



# VOLUNTEER FISH SURVEY PROJECT TIMELINE



1990

## BEGINNINGS OF REEF

With support from The Nature Conservancy and NOAA Fisheries, REEF began work on a fish survey protocol

1993

## FIRST REEF SURVEYS

REEF's initial surveys were conducted in Key Largo, FL

1994

## SCANFORMS DEVELOPED

Originally, divers wrote down each fish on a slate and submitted surveys using paper forms

1996

## FIRST SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATION

The first scientific paper to use REEF data was published in the Bulletin of Marine Science

1997

## WEST COAST EXPANSION

The project expanded from the Tropical Western Atlantic to the west coast of the US and Canada

2000

## MORE SURVEY REGIONS

New regions included Tropical Eastern Pacific, Northeast US and Canada, and Hawaiian Islands

2005

## ONLINE DATA ENTRY

Efficient and cost-effective, the online system allowed volunteers to submit data through REEF's website

2010

## SOUTH PACIFIC SURVEYS

Surveying expanded to the species-rich waters of the tropical Pacific, including Fiji and French Polynesia

2013

## OFFLINE DATA ENTRY

The offline data entry tool allowed volunteers to enter surveys without an internet connection

2018

## WORLDWIDE SURVEYING

With the addition of the Central Indo-Pacific, Eastern Atlantic & Mediterranean, and Indian Ocean & Red Sea regions, the VFSP became a global program

2020

## A QUARTER-MILLION SURVEYS

Thanks to the dedication of more than 16,000 citizen scientists, REEF's database reached 250,000 surveys

2021

## SPECIES CONSERVATION STATUS

REEF data were used by a coalition of scientists to document a 90% decline in Sunflower Sea Star populations, now listed as Critically Endangered by the IUCN

2023

## 30 YEARS OF CITIZEN SCIENCE

The VFSP represents three decades of impactful marine life data, providing valuable insight into the health of the oceans

