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Le Méridien Al Aqah Beach Resort

New Reef Makes More Room for Marine Life

ENVIRONMENT

New reef makes more room for marine life

FUJAIRAH **Aimee Greaves**

Marine life off the east coast has been given a new home thanks to a manmade reef in Fujairah.

Thirty-five concrete reef structures were dropped 100m off the coast of Le Méridien Al Aqah Beach Resort last June.

Now, on a good day, scuba divers can see eels, crabs and fish varieties, including hammour, Seargent Majors and Banner fish.

The project began in June, with 14 reefs created from artificial reef modules that take about five years to mature. To date, more than Dh100,000 has been invest-



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ed in the project, said Simon Tambling, Managing Partner, Al Boom Diving.

“Diving is a great recreational activity, but it must go further in order to foster understanding of the importance of protecting the delicate marine environment,”

he said. The water sports company collaborated with Le Méridien Al Aqah resort in Fujairah on the project.

The money was spent on importing reef block structure moulds, fabrication, deployment with cranes and parachutes and man hours.

Patrick Antaki, General Manager, Le Méridien Al Aqah, said resort staff hit on the idea in the wake of Cyclone Gonu, which hit the emirate nearly three years ago. “The cyclone completely redesigned the whole coastline. The beach was completely changed and we felt we had to do something about it,” he told **Emirates Business**.

He said he expected the reefs would mean increased media visibility for the emirate. “People are going to see the name Fujairah a little bit more, which will encourage them to come here. Fujairah is a dive destination and this is the ideal spot for beginners to learn to dive.”