



The Reef Balls Are Here!

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Sand Dollar Bonaire Lends A Helping Hand with Coral Reef Expansion



Sand Dollar Condominium owners, hotel staff, dive staff and marine enthusiasts on the island of Bonaire have joined forces to institute a pilot program dedicated to the production of artificial reefs.

Although Bonaire lays claim to one of the most healthy fringing reef systems in the Caribbean, it lost some of the hard coral formations that thrived along its shallow terraces in a storm surge six years ago. To help speed up the regeneration of this coral, a process that if left to nature would easily span a human lifetime, Sand Dollar is now building and will shortly place a total of twenty, 600 lb. Reef Balls as part of a pilot project with the Bonaire Marine Park. Most of the reef balls will be placed immediately in front of Sa adjacent to Bari Reef.

The three-foot high structures, which resemble upside down tea cups, are made of a special concrete mixture whose Ph levels are closer to that of the ocean, thereby stimulating early marine assimilation and growth. These reef balls contain series of eight to thirteen holes that make them especially attractive to Bonaire's diverse marine life. The surface of the Reef Balls have also been designed and



prepared to encourage the adhesion of new coral polyps. Sand Dollar expects to place these reef balls directly in front of the resort in 10 feet of water in late January or early February.



This artificial reef project will probably rank among such significant and positive interventions by humans on Bonaire's marine life as the sinking of the Hilma Hooker, the Sponge Reattachment Project of 1989, carried out on the pilings under the Town Pier - management practices that have preserved the parrotfish.

Private citizens are sponsoring individual reef balls for \$300 and will be identified on a plaque mounted in the Sand Dollar lobby. Every reef ball will be identified with a number stamped on a brass tag affixed to each ball. As part of the project, both snorkelers and divers will be able to log the different marine species they find on each ball in logs books kept at the dive shop.

The Reef Ball project is being executed with the full support of the Bonaire Marine Park. Jorgen Weterings, a Sand Dollar condo owner and head of the project stated, "the pilot project will be monitored for two years with assistance from local naturalists Dee Scarr (Touch the Sea) and Jerry Ligon (Bonaire Dive & Adventure). Everyone who has heard



about this project has been willing to sponsor a reef ball. The maintenance at Sand Dollar who are helping to build the reef balls have really embraced the project and the owners make a positive contribution to the marine

Bonaire may be best known for the diving, this project will directly benefit snorkelers because of the shallow placement of the reef balls. If this project

goes well, Weterings hopes to see a bigger second project in the future.

Supporters who are interested in aiding the project can buy a reef ball t-shirt at the Sand Dollar office or sponsor a reef ball by contacting Weterings at jweterings@ checking this page for details. You can learn more about reef balls at www.reefball.org. General information and reservations: 1-800-288-4773.



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Sand Dollar Condominium Resort

Reservations: 1-800-288-4773 or reservations@sanddollarbonaire.com

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