



REEF-in-Brief

*The e-Newsletter of the
Reef Environmental Education Foundation*

August 2006

1. **Welcome** - Greetings everyone! As always, there is a lot to cover in this month's edition of REEF-in-Brief. The 15th Great Annual Fish Count has just wrapped up and though we are still tabulating results, it looks like, once again, we will have generated a lot of tremendous data and had great participation. We'll report more on this year's GAFC next month. Read on to see what's happening right now with REEF...

- *Best Fishes* - Bryan Dias, REEF Director of Outreach & Education

2. **REEF's 2006 Volunteer of the Year** - REEF would like to congratulate super volunteer Judie Clee as our Volunteer of the Year (VOY)! Judie is from Bermuda and has been a passionate and dedicated REEF surveyor, teacher, and ambassador since becoming involved with the organization in 2000. "It's a wonderful, wacky world of critters beneath those waves and I love to encourage people to enjoy, understand and protect it," Judie always says.

Judie got involved in REEF while with her sister on a live-aboard trip in the Pacific. It was pretty much fate, as REEF Founder, Paul Humann, was also on the trip. Judie says she was aware of REEF, having been a long-time volunteer and supporter of the Bermuda Zoological Society, but really decided to take the plunge after she learned more from Paul. She was very excited to take all this back to Bermuda, where she thought the program would prove highly beneficial as well as be a lot of fun.

She is one of REEF's most active surveyors, having amassed over 1,000 surveys and becoming one of a handful of members in the "Golden Hamlet Club" (reserved for those who have reached this remarkable milestone.) She has also participated in numerous REEF Field Surveys and on various Advanced Assessment Team (AAT) Projects. In fact, Judie cites her participation in one of REEF's AAT trips to the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, which happened to coincide with coral spawning, as a highlight of her REEF involvement.

These days, Judie has been active as a REEF "ambassador" serving as a "naturalist on-board" for a couple "REEF Week" events hosted by the Little Cayman Beach Resort. These went over so well that Judie will be giving a repeat performance with another great REEF Field Station, Deep Blue Resort of Utila, in the Bay Islands of Honduras this fall (more in *REEF Events* below). During these events, Judie teaches Fish ID, gives talks on behavior, and generally makes herself available to answer questions from resort guests about the marine environment. She is also, as always, working tirelessly to keep REEF active in Bermuda where, amongst other things, she is working on a mapping project that will cover the various marine habitats around the island and will, of course, integrate REEF data into the process.

REEF would like to thank and congratulate Judie Clee for all of her efforts and great work

What's in this issue:

- 1 - [REEF-in-Brief August](#)
- 2 - [REEF's 2006 VOY - Judie Clee](#)
- 3 - [REEF Volunteer Discovers Species](#)
- 4 - [Grouper Moon Project Update](#)
- 5 - [REEF Starter Kits](#)
- 6 - [REEF-in-Brief Online Survey](#)
- 7 - [REEF Parts - Things To Know](#)
- 8 - [Partner Events](#)



REEF's Volunteer of the Year, Judie Clee, receives her award from REEF Founder Paul Humann (above.) Judie received her award during the recent REEF Field Survey to Little Cayman - the group from that trip is seen below.



on behalf of the organization and marine conservation. Cheers to our Volunteer of the Year!

3. **REEF Volunteer and Former Staff Member Leslie Whaylen Discovers New Species** -

Leslie discovered a species of cardinalfish new to science while diving off the coast of Tutuila in the South Pacific in May 2005. While working at the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources in American Samoa, Leslie accompanied U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service coral reef biologist, Dr. Jim Maragos, on a survey expedition.

She sighted the fish again the following month while conducting a survey on fish biodiversity at Rose Atoll. Unable to accompany the team on a follow-up collection trip, a colleague of Dr. Maragos finally collected several juvenile specimens and brought them back to the Waikiki Aquarium in Hawai'i.

Dr. Jack Randall of the Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology at the University of Hawai'i and the Bishop Museum is a prominent fish taxonomist. According to Leslie, "At first, Jack did not think it was a new species. In my fish heart of hearts, I knew that once the juveniles matured into adults, the doubt would disappear. Eight months and a DNA test later, the fish was confirmed as a new species."

The new cardinalfish has been named *Ostorhynchus leslie*. Information collected by Leslie on the fish's habitat, behavior, and geographic distribution contributed to a paper in the press by Dr. Randall and Jennifer Schultz, also at the University of Hawai'i. Two adult *Ostorhynchus leslie* are now on display at the Waikiki Aquarium.

REEF is proud to have Leslie as a member of our Advanced Assessment Fish Survey Team and a returning volunteer on the Grouper Moon Project. "My dream after so many years of fishwatching has finally come true - I found a new species of fish!" she told us.

4. **Marine Conservation in Action: REEF's Grouper Moon Project** - REEF's successful conservation science program, the Grouper Moon Project (GMP), continued to expand in scope and effect this summer. In July, REEF staff and volunteers, along with collaborators from the Cayman Islands Department of the Environment (CIDOE) and researchers from Oregon State University (OSU), initiated two new components of the project - one aimed at better understanding juvenile Nassau grouper habitat preferences and levels of recruitment in the Cayman Islands and one to evaluate reproductive behavior in mature Nassau grouper on an island with no known spawning aggregation.

After focusing on mature Nassau grouper for the last 4 years, the Grouper Moon Project is beginning to explore research questions that focus on juveniles. Our primary objectives are to more fully understand 1) the level of recruitment, 2) genetic relationships between baby grouper that settle to the island with fish that attend the Little Cayman aggregation, and 3) habitat preferences and densities of juvenile Nassau grouper. To begin to address these questions, REEF's 2005 Volunteer of the Year and long-time Grouper Moon volunteer, Judie Clee, and OSU researchers, Drs. Scott and Selina Heppell, coordinated a thorough search of nearshore habitats on Little Cayman for juvenile (young of the year, i.e. resulting from spawning in February 2006) Nassau grouper during July. Volunteers from a REEF Field Survey occurring on Little Cayman that month also joined in the search. Despite over 40 hours of in-water surveys, no young of the year individuals were found. The most likely reason is that the timing of the search was too late in the year. REEF plans to revisit this important study again next Spring.

The second project undertaken this summer expands the scope of the ongoing acoustic tagging and tracking research coordinated by REEF and CIDOE. After two years of successfully tagging and tracking 50 mature fish on Little Cayman using an acoustic array



Copyright Jim Maragos

Photos (above and below) of a newly named cardinalfish discovered by REEF volunteer and former staff member, Leslie Whaylen, in the South Pacific. Photos by: Jim Maragos.



Copyright Jim Maragos



A diver (above) from this year's REEF Grouper Moon Project releases a tagged fish around Cayman Brac. Photo by: Scott Heppell.



A CIDOE boat (above)

of hydrophone listening devices, we now have a much better understanding of the reproductive habits of mature fish in an area with a functioning spawning aggregation. However, it is not known what fish on neighboring Cayman Brac, with no known aggregations, do during the reproductive winter months. We are fairly certain that Cayman Brac fish are not traveling over the abyssal water between Brac and Little Cayman in order to attend the aggregation on Little Cayman. But we don't know if mature fish stay put on home reefs or if they migrate to a site with too few fish to warrant spawning. To help answer this question, a total of 20 mature Nassau grouper will be tagged on Cayman Brac and an array of hydrophones will be installed around the island in order to track the movements of tagged fish.

REEF launched the Grouper Moon Project in the Winter of 2002. The Project's initial objectives were to observe the newly discovered Nassau grouper spawning aggregation off the western tip of Little Cayman, and to develop a protocol for monitoring fish numbers and activity at the site. Since then, a team of divers from REEF and the Cayman Islands Department of Environment has visited the aggregation site and nearby reefs each winter in order to monitor and study the aggregation. The project has grown in scope to include an ambitious acoustic tagging research project, juvenile habitat and genetics studies, and early results have been published in the scientific literature.

For more information, visit -- <http://www.reef.org/data/groupermoon.html>

5. **Featured Product - REEF Starter Kit** - This month, the REEF product we are featuring sits at the core of what we do - engaging wonderful individuals like you to get out in the water and conduct marine life population surveys. REEF makes "Starter Kits" available that contain everything you need - specialized underwater slate, underwater survey paper, scanforms, and more - to do a survey and make an active contribution to marine conservation.

REEF has numerous items to assist you with your marine life education and survey efforts. We have Starter Kits for all of our survey regions and, in many instances, kits that are tailored made for smaller areas within our survey regions. For example, in California, we have one kit for Southern California that contains a warm-water friendly slate and a laminated waterproof ID card for fishes of that area and another kit for Northern California that has a cold-water slate (larger and easier to use with dive gloves) and its own ID card.

We also have an extensive supply of fish and other marine life identification guidebooks as well as books on behavior and other topics. For a complete list of what we have, prices, and to place an order, please visit our secure online store - it's open 24/7.

[Visit our online store here...](#)

6. **REEF Launches Online Survey Feature** - Let us know what you think! As a new regular feature in REEF-in-Brief, REEF will be asking a question or series of questions in order to give you an opportunity to share your thoughts, ideas and opinions on how we can serve you - our members - better. This month's question asks you to let us know where you'd like to see REEF schedule a Field Survey in the future.

[Visit the survey page here...](#)

7. **REEF Parts - Things To Know** - Here are a few notes and news bits we'd like you to know about:

- REEF would like to thank our terrific volunteers Elaine Morden and Barbara Bohnsack for helping us stuff hundreds of new member envelopes!
- Looking for a great place to dive this winter? Join REEF for a week of great diving and learning on our Field Survey

A CIDOE panga (above) returns after a day of tagging around Cayman Brac. A Juvenile Nassau grouper (below) hides amongst the seagrass. Photo by: Liz Whiteman



Each REEF Starter Kit, available from our online store for all REEF survey regions, comes with a specialized underwater slate ideal for conducting surveys!



to Bequia in the Grenadine Islands November 11th-18th. The cost is \$750 per diver, [click here for more details...](#)

8. **REEF Events** - Here are some great things to get involved in with a few of our partners:

- **REEF Fish ID Training in San Diego** - On September 9th, San Diego Oceans Foundation will be hosting a REEF Fish ID training. The class is open to snorkelers and divers of all levels and ages. By the end of the training session you will be able to identify local marine fish, collect information on populations, and report it to REEF for species and abundance tracking. The information will then be used by the National Marine Sanctuary Program, National Marine Fisheries Service, and The Nature Conservancy, along with others. For every 6 surveys completed, participants will earn a FREE dive trip on the Lois Ann (maximum of 5). If you are interested in attending, please RSVP by emailing courtney@sdoceas.org or by calling (619) 523-1903.
- **REEF Week with Deep Blue Utila** - During the week of October 21st-28th, [Deep Blue Utila](#) (a REEF Field Station) is hosting their "REEF Week." They will be bringing super REEF volunteer, Judie Clee, down from Bermuda to give nightly "critter" talks on REEF Fish ID, behavior, and lots of other interesting topics. This is a great opportunity to learn and have fun in a relaxed, but very nice environment. Utila boasts some of the best diving in the Caribbean (be sure to check out the north side walls - perhaps the best in the region!) For more information or to make a reservation for this all inclusive trip, please contact owner, Steve Fox, at waves2222@aol.com.
- **Centro Ecologico Akumal (CEA)** - A REEF Non-Profit/Academic Field Station - located in Akumal, Mexico on the Yucatan Peninsula, is looking for volunteers. In response to environmental degradation and the demands of the community, CEA is launching a new Marine and Coastal Protection Program that can essentially be divided into two main components: a scientific monitoring project and an environmental education project. CEA is currently recruiting volunteers to join our team and help with both components of the program. For more information, please go to CEA's website www.ceakumal.org or contact Lucy Gallagher at marine@ceakumal.org for a volunteer pack.

Contribute Now

Please consider supporting REEF and the critical work we do by donating generously.

See You Next Month!

To subscribe or to unsubscribe, please visit our "REEF-in-Brief" page at:

<http://www.reef.org/enews/enews.htm>

To learn more about REEF, visit www.reef.org

