



REEF-in-Brief

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

February 2006

1. **Welcome** - February has almost come and gone and 2006 is in full swing here at REEF! We have a lot of great stuff coming up with our [2006 Field Survey season](#) set to begin in April. REEF will also be participating in Dive In To Earth Day on the last weekend of that month. We are co-sponsoring an event with REEF Field Station, Key Largo's [Horizon Divers](#). The event will feature a photo scavenger contest, Fish ID classes and lots of fun. If you plan to be in the area or want to come down to the Keys, we'd love to see you here! See more in the ["REEF Events"](#) listing below.

Also, we have launched the [2006 Great Annual Fish Count](#) - the 15th installment of this premier marine conservation citizen science event. In the coming weeks, check the GAFC website for local events near you - we will be adding them regularly as they are planned and announced. This annual event, centered around each July, is a great way for you to connect with others interested in Fish ID and doing surveys - find some new, like-minded dive buddies! It's also a chance to take a free REEF Fish ID course and have a lot of fun. If you know of others who may be interested in getting involved, this is the time!

We hope to see you out there! Also, remember - the GAFC is a great way to get going with REEF, but the message is that it's what we do year-round. So, keep those surveys coming the other 11 months out of the year and we may see you in the [Golden Hamlet Club!](#) Best - Bryan Dias, REEF Director of Outreach and Education

2. **Golden Hamlet Club Boasts New Members** - REEF's success is a direct result of the motivation and dedication of the thousands of volunteers who make our work possible. Their critical contributions to marine conservation, namely carrying out REEF Fish surveys, is the backbone of what we do here. Without this dedication, the REEF model and the purpose of the organization would simply not work. Whether you've done one survey and are just getting started or you are a long-time veteran, this holds true and we thank you!

The idea that REEF surveys can be conducted anywhere within our survey areas and at anytime is a key point - The Fish Survey Project is fun, flexible, and doesn't require "organized" events to get out there and do it. The majority of our surveys come from individuals who do so on their own - while on vacation, taking time out from their busy lives and schedules, or, for the lucky few, just hopping into the water in their "own backyard."

In recognition of those who have shown an incredible level of dedication over the years, REEF has created the Golden Hamlet Club (GHC). This honor is reserved for volunteers who have reached 1,000 individual surveys, representing hundreds of hours of volunteer survey time. Linda Baker of Bonaire was the inaugural member of the



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



REEF's Golden Hamlet Club (GHC), reserved for those who

GHC in May, 2005.

REEF is now pleased to welcome two new members to this very exclusive club:

- **Peter Leahy** of Parkland, Florida with 1,082 surveys
- **Judie Clee** of Bermuda with 1,001 surveys

We would like to thank Peter and Judie for their efforts and strong commitment to REEF and marine conservation. Several other members are poised to reach this milestone. Stay tuned to REEF-in-Brief for more. And, again, we would like to thank anyone and everyone who has ever conducted a survey and supported REEF - we hope to see your name here someday, too!

3. **REEF Field Station of the Month** - [Ocean Watch Foundation](#) located in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, a long-time and dedicated partner of REEF, is this edition's recipient of the Field Station of the Month (FSOM) award.

Ocean Watch Foundation is a non-profit volunteer organization founded in 1988 for the preservation, protection and education of the local coral reef communities in Southeast Florida. Its membership is comprised of people from the diving, fishing, boating, environmental and marine industry communities all with one thing in common: a love of the ocean. From this common ground the volunteers work together in protective efforts to preserve the fragile coral reef communities.

As part of Ocean Watch's mission and activities, they regularly engage in teaching REEF Fish ID and organizing survey dives. In fact, they teach monthly courses, offer regular Fish ID testing opportunities, and serve to bring many new members to REEF. They are a very dedicated organization and a tremendously valuable REEF partner.

If you plan to be in the Southeast Florida area (or you already are) over the Earth Day weekend (April 21st-23rd), Ocean Watch, as well as REEF, will have a table at Fort Lauderdale's big dive show - [Oceanfest](#). Additionally, the Ocean Watch Foundation will make a brief presentation about their activities and relationship with REEF during our Fish ID course on the Saturday (the 22nd) at 11AM. Come join us to find out more about what Ocean Watch is all about and how you can get involved!

4. **Meet the REEF Interns** - REEF is happy to welcome two new interns for the spring term:

Ashley Pruden joins us from Toledo, Ohio where she is a recent graduate of the University of Toledo. She received a Bachelor of Science in paralegal studies. She joins REEF to do something "out-of-the-ordinary" and explore a different career option while expanding upon her personal interests such as conservation and scuba diving.

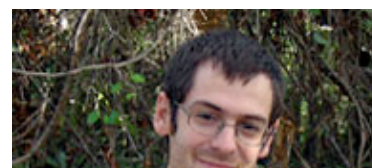
Matthew Nuttall is a recent graduate of the University of Miami with a Bachelor of Science in the double major of Marine Science and Biology. He is interested in pursuing postgraduate studies in Marine Science. While at REEF, Matt is excited to get out on as many different projects as possible in the hopes of giving him some practical experience and ideas for his future studies.

REEF's Marine Conservation Intern Program provides the opportunity for young people to work with the organization and spend a stint living and working in Key

have shown extraordinary dedication by conducting over 1,000 individual surveys has two new members. The logo for the GHC was designed by artist, Eleanor Pigman.



REEF's Field Station of the Month (FSOM) is [Ocean Watch Foundation](#), located in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. They are a highly active and dedicated REEF partner, engaging local volunteers, teaching regular Fish ID, and organizing survey events throughout the year.



Largo. We offer internships three times a year - spring, summer, and fall. We will begin taking applications for the fall term soon. Though we consider candidates from a wide-range of backgrounds and experience, most interns have completed or nearly completed their undergraduate degrees, have studied and/or worked in marine conservation or related fields, and have a demonstrated passion for marine environments and diving. For more information, please visit our [Intern Program Page](#).

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



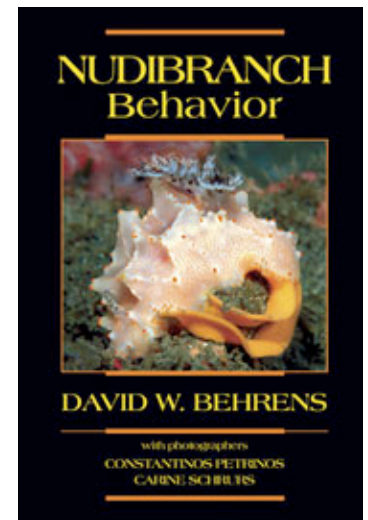
REEF's Spring Marine Conservation Interns - Ashley Pruden (above) and Matthew Nuttall (below).

5. **New Book - Nudibranch Behavior** - Nudibranchs are among the most beautiful creatures on the reef, with colors and shapes that dazzle and delight. Unlike fish that may disappear before our eyes in a flash, the showy nudibranch glides slowly along the substrate, allowing us the time to savor this extraordinary sight.

With their shell-less unprotected, bodies how do they survive in seas filled with hungry mouths? How do these sightless creatures navigate the reefs to find food and mates? What and how do they eat? How do they reproduce? What special relationships have they developed with other reef inhabitants? These and many more questions are answered in this informative and lavishly illustrated book. You will never look at nudibranchs the same way again!

Check out this new book by author David W. Behrens that features stunning photography by Constantinios Petrinis, Carine Schrurs, and others. [REEF's online store has this](#) and numerous other great items - fish and creature ID books, marine ecology books, REEF survey materials and much more.

Check out [REEF's online store](#) to get this terrific volume or any of the latest and greatest stuff for yourself or the Fish ID enthusiast in your life!



Are you curious about these beautiful, yet somewhat mysterious, creatures? Visit [REEF's online store to pick this great book up](#).

6. **REEF Events** - Here are a some great events to mark in your '06 calendar:

- **Deep Blue Lodge in Utila, Bay Islands, Honduras** - a REEF Field Station - is offering their annual Utila Whale Shark Research Project from March 25th to April 22nd, 2006. Be a part of one of the most exciting events in the Caribbean. See these gentle giants firsthand in the water and help to build our growing knowledge of them. To learn more, visit their websites at www.DeepBlueUtila.com and www.UtilaWhaleSharkResearch.com.
- **REEF will have a booth at Fort Lauderdale's premier dive and adventure sport show, Ocean Fest.** This event coincides with Earth Day and will take place over the weekend of April 21st-23rd. REEF staff, interns, and volunteers will be on hand to talk about what we do and we'll have various things available such as t-shirts and marine life guidebooks. We'll also be giving an introduction to REEF Fish Identification. For more information, a complete schedule of seminars, and everything else you need to know, please visit their website at <http://www.oceanfest.com>. We hope to see you there!
- **REEF and Horizon Divers will be hosting a "Dive In To Earth Day" event in Key Largo on April 28th-29th.** Activities will kick-off with a free REEF Fish ID class at [Horizon Divers](#) on the evening of Friday, April 28th (another opportunity will be offered the following morning on Saturday the 29th.) On Saturday, there are two opportunities to dive - the morning trip will offer the chance to compete for great prizes (like free dive trips from Horizon and more!) in an underwater photo scavenger hunt. The afternoon dives will be all about doing REEF surveys and having fun. After the diving is through, we'll meet back at Horizon for the awards to be handed out and a barbecue! For more information please contact our interns at intern@reef.org or call (305) 852-0030 ext. 1.
- **The 15th Great Annual Fish Count is coming this summer!** Events will be added soon. Check the GAFC

website (www.fishcount.org) for more information and events. If you don't see an event in your area, check back often as we expect frequent updates as local events are planned.

See You Next Month!

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

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