



Illegal Rope Courses Damage Living Corals!



The threats against corals are serious, but luckily problems caused by humans can also be solved by humans. The more we learn about our coral reefs, the better we can work to protect them. Coral reefs made up of living creatures that provide food, protection and economic livelihood for the CNMI. They also provide natural

The CNMI is home to 256 species of coral, 32% of all known corals on the planet!



recreation for our guests. Please help us protect our coral reefs.

In March, members of the DCRM Marine Monitoring Team and DCRM Enforcement removed a non-permitted and illegal rope course installed by unidentified

dive operators at the Laolao Bay dive site. **Over 1,000 feet of rope**

was removed. The rope course had been installed across living beauty and

coral and was causing severe damage to the corals, and other reef habitat. We presume that the course had been installed as a means of assisting inexperienced divers to move around the reef.

BECQ encourages dive operators to use permitted rope guides at designated entry and exit points and to ensure that their divers are appropriately trained in buoyancy control before taking them near sensitive environments.

BECQ wants to remind the public and our marine sports operators that according to Commonwealth Code § 15-10-11, all developments as defined in § 15-10-020 to be within an Area of Particular Concern

(APC) or which have a significant adverse impact on an APC, must be permitted by DCRM. All of CNMI's Lagoon area and Reefs are defined as APCs (§ 15-10-315).

Activities that are unpermitted within an APC are subject to investigation (§ 15-10-910) and potential enforcement actions (§ 15-10-920). Enforcement actions can include: notices of violation, significant fines, and other associated penalties.

In addition to the required DCRM permits, marine

sports and dive operators must also get permits from BECQ, DFW and the US Army Corp of Engineers before installing anything in our marine environment.

Please contact BECQ-DCRM Permitting Section for further information – 664-8300.

To report violations please contact DCRM Enforcement - 483-2926, or use our new Reef Report app which can be found by searching “Reef Report” in Google Play.

I. Randall, R. 2003. An annotated checklist of hydrozoan and scleractinian coral collected from Guam and Islands. 127-137 pp.



For more information, visit www.cnmicoralreef.com