

CONSERVATION EFFORTS

PRACTISE REEF ETIQUETTE, DIVERS TOLD

Don't touch marine life, keep fins up to avoid damaging corals, says group

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MARINE-related organisations are calling on the public to be part of ocean conservation efforts.

Reef Check Malaysia programme manager Nadhirah Mohd Rifai said recreational scuba divers could play an active role.

“As divers, it's crucial to prac-

tise reef etiquette while underwater.

For instance, avoid unnecessary contact with marine life, maintain proper buoyancy, and keep your fins up to prevent damaging corals.

“Support eco-friendly or Green Fins certified dive operators and participate in marine conservation activities as a ‘local hero’.

“You can act as the ‘eyes and ears’ of the authorities by reporting environmental violations,



(Seated, from right) Malaysia Mermaid Club founder Angelia Thien Hedger, Reef Check Malaysia programme manager Nadhirah Mohd Rifai, Professional Association of Diving Instructors Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei regional manager Mark Hedger, Sabah Dive Squad Club president Sim Fui as well as Marine Research Foundation conservation officers Brittany Ashley Chang and Liyana Izwin Khalid posing for a photograph at a luncheon organised by the Sabah Dive Squad Club in Kota Kinabalu on Sunday. PIC

COURTESY OF SABAH DIVE SQUAD CLUB

such as illegal fishing in fully protected marine parks,” she said at a luncheon organised by the Sabah Dive Squad Club here on Sunday.

The event was attended by club president Sim Fui, Professional Association of Diving Instructors (Padi) Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei regional manager Mark Hedger, Marine Research Foundation (MRF) conservation officers Liyana Izwin Khalid and Brittany Ashley Chang, as well as Malaysia Mermaid Club founder Angelia Thien Hedger.

Hedger said Padi's Blueprint for Ocean Action demonstrated its commitment to addressing the primary threats faced by oceans.

“By mobilising millions of Padi torchbearers dedicated to ocean preservation, and collaborating with like-minded global partners, we can drive local initiatives for global impact.

“Our goal is to restore the equilibrium between humanity and the ocean,” he said, adding that Padi's Aware programme encouraged divers to engage in conser-

vation activities.

Marine Research Foundation's Chang said that since 2017, the non-governmental organisation had been involved in studying the effects of climate change on green sea turtles, devising methods to reduce bycatch of species like turtles, sharks and rays, and conducting marine debris removal efforts.

She said that next month, MRF would hold an international beach cleanup activity and hoped to see increased participation from divers.