

Scientific coral reef survey to be conducted in Bonaire

July 16 2010



Living Oceans Foundation team member makes preparations for coral reef survey. Credit: Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation

Starting Monday, July 19 through Tuesday, July 27, 2010, the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation will conduct a scientific coral reef survey in Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles. The main objective of this project is to reevaluate coral sites previously studied by the Foundation in order to produce management decision aids and tools needed by resource managers and other stakeholders in Bonaire to achieve effective coral reef conservation results.

The Living Oceans Foundation's Bonaire survey is a precursor to its Global Reef Expedition, which will begin in 2011 with surveys of the Caribbean region. Throughout the ambitious, four-year Global Reef

Expedition, the Foundation will examine the resilience of reefs worldwide to identify those sites that warrant immediate protection and to identify management options to protect and enhance the health and resilience of reefs.

Bonaire has been selected for this study because its [coral reefs](#) represent some of the healthiest reefs in the western Atlantic, especially in the deeper water zones. Since 1979, the waters around Bonaire, from the high water mark to the 200-foot depth contour, have been designated a marine park and are protected by law.

However, long-term studies by Dr. Andrew Bruckner, the Foundation's chief scientist, have documented extensive outbreaks of two of the most virulent diseases in the Caribbean, yellow band disease and white plague. These diseases have affected the health of the most important reef building corals on Bonaire's reefs over the past decade. This new survey project in Bonaire will reevaluate those sites previously studied by Dr. Bruckner over the last two decades using identical methodologies, and will evaluate patterns of recovery that have occurred since he last surveyed these reefs in 2006.

Provided by Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation

Citation: Scientific coral reef survey to be conducted in Bonaire (2010, July 16) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-07-scientific-coral-reef-survey-bonaire.html>

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