

# Press Release

## Dive Friends Bonaire Awarded Status of Bonaire's first CoralWatch Dive Operator by PADI Project Aware

**Kralendijk, Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles, August 13, 2009**

Dive Friends Bonaire is pleased to announce they have been granted the esteemed status of Bonaire's first CoralWatch dive facility by PADI Project Aware.

PADI's Project AWARE foundation has partnered with CoralWatch, a non-profit research organization from the University of Queensland, Australia, as well as NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), to involve divers and snorkelers in monitoring coral bleaching on the world's coral reefs.

The CoralWatch program makes monitoring coral reefs easy. The CoralWatch chart uses a series of colors representing different stages of bleaching and recovery. Just match the color of the coral with the corresponding color on the chart and record the color code along with the type of coral on the data sheet. Data collected from monitoring activities is then entered on-line and analyzed by scientists to answer questions on coral bleaching and recovery patterns, as well as the severity and duration of bleaching events.

Dive and snorkel volunteers on Bonaire make it possible to measure small natural fluctuations in the coloration of healthy corals to immediately identify changes outside of the normal range. With their support, it's also possible to monitor coral health throughout the year, not just during bleaching events, and help determine factors that influence the island's coral health.

Registered guests of Dive Friends Bonaire are welcome and encouraged to assist in CoralWatch. Those interested in participating will receive a free, fifteen-minute orientation about how to monitor the corals as well as information on coral bleaching in general. A CoralWatch card and slate will be issued to the divers and snorkelers, and they are then eligible to conduct monitoring dives on the house reef of Dive Friends Bonaire, the registered research site for Bonaire.

Several monitoring levels are available depending upon the interest and proficiency of the diver or snorkeler. At the simplest level, five random corals can be monitored on any dive on the house reef, by comparing the lightest and darkest colors of the coral to the CoralWatch card, and then registering the results on the slate. Input is then returned to Dive Friends Bonaire staff for inputting into the database.

To learn more about the CoralWatch program at Dive Friends Bonaire, visit [www.dive-friends-bonaire.com/coralwatch.html](http://www.dive-friends-bonaire.com/coralwatch.html).

Dive Friends Bonaire is one of Bonaire's premier diving facilities offering full diving and snorkeling services while still providing personal attention. Two retail stores are available in Kralendijk, in addition to four diving facilities. For additional information about all their services, visit their web site at [www.dive-friends-bonaire.com](http://www.dive-friends-bonaire.com), or e-mail: [info@dive-friends-bonaire.com](mailto:info@dive-friends-bonaire.com).

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