

3 Coral Reef Friendly Tips



Look but don't touch

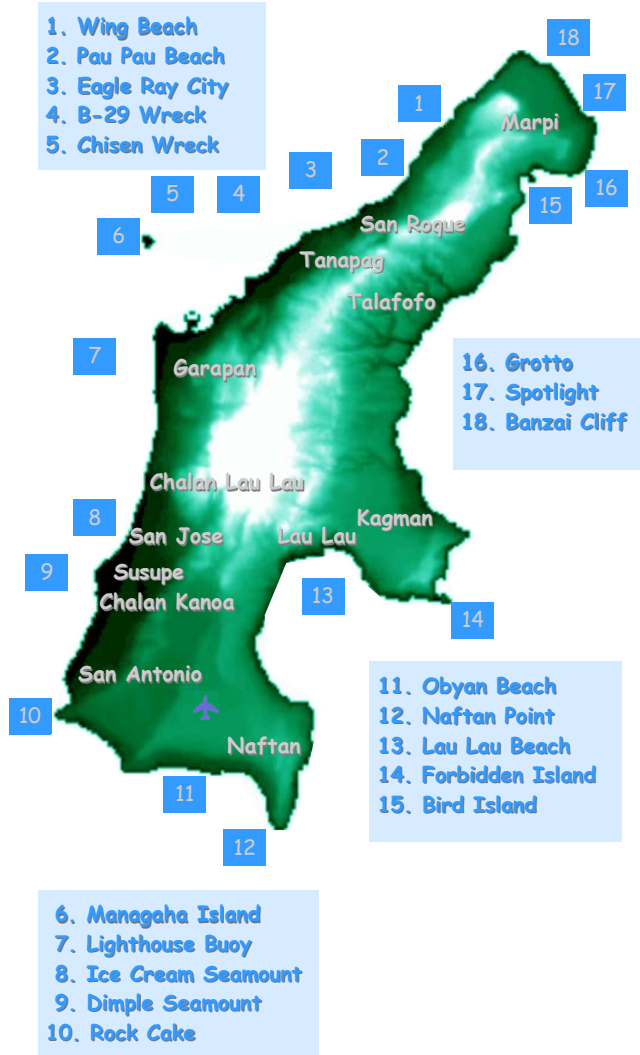


Stay off the bottom



Don't litter

Saipan's Dive & Snorkel Sites



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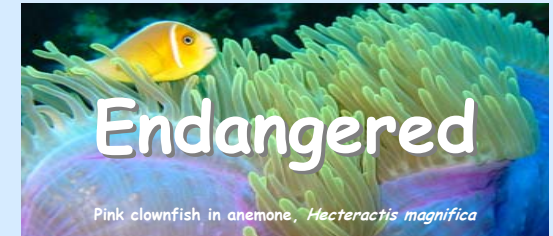
Coral Reef Friendly



CNMI



The CNMI has some of the most beautiful and diverse coral reefs in the world, providing excellent recreational diving and snorkeling opportunities. These coral reefs are home to many forms of sea life. They are also important to the islands because they provide food, protect beaches from typhoon damage and erosion, support the economy, and help to maintain the environmental health of the oceans.



Coral reefs are the largest biological structures on earth, created by tiny plant-like animals called polyps. Corals may seem sturdy, but in fact they are quite fragile and vulnerable, and are in need of protection. Physical destruction, over harvesting, habitat loss, global climate change, coastal development, and pollution contribute to the loss of coral reefs. It is estimated that nearly 27 percent of the world's reefs are already destroyed, and another two-thirds will be lost within 30 years if they are not protected.

"Our Reefs, Our Future!"





Look but don't touch

- Do not touch, hold onto, stand on, or break corals. Corals are very delicate. Some corals can even sting or cut you.
- Do not take anything living or dead out of the water, except for recent garbage.
- Avoid harassing, handling, chasing, riding or feeding marine animals.
- Fishing while SCUBA diving is not allowed.



Stay off the bottom

- Maintain good buoyancy control, finning and body control to avoid damaging corals.
- Move slowly. Stirring up sediments can choke and kill corals.
- Secure all equipment to avoid dragging and snagging.



Don't litter

- Don't leave anything. Take your garbage with you, or use a trash bin when available.
- Do not discard cigarette butts carelessly.
- Bring extra plastic bags to pick up trash at the beach.

Creature Checklist

What have you seen?

1. Giant Clams

These colorful clams make some of their food from sunlight harvested by algae living in their fleshy mantles. Giant clams are overharvested and endangered in many parts of the world.

2. Bluespine Unicornfish

The Chamorros call this fish *tataga*, meaning "to cut", probably referring to the defensive knife-like spine near its tail. It is a highly prized food fish in the CNMI.

3. Spotted Eagle Ray

One of the diving highlights in the CNMI, these graceful rays can usually be seen in numbers at Eagle Ray City.

4. Green Sea Turtle

This sea turtle is the most commonly sighted turtle in the CNMI, and is the largest of all hard-shelled sea turtles. It is an endangered species protected under CNMI law.

5. Spotted Boxfish

This colorful reef fish is a male. Females are black with white spots. Their bodies are made up of hard plates, and they can produce a toxic chemical which deters predators.

6. Spotted Garden Eels

From afar, these eels look like shoots swaying in the currents. Come closer and they disappear into the sand.

7. Pincushion Star

This basketball-shaped creature is a relative of the starfish. Sometimes, tiny shrimps can be seen on them.

8. Octopus

This master of camouflage is a common reef inhabitant that usually hides in crevices and holes during the day.

9. Mushroom Corals

These free-living corals look like the underside of mushrooms, and have the unique ability to move from place to place.

10. Sea Cucumbers

These worm-like creatures swallow sand to eat nutrients and bacteria. By cleaning the sand, they perform an important function in coral reef ecology.

Coral Reef Friendly CNMI



- Do not disturb any beach morning glory or other plants on the beach. These plants help prevent erosion and preserves the natural beauty of the beach.
- Driving or parking on the beach is illegal. Park all vehicles at designated parking areas.



- Vessels should be secured by using a mooring buoy. If moorings are unavailable, anchors should only be dropped on sandy bottoms.
- Vessels should be kept at least 20 feet away from coral reefs.
- Vessels should be inspected before departing for any leaking oil or fuel. Use a bilge sock to absorb contaminants.

