

USVI International Year of the Reef 2008 Update



January Free Family Movie Night



The U.S. Virgin Islands held its first IYOR 2008 event on Friday, January 25th with a **free public movie night** featuring Blue Planet's *Coral Seas* at the University of the Virgin Islands from 7:00-8:30pm. The family-friendly event provided free popcorn for the 65 attendees and was followed by St. Croix marine ecologist Kemit-Amon Lewis's short underwater production of local species and charismatic reef organisms. Prior to beginning the film, the St. Croix Committee for IYOR Co-Chair, Karlyn Langjahr of Coastal Zone Management's St. Croix East End Marine Park gave a brief educational power point presentation

on International Year of the Reef 2008 and the economic, ecological, cultural and health benefits of our USVI reefs. Co-Chair Emily Tyner of the University of the Virgin Island's Marine Advisory Service announced upcoming IYOR 2008 events on St. Croix. The event was free with an optional donation jar which collected \$30 to be used for future IYOR 2008 activities on St. Croix.

January-February SCUBA Essay Contest



Thanks to CRABBS, a local dive club active in the community on environmental issues, the St. Croix Committee for IYOR received a generous donation to sponsor local high student open water dive certification. Co-chairs for the Committee for IYOR launched a SCUBA essay contest, traveling to 4 local high schools and announcing the contest. To compete for the award, interested students submitted a 2 page essay answering why they wished to become dive certified as well as how they would use dive certification in the short- and long-term future. The four winning essays came from

students at the St. Croix Education Complex, a public high school. Students were recognized at the February "*Dive Into IYOR*" event (see below) and presented certificates. The winning students, from left to right, E'Dee Stout, Kurrisa Vialet, Adrian Cuencas, and Ismael Navarro.

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February “Dive Into IYOR” St. Croix



On Saturday, February 9th from 8:00am to 12:00noon the St. Croix Committee for IYOR launched a *Dive Into International Year of the Reef* in Frederiksted targeting the local recreational dive community. A strong turnout of 17 divers from the CRABBS dive club and the St. Croix Women’s Dive Association removed trash from below the Frederiksted Pier, totaling 15 large garbage bags, 2 fish traps, 4 long poles, a large generator, and a lawn-chair. For non-divers, a beach and snorkel clean-up was conducted on nearby Dorsch Beach, removing an additional 9 large bags of waste. A free snorkel clinic was

offered with equipment provided, with six kids participating. Following the clean-up, all participants met at the Frederiksted Clock Tower for free pizzas, refreshments, and other snacks. The awards of free open water dive certification were presented to four local high school students along with other prizes. An East End Marine Park informational booth was displayed with free educational hand-outs.

Sponsors of this event include N2 the Blue dive shop providing free tanks, tank refills and weights; SCUBA West donating snorkel gear for the free snorkel clinic; the Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority (VIWMA) provided a dumpster at Dorsch Beach and garbage bags for trash collection; Plaza West supermarket for donating and drinks/snacks and onion bags for underwater garbage collection; Napoleon’s Pizza of Frederiksted for donating large cheese pizzas; CRABBS for donating funds to sponsor free open water diver certification to four local high school students; the Ocean Conservancy for providing free calendars and underwater marine creature identification booklets.



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March Free Family Movie Night

Due to popularity and demand, the St. Croix Committee for IYOR held its second Free Family Movie Night on Friday, March 7th featuring Blue Planet's *Tidal Seas* at the University of the Virgin Island's Great Hall from 7:00-8:30pm. The family-friendly event provided free popcorn for the 55 attendees and was followed by short DPNR- Division of Fish & Wildlife video called "*Our Natural Virgin Islands.*" The event was free with an optional donation jar which collected \$50 to be used for future IYOR 2008 activities in the territory. The event has now expanded as a regular IYOR Movie Series and will take place every other month. Stay tuned for the Friday, May 9th showing of *Coral Seas: Canaries of the Sea.*

