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29 NOVEMBER 2005

Malaysia: 200 reef balls 'planted' to restore corals

About 200 reef balls weighing a total of 540 tonnes were planted at the Mid Reef area off Manukan Island, near here, to restore coral reefs wrecked by the Greg Storm about eight years ago, Thursday.

Officiating at the ceremony were Assistant Tourism, Culture and Environment Minister, Datuk Karim Bujang, and Sabah Parks Director, Datuk Lamri Ali.

The reef ball, which is a designed artificial reef, is also useful in protecting coral reefs from trawlers.

The reef balls are made of special marine-friendly concrete and are designed to mimic natural reef systems, with Sarawak being the first place in Asia to use it.

Containing no toxins and any biologically active compounds that can leach into seawater, it remains stable on the seabed even during cyclones and predicted to last at least 500 years.

As for Sabah Parks, it is the first time that reef balls were used towards the conservation of marine lives in Tunku Abdul Rahman Parks and Karim said the next area identified was Selingan Island, Sandakan under the Ninth Malaysia Plan.

The reef balls that cost Sabah Parks about RM398,000 are sourced from Dasanrama Enterprise.

Contributors

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In this respect, he urged corporate bodies and tourism players to contribute by sponsoring the reef ball project in the future.

Among them, he said, was the Turtle Island to protect sea turtles and control beach erosion.

In the meantime, he advised the fishermen and trawlers to stay away from the park's waters to avoid their nets from getting stuck on the reef balls.

At the same time, he hoped Sabah Parks would monitor the reef balls so that it would not be damaged by fish-bombing.

"It would be a waste of money if it is bombed and we have to replace it again and again," he said.

Source: www.dailyexpress.com.my

posted by Melt du Plooy @ 11/29/2005

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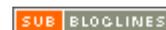
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