

Now on Seedmagazine.com: [China Sweats in Warmest Temperatures on Record](#)



[Subscribe to Seed](#) [Gift Subscriptions](#)

INSTANT UPDATES: [RSS](#)

[Front Page](#) [News](#) [Focus](#) [Video](#) [Podcasts](#) [Magazine](#) [Subscribe](#)

ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

ECO-TRIPPING AROUND THE WC PART III

Our traveller uncovers an effort to rebuild a shallow water ecosystem in the Dutch /

by [MARIJKE WILHELMUS](#) • Posted August 1, 2006 12:35 AM

Marijke Wilhelmus is a freelance web designer whose love of marine life spurred her to go around the world to discover examples of sustainable living and preservation projects in and below the surface of the ocean. Seed asked Marijke to document her travels by sending dispatches chronicling the different characters she meets and the innovative and practical witnesses.

(Click on a thumbnail below to view a larger picture)



[Look Inside](#) • [Subscribe](#)

[Eco-Tripping Around the World: Part V](#)

[Eco-Tripping Around the World: Part IV](#)

[Eco-Tripping Around the World: Part II](#)

[Eco-Tripping Around the World: Part I](#)

By Category:

By Author:

By Date:



Bari Reef, [Bonaire](#), Dutch Antilles

I've done over 400 dives all over the world, including Hawaii, the outer islands of Fiji, the C Scotland, but I have never seen so many different types of fish or been able to observe their as closely as on Bari Reef.

My senses were overwhelmed when I reached the reef—just 100 meters away from shore—and diversity of the fish, which didn't swim away as I approached. Soon, I found myself sur large school of shimmering, silver-sided baitfish, moving in unison. I noticed spotted cleane anemones, several spotted scorpion fish and peacock flounders, which are masters of camou observed lots of juvenile aquatic life like the French angelfish, several species of butterfly f octopus.

After all that, I was not surprised to hear that Bari Reef is the number one dive site for species diversity in the entire Atlantic Ocean. However, the 20-meter path the reef back to shore has the appearance of a desert.

It was not always like that.

The storm surge from Hurricane Lenny in 1999 completely plundered the shallow terraces, damaging the shallow water species, including hard corals like elkhorn and staghorn coral. On top of that, so much sand was deposited from Klein Bonaire, the small island about 2 kilometers away, that the corals were smothered and could not recover.

To help speed up the regeneration of this coral—a process that, if left to nature, would easily span a human lifetime—in January 2006 the Sand Dollar Resort placed 12 600lb. reef balls in the shallow waters between Bari Reef and the

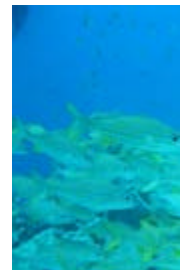


A schoolmaster lurks within a reef ball.

shore as part of a pilot project with the Bonaire Marine Park. The goals are to encourage fish return to the habitat.

The 3-foot high structures, which resemble upside down tea cups, are made of a special mix with lower acidity levels than normal cement, thereby stimulating early marine assimilation. The concrete has been mixed with dead milled coral, which encourages the adhesion of new coral. Each reef ball also has about eight to 13 holes on its surface so that fish can swim through it or lo

Jerry Ligon, staff naturalist at Bonaire Dive & Adventure, monitors the reef balls about six times per month. He does not expect coral to settle on the reef balls until they have aged more. Another limiting factor is that coral only reproduce after the full moon in the three summer-to-autumn months of August, September and October. Ligon explained that, before the young polyps can settle on any substrate, a particular type of algae must be present so they can begin their differentiation into a multi-cellular organism, which will then become a proper coral head.



A school of smallmouth

I visited Bari Reef about three months after the balls were placed. It appears a lot of marine life has begun to inhabit them.

< PREVIOUS

Page 1 of 2

Send this article to: [Del.icio.us](#) [Spurl](#) [Ma.gnolia](#) [Digg](#) [Reddit](#) [Newsvine](#) [A Friend](#)



[About seedmagazine.com](#) • [Advertise with Seed](#) • [Contact Us](#) • [Privacy Policy](#) • [Terms & Conditions](#)

© Copyright 2005-2007 [Seed Media Group, LLC](#). All Rights Reserved.