



# REEF-in-Brief

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

May 2005

1. **REEF Golden Hamlet Club's Inaugural Member** - Linda Baker - For many REEF surveyors, getting in a few dozen dives (and REEF surveys) each year is about all that their schedule allows. But for those fortunate few, who either live near the water, work on the water, or manage to take multiple dive vacations each year, their REEF survey effort can build up pretty quickly. If you have taken a look at the most active REEF surveyors list lately, you know that dozens of our members have done over 100 surveys in their lifetime and that a pretty big handful of our members have conducted over 500 surveys! A few are even approaching 1,000 surveys. It is in honor of those contributing more than 1,000 surveys that REEF has created the Golden Hamlet Club. Congratulations to Linda, who is our first member of this prestigious club. Members of the Golden Hamlet Club will be awarded a specially designed plaque, as well as listed on a coordinating plaque at REEF Headquarters.

REEF is proud to award the first Golden Hamlet plaque to Linda Baker. Linda has been a member and active surveyor since 2000. She lives in Bonaire and works as a divemaster at the Carib Inn. Linda avidly conducts REEF surveys on most of her dives and teaches fish identification to many of her visitors. She is a member of REEF's Advanced Assessment Team and she has documented 301 species (all in Bonaire!) Linda's 1,000th survey was conducted on 12/20/2004 at Something Special in Bonaire. We extend a special thanks to Linda for her efforts and congratulate her on being the inaugural member of the Golden Hamlet Club.

You can see Linda's effort and other top surveyors at: <http://www.reef.org/stats.htm>

2. **2004 REEF Volunteer of the Year** - Jessie Armacost - REEF is very proud to award the 2004 Volunteer of the Year honor to Jessie Armacost. Jessie has been an active REEF member since 1999 and has completed over 500 surveys. Until recently, Jessie lived in Bonaire and was locally known as the REEF "ring-leader."

She is an enthusiastic supporter of REEF and has done an incredible amount of work to generate a consistent stream of high-quality data from Bonaire. She coordinated periodic fish identification training classes for the Bonaire Marine Park volunteer divers, as well as through many of the local dive shops. Through the years, Jessie's training introduced hundreds of local and visiting divers to the joy of fishwatching, and she enabled 7 local divers to progress up to REEF's Expert Level.

Jessie is a member of REEF's Advanced Assessment Team and she participated in, as well as helped coordinate, several of the REEF-Ocean Conservancy training workshops held throughout the Caribbean. She also served as a REEF representative during the annual Bonaire Dive Festival as well as the Great Annual Fish Count. The REEF staff and Board of Trustees extend a big thanks to Jessie and to the many other

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REEF's first member of the Golden Hamlet Club, Linda Baker of Bonaire, has just completed her 1,000 survey!



REEF's Volunteer of the Year - Jessie Armacost. Thanks to Jessie for all her hard work and dedication to REEF over the years!

volunteers who help REEF achieve success.

3. **The 14th Great Annual Fish Count** - REEF's signature yearly event - The Great Annual Fish Count (GAFC) - is coming this July! 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! Event organizers throughout REEF's survey regions are currently planning and registering their events with us.

Information on the event itself, including schedules by location, can be seen at [www.fishcount.org](http://www.fishcount.org) - the GAFC's official website. If you don't see anything scheduled where you like to dive, check back often, new events are being posted all the time. 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.

One thing to look for with this year's GAFC is the Fundraising Challenge. This is a great way to help raise money for REEF while having fun participating in the GAFC. We have a lot of prizes to give away to top fundraisers this year. Last year's GAFC prizes included a Peter Hughes Dive Trip, marine-related artwork, dive clothing, and a lot more! Information on the GAFC Fundraising Challenge can be found at:

[http://www.fishcount.org/about/gafc\\_fc.html](http://www.fishcount.org/about/gafc_fc.html)

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 worldwide. We hope to make the 2005 GAFC bigger and better than ever! We hope you get involved!

4. **REEF Field Surveys** - REEF's recent April Field Survey to Costa Rica was a great time and a real success. From April 2-9th, the group dove and surveyed at Playa Flamingo on the Pacific coast of Costa Rica in the Guanacaste region. Since this trip took place in part of REEF's Tropical Eastern Pacific (TEP) region, the organization's newest, the data collected will be critical to REEF's efforts in the area. Participants, all of whom are veteran surveyors from the Caribbean, had a great time learning new fish and experiencing eastern tropical Pacific diving.

REEF also took advantage of the trip to conduct the first two "REEF Regional Capacity Building Training Seminars" in the country. These events reached over 50 people and considerable progress was made in generating a locally active REEF program in the country. Contributing to this effort, Field Survey participants Ari Bobrow, Rick and Brenda Hitt, Michael Phelan, and Stephanie Terrien-Dias donated their starter kits to Mundo Arrecife, REEF's non-profit partner in the country, to assist them in acquiring the materials they need to carryout a successful program in the face of a limited budget. Additionally, Rick and Brenda Hitt kindly donated their *Reef Fish: Baja to Panama* book by Paul Humann and Ned DeLoach. These kind and generous donations will go a long way in assisting our local partners with their REEF efforts.

REEF Field Surveys offer you a great chance to take a volunteer vacation that counts - these events are always led by REEF staff or expert volunteers and are filled with



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



REEF's 2005 Costa Rica Field Survey group on the beach at Playa Flamingo.

diving, surveying; learning, and fun. Each year REEF has a full schedule of Field Surveys taking you to some of the finest diving locations in our survey regions. Here are a couple highlights from this year's schedule that still have spaces left - get involved!

**Sosua, Dominican Republic** • [Northern Coast Diving Center](#) and [Sosua By the Sea Hotel](#) • June 11-18, 2005 - 8 days/7 nights - \$755 (11 dives) - \$880 (16 dives), includes either 5 days of 3-tank dives or 5 days of 2-tank dives plus one additional day of 2-tank dive, lodging in a standard room, and r/t airport transfers.

**West Palm Beach, Florida** • [Jim Abernethy's Scuba Adventures](#) • July 7-11, 2005 - 5 days/4 nights - \$681, includes 3 days of 2-tank dives and ocean view accommodations at the Singer Island Hilton. \*REEF Fee is \$100 (Non-diver price - \$495)

**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.

For more information on these and other REEF 2005 Field Surveys please visit our [Field Survey webpage](#).



Costa Rican REEF volunteers from Mundo Arrecife participated in a training seminar in Ocotal. These enthusiastic individuals are working to start an ongoing and effective REEF program in Costa Rica.

- Field Station of the Month** - REEF's Field Station of the Month is "Scuba Dogs" of San Juan, Puerto Rico. The shop was founded in 2000 by Elsa and Alberto Marti. They are so named because they are a "Diver's Best Friend." They regularly run Scuba Camp for kids and they are the only operator on the island to do so, having certified over 300 youngsters to dive. They serve as the National Coordinator of the International Coastal Cleanup put on by the Ocean Conservancy in Puerto Rico. They also created an educational environmental campaign called the "Trash Fish," telling how different types of trash harm the marine life. This campaign is scheduled weekly in TV and the largest local newspaper. It won international advertising awards and it's currently being translated and developed by "Keep Texas Beautiful."



REEF's Field Station of the Month is [Scuba Dogs](#) of San Juan, Puerto Rico. Check them out the next time you plan to dive in the area!

Now, after 18 months of construction, Scuba Dogs is launching a top-notch training facility in Puerto Rico and one of the best in the Caribbean. Scuba Dogs is also the only dive center in the Blue Flag National Jury and is actively involved with the PR Tourism Company improving the scuba diving industry in the Island. They actively support REEF by their involvement in the Great Annual Fish Count and teaching Fish ID. Give them a visit the next time you dive Puerto Rico!

Visit their website at: <http://www.scubadogs.net>

- 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
May 7th	Seattle Aquarium, 1483 Alaskan Way, Seattle, WA	Seattle Aquarium / SeaDoc Society Pacific Northwest Fish & Invertebrate ID. Instructor: Janna Nichols. Free to the public. Classes will be held in the Large Classroom located upstairs near the administrative offices; use the big orange staircase to go up. May 7, 2005. 8 am to Noon: Pacific Northwest Fish Identification. Noon - 1 pm: Lunch break. A chance to stretch your legs and go out for lunch around the Seattle waterfront. 1 - 5 pm: Pacific Northwest Invertebrate Identification. To register, please send email to <a href="#">Lavonne Hull</a> and let us know if you will be attending both sessions, or the morning session or

afternoon session only.

May 14-21st

Little Cayman, Cayman  
Islands, British West  
Indies

Little Cayman Beach Resort - REEF week - get more out of your vacation conducting survey dives and learning about the ecosystem. Dive, Eat & Sleep package available for \$1495. Call Reef Fanta-Seas on 1 800 327 3835. More at: [www.littlecayman.com](http://www.littlecayman.com).

See You Next Month!

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

To learn more about REEF, visit [www.reef.org](http://www.reef.org)

