



You may have heard of the REEF Volunteer Survey Project. We'd love for you to get involved!

### **What is it?**

REEF enlists the help of recreational divers and snorkelers to keep track of marine life they see in the water. This data goes into the largest publically available marine life database of its kind. This information helps scientists, researchers, teachers, students, citizens, policy makers, etc.

### **Where can I do surveys?**

Anywhere you dive (or snorkel)

### **Who can participate?**

Anyone who dives (or snorkels)

### **When can I do surveys?**

Anytime you're in the water. Any time of year, any time of day or night, basically anytime you like! We encourage data collecting year 'round, whenever possible. You can get started right away, as long as you can positively identify the fish you record on your survey. When in doubt, leave it out.

### **Who do I go with?**

Anyone you like. Your buddy need not conduct a survey if they don't want to. But it certainly is more fun with two! Each diver should do their own survey, log their own data, and submit their own data online. Remember: One survey per diver, per dive. Surveying can be done on your own, or as an organized group activity.

### **What do I survey?**

All fish you see, and in some areas, a select list of invertebrates/algae.

### **What equipment is needed?**

You'll need a **slate** to write on, or something to keep track of what you see. You can use one of your own, or one of REEF's slates specially made for surveying. You can make life even easier on yourself by using **REEF waterproof underwater paper** that has the most common fish in that region already printed on it. Just circle the species as you see them, and you're on your way. There are also **laminated ID cards** you can take with you in the water. An **ID book** for the region is also needed to help you positively identify what you saw. (hint: **taking photos** of mystery fish is a great idea!) All of these are available in the REEF online store at [www.REEF.org](http://www.REEF.org)

### **Don't I need to be trained first?**

Taking a class at your local Field Station is certainly the fastest way to learn how to ID a lot of fish, but if that option isn't available, you can get started on your very next dive. Just make sure the fish you record on your survey are ones you can positively identify. Our **Fishinars (short Webinar-style fish ID classes)** are a great way to start and continue learning. Another option for

a fun learning experience is to go on one of REEF's Field Survey trips. You can find Fishinar and Field Survey schedules online at [www.REEF.org](http://www.REEF.org) under the 'Resources' tab.

### **What if I don't know the names of all the fish I see?**

Don't worry! Just record the ones you DO know, even if it's just one. You'll learn as you go and get better with each survey you do. (hint: **taking photos** of mystery fish, or sketching key features on your slate is a great idea!)

### **What's my time commitment?**

Whatever length of time you want to spend in the water, plus the time it takes to enter your data online. (about 10 min)

### **What's the survey method?**

Just go on your dive or snorkel like you usually do – wandering around, looking in nooks and crannies, in any depth of water. You'll be recording the relative abundance of the total number of fish of each species you see cumulatively on your dive, not exact counts.

- S=Single (1)
- F=Few (2-10)
- M=Many (11-100)
- A=Abundant (101+)

### **How do I submit my data?**

It's all done **online** nowadays! (no more paper scanforms) Join REEF first (it's free) and you'll be assigned a member number. Log in using that number and your last name to enter your survey data online. <http://www.reef.org/dataentry/login.php>

### **What happens when I get really good at this?**

REEF has 5 Experience Levels. When you first start out, you're a level 1 surveyor. Then, by accumulating certain numbers of surveys and passing tests for levels 2-5, you can work your way up to the highest level. You can take your tests online now - just contact [janna@reef.org](mailto:janna@reef.org)

### **How can I find other REEF surveyors in my area?**

Look on the REEF Field Station page to find one near you. Field Stations can help you get acquainted with other surveyors in your area.

### **This sounds like a great activity for a Dive Club (or shop) – how do we get involved?**

You might be interested in becoming a REEF Field Station. You can teach your own classes to your group, and organize REEF survey dives for fun. Contact Janna for more info.

### **Where can I find more info?**

The REEF website, of course! [www.REEF.org](http://www.REEF.org)

So get started today! Join REEF to get your member number and get rolling.

<http://www.reef.org/user/register/member>

Please feel free to email me with any questions you might have. I'm here to help!

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