

The path to Coral Recovery: Scientific Foundations and Practical Lessons

During the 2019 edition of the DCNA Convention on Bonaire, biologists from local protected area management organizations including Aruba National Park Foundation, STINAPA Bonaire, Reef Renewal Foundation Bonaire, CARMABI Curaçao, Saba Conservation Foundation, Sint Maarten Nature Foundation, STENAPA and CNSI of Sint Eustatius will be united on October 28th for a full day of workshops. The central focus of the workshops will be coral recovery, with insights from science and practices. The Dutch Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF-NL) will also be present. In addition to their participation in the other workshops, Arjan de Groene of WWF-NL will give a presentation on the Coral Action Plan for the Caribbean Netherlands and Joseph Stuefer from NWO will further elaborate on the upcoming call for scientific research proposals in the Dutch Caribbean.

Coral as a building block of the Caribbean

Coral restoration is high on the agenda worldwide, and it certainly is in the Dutch Caribbean. The unique nature of the Caribbean part of the Dutch Kingdom is built out of and surrounded by coral. Saba and Sint Eustatius are

volcanic in origin while Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao and Sint Maarten are made up of fossil coral structures from times when the sea level was higher. The Dutch Caribbean is therefore built on a coral reef millions of years old.

Current Importance of coral

Tourists have traditionally come to the Dutch Caribbean islands to admire the uniqueness of the region's nature, including world-renowned coral reefs. In surveys from 2013, the economic value of the ecosystem services provided by nature on Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius represented 31%, 63% and respectively 24% of the annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the islands. On Sint Maarten recent studies by the Nature Foundation has shown that coral reefs contribute USD 50 million to the economy of the island. This clearly shows that nature is the engine that drives the economy of all six islands in the Dutch Caribbean. If there is no adequate action against the current threats to coral reefs, the value will decrease considerably with major consequences for the well-being of the population.

First Hand Experience

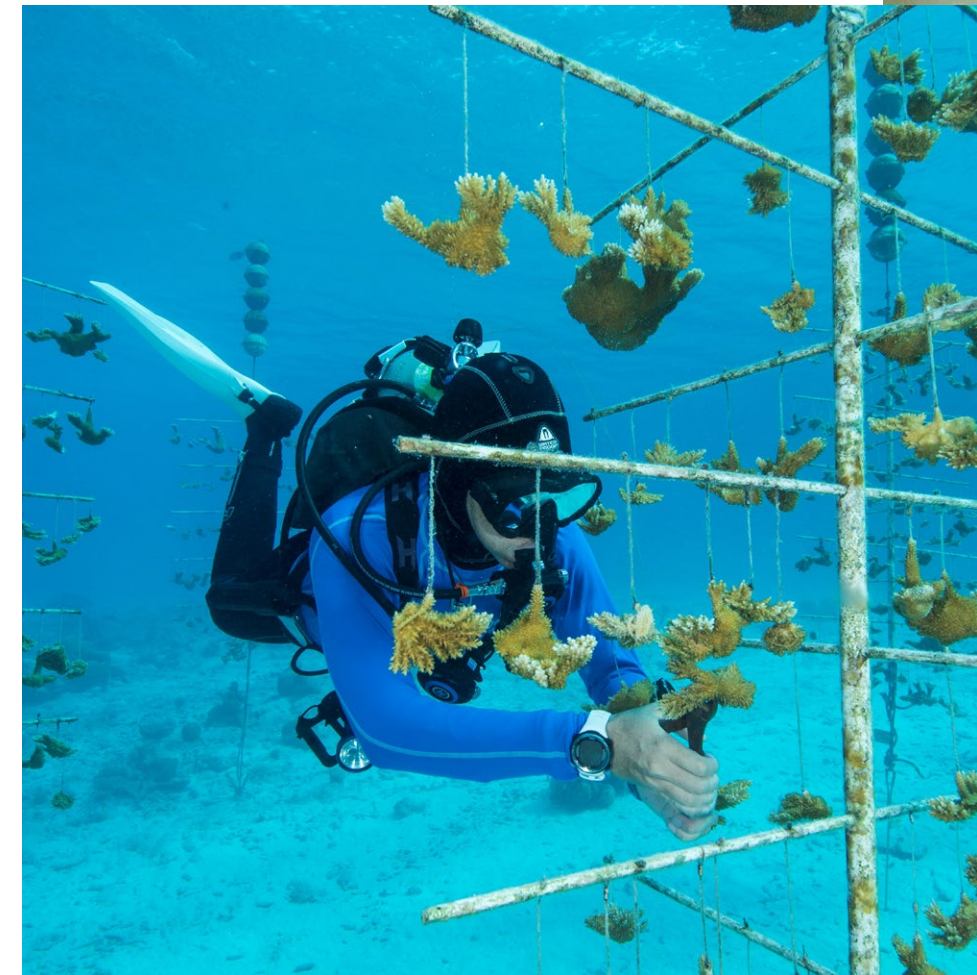
As part of the solution to promote coral recovery, the Coral Restoration Foundation Curacao and Reef Renewal Foundation Bonaire, among others,

are focused on the future actions to restore these valuable coral reef ecosystems. Through presentations and organized field excursions organized by Reef Renewal Foundation Bonaire, attending biologists will get to see a fully tested and optimized method for reef restoration with their own eyes. This workshop will give the biologists a platform to exchange knowledge and experience about the different coral restoration programs and techniques on the Dutch Caribbean islands.

Public lecture: Status of Coral reefs

The health of coral reefs being crucial to the sustainable prosperity of the islands in the long term is a key theme for the meetings. For any member of the public interested in and committed to the status of coral reefs and who would like to meet the regional experts in person, there will be a public lecture by Dr. Erik Meesters of Wageningen University and Research on **Monday October 28 from 7:30 PM to 9:00 PM at Captain Don's Hotel, Kralendijk, Bonaire.**

For more information, please contact DCNA: (+599) 717-5010 or research@dcanature.org



Coral Restoration. Photo by: © Reef Renewal Foundation Bonaire

Would you like to share a news item?
Please e-mail us: research@DCNANature.org