A dozen divers spread across the site, slates in hand, pointing at fish and flashing animal hand signals: horse-eye jacks, yellowhead jawfish, spotted eagle rays, colorful chromis. Scanning the reef for new species and recording them, volunteers document new species and track the spread of exotic (non-native) species. REEF provides free access to its database, which helps scientists, policymakers, and the public better understand and preserve oceans.

Specific successes include evaluating populations of rockfish in the Pacific Northwest and goliath groupers in Florida to ensure sustainable fisheries for these keystone species; monitoring and protecting one of the Caribbean’s largest and last-known spawning aggregations of Nassau grouper in Little Cayman; and documenting occurrences of non-native fish, including invasive lionfish.

Many divers take up fish-watching because they are curious about nature and want to actively conserve oceans. Others survey because it makes diving more interesting. Learning the names, behaviors and characteristics of underwater creatures enhances the diving experience. When surveying, every dive feels like a treasure hunt — making even the most mundane dive unforgettable.

If you know just one fish, you can start surveying. Grab a slate and a waterproof species checklist at reef.org/store. Go diving, and remember to keep an eye out for camouflage critters and speedy swimmers. Record only what you can positively identify; leave out the rest, and submit the data online. Learn new species by reading a marine life guidebook or attending a “Fishinar” — REEF’s free online Fishinar, or take an ID class at your local dive shop.

自来水族和摄影师，包括Ned和Anna DeLoach，是reef.org的创始人和先驱。REEF的志愿者调查项目和Scuba Diving杂志的每月Cutter Hunt专栏成员。

在这些专栏上，你可以阅读Ned和Anna的关于识别海洋生物的指南。2014年，加入他们并学习如何真正识别珊瑚礁。“Fishininers”——REEF的免费在线研讨会。

Volunteer data collection yields valuable information on fish populations, including Nassau grouper (below).

A growing list of conservation organizations uses REEF data to assess the volume of data enables researchers and marine-resource managers to detect changes in ecosystems and implement conservation measures.

REEF data have been used to assess biodiversity, monitor changes in fish populations and evaluate the effectiveness of marine-protected areas and artificial reefs. Surveyors document new species and track the spread of exotic (non-native) species. REEF provides free access to its database, which helps scientists, policymakers, and the public better understand and preserve oceans.

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The key to becoming a successful “fishininer” is to practice. REEF leads Field Survey Trips throughout the world each year to increase divers’ identification competence and confidence. These trips are led by some of the world’s best underwater naturalists and photographers, including Ned and Anna DeLoach, founders and pioneers of REEF’s Volunteer Survey Project and Scuba Diving magazine’s monthly Cutter Hunt columnists.

In this issue, you can read about Ned and Anna’s passion for identifying marine life in the Cutter Hunt featuring microscopic bumblebee shrimp on page 28. The DeLoaches are leading a REEF Field Survey Trip to Dominica in February 2014. Join them and learn to really “see” underwater. You might even find a bumblebee shrimp or two.

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