

Press Release from Reef Renewal Foundation Bonaire

June 3, 2024

ReeFiesta 2024: Creating Community & Restoring Hope for Bonaire's Reefs**SUMMARY**

- Reef Renewal Foundation Bonaire (RRFB) hosted its 6th annual ReeFiesta event on Saturday June 1st to celebrate World Reef Awareness Day, in collaboration with 13 dive shops and 5 local sponsors.
- Over 120 divers and snorkelers had their first experience practicing hands-on coral restoration at 10 different coral nursery sites around Bonaire, guided by the RRFB team and trained dive shop instructors.
- More than 200 participants, volunteers, sponsors, and long-time supporters came together for a lively reception at Chibi Chibi Restaurant in the evening, for a gift raffle and speeches from keynote speakers.

(Bonaire, Dutch Caribbean) On Saturday June 1st, over 120 community members had their first ever hands-on coral restoration experience and celebrated World Reef Awareness Day. RRFB's annual ReeFiesta event strives to involve more of Bonaire's community in coral restoration and spread awareness about the importance of healthy coral reefs.

On Saturday morning, RRFB staff and trained instructors at 13 dive shops led a training session for ReeFiesta participants before heading to 10 nursery sites around the island. Divers practiced removing algae from nursery structures and had the chance to add new coral fragments to each nursery. Snorkelers learned about various restoration techniques on a tour of nursery and outplanting sites.

In the evening, over 200 participants, RRFB staff, dive shop instructors, sponsors, and volunteers came together for a lively reception at Divi Flamingo Resort's Chibi Chibi Restaurant. The night began with speeches from President of RRFB's Board of Directors David Fishman, Managing Director Francesca Viridis, Ecology Advisor for STINAPA Bonaire Caren Ekrich, and sponsor Orco Bank's Country Manager Judy Diaz.

The group competed in a coral restoration trivia session and gift raffle, with all proceeds donated to RRFB. Thanks to dozens of prizes generously contributed by local dive operators and sponsors, including scuba courses, dive gear, and merchandise, the raffle was a fundraising success.

This event was hosted by RRFB in collaboration with AB-Dive, Beyond the Corals, Buddy Dive Resort, Divi Dive, Harbor Village Resort, Scuba Elite, Technical Diving Services, Toucan Diving, Tropical Divers, VIP Diving, Wannadive, Xprodivers, and 4Wheel Diving. It was kindly made possible by official sponsors Orco Bank Bonaire, Rocargo, Hooked by Sunsets RestroBar, Tourism Corporation Bonaire, and Brandaris BV.

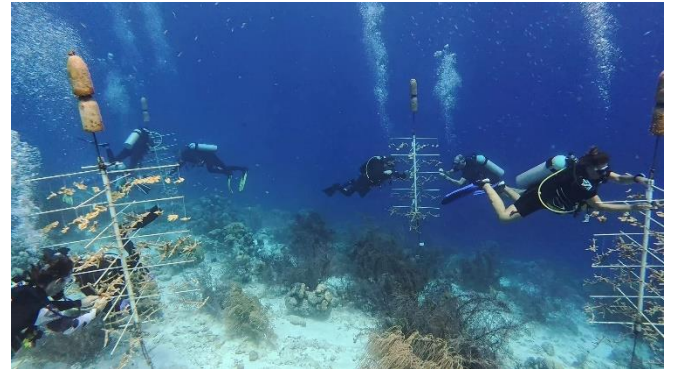
ReeFiesta underscores the collective power of individuals and organizations working together to safeguard Bonaire's reefs. RRFB extends its heartfelt gratitude to all participants, whose support and passion is vital to the future health and resilience of Bonaire's marine ecosystem.

PHOTOS

Please contact caitie@reefrenwalbonaire.org to request high-resolution versions of all images.



ReeFiesta divers and snorkelers listen to an educational presentation before getting in the water to practice coral restoration techniques. Credit: David Fishman



ReeFiesta divers practice algae control and coral tying at Something Special, one of 10 coral nurseries visited on Saturday morning. Credit: AB Dive



Dive shop instructors train ReeFiesta divers on proper nursery maintenance techniques before heading into the water. Credit: AB Dive



ReeFiesta divers and snorkelers pose for a group photo before getting into the water. Credit: David Fishman



The RRFB team poses for a photo in the ReeFiesta photo frame. Credit: David Fishman



RRFB Board President David Fishman is introduced by RRFB Communication & Development Officer Caitie Reza. Credit: David Fishman



RRFB Managing Director Francesca Virdis speaks to ReefFiesta participants, volunteers, and long-time supporters at the ReefFiesta celebration on Saturday evening.



ReefFiesta snorkelers begin a tour of RRFB's nursery and restoration sites at Buddy's Reef. Credit: David Fishman

About RRFB

Reef Renewal Foundation Bonaire is a non-profit organization focused on the protection and restoration of Bonaire's biodiverse coral reefs. In collaboration with research partners and regional practitioners, RRFB implements innovative, science-based programs that expand and strengthen key populations of coral in Bonaire. Today, with the help of 14 partner dive operators around the island and a dedicated team of volunteers, Reef Renewal Foundation Bonaire has outplanted over 60,000 corals back to the reef.

To learn how to get involved or lend support, please visit www.reefrenewalbonaire.org or email info@reefrenewalbonaire.org.

