

GEF International Waters Conference

# TOURISM AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

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The Great Barrier Reef stretches over 2300km or about 1200 miles along the north east coast of Australia.

Each year, approximately 2 million tourists visit the Great Barrier Reef.



# The Great Barrier Reef



- ▶ 348,000 square km (134,364 sq miles)
- ▶ Largest Marine Park in the world
- ▶ 1975: declared a Marine Park
- ▶ 1981: inscribed onto the UNESCO World Heritage List.

## Multiple Use Marine Park

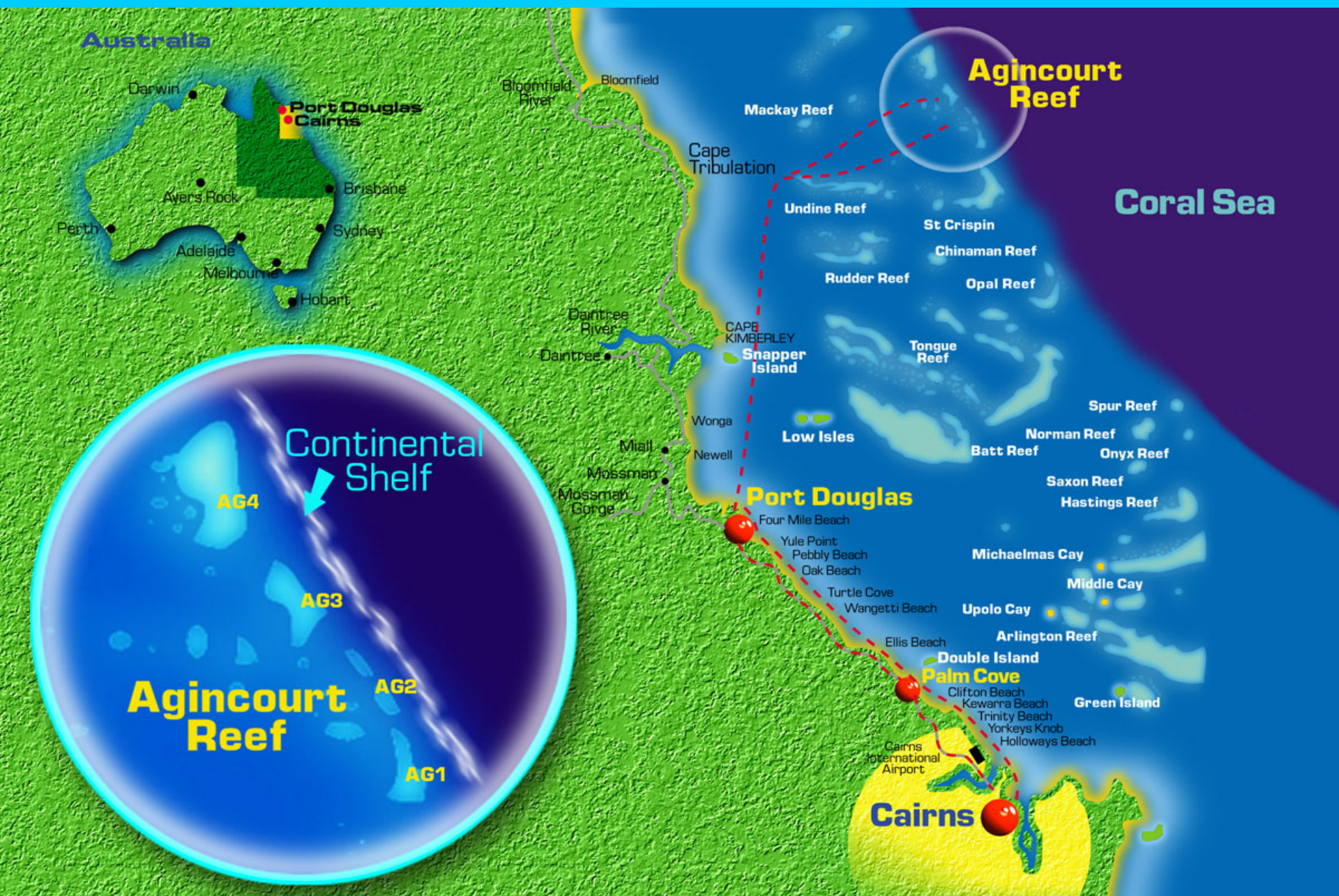
- ▶ One-third of the Marine Park is a totally protected 'no-take' Green Zone.
- ▶ 85% of tourism takes place in less than 10% of the Marine Park.



## World's largest UNESCO Heritage Site

- > Bigger than the UK
- > About the same size  
as Japan
- > Half the size of Texas.







# The Great Barrier Reef



- Some of the highest marine biodiversity in the world.
  - > 2900 reefs
  - > 600 rocky continental islands
  - > 300 coral cays.
- 1500 species of fish
- 400 species of corals
- 6 of the world's 7 species of sea turtles
- Sep 08: Hundreds of species new to science were revealed following a 4 year research program.



# GBRMP Management Areas

**The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is a Commonwealth Marine Park.**

## **Management areas include:**

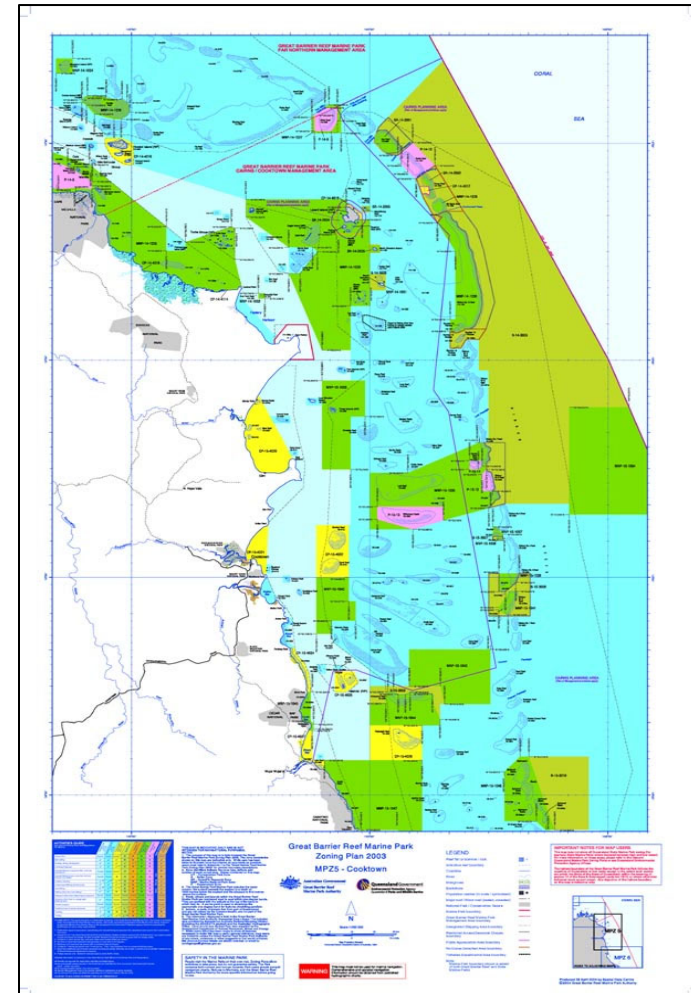
- All the waters below mean water level mark
- Some islands or parts of islands that are Commonwealth owned.
- The subsoil beneath the sea bed to a depth of 1000m
- The air space above to a height of 1000 m

## **The GBRMP is divided into 4 Management Areas:**

- Far Northern (85,200 m<sup>2</sup>)
- Cairns / Cooktown (35,500 m<sup>2</sup>)
- Townsville / Whitsundays (76,100m<sup>2</sup>)
- Mackay / Capricorn (143,400 m<sup>2</sup>)

## **Within these management areas there are 3 declared Planning Areas:**

- Cairns Planning Area
- Hinchinbrook Planning Area
- Whitsundays Planning Area



# Zoning

## **Representative Areas Program (RAP) Objectives**

- Maintain Biological Diversity
- Allow species to evolve and function undisturbed
- Provide an ecological safety margin against human induced disasters
- Provide an ecological base from which threatened species or habitats can recover and repair
- Maintain ecological processes and systems.

**A Representative Area** is an area that is typical of its surroundings at a special scale.

As part of the Zoning review to implement the RAP, two independent steering committees provided advice to GBRMPA about:

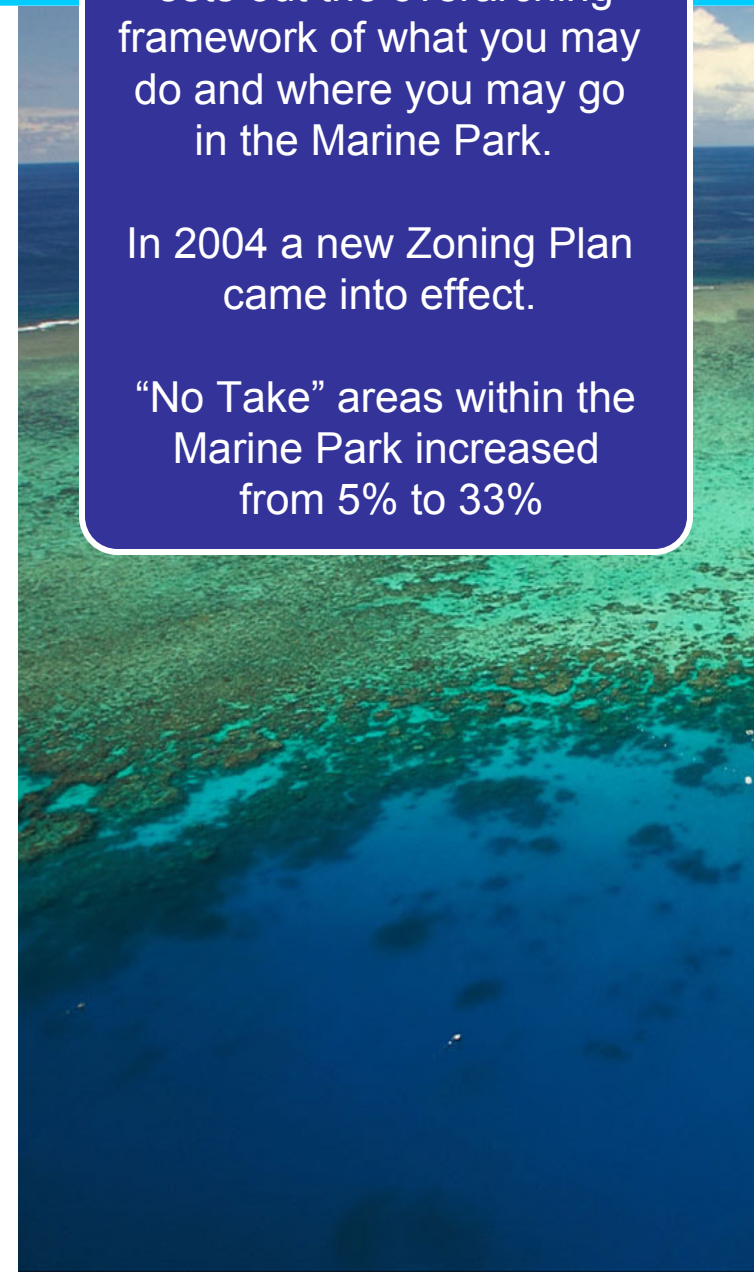
- Biological and physical aspects of the GBR Region
- Social, economic, cultural and management feasibility aspects of human use and values of the Marine Park.

Zone Boundaries changed from being based on a specified distance from the reef edge to a co-ordinate based system.

The GBRMPA **Zoning Plan** sets out the overarching framework of what you may do and where you may go in the Marine Park.

In 2004 a new Zoning Plan came into effect.

“No Take” areas within the Marine Park increased from 5% to 33%





# Marine Park Management

## Environmental, economic, cultural and social importance

- The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) is an Australian Government statutory authority responsible for the overall management of the Marine Park.
- Supported by key government agencies such as Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.
- Tourism industry associations, such as Ecotourism Australia and peak industry body AMPTO (Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators) contribute to the success of the partnership.
- The key partners are approximately 600 individual marine-based tourism businesses.
- The future well-being of both the Marine Park and the tourism industry are inextricably linked – **a healthy tourism industry will always need a healthy Great Barrier Reef to show its visitors.**

A robust, collaborative and Sustainable Tourism Partnership between government and industry is key.



Australian Government  
Great Barrier Reef  
Marine Park Authority



Queensland Government  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service



Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators

# Permits

**As a general guide, the following activities require a permit.**

- Most commercial activities including tourism
- Installation and operation of structures, such as jetties, marinas, pontoons and aquaculture facilities.
- Any works such as repairs to structures, dredging, dumping of spoil, placement and operation of moorings.
- Anchoring or mooring for an extended period
- Waste discharge from a fixed structure
- Research (except for limited impact research)
- Educational programs
- Traditional hunting.

**Applications are submitted to GBRMPA or QPWS.**

- Permit applications are assessed against legislative criteria, including the likely effect to the World Heritage values.
- With all applications the onus is on the applicant to establish environmental impacts of the operation as acceptable.





# Sustainable Tourism Partnership

## Ensuring maximum benefits and minimum negative impacts.

Some of the main partnership policies and activities:

- ▶ **The High Standard Tourism Program:**  
Encourages operators to achieve high standards and rewards those that do. GBRMPA recognises the ECO Certification Program operated by Ecotourism Australia. ie Ecotourism certified operators can achieve longer-term operating permits. All of Quicksilver's products are accredited with Ecotourism Australia.
- ▶ **The Eyes and Ears Incident Reporting Program:**  
Encourages operators and crew to report suspected incidents to the GBRMPA.
- ▶ **Monitoring Programs:** Operators voluntarily monitor sites they visit and report observations to the GBRMPA and researchers, such as:
  - > **BleachWatch**
  - > **Eye on the Reef**
  - > **Whale Sightings**
  - > **Water Quality.**

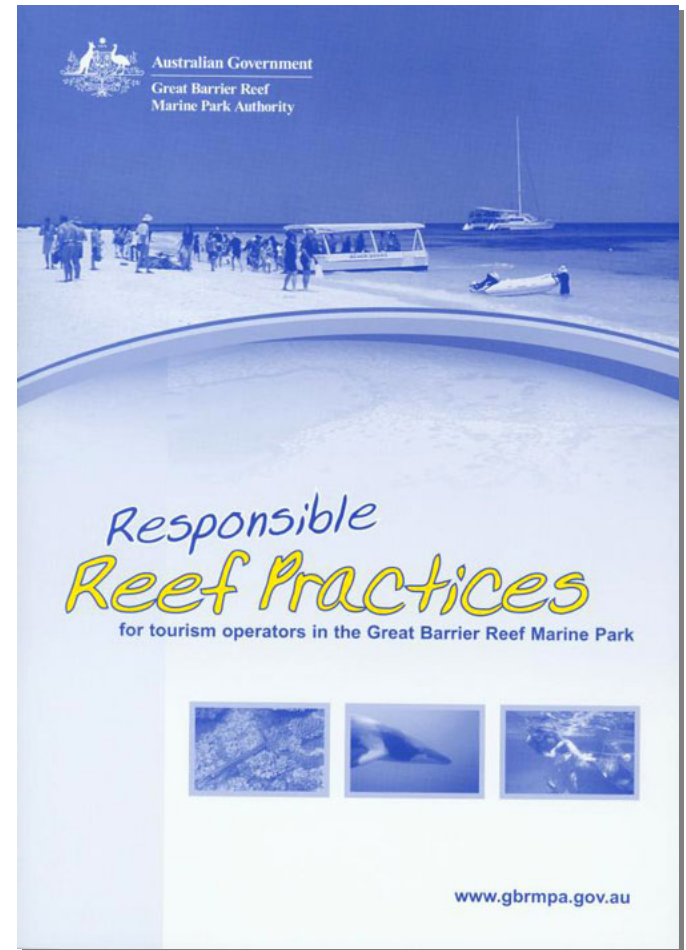
The GBRMP Sustainable Tourism Partnership significantly contributes to conservation and management of the Marine Park and ensures a high standard tourism product.



*Through our Reef Biosearch division, Quicksilver has the longest ongoing log of observations on the Great Barrier Reef - since 1986.*

# Sustainable Tourism Partnership cont...

- ▶ **Industry Training Workshops**
- ▶ Internationally recognised **Responsible Reef Practices** jointly developed by the GBRMPA and the tourism industry which address 28 key tourism activities from anchoring to whale-watching.
- ▶ **GBRMPA Industry Liaison Officers** based in the local communities.
- ▶ **Tourism and Recreation Reef Advisory Committee**
  - > Provides GBRMPA with regular advice.
  - > Framework for the Sustainable Use and Management of Tourism and Recreation in the Marine Park helps guide tourism management decisions.
  - > Identifies emerging issues such as the effects of climate change and fostering Indigenous participation in tourism and its management.
- ▶ **Community Engagement**

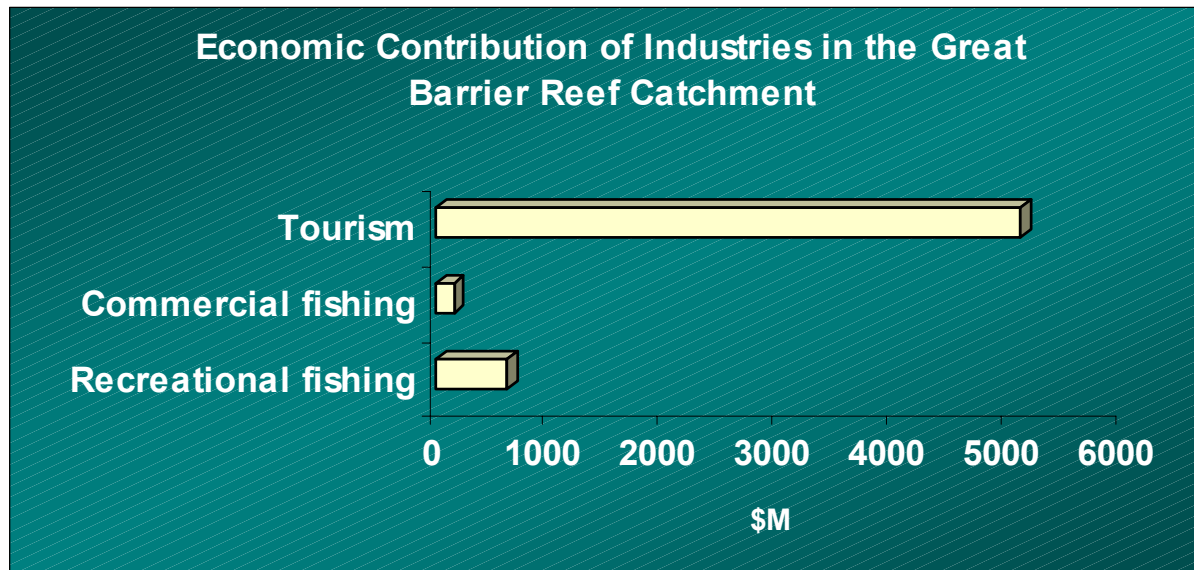




# Economic Contribution

## Marine tourism in the Great Barrier Reef region

- ▶ Worth \$5.1 billion to the Australian economy
- ▶ Employs 54,000 people
- ▶ Major export earner and dwarfs other industries in the area, (commercial fishing contributed \$120m and employs 640 people)
- ▶ It is the second major employer next to mining
- ▶ Over \$10 Billion invested in Queensland.



# Economic Contribution cont...

## Marine tourism in the Great Barrier Reef region

### Marine tourism industry taxes:

- ▶ \$187.5m in income tax
- ▶ \$19.9m company taxes.
- ▶ \$8m Environmental Management Charge

*The major effect is a more economically robust community and local councils which are better resourced to provide services and infrastructure to our local communities - which are predominantly located in the regional areas.*





# The Quicksilver Group

- Largest Great Barrier Reef operator
- Based in Cairns and Port Douglas, Tropical North Queensland.
- 88 Permitted Moorings and 32 Marine Park Permits
- 11 major vessels
- 4 reef platforms
- Five key brands including
  - > Outer reef platform cruises
  - > Island cruises
  - > Adventure dive and snorkel day trips
  - > Liveaboard dive trips
  - > Eco-sensitive Green Island Resort.



QUICKSILVER GROUP



# Outer Reef Cruises





# The Quicksilver Group

- ▶ **1928:** Great Adventures' pioneers - first regular cruises to Green Island.
- ▶ **1979:** Quicksilver commenced with the first cruises to Low Isles.
- ▶ **1983:** Established first permanent reef platform.
- ▶ **1986:** Reef Biosearch environmental division established - the largest team of marine biologists outside of a government agency.

## Today

- ▶ 400,000 passengers annually
- ▶ 500 local employees.



*Our own success helps us contribute to and benefit our community through employment opportunities both direct and indirect, community sponsorship, educational, cultural and environmental stewardship.*

## QUICKSILVER GROUP





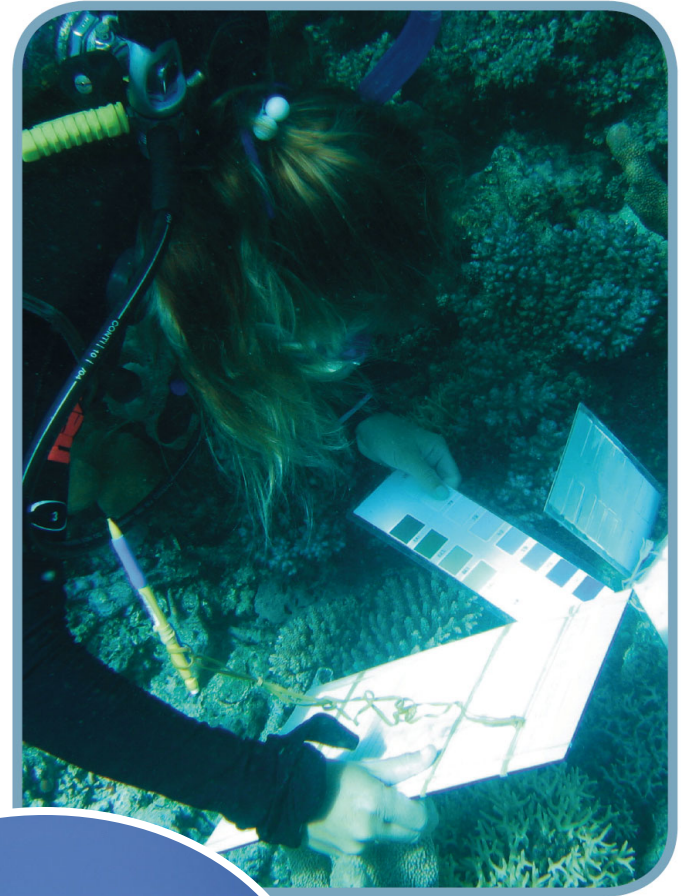
# What Quicksilver does...

## Environmental Management - Reef Biosearch

- ▶ Educational and interpretive activities on board Quicksilver vessels, marine and reef education within the general community, schools and Tourism industry training
- ▶ Research monitoring programs on the reef
- ▶ Ecotourism consultation
- ▶ Consultation and advisory roles to the reef management authorities.

## Best Environmental Practices & Procedures

- ▶ Staff training
- ▶ Waste management
- ▶ Protection of marine life
- ▶ Visitor behaviour management
- ▶ Hydrocarbon and chemical management
- ▶ Cultural heritage
- ▶ Protection of world heritage values.



# What Quicksilver does... cont

**Quicksilver has used dedicated sites with permanently moored platforms since 1983. Our investment in these platforms has created a sense of stewardship to protect and preserve what we perceive as our patches.**

## **Some Best Environmental Practice Examples:**

- ▶ Pontoons, mooring blocks and chains positioned on sand to reduce impacts and also to avoid shading of corals and potential damage by snorkeller's fins.
- ▶ All wastewater is pumped onto the transfer vessels for appropriate disposal.
- ▶ Lycra suits for sun protection lessen the use of sunscreens.
- ▶ Floatation vests and resting stations are provided for snorkellers to reduce accidental impact.
- ▶ On Green Island we utilise a state-of-the-art tertiary sewage treatment plant so no effluent is discharged into the Marine Park.

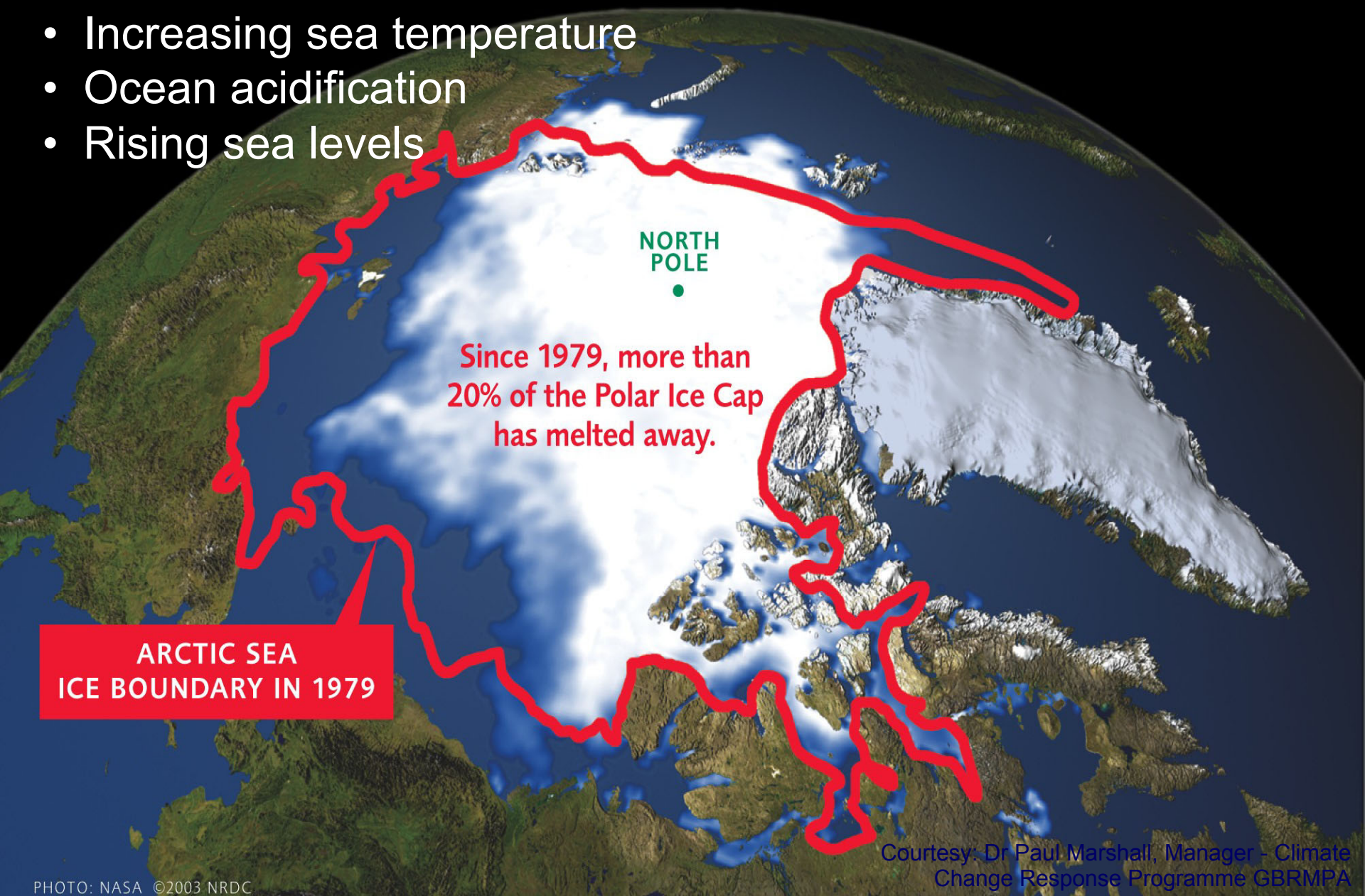


The recent four engine  
refit to our 45 metre  
wavepiercer catamaran  
resulted in 40% weight  
reduction and  
20% emissions reduction.  
We operate two solar  
powered semi-sub.



# Climate Change

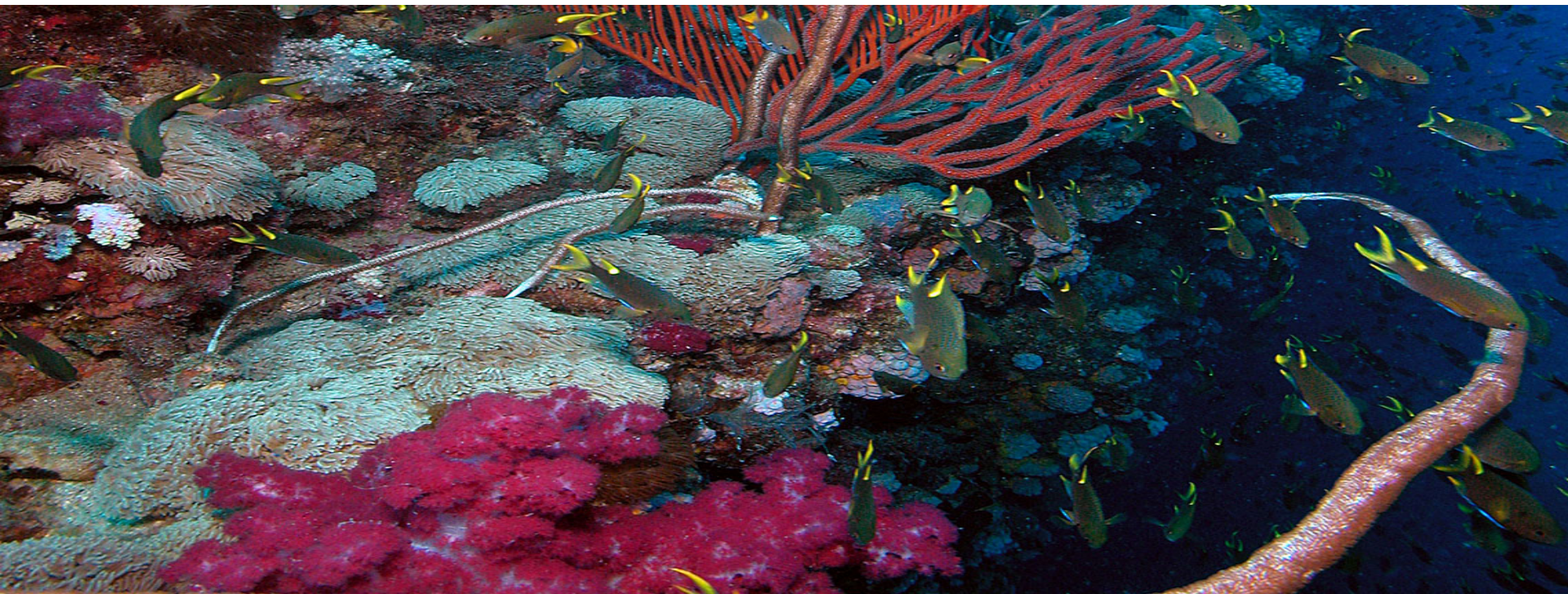
- Increasing sea temperature
- Ocean acidification
- Rising sea levels





# The Shade Project

A collaborative research project  
by Quicksilver Connections and  
the Centre of Marine Studies  
University of Queensland









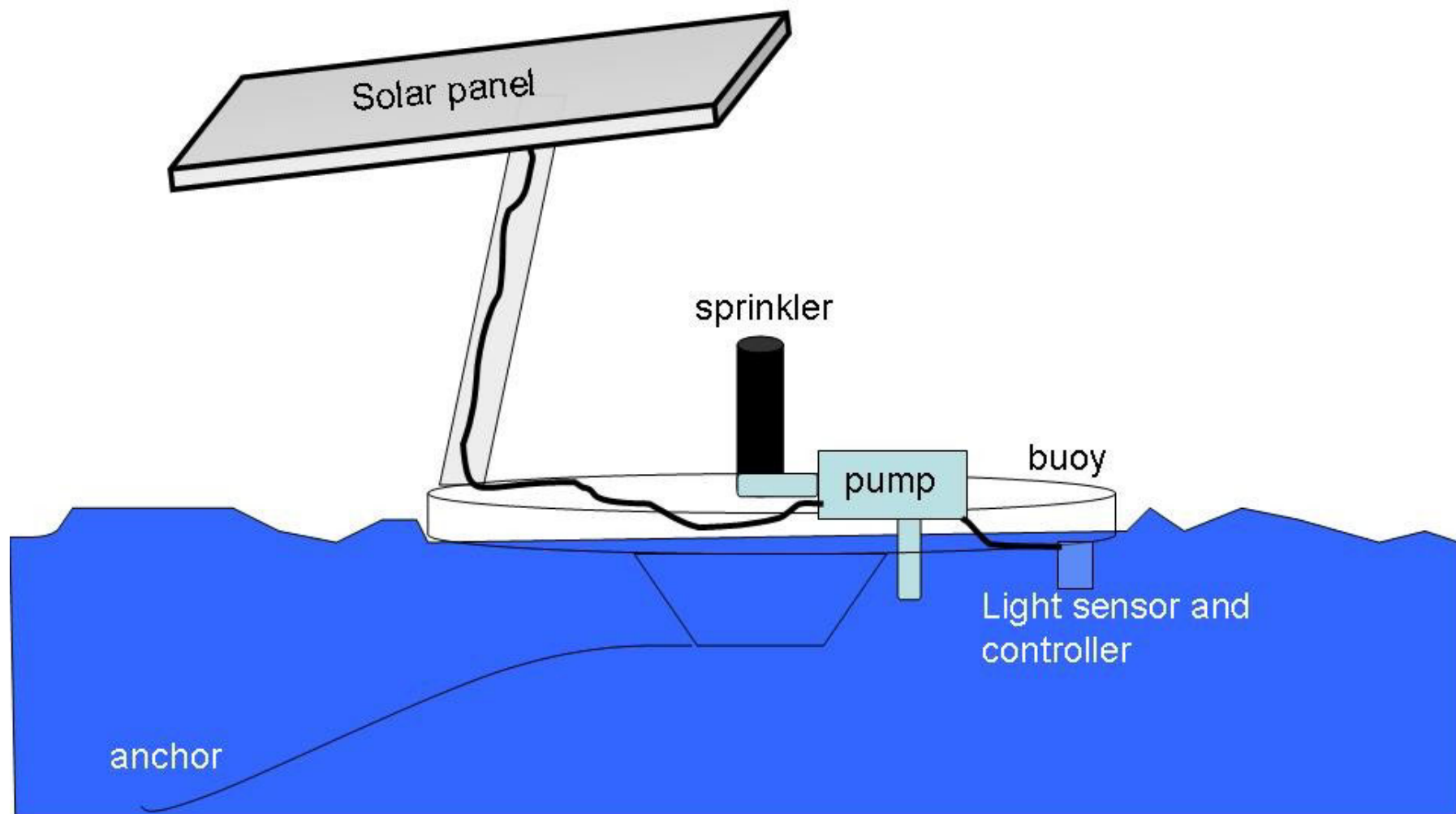




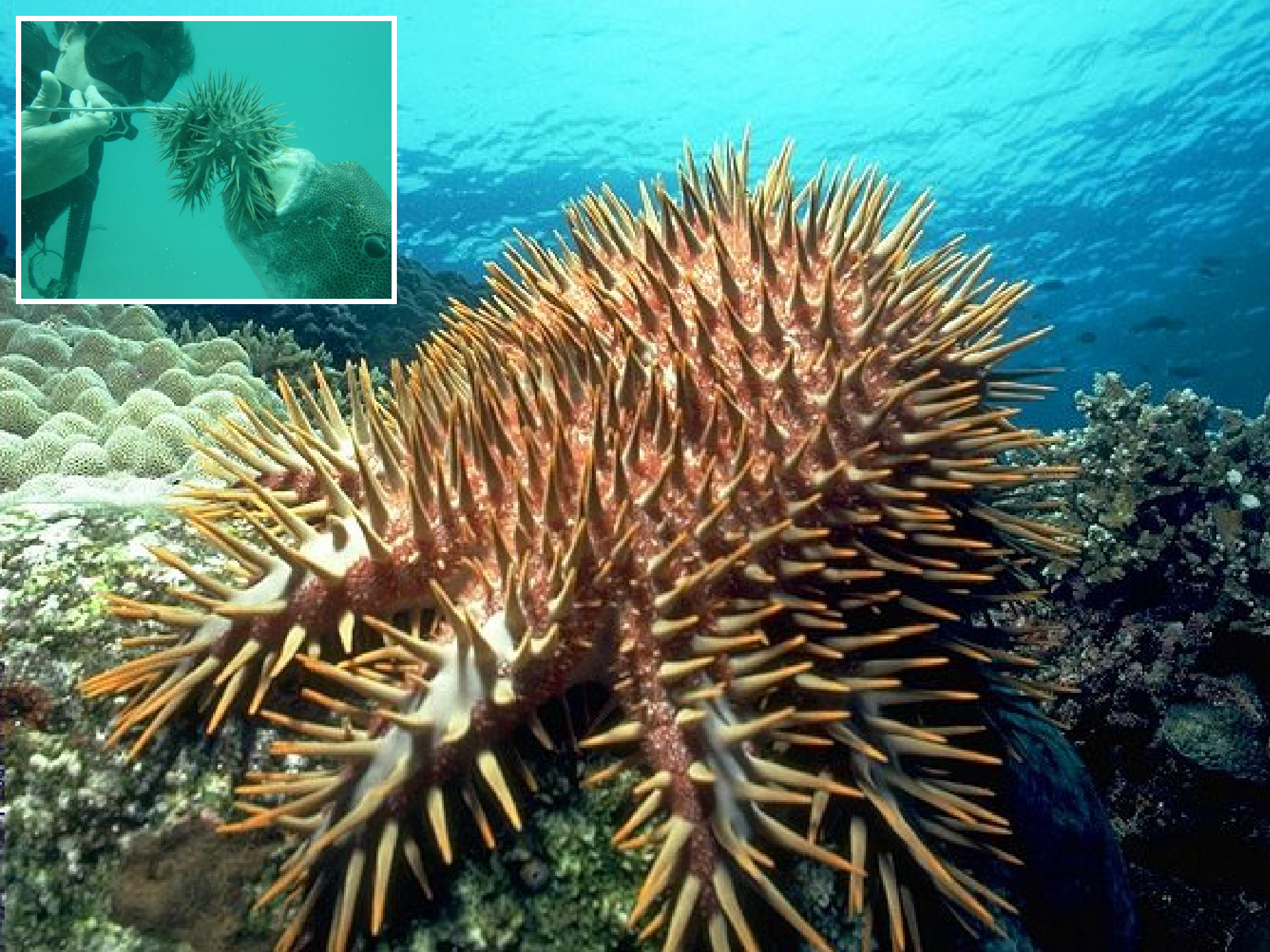
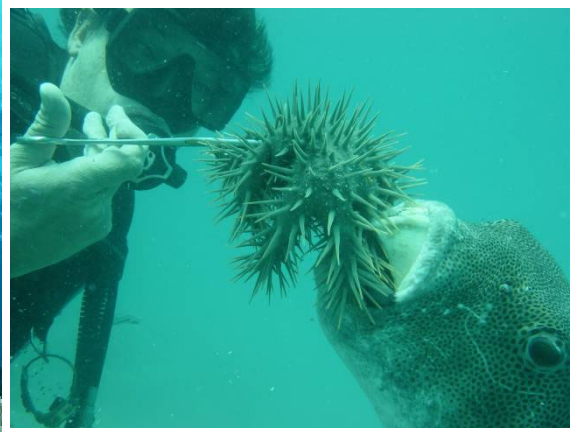




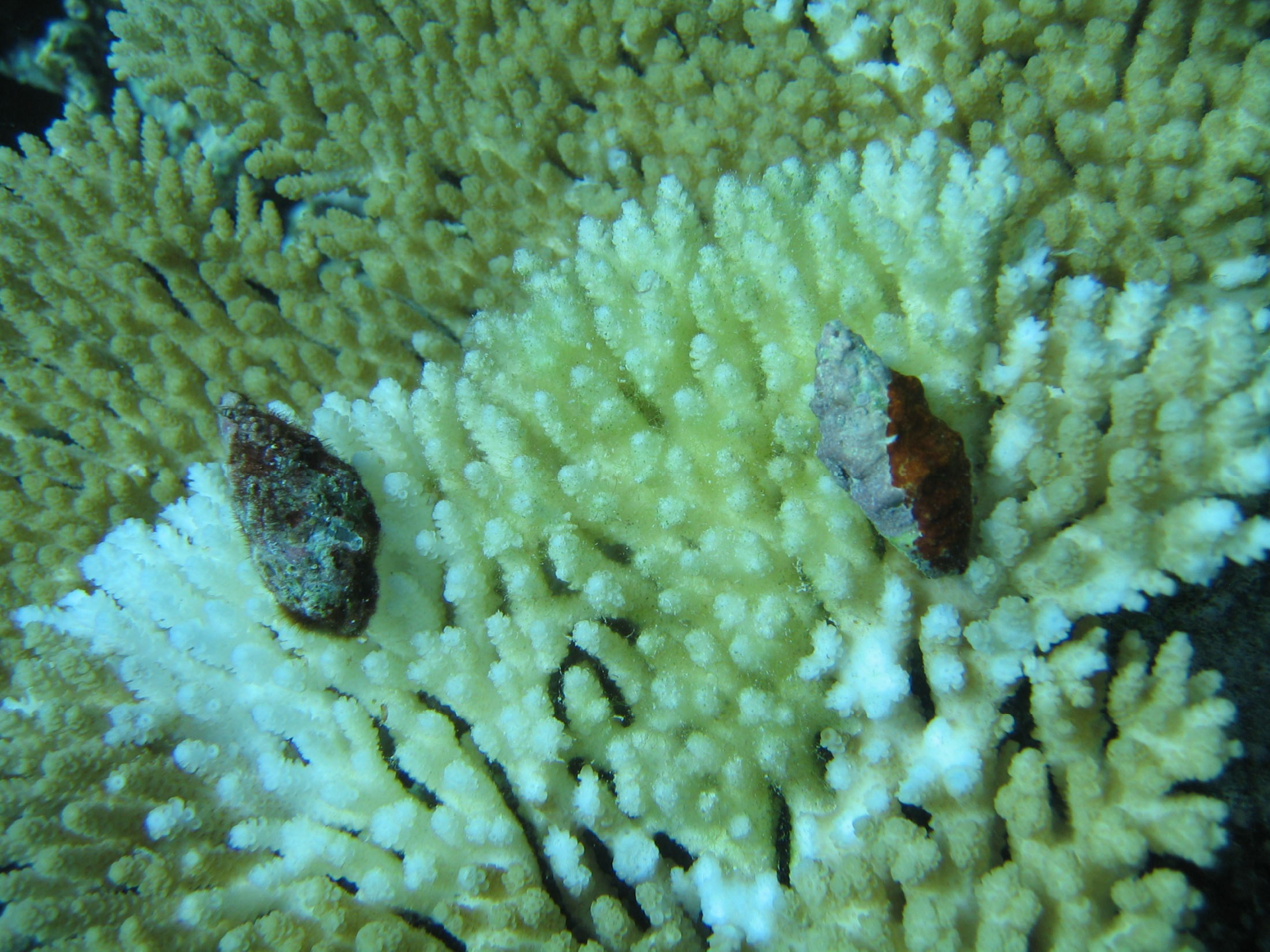
























At Quicksilver, we would like all of our guests to leave us as ambassadors for reef protection and preservation.