

Marine Conservation

Marine Reserve and No Take Zone

Coral reefs are colonies of delicate, slow growing, living creatures, which are very easily damaged. Hard corals especially can take decades to grow and any damage can take decades to heal. With all the other pressures that coral reefs are facing in this modern age from coastal development, sea level rise, ocean acidification, pollution, coral bleaching and shipping industries, we want to do everything we can to give our small marine reserve the chance to go from strength to strength. We have an established boat channel and mandatory mooring buoy programme to minimise negative impacts on the reef and prevent anchor damage.



At Treasure we do our very best to protect our reef from impacts, and kindly request your support in observing our guidelines:

- Please **DO NOT STAND on the CORALS**
- If you need to stand please find a sandy place to put down your feet
- Please do not break off any coral branches (even if you think it may already be dead)
- Be cautious about what you touch or pick up, a shell that may look uninhabited may have a new tenant
- Take your litter with you, we have plenty of bins around the island, otherwise any litter left on the beach can easily find its way into the sea
- If you see any exciting larger marine species, such as turtles or dolphins, please do not chase them or attempt to touch them. Your actions could scare or alarm them, these creatures are capable of accidentally causing you harm if they feel threatened. Please stay back and enjoy the view, otherwise they may not come back again.

Thank you in advance for your respect towards our marine reserve status, and if these guidelines are too hard to remember then just think of our island motto:

‘Take only memories, leave only footprints’

Crown of Thorns Starfish (COTS) Project

COTS is an invasive starfish that feeds primarily on stony corals and can consume up to ten square metres every year. A COTS eradication project can take a number of years to have an impact upon a COTS population and removal trips need to be done on a regular basis for best results. Once the COTS population is under control, it can take many more years for a badly damaged reef to recover. Our COTS eradication project has been running now since 2007 and we are seeing a definite reduction in the number of COTS found on our coral reefs around the island. COTS eradication is conducted a minimum of twice a month, or more if necessary. This is a long term ongoing strategy in order to yield successful results. We encourage you to report sightings of COTS on our house reef, but ask you to please take care not to touch them!



Coral Gardening Project and Artificial Reef Development

December 2015 saw the reinstatement of the coral planting programme. The long term strategy is to transplant young corals onto artificial reef points situated around the island with the aim of increasing resilience against unavoidable natural events such as cyclones and coral bleaching. The first artificial reef structures will be implemented late 2016 and early 2017. Harvesting of coral fragments is done according to global best practice to ensure minimal negative impact on donor colonies and maximise survival rates of the corals. We identify suitable colonies of Acropora and Pocillopora species, recognised as fast growing corals with resilience to coral bleaching. You can see the coral growing racks as you snorkel around the island!

