

International Year of the Reef 2008

TOP 5 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR ACTIONS COUNT

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International Year of the Reef (IYOR) 2008 call to action: Help protect reefs from destruction. Divers can take part in the year-long campaign to raise awareness about coral reefs and the threats facing these vibrant and essential ecosystems.

Now is the time to take action. For the

first time in history the IUCN (World Conservation Union) Red List of Threatened Species includes corals in its annual report of wildlife going extinct — with climate change being named one of the biggest threats to marine life by IUCN scientists. Additional research indicates more than half the world's coral reefs

could die in the next 25 years. And healthy reefs are tremendously valuable to ecosystems, human health and global economies.

Project AWARE Foundation calls on divers around the world to focus their conservation efforts on IYOR events in 2008.

TOP 5 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR ACTIONS COUNT FOR IYOR 2008

1. MONITOR CORAL REEFS Find a registered Project AWARE CoralWatch Operator and volunteer for coral reef monitoring. The information you collect will be used to answer important scientific questions about coral reef bleaching and recovery. There are more than 500 — and counting — established CoralWatch locations around the world.

2. VOLUNTEER FOR A REEF CLEANUP Find a reef cleanup in your area or volunteer for one during your next dive vacation. Use your underwater skills and be part of the effort to remove harmful debris from reef environments. Project AWARE is the official underwater coordinator during annual International Cleanup Day events and year-round. Shoreline and underwater cleanups are organized in more than 100 countries and territories of the world.

3. BE AN AWARE DIVER Always dive carefully in fragile ecosystems: Control your buoyancy; be aware of equipment placement; and monitor your body positioning to avoid any contact with reefs. For more tips, see Project AWARE's 10 Ways a Diver Can Protect the Underwater Environment and 10 Tips for Underwater Photographers.

4. REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT Find simple ways to go green such as switching to compact fluorescent light bulbs, turning off electronics when not in use, and turning down central heating or turning up central AC by just one or two degrees.

5. TELL AT LEAST THREE PEOPLE HOW REEFS ENRICH OUR LIVES Don't be shy. Just describe what reefs mean to you. Do they provide a world of recreation and adventure, support your annual income, supply food for your table? Let others know why reefs deserve our protection.

Visit projectaware.org for these and other ways to take action and stay tuned to iyor.org for the latest updates on IYOR 2008 events and coral reef conservation topics. ▀

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