

# MAY 2018

## Håfa Adai!

"TOURISM DEPENDS ON REEFS"

This edition of the GYOR newsletter covers the relationship between tourism and coral reefs.

Tourism is Guam's #1 industry, generating \$1.4 billion for the economy annually and creating 18,000 jobs. Coral reefs generate nearly 25% of this, contributing over \$322 million dollars per year. With visitor numbers continuing to grow, managing impacts from recreational use and tourism is needed now more than ever.

Guam's natural resource managers are looking for partners to help us protect our reefs and tourism economy. Please contact us if you are in the marine tourism or hotel industry and would like to get involved.

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

Don't forget to check out our website at [www.guamcoralreefs.com](http://www.guamcoralreefs.com) and like us on Facebook at [@GuamYearoftheReef2018](https://www.facebook.com/GuamYearoftheReef2018).

### #GYOR2018



# GUAM YEAR OF THE REEF 2018 NEWSLETTER

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.

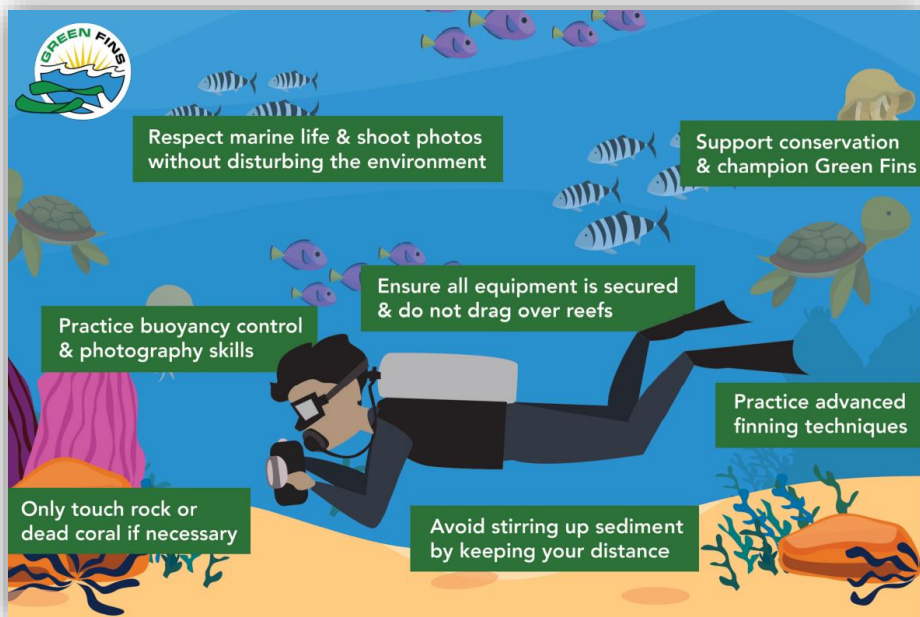


The Green Fins "Code of Conduct" consists of 15 best management practices to promote a sustainable diving and snorkeling industry. [Source: Reef World]

- No stepping on coral
- No stirring the sediment
- No touching or chasing marine life
- No gloves
- No feeding fish
- No littering
- No spearfishing
- Do not support shark finning
- Don't buy souvenirs of coral and marine life
- Do not collect dead or alive marine life
- Do not anchor on coral reefs
- Use mooring buoys
- Wear a life jacket when snorkelling
- Report environmental violations
- Join in conservation projects

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".



Creative marketing and outreach materials such as the poster to the left are provided to participants to communicate reef safe practices to guests. The materials come in many languages and rely on infographics to catch the reader's attention. Materials can be retrofitted to be waterproof, so as to remind tourists immediately before entering the water. For example, studies by UOG student Ashton Williams have shown pre-dive briefings significantly reduce diver contact with the reef. We are investigating whether the Green Fins approach could work on Guam. Contact Mallory Morgan at BSP for more information.

## 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!



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

The Friends of Reefs Guam coral reef monitoring team gained 15 new members after the April 7 training, held at Tepungan Beach Park. Over 1200 community members have completed this training.



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



## 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.
- [Guam Daily Post](#) and [Pacific Daily News](#) put out the Guam Coral Reef Response Team's call for community members to report crown-of-thorns sea star sightings.
- 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](#).

## May Events

- MDA Dive Shop Diver's Night (5/11)
- 30<sup>th</sup> 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: Malessa (5/12)
- Science Sunday: Jessica Gross on mangroves (5/20)

For event details visit: [guamcoralreefs.com/calendar](http://guamcoralreefs.com/calendar)

## Next month's GYOR theme: Restoring reefs and watersheds