

# REEF TEACH TIMES

Edition 5 December 2008

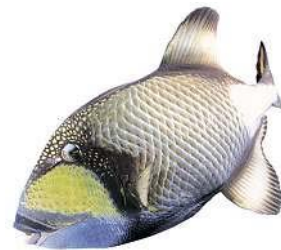
Welcome to the fifth edition of Reef Teach Times. We hope this newsletter gives you an insight into what's happening on the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) at this time of year. As summer heats up many fish and corals are preparing to reproduce, it's time for...

## SEX on the reef!

Did you know that **the biggest orgy in the world** takes place right here, on the Great Barrier Reef?! Over 150 species of coral release their eggs and sperm on just a few nights of the year, usually 2-6 nights after the full moon in November (this year spawning occurred on 17th and 18th November). The corals release their eggs and sperm simultaneously, in huge clouds that drift slowly upwards, rather like champagne bubbles and form sticky, smelly slicks on the surface, so large they can be seen from space! By **spawning** at the same time, corals and other animals maximize their chances of successful reproduction (even a big fish has to stop eating when it's belly's full!) and by spawning when tidal movement and currents are minimal, there is a better chance of the eggs and sperm finding each other at the surface and creating a **planula** (a coral larvae), that will eventually settle onto the reef as a **coral polyp** and begin cloning itself into a whole new coral colony!

All those eggs and sperm and planulae provide nutritious snacks for many animals on the reef, and attract **pelagic** (open water) species (such as tuna and mackerel) to the reef to feed. Many reef fish (such as surgeonfish, parrotfish, damsels and wrasses) time their own reproduction to coincide with coral spawning, and sea stars, sea cucumbers, clams and cuttlefish also get in on the action!

At this time of year the **Titan triggerfish** (right) will also be vigorously defending their nests. These very protective parents can grow to over 75cm in length, are very aggressive when nesting, and can inflict a powerful bite on anyone who gets too close! If you see one hovering over a patch of sand or rubble - best respect its personal space and give it a wide berth!



## Reef Teach needs YOU!

Reef Teach is a **locally-owned business** that relies on the support of other local businesses. It's been pretty quiet around town lately, so we really appreciate your support in promoting Reef Teach - a big **THANK YOU** to everyone who's recommended us lately. **We hope you'll continue to recommend us to everyone booking a reef trip** - clients often tell us how much more they enjoy their trip when they can recognize and appreciate what they're looking at.

The Reef Teach show runs from **6:30pm to 8:30pm, Tuesday-Saturday** (private shows can also be arranged for group bookings at other times), and costs **\$15 for adults / \$8 for under 14s** - about the same cost as watching a movie, only more interactive and with free tea, coffee, Milo and chocolate biscuits! We also provide free field guides to help people recognize the most common fish and corals, and have many specimens of coral and other animals that people can touch and explore for themselves. **Commissions are 20% (\$3 per booking)** and agents and dive instructors are welcome free of charge - just let us know beforehand so we know who's coming. We offer a reduced rate of \$10 for Dive Masters and boat staff. Reef Teach also has a great **reef shop** selling fish and coral field guides, maps, T-shirts, underwater cameras and other souvenirs.

## Why not come and join us on **facebook** ??

Help us build an on-line Reef Teach community by joining our group: **Reef Teach, Cairns, Australia**. Have you seen anything interesting lately out on the reef (animals, behaviour, etc)? Post it to our **"Interesting Sightings" discussion group!** Want to find out about local reef-related events and conservation campaigns (e.g. the WWF campaign for protection of the Coral Sea)? **Check out our news and posted links!**



For all bookings/enquiries please contact (07) 4031 7794 or email [learn@reefteach.com.au](mailto:learn@reefteach.com.au)

**"With learning comes appreciation."**

REEF TEACH: 85 Lake St, Mainstreet Arcade (2ND FLOOR) Tel: (07) 4031 7794

# REEF TEACH

6:30-8:30pm

Tuesday - Saturday

\$15 adults \$8 under 14s

## Christmas Opening Hours

\*\* December \*\*

Sat 20	OPEN
Sun 21	closed
Mon 22	closed
Tues 23	OPEN
Wed 24	OPEN
Thurs 25	closed
Fri 26	closed
Sat 27	OPEN
Sun 28	closed
Mon 29	closed
Tues 30	OPEN
Wed 31	closed

\*\*\* January \*\*\*

Thurs 1	closed
Fri 2	OPEN
Sat 3	OPEN

Then back to normal opening hours:  
Tues-Sat OPEN  
Sun & Mon CLOSED

Please remember that Reef Teach is **CLOSED on Mondays** (as well as Sundays) until further notice. We apologise for any inconvenience this causes your clients. Please draw their attention to this when they pick up a brochure. Thank you.

or visit: [www.reefteach.com.au](http://www.reefteach.com.au)