

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 31, 2001

Contact: Alex Score

(305) 451-0312

“Thousands Went Fish Watching in July”

The 2001 Great American Fish Count (GAFC) was a great success with over 1,000 volunteers counting fish throughout the nation and in the Caribbean. Many GAFC dives were conducted within National Marine Sanctuary areas, with kick-off events being held in Stellwagen Bank, Florida Keys, Channel Islands and Monterey Bay. Over 1,500 surveys were conducted during the month of July. The surveys collected during the GAFC are entered into the Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF)'s ongoing fish monitoring database, which is used by marine scientists, resource managers, and conservation communities to assist in the understanding and management of the marine environment.

This year's festivities included the GAFC Challenge. Surveys conducted during sanctioned GAFC dives were entered into a grand prize drawing for a week for two at one of two beautiful Caribbean resorts - the Southern Cross Club in Little Cayman and the Aqua Safari in Cozumel.

CONGRATULATIONS to the GAFC Challenge grand prize winners Gys Van Hoora from Bonaire for the Southern Cross Club in Little Cayman, and Tina Fisher from Florida for the package at Aqua Safari in Cozumel.

Additional prizes were drawn for each geographic region. Sponsors included Dive Training magazine, Bonica Precision Inc., ReefNet, New World Publications, Divers Direct of Key Largo, and special prints by Paul Humann and Tom Isgar. A special thanks goes out to all our sponsors, whose support helped make this year's GAFC Challenge event a huge success.

The GAFC is an annual fish census conducted by volunteer scuba divers and snorkelers. The event began in 1992 with a group of divers in the Channel Islands and is now managed by the Reef Environmental Education Foundation. The purpose of the GAFC is to mobilize and educate the recreational diving community and to increase awareness and level of concern regarding the condition of our fisheries and marine environment. Participants are encouraged to continue their surveying efforts throughout the year as part of REEF's ongoing program. The national scope of the fish count has led to its incorporation into REEF's partnership with the National Marine Sanctuary System.

For more information on REEF and the Great American Fish Count, please visit:
<http://www.reef.org> and <http://www.fishcount.org/>.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 31, 2001

Contact: Alex Score

(305) 451-0312

“Great American Fish Count Challenge”

The Great American Fish Count (GAFC) is an annual fish census conducted by trained volunteer scuba divers and snorkelers during the month of July. This year's event included the new GAFC Challenge. Surveys conducted during a sanctioned GAFC dive were entered into a grand prize drawing for a week for two at one of two beautiful Caribbean resorts - the Southern Cross Club in Little Cayman and the Aqua Safari in Cozumel.

CONGRATULATIONS to the GAFC Challenge grand prize winners Gys Van Hoora from Bonaire for the Southern Cross Club in Little Cayman and Tina Fisher from Florida for the package at Aqua Safari in Cozumel.

Additional prizes were drawn for each geographic region. Sponsors included, Dive Training magazine, Bonica Precision Inc., ReefNet, New World Publications, Divers Direct of Key Largo, and special prints by Paul Humann and Tom Isgar. A special thanks goes out to all our sponsors, whose support helped make this year's GAFC Challenge a success.

The GAFC event began in 1992 and is now coordinated by the Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF). The national scope of the fish count has led to its incorporation into REEF's partnership with the National Marine Sanctuary System. Divers participating in the GAFC are encouraged to continue their surveying efforts year round as part of REEF's ongoing Fish Survey Project.

GAFC 2001 Challenge Winners

Grand Prize Aqua Safari

Tina Fisher of Tierra Verde, FL

Grand Prize Southern Cross Club

Gys' Van Hoora of Bonaire

Regional Winners

Florida

- 1) Joellen Sullenger
- 2) Scott Fowler
- 3) Alan Manning

Northern California

- 1) Leon Garden
- 2) James Michael
- 3) Joanne Garden

South Atlantic

- 1) Lee Griffen
- 2) Anna Watkins
- 3) Jeffrey Magee

Southern California

- 1) Mary Fangman
- 2) Kathy Altomare
- 3) Robert Rygig

Northeast US

- 1) Kerri Hurd
- 2) Janet Maccausland
- 3) Brandy Derickson

Gulf of California

- 1) Julia K Olson
- 2) Merrie Brucks
- 3) Candy Vactor

Pacific Northwest

- 1) Wes Nicholson
- 2) Chad Pritchard
- 3) Gerald Sievert

Hawaii

- 1) Mary Fullenwider
- 2) James Vaughn
- 3) Fred Litt

Flower Garden Banks NMS

- 1) Geogre Ruelens
- 2) Robert White
- 3) Daniel Belhar

Caribbean/Bahamas

- 1) Cheri Arnold
- 2) Jonathan Grotz
- 3) Anne Wilk

###