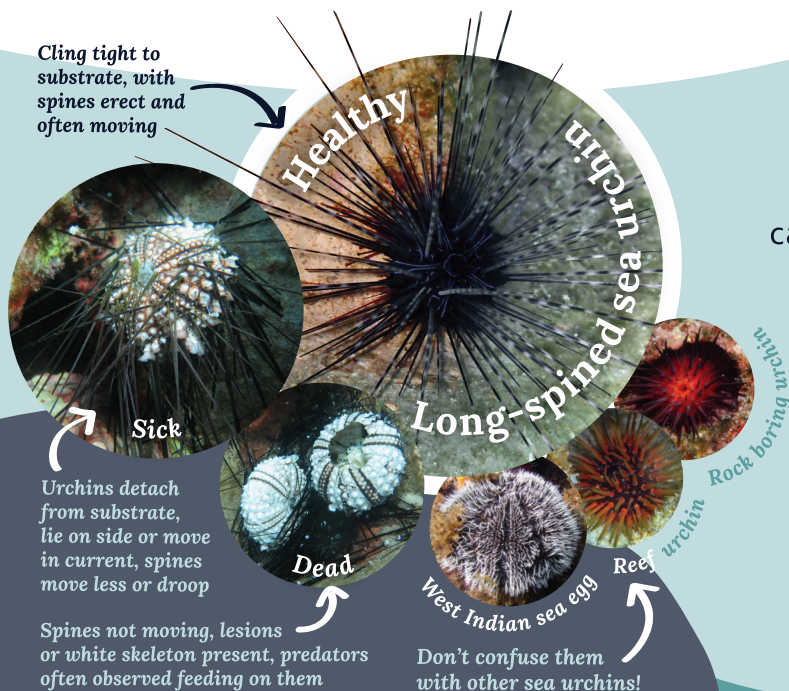


Long-spined sea urchins: not trouble, but *in trouble!*



Chances are, you've been warned not to step on their spines in the past: Sea Urchins.

One species of sea urchin in particular are called **Long-spined sea urchin** or 'Diadema'.

They are easy to recognise by their exceptionally long and thin black spines.

These fascinating, spiky creatures are **incredibly important** in sustaining the delicate balance on reefs by grazing algae, which are competitors of corals.

Long-spined sea urchins allow our valuable corals space to grow and thrive.



Long-spined sea urchins are getting sick, and **You can help!**

In the 1980s, a Caribbean-wide disease killed 98% of these urchins, and their populations still haven't recovered.

In February 2022, extensive long-spined urchin die-offs began again.

Scientists and local reef managers are trying to identify causes and work on restoring the urchin population.

Help protect urchins!
To prevent spreading disease:



Wash dive gear in lots of fresh water and sun-dry.



Dive on clean sites **before (known) infected sites**



Do not step on them or (re)move them: live and dead!

Citizen Science
Report your sightings

Share your observations of **healthy, sick or dead urchins.**

This data is incredibly important for scientific research:

Location Date Depth Numbers
(Healthy, Sick, Dead)

Report here and try to take photos:

agrra.org/sea-urchin-die-off/

AGRRRA Atlantic and Gulf Rapid Reef Assessment



Or contact your local Park Management Organization!

Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance
Safeguarding nature in the Dutch Caribbean



Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Netherlands

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