

Dear BREEF Friend,

This month's e-newsletter features the Blue Flag Programme, Invasives and more. Enjoy! **BREEF is supported by its members, please remember to update your membership. Call us at 327-9000.**

BREEF JOINS Foundation for Environmental Education as Bahamas Representative

In January of 2007, BREEF signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Tourism for the management of the Blue Flag programme in The Bahamas. Blue flag is an internationally recognized voluntary environmental certification programme for beaches and marinas which is managed by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) through local agencies. In June, Casuarina McKinney, BREEF's Executive Director traveled to Italy where BREEF was officially accepted as the representative for The Bahamas. "I am delighted that BREEF will represent the Bahamas in this important initiative to promote sustainable development": said Ms. McKinney "we share the common goal of promoting environmental awareness and stewardship through implementing programmes such as this." Last month Mr. Heiko Crost, FEE representative and mentor for The Bahamas, visited our islands to meet with and provide support to the National Jury. He visited the Atlantis Marina in New Providence as well as Old Bahama Bay in Grand Bahama, the first two marinas in The Bahamas to join the Blue Flag Programme. www.blueflag.org Application for the award is voluntary, once received, they are reviewed by the National Jury, upon which, marinas meeting or exceeding established criteria may be awarded Blue Flag status. This status is then reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that all criteria continue to be met. The local jury consists of representatives from BREEF, the BEST Commission, The Bahamas National Trust, the Ministry

No Invasives Week

Plant Native



The National Biodiversity Committee has designated Oct 8-12 as "No Invasives Week" During this week, the committee on which BREEF sits, will conduct activities to increase public awareness of this issue. Invasives are a problem because they out-compete natives, harm local ecosystems and reduce biodiversity. The public will be encouraged to: - **Remove invasive plants** from their landscape - Casuarina, Scaveola (white inkberry), Monkey Tamarind, Brazilian Pepper and Melaleuca - **Use native species** such as cocoplum, seagrape and buttonwood instead. - Avoid clear-cutting of lots; instead **leave native trees** which provide shade and habitat for animals. - Become **responsible pet owners** - secure pets, spay or neuter cats and dogs and prevent the release of unwanted pets into the wild. Let's all do our part to control their spread. Check out <http://www.breef.org/InvasiveSpecies/tabid/73/Default.aspx>

BREEF Profiles

Melanie Johnson St. John's College, Nassau, Bahamas

After reflecting on her experiences at this summer's BREEF Teacher Training Workshop, Ms. Johnson wrote "This week has shown me why it is necessary to protect and conserve Bahamian ecosystems,.... not for ourselves but for future generations." As a dedicated teacher, now more aware of marine conservation issues, she along with 25 of her students took part in the recent "No Invasives Week" activities. Her group along with students from the C.V. Bethel Marine Science Magnet programme did an excellent job in assisting members of the Biodiversity Committee with the removal of invasives at Orange Hill Beach. This action shows that education does indeed result in environmental stewardship. She plans in the near future, with BREEF's assistance, to take her students snorkeling in a mangrove creek to illustrate the value of these important ecosystems to The Bahamas. Ms. Johnson is grateful to Mrs. Nevillett Pearce, her sponsor for the BREEF Workshop for the incredible opportunity afforded her. Mrs. Pearce, Head of the Science Department at Kingsway Academy, was a participant at last year's workshop, she was so appreciative of the opportunity to attend that she made a donation to BREEF so that another teacher would be able to have a similar opportunity. BREEF salutes both Mrs. Pearce and Ms. Johnson.



Do you have any lionfish specimens?



The Marine and Environmental Studies Institute (MESI) at the College of The Bahamas is developing a National Specimen Library, if you have captured lionfish they will be happy to receive them either ice-fresh or frozen. For more information, please contact the MESI 302-4300, The Department of Marine Resources 393-1777 or BREEF 327-9000.

Remember that lionfish are venomous, please use caution!!!!

Photo by Sandra Voegeli

Follow-up on Dolphin Encounters - Project B.E.A.C.H. International Coastal Clean Up

This year's International Coastal Clean-up of Stokes Beach was a great success, some 575 volunteers from school and community groups collected over 4 tons of garbage, helping to reduce the impact of marine debris on our coastal resources. The top 3 items collected included food-service items (cups, plates, forks, knives and spoons), cans, and food wrappers which are all items discarded from shoreline recreational activities. As responsible beach goers we should always secure our trash and take it home to properly dispose of it. Trash left in overflowing bins at the beach often end up in our waters. **The Bahamas is a coastal nation, none of us live far from the coast, so even what we do at home can impact our marine environment. Lets all do our part to take care of our environment.**