

# Coral Reefs and the Recreational Dive Industry: *Stewardship, Education and Awareness*

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# Defining the Dive Industry: Participation

- ❖ The Outdoor Industry Association's *Demographics of Enthusiasts Report* in 1997, estimated 14.6 million scuba diving participants in the U.S.
- ❖ Mean age of divers: 29 years
- ❖ Gender of divers: 65% male, 35% female



# Defining the Dive Industry: Participation

- ❁ PADI has certified more than 10 million divers and adds nearly one million additional certifications to that population annually



# Defining the Dive Industry: Stakeholders

Charter dive boats/live-aboards

Training Agencies

Dive Centers

Dive Resorts

Diver training professionals:  
Divemasters and Instructors

Media

Associations and Clubs

Manufacturers

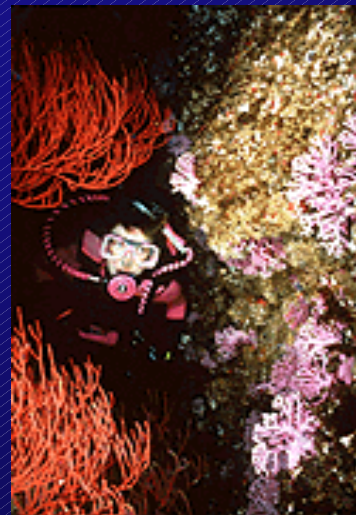
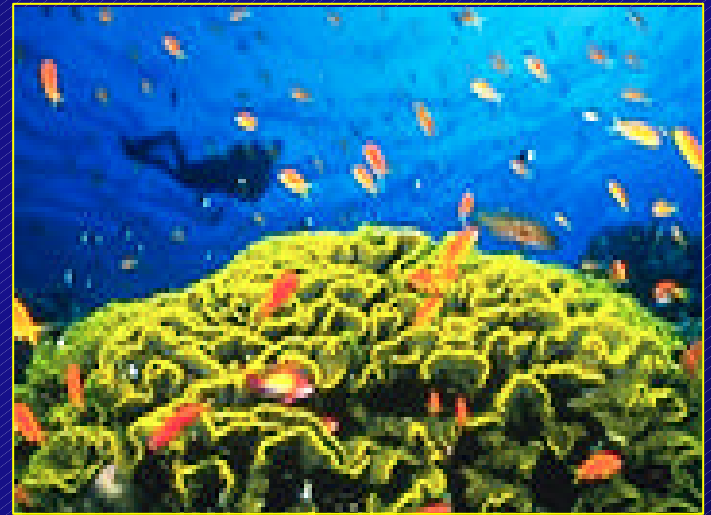
# The Size of the Dive Industry: Stakeholders

- ❖ Economic worth: 4.5 billion U.S.D. (approx)
- ❖ Number of Dive Centers and Resorts: 4726 affiliated with PADI (65-70% of market)
- ❖ 100,000 dive training professionals
- ❖ 170 countries of operation



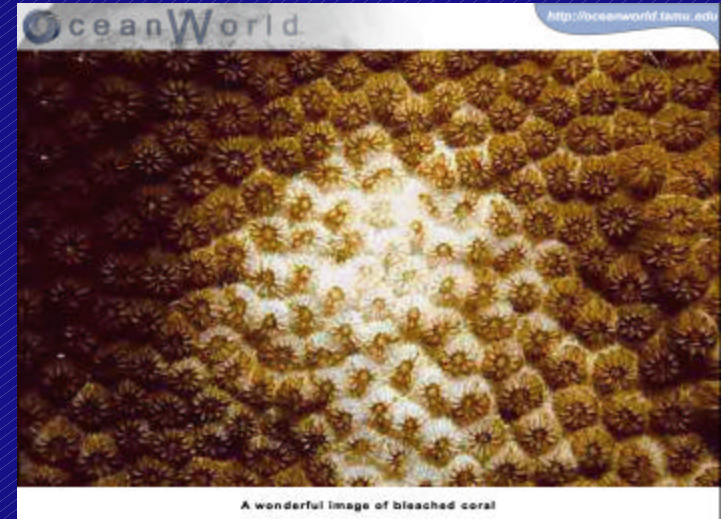
# Importance of Healthy Coral Reef Areas to our Industry

- The recreational scuba diving industry depends on healthy coral reef environments for business and livelihood.
- Coral reefs are the main attraction for visitors in resort environments.
- Healthy coral reef environments = healthy dive/snorkel tourism = healthy economy/industry



# Responsibility of our Industry: Perspective

- ❖ Divers have a unique perspective of coral reefs – a window to the underwater world. They can see first-hand reef decline from natural pressures and damage from humans.
- ❖ Divers can minimize personal impact to the coral reef.



# Responsibility of our Industry: Advocacy

- ❖ Divers are often the strongest advocates for healthy marine environments – it is their playground and their passion.





# Responsibility of our Industry: Awareness

- ❁ Divers see themselves as visitors in this underwater environment, with a responsibility to preserve it for future guests.



# Dive Industry Action:

## *The Role of Education as a Mitigating Factor*



- The recreational scuba diving industry is proactive in educating and involving participants in coral reef conservation initiatives.
- Divers have supported many initiatives including marine protected areas

# Dive Industry Action:

## *The Role of Education as a Mitigating Factor*

- ❁ We have developed public awareness campaigns specifically addressing the need to protect living reefs.
- ❁ Through these campaign materials, millions of divers have been introduced to messages about coral reef conservation and responsible dive tourism.





# Dive Industry Action:

## *The Role of Education as a Mitigating Factor*

- The impact of education has been established as a way to reduce the number of contacts a diver or anchor has with the reef (Townsend, 2000).



# Dive Industry Action:

## *The Role of Education as a Mitigating Factor*

- ✿ We have implemented training courses for all levels of divers about coral reef conservation and proper diving techniques.



# Dive Industry Action:

## *The Role of Education as a Mitigating Factor*

- ❁ We support and encourage monitoring efforts by recreational divers to contribute to information about the health of coral reefs.
- ❁ Valuable data have been gathered and compiled into a global information system established for managers and scientists.



# Dive Industry Action:

## *The Role of Education as a Mitigating Factor*

- ❁ We've established a nonprofit organization, Project AWARE Foundation, dedicated solely to preserving the aquatic environment and its resources through:
  - ❁ direct funding
  - ❁ grass roots projects
  - ❁ education and outreach

[www.projectaware.org](http://www.projectaware.org)





# Future Hope

- It's what we're doing now collectively that will reverse the trend of reef decline and contribute to the recovery of the world's coral reefs.

