Guam’s reefs are a special attraction for marine tourism. However, the relationship between tourism and coral reefs must be managed to ensure the sustainability of these benefits into the future.

Guam welcomed a record number of tourists in 2017 with over 1.5 million visitors. Despite these numbers, the tourism industry continues to face its own set of challenges. Meanwhile, Guam’s coral reefs also face tremendous stressors. Coral bleaching damaged reefs in 2013, 2014, 2016, and 2017. In addition, local stressors such as sedimentation, pollution, harmful fishing practices, and nuisance species also threaten reef health.

The goal of the Guam Visitors Bureau (GVB) is to reach two million visitors per year by 2020, according to the GVB 2020 Strategic Plan. Collaboration between natural resource managers and tourism industry leadership is vital to help preserve the critical feedback loop between Guam’s coral reefs and tourism: Reefs support tourism — and tourism impacts reefs — so we must manage tourism to protect reefs and thus sustain the future of Guam’s tourism industry.

If you would like to contribute content or photos to the newsletter, please contact us: GuamYOR2018@gmail.com

Don’t forget to check out our website at www.guamcoralreefs.com and like us on Facebook at @GuamYearoftheReef2018.

The Bureau of Statistics and Plans will be hosting a “Safe and Sustainable Tourism” course at the Pacific Hotel and Restaurant Expo May 9-11, 2018. The two-hour course is targeted towards hotel staff from different departments and all levels of leadership to promote reef-safe tourism practices. GYOR will also have a table at the event. Training for marine tour operators is also planned for 2019 and will be similar to the internationally-recognized “Green Fins” model. Green Fins is an initiative of the United Nations that encourages sustainable diving and snorkeling practices. The voluntary program provides participating businesses with technical support to assess sustainability of operations, as seen in the above “Code of Conduct”.

The Green Fins “Code of Conduct” consists of 15 best management practices to promote a sustainable diving and snorkeling industry. [Source: Reef World]
A student from Guam Community College wrote a letter to the Editor of the Guam Daily Post calling for education of tourists on marine preserve regulations and general practices to protect the island’s natural beauty.


Department of Agriculture’s Brent Tibbatts was featured in the Guam Daily Post to warn the public of increased jellyfish sightings.

Guam Nature Alliance’s Kids Freshwater Derby was covered in the Guam Daily Post.

Lieutenant Governor Ray Tenorio proclaimed Guam Soil & Water Stewardship Week on Wednesday, April 25.

Guam Visitor’s Bureau is promoting GYOR on events webpage.

Si Yu’os Ma’åse’! If you would like to unsubscribe, please let us know at GuamYOR2018@gmail.com.

April Highlights

The Eyes of the Reef Marianas training session had a great turn out on April 26. Participants learned to identify and report reef impacts. Of the 34 attendees, 65% were Outrigger staff. Thanks for the support, Outrigger!

Community members participated with GYOR partners in the April 14 Merizo Pier clean-up. Participants also sorted recyclables and went snorkeling.

April’s Science Sunday featured Brent Tibbatts sharing fun facts and stories about whales in Marianas.

In the News

- A student from Guam Community College wrote a letter to the Editor of the Guam Daily Post calling for education of tourists on marine preserve regulations and general practices to protect the island’s natural beauty.
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May Events

- MDA Dive Shop Diver’s Night (5/1)
- 30th Annual Guam-Micronesia Island Fair (5/2-6)
- Keep Guam Beautiful Beach Clean-up at Ritidian (5/5)
- PHARE - Pacific Hotel and Restaurant Expo (5/9-11)
- Ridge to Reef Adventure: Malesso (5/12)
- Science Sunday: Jessica Gross on mangroves (5/20)

For event details visit: guamcoralreefs.com/calendar

Next month’s GYOR theme: Restoring reefs and watersheds