



## Coral Conservation



**SEA LIFE works in a number of regions to help protect and restore precious coral reefs.**

**We've helped rebuild damaged coral reefs in the Maldives with special 'coral frames'; worked with the Indonesian Nature Foundation (LINI) in Bali to rebuild reefs devastated by illegal cyanide poisoning; and supported research in Curacao, Mexico and in Florida to understand how corals breed and recover from disease.**

### Maldives

- The Maldives is an archipelago of around 100 small islands in the Indian Ocean which lie at or close to sea level and which rely on their surrounding coral reefs to protect them from being engulfed by the ocean.
- Their delicate reefs were devastated by a coral bleaching event in 1998, and the tsunami of 2004.
- SEA LIFE staff worked with the Reef Ranching Co-operative and local communities to place specially made frames on the seabed, each covered in securely fastened coral cuttings.
- A total of 51 coral frames were built, taking small pieces of damaged coral from the reef and transplanting it onto the frames, creating just over 75 square meters of 'new' coral reef habitat.
- Within 5 years these coral transplants can be completely covered in healthy growing coral to form the basis of a new reef.

### Bali

- A group of five SEA LIFE expert aquarists from across the SEA LIFE network travelled to Bali, Indonesia, to work with The Indonesian Nature Foundation at the LINI Aquaculture and Training Centre in 2019.
- The team helped train the local fishing community in aquaculture techniques while also helping to construct an artificial reef to add to LINI's local reef restoration areas.



- LINI is a non-profit organization based in Bali. LINI is the Indonesian term for a “line” or connection. Their mission is to establish firm and lasting connections to support the conservation and management of coastal marine resources through science, education and the empowerment of coastal communities.

### Curacao

- Understanding how coral reefs survive and reproduce is vital to their conservation. In 2019 a team of curators and aquarists from all eight US SEA LIFE aquariums undertook a three week conservation research trip to Curacao, home to some of the Caribbean’s most spectacular and pristine coral reefs.
- Funded by the SEA LIFE Trust and each of the US SEA LIFE Centres these “coral conservation heroes” were studying, among other things, how these sedentary animals share genetic material and reproduce, and what role butterflyfish have in assisting the corals to breed.
- The team also collected eggs and sperm from healthy corals which they used to rear new coral embryos. The young corals were then planted out at two degraded reef sites.

### Florida

- SEA LIFE Michigan in the USA is working with other AZA-accredited aquariums to support a pioneering reef restoration project to study the causes of a disease affecting the Florida Reef Tract.
- The Florida Reef Tract is the largest barrier reef in North America and it’s in serious trouble! Over the last few decades, the reef has been dealing with the pressures of pollution, warming seas and habitat destruction.
- Now, it’s facing a new threat: a deadly and destructive disease that is not yet understood by scientists.
- SEA LIFE Michigan is taking into care rescued corals from the Florida Reef Tract and will hold them for 3-10 years whilst scientists study the causes of the disease and find a treatment. By taking and protecting these endangered corals, we can ensure the genetic health of the population and increase the odds of species survival.
- Once a treatment for the disease is found and we can sustain a healthy coral population in the Florida Reef Tract again, the corals held in the aquariums will be taken back to Florida to help regrow the reef.

