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Dive firms help with research

DIVE companies in Airlie Beach have joined volunteers as part of the global initiative Reef Check.

Volunteers are trained by marine biologists from James Cook University to seek out signs of human impacts on coral and other reef animals.

"It's great to see dive companies taking responsibility for the Great Barrier Reef by giving our team a ride out to the reef to survey dive sites," Reef Check co-ordinator for Queensland Jos Hill

said.

"The data gathered by volunteers will be used by reef managers and will help to build a picture of coral reef health around the world."

Over the next month, local teams up and down the Queensland coast will be trained to monitor reefs throughout the Great Barrier Reef region.

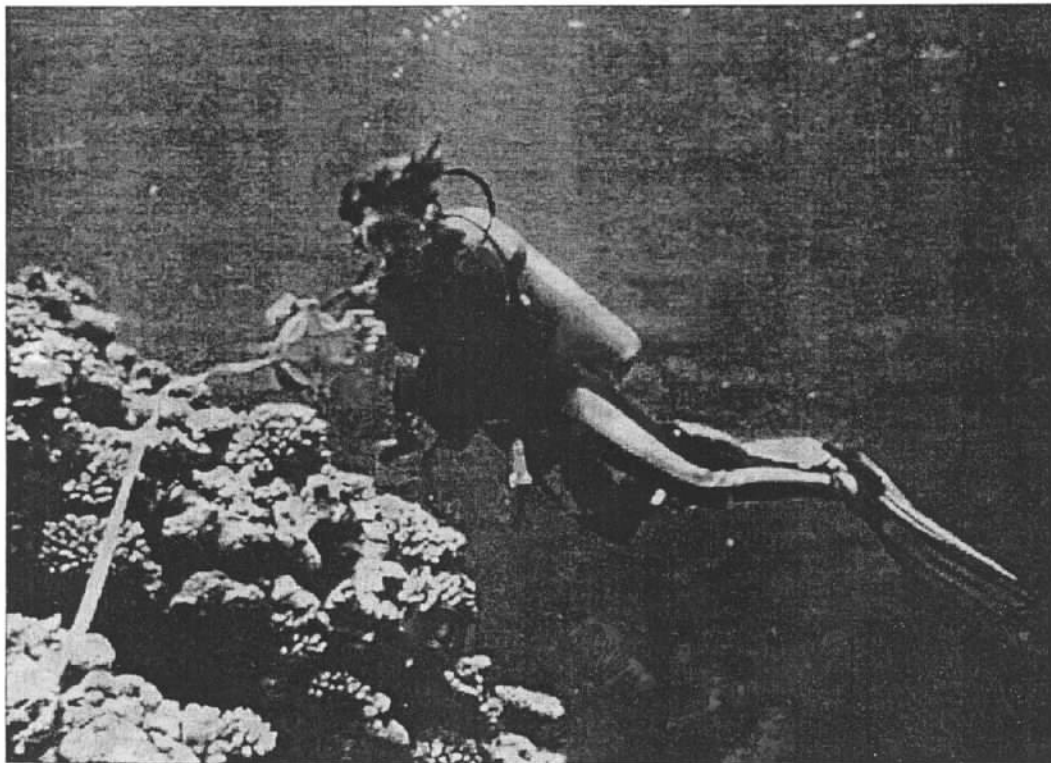
Volunteers will be looking for signs of impacts like algal blooms, as well as indicators of a healthy reef, such as lobsters and

sea cucumbers.

"Surveys are now happening every year at the Whitsundays, so we can try to get some longterm data on the health of the reef," said Queensland Media Liason Officer Chloe Lucas.

"This year there weren't any volunteers local to Airlie Beach, but we are hoping to attract some for next year."

Up to date, Reef Check surveys have been carried out at over 1000 reefs in 50 countries and territories.



REEF Check scientist Jos Hill surveys the reef.