



REEF-in-Brief

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

June 2005

1. **The 14th Great Annual Fish Count** - REEF's signature yearly event - The Great Annual Fish Count (GAFC) - is coming next month! The GAFC is a great event that drives attention to marine conservation as well as the great work REEF does year-round. If you haven't done so before, the GAFC provides a great opportunity to learn REEF Fish ID and conduct surveys, meet other individuals and dive operators who support marine conservation, and have a lot of fun! There are numerous events taking place throughout much of REEF's survey regions.

Information on the event itself, including schedules by location, can be seen at www.fishcount.org - the GAFC's official website. If you don't see anything scheduled where you like to dive, check back, some new events are being posted. Also, let your local dive shop or club know that you are interested and urge them to find out more about it. If you are feeling really motivated, get involved and organize your own event - it's easy and fun. Everything you need is on the website.

REEF's Great Annual Fish Count is an event that makes a real difference! Last year's GAFC generated nearly 2,000 surveys in the month of July and boasted over 80 events in numerous countries. We hope to make the 2005 GAFC bigger and better than ever! We hope you get involved! For more information and a schedule of events, please visit:

<http://www.fishcount.org>

2. **REEF Educators Meet In Key Largo** - Thanks to a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), REEF has recently formed an Educators Advisory Committee (EAC) to advise and direct the future of REEF's Education Program. This a very exciting prospect for the organization. We are looking to not only improve our current educational activities, such as REEF Fish ID, but address the growth of the program into other areas of informal education and formal, in-the-classroom education. The group met in Key Largo from June 14th-16th and discussed a wide variety of subjects including REEF's place in the marine education world, future directions of the program, and the setting of priorities and goals.

The EAC, now with seven members, represents a tremendous diversity of environmental education, outreach, and scientific experience. The group is coordinated by and will support the work of REEF's Director of Outreach and Education, Bryan Dias, as well as other related areas for the organization. One of the first projects the group is tackling is the development of high school level lesson plans related to the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary. The work on this curriculum development is also being funded by the NOAA Education Enhancement Grant. Look

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REEF's 14th Great Annual Fish Count is coming this July! Get Involved!



REEF's Educators Advisory Committee met for the first time from June 14th-16th in Key Largo to discuss the future growth of the organization's Education Program.

for more on this coming soon.

Special thanks to all the EAC members who participated in the conference and to Key Largo's [Island Dolphin Care](#) who graciously hosted the event at their terrific new interpretation center and office building. Also, thanks very much to one of REEF's Key Largo Field Stations, [Horizon Divers](#), who supported the diving/snorkeling portion of the meeting.

3. **REEF Field Station of the Month** - REEF is pleased to designate Project S.E.A.-Link, a non-profit organization based in Maui, Hawaii, as its Field Station of the Month (FSOM). Their mission is to promote marine science, education, and awareness by providing a link between students, teachers, scientists, the local community, the general public, other nonprofit organizations, and governmental agencies. Its goals include encouraging and inspiring the next generation of marine scientists, educators and stewards of the ocean environment; supporting the inquiry-based reform in science education; and promoting conservation and stewardship in order to preserve and protect marine resources. Project S.E.A.-Link is carrying out its goals through educational programs, the development of an interactive website providing resources for students and teachers, and through scientific efforts consisting of community-based coral reef monitoring.

Project S.E.A.-Link is a small organization with no employees but many (hundreds) of volunteers from within the community. They work closely with other local organizations and receive in-kind support from those organizations as well as local businesses that support our mission. Project S.E.A.-Link is also a highly active REEF Field Station engaging in fish id activities, surveying, and extensive Great Annual Fish Count events in Maui. Additionally, they are a valued REEF partner in many other areas related to our work in Hawaii. To learn more about Project S.E.A.-Link and how you can support their important work, please visit their website at:

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

4. **Take A Volunteer Vacation That Counts (Fish!)** - REEF's Field Surveys are a great way for you to go to a terrific dive destination, have fun, and contribute to marine conservation. These trips are lead by REEF staff and expert volunteers to great locations throughout our survey regions. Participants have the opportunity to participate in daily fish talks, interact with other members and the trip leader, and do a lot of diving! Here's a great trip in which to get involved:

Southern Gulf of California/Sea of Cortez • [Don Jose](#) • October 2-9, 2005 - 14 Divers Maximum - 8 days/7 nights - \$1,567, this trip will feature a custom itinerary of locations in the western Gulf, includes lodging, food, and unlimited diving, aboard an 80 foot long liveaboard dive boat, the Don Jose.

There are several other trips that still have openings in 2005. Look for our 2006 schedule with a lot of great locations on tap coming soon. Complete trip listings for 2005 and details on price, booking, accommodations, and diving are available on our website. For more information please visit our Field Survey page at:

<http://www.reef.org/fieldsurv/index.htm>

5. **Two REEF Members Honored** - The California Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA)

The meeting also included several guests and REEF interns.



REEF's Field Station of the Month is Project S.E.A.-Link based in Maui, Hawaii



REEF Field Surveys are a great way to experience first rate dive travel while contributing to marine conservation. Join us for our upcoming trip to the Gulf of California - your guaranteed to see some of these guys - the Cortez Angelfish - if you do!

Initiative and the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) recently announced the appointment of 29 members and 10 alternates to the MLPA Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group. John Wolfe, one of REEF's Pacific Advanced Assessment Team members and active training coordinators in the Monterey area, was recently named to the group. Congratulations, John!

Under the guidance of a blue ribbon task force, this group is responsible for working with a science team, professional staff and DFG to help the state improve the design and management of the central coast portion of a statewide network of marine protected areas (MPAs).

Initially, the group will help develop regional goals and objectives, and evaluate existing MPAs within the central coast region (Point Conception to Pigeon Point). The stakeholder group will also help develop recommendations for alternative MPAs proposals. At points in the process the regional dialogue will focus on two subgroups for the north and south central coast areas where group members can bring their in-depth of knowledge about local resources and uses. More can be seen at:

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa/centralcoast.html>

Also, Capt. Scott Fowler, a scientific diver and captain for the National Undersea Research Center, has been recognized by NOAA as a 2005 Environmental Hero for his long-standing commitment to raising public awareness for protection of the Florida coral reef ecosystem.

Scott continually highlights the wonders of the Florida Keys coral reef ecosystem and the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary in his weekly column that appears in the Upper Keys Reporter. Over the past year he has participated in developing the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary's Blue Star program that is designed to recognize dive and snorkel operators who meet high standards in educating their customers about the Sanctuary and the marine environment.

Scott also represents the Upper Keys diving and snorkeling industry as an alternate on the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council. In addition to this extensive work with community outreach in the Florida Keys on marine issues, Capt. Fowler directly participates in volunteer scientific monitoring projects. He is a member of REEF's Advanced Assessment Team, which provides detailed information on fish populations to Sanctuary managers, and is an instructor for The Nature Conservancy's RECON program, which tracks the health of coral reef areas. Fowler is the owner of a dive operation, [Partial Pressure Diving Co.](#) in Key Largo that is also one of REEF's newest Field Stations in the area. Congratulations, Scott!



REEF member John Wolfe has been selected as a member of the MLPA Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group.



REEF member Scott Fowler was honored as one of NOAA's Environmental Heroes for 2005.

6. **Upcoming Events** - Here we will feature some of our Field Stations' events and other happenings you might be interested in getting involved in.

Date	Location	Description and Information
Month of July	Many Locations	<p>The 14th Great Annual Fish Count is happening throughout the month of July in numerous locations throughout REEF's survey regions. For more information on the event, how to participate, and a schedule of events near you, please visit:</p> <p>http://www.fishcount.org</p> <p>It's a great way to get involved - numerous free REEF Fish ID courses are being offered as well as diving/snorkeling opportunities, social events, and more!</p>



See You Next Month!

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