

# SNORKELING



*Coral reefs are among the world's most spectacular habitats and snorkeling is an excellent way to explore them. As coral reefs face an increasingly uncertain future, snorkelers and other coral reef visitors can play an important role in helping protect these fragile habitats. Follow these simple guidelines to become a "coral friendly" snorkeler.*

## BEFORE SETTING OUT TO EXPLORE THE REEFS

- Get the best possible snorkeling instruction you can.
- Practice snorkeling skills away from the reef.
- Make sure your equipment fits properly before you snorkel near corals—it can be very difficult to adjust in the water.
- If you feel uncertain, or are an inexperienced snorkeler, consider wearing a snorkel vest for added buoyancy.
- Learn all you can about coral reefs—they are fascinating and fragile environments.

## IN THE WATER

- Never touch corals; even slight contact can harm them. Some corals can sting or cut you.
- Select points of entry and exit to avoid walking on corals.
- Maintain a comfortable distance from the reef, so as to avoid contact.
- Know where your fins are at all times and don't kick up sand.
- Stay horizontal in the water while you're near or above the reef.
- Learn to swim without using your arms.
- Move slowly and deliberately in the water—relax as you swim and take your time.
- Remember, look but don't touch.

## MINIMIZE CONTACT WITH MARINE LIFE

- Take nothing living or dead out of the water except recent garbage which does not have living organisms on it.
- Never chase or try to ride marine life.
- Never touch, handle or feed marine life except under expert guidance and following locally-established guidelines.
- Avoid using gloves in coral environments.

## SHORESIDE

- Support coral parks and other conservation projects.
- Avoid purchasing souvenirs made from coral, turtles or other marine life—this is often illegal, and it's never environmentally wise.
- Speak up. Make sure your snorkeling buddies understand these simple but important conservation practices.