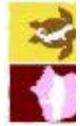




## Friends of the Environment Abaco, Bahamas



### Artificial Reef Balls Installed Adjacent to Mermaids Reef

Home

A Reef Ball is a designed artificial reef used to restore ailing coral reefs and to create new fishing and scuba diving sites. Reef Balls are used for beach protection, freshwater, mitigation and many other uses too.

About Us

They are used around the world to create habitats for fish and other marine and freshwater species. Over 500,000 Reef Balls have been deployed in over 3,400 projects worldwide. Reef Balls are made in many sizes to best match the natural reef type which is being mimicked.

Calendar

Artificial reef balls create essential fish, invertebrate and marine plant habitats. In most cases, the evidence indicates that Reef Balls can easily reach the 80% or more of the natural species diversity and population densities of nearby natural reef systems within just a few years, however achieving the ultimate goal of 100% may take five or more years and will nearly always require special treatments to match local conditions.

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In Early 2006, Friends of the Environment approached the Reef Ball Foundation for their assistance in purchasing the molds designed by the Reef Ball Foundation for use in the Abacos to fulfill 2 very important goals. The Reef Ball Foundation along with the Lyford Cay Foundation made it possible for FRIENDS to purchase 2 small molds to create artificial reefs in the Abacos.

FRIENDS wanted to address two (2) very important needs  
with these reef balls:

First

The expansion of Mermaid Reef, located just off Marsh Harbour.

Mermaid Reef is a small set of coral heads that are heavily visited by tourists and locals. This reef is extremely important for education on Great Abaco - it's the only place where most students, especially low income students, get an opportunity to dive and actually see fish other than school masters, grunts and barracudas.

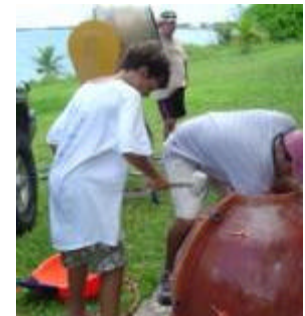
Second

The need for Bahamian students to have had more scientific experiences in the marine environment that surrounds them. At a basic level many Bahamian students have never spent time in the water or on reefs, and do not understand why their preservation and protection is important. Also, it is important to build a cadre of Bahamian students who are interested in science, who can make a career out of it and return to the Bahamas to help study, understand and preserve the Bahamian environment.

The molds for FRIENDS arrived in late summer of 2006 and the first 4 reef balls were made and launched and placed on Mermaid's Reef in September, 2006. The Reef Ball Foundation helped with this initial construction process - educating Friends of the Environment and interested volunteers about the processes from beginning to placement on the reef.



Since this initial launch, FRIENDS has been working with students from area schools to make more artificial reef balls. The hope is to construct in excess of 100 artificial reef balls and to place them at Mermaid's Reef to create a snorkeling trail to explore the wonders of the sea.



Reef Balls are constructed out of fiberglass mold made by the Reef Ball Foundation. A marine buoy bladder is placed in the middle of the fiberglass mold to create a void as well as several floats to create the voids around the outside of the ball. In addition to creating the void areas, these floats also allow for floatation for transport to the site for installation. There are also coral adaptors added to the reef balls, there is something for the coral to attach them to.



Once all this complete, these m are then filled with a special co mixture that is designed to last in salt water, have a similar PH balance to salt water and not le; and contaminate the waters aro reef.

Once the concrete has cured for 24 hours, the fiberglass mold is removed and you have completed the construction of your reef ball. The buoys are left in the artificial reef ball for buoyancy to the reef at which time they are removed.



The concentrated weight of the artificial reef ball is at the base. This makes them very secure during hurricanes and storms. No further tie downs are required.



FRIENDS has successfully transplanted several species of coral to their newly installed reef balls. This is very exciting and will be a real educational tool for students, tourist scientists and The Reef Ball Foundation who will monitor our reef ball progress. in the next 4 - 5 years, these new reef balls will be covered by new coral growth, if mother nature does her part.





This proposed snorkeling trail created by the artificial reef will help alleviate some of the pressure from snorkelers on the natural reef as well as allow for more preservation of the species on the natural reef through transplanting and maintenance for growth. The reef at Mermaid's Reef is very healthy but increased tourism and fishing could impact the area. The expansion will ensure that the habitat will survive and v prosper and grow.

[Keep informed about the Reef Balls Installed Adjacent To Mermaids Reef](#)

We hope you will visit Mermaid's Reef and when you travel to Abaco and see for your self the progress that is being made for years to come. If you would like to be a part of this project, please contact FRIENDS.



[Learn More about The Reef Ball Foundation](#)

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