



# REEF-in-Brief

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

May 2006

1. **Welcome** - Hi Everyone. We hope this email finds you all well and getting lots of time in the water doing REEF surveys. There are a lot of exciting things happening here at REEF, as always, this time of year. It's usually the beginning of our "busy season" and this year looks to be no different. We'll be welcoming our new Executive Director, Leda Cunningham, in July (more on that below in #2), our [REEF Field Survey schedule](#) is in full swing, the [Great Annual Fish Count](#) is just around the corner, and a lot more.

You may have noticed a new format here with "REEF-in-Brief." we have decided to go with a shorter email version that easily leads you to a longer, complete version of the electronic publication. Just follow any of the links in the e-newsletter "blurbs" below and they will lead you to the full version on the REEF website. The links at right ("What's in this issue") take you to the appropriate link within the short version.

We hope you like it. Let us know what you think! Best "Fishes" - Bryan Dias, REEF Director of Outreach and Education

2. **REEF Welcomes New Executive Director in July** - In mid-July, Lad Akins will be handing over the reigns to Leda Cunningham as the new Executive Director at REEF. Lad, the REEF Board and staff are all very excited about the transition and look forward to new energies and enthusiasm with Leda at the helm.

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

**From Lad:** Dear REEF Members, After 16 years of bringing REEF to the forefront of marine conservation, I am finally handing over the reigns to spend more time with family. This is a decision I've thought about and been discussing with the REEF Board of Trustees for some time. We finally decided to move forward with this decision and have spent the past few months advertising and interviewing for a new Executive Director. There were many highly qualified applicants and the decisions were tough to make. In the end, we all felt that we made the best possible choice to move REEF forward in a progressive, consistent manner but with new energies and ideas.

In July, Leda Cunningham will take over the helm at REEF. I will still be working with REEF on special projects and helping out as needed, but Leda will take the lead in moving REEF forward and into a new era. Leda is an active diver, an experienced fishwatcher and a member of the Tropical Western Atlantic (TWA) Advanced Assessment Team, a great organizer and motivator. All of the Board and staff are very excited to be working with her on furthering REEF's programs and goals.

Best fishes always,  
Lad

**From Leda:** Hi Everyone - I am delighted to be (re) joining REEF in the position of Executive Director starting mid-July. Lad's are big shoes to fill so I'm pleased that he will be sticking around to facilitate a smooth transition. I'm looking forward to working with the Board again, as well as friends old and new on the REEF staff - we've got a great team.

It's been a few years since I left the REEF family, so I thought I'd catch you up. I've just completed a dual Masters program at American University in Washington DC. The MBA skill set combined with a foundation in environmental policy will be useful in managing REEF as an effective and meaningful organization within the environmental community. While in DC, because I just couldn't stay away from my diving roots, I served as the Dive Outreach Coordinator at the National Environmental Trust (NET) and organized the Congressional Staff Dive Club as a way to educate folks on Capitol Hill about marine conservation through diving.

I look forward to building bridges between REEF and our partners in the DC area and beyond. REEF has an important job to do and an exciting future ahead. There's no place I'd rather be right now. Looking forward to working with you - Leda Cunningham

3. **The 15th Great Annual Fish Count** - We are beginning to add events to the schedule all the time for this year's Great Annual Fish Count (GAFC.) If you don't see something near your location or where you intend to visit this summer, check back for updates - more will be added soon!

The survey dives and snorkels will take place throughout the month of July, but many local event organizers start scheduling Fish ID courses and other events for May and June. We are beginning to receive event details from our numerous and wonderful local volunteers, who make this event what it is every year! [Please visit the Great Annual Fish Count \(GAFC\) website](#) for events (more being added all the time) and everything else you need to know. If you don't see an event in your area, check back often for updates.

Better yet, become a local event organizer yourself! It's fun, easy, and you'd be making a great contribution to marine conservation. Follow the "About" link from the homepage for more details on how to do so including ideas for events, publicity tips, and complete rules for participation. We hope to see you out there!

<http://www.fishcount.org>



*Leda Cunningham (above), will be joining REEF as the new Executive Director in July. We look forward to having her new ideas and energy on-board.*



*REEF's 15th Great Annual Fish Count is coming soon. Get involved with the premier marine conservation citizen science event and see what the fun is all about! Visit the [GAFC website](#) for more information.*

4. **New Book Focuses on Things You Can Do to Save the Ocean** - This new book by David Helvarg, which mentions getting involved in REEF, addresses how we can both continue to enjoy and appreciate the ocean, yet also partake in actions that protect and conserve this vital resource.

**From the Publisher:** Personal, and sometimes whimsical, *50 Ways to Save the Ocean* addresses daily choices we can make to affect the health of our oceans:

- \* What fish we should and shouldn't eat; how and where we vacation;
- \* Maintaining storm drains and driveway run-off;
- \* Protecting our local water tables;
- \* Proper diving, surfing, and tide pool etiquette;
- \* And supporting local marine education.

Helvarg also looks at seemingly daunting issues and what we can do to stir the waters, including:

- \* Toxic pollutant runoff;
- \* Protecting wetlands and sanctuaries;
- \* Keeping oil rigs off our shores;
- \* Saving our reef environments;
- \* And replenishing fish reserves.

**From REEF:** This is a really nice, straightforward and practical guide to things you can do - big and small - to help save our oceans. Of course, we especially like it because one of the things David mentions is getting involved with REEF. We wholeheartedly agree!

5. **REEF Field Survey to Barkley Sound - Hurry! Deadline May 30th** - A special REEF Field Survey is planned to Barkley Sound this Fall. The dates are October 3-7 (deadline to sign up is May 30th - some spots still available!) and we will be based from Rendezvous Dive Adventures and Lodge (<http://www.rendezvousdiving.com/>). REEF Field Surveys are a great way to learn more about all those critters you are seeing on your dives, as well as to dive with a group of like-minded individuals. Both beginning and experienced REEF surveyors will enjoy themselves. Seminars on both fish and invertebrate ID will be offered.

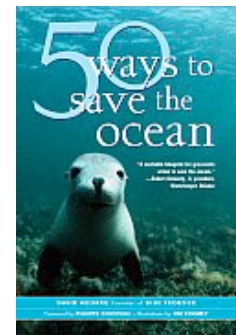
An expert in the Pacific Northwest critter ID will lead the group, and present daily identification seminars. Barkley Sound is known for its incredible Pacific Northwest diving, as well as its incredible topside scenery. Rendezvous' full diving lodge is located in Rainy Bay at the mouth of Alberni Inlet. There are no roads in this area, and we will be taking a boat to the lodge from Pt. Alberni.

The package price is \$825 per person based on double occupancy (non-divers are also welcome, \$650pp). The package includes 4 nights accommodation at the lodge (Tues-Fri), all meals from breakfast on Wednesday to lunch on Saturday, 4 days of 2-tank (minimum) dives, use of kayaks, and r/t boat transfers from Pt. Alberni. Participants also pay a \$100 REEF fee (tax-deductible) to cover the cost of the teaching and survey materials.

We have space for 7 divers and the deadline to sign up is May 30. So if you are interested, please contact Sabah at Dive Reservations (REEF's dive travel partner) to reserve your space today -- [reef@diveres.com](mailto:reef@diveres.com) or 888-363-3345. The full trip flyer is posted at:

<http://www.reef.org/fieldsurv/2006/Barkley06.pdf>, and includes complete trip details.

6. **REEF Events** - Here are a couple great things to get involved that are coming soon:



*50 Ways to Save The Ocean, by David Helvarg (above), is available online from numerous sources and gives you practical information on things you can do to make a direct contribution towards helping our oceans.*



*Rendezvous Dive Adventures and Lodge (above) will host the Barkley Sound Field Survey this October - it's a great way to get involved with REEF and meet some great people!*

- **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](http://www.ceakumal.org) or contact Lucy Gallagher at [marine@ceakumal.org](mailto:marine@ceakumal.org) for a volunteer pack.
- **The 15th Great Annual Fish Count is coming this summer!** Events are being added regularly. Check the GAFC website ([www.fishcount.org](http://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>

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

