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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 29, 2011

NOAA Releases Marine Etiquette Video for Visitors to the U.S. Caribbean
Educational Video Promotes Responsible Tourism, Discourages Illegal Taking of Coral for Souvenirs

NOAA's Fisheries Service and Coral Reef Conservation Program today released an ocean etiquette video to educate visitors to the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico on how to be good stewards of the marine environment, including by not collecting corals and marine life as souvenirs.

The six-minute [Caribbean Marine Etiquette](#) video and corresponding 30-second public service announcement are available in English and Spanish, and educate viewers on the impacts of throwing litter on the beach, kicking or standing on live corals, anchoring boats on corals and seagrass, and collecting corals and other animals as souvenirs. The video will air in hotels, dive shops and on television throughout the U.S. Caribbean to promote responsible tourism, and was produced by For the Sea Productions.

"If each one of our approximately 7.6 million visitors took home a piece of the reef, there would be nothing left for future generations of visitors, locals, or marine animals," said Dr. Lisamarie Carrubba, natural resources specialist for the NOAA Fisheries Caribbean Field Office in Puerto Rico. "Through education, we can help ensure that our marine resources will continue to support the tourism industry in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands."

Corals are the slow-growing colonies of animals that form the foundation of the reef ecosystem. Collecting corals, sea fans and other invertebrates destroys the habitat such important marine species as spiny lobster, groupers and snappers need, and can do long-term damage to the larger reef community.

Regulations prohibit the taking without a permit of both living and dead coral and shells from beaches and reefs of the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. Despite these local laws, U.S. Customs Agents confiscate hundreds of pounds of such material every month from all major airports in the U.S. Caribbean. Since 2007, NOAA has been working with local enforcement officers in partnership with the Caribbean Fishery Management Council to identify violations, and hopes the marine etiquette video and educational posters at airports and cruise ship terminals will reach visitors even before a violation occurs at the beach.

Academy Award-winning actor Benicio del Toro voiced the Caribbean Marine Etiquette video's main character, a smooth trunkfish. In the Spanish-language version, Grisel Mamery, host of the Puerto Rican television show *Que Noche* voices the spotted eagle ray, with members of the Radio 940 AM studio voicing the rest of the characters. Puerto Rican musical group *Así Somos* composed the original score for both videos, with guest musicians including Jerry Medina, Christian Nieves, and the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music Choir under the direction of William Rivera.

Many partners supported the production of the educational video, including Aquatica Dive & Surf; Channel 6 and Radio 940 AM; Coki Beach Dive Club; Dive Experience; Island Scuba; Jobos Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve; N2 The Blue; Ocean Divers; Ocean Sports Divers; Puerto Rico Conservation Trust; Puerto Rico Department of Natural and

Environmental Resources; Puerto Rico National Parks Company; Puerto Rico Public Broadcasting Corporation; Puerto Rico Tourism Company; Pure Adventure Puerto Rico; St. Croix Environmental Association; St. Croix Hotel and Tourism Association; St. Thomas Diving Club; The Surfrider Foundation; Taino Divers; The Dive Shop; The Nature Conservancy; Turismo en Borinquen; University of Puerto Rico Department of Marine Sciences; University of the Virgin Islands; U.S. Virgin Islands Hotel & Tourism Association; Virgin Islands Environmental Resources Services; Virgin Island Network of Environmental Educators; and Virgin Islands Marine Advisory Service.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Visit us on [Facebook](#).

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On the Web:

NOAA Fisheries Service Southeast <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>

NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program <http://coralreef.noaa.gov>