



**To: Instructors and diving guides**

## **Campaign for the protection of Mediterranean gorgonians and red coral**

Dear friend,

Reef Check Italy is a non-profit association ([www.reefcheckitalia.it](http://www.reefcheckitalia.it)), under the Coastal Environment Monitoring Protocol (CEM) is trying to complete the very useful information that many diver volunteers have sent in recent years about the presence / absence and abundance of 39 species of particular interest, selected for their ecological importance.

It is increasingly evident that the Mediterranean underwater landscapes are rapidly changing, for many reasons such as global warming and expansion of alien species. Among the species that are experiencing these adverse effects there are sea fans and red coral. As divers know, these are among the organisms that characterize the most beautiful Mediterranean dive sites, but to date we do not yet know with certainty where this species are present and where absent. This information is crucial to follow the changes that take place underwater, to understand where the sea fan forests are degrading or even disappearing. This knowledge is crucial to develop strategies and projects to protect these habitats and avoid undesirable cascading effects on other organisms which compose the rocky bottom benthic assemblages.

We are asking your help because we imagine that no one better than you do know the sea bottoms that you usually dive at.

Just complete the enclosed form and return it by email to [postmaster@reefcheckitalia.it](mailto:postmaster@reefcheckitalia.it)

Volunteering is a form of environmental commitment that requires a deep respect for nature and the awareness that knowledge is the only way to develop appropriate protection strategies. We might need you for more information in the future. We are in any case available to any request for information you want to ask.

30/11/2010

Thanks for the help you can give us.  
RCI staff



## Instructions for filling out the report forms

Complete the form by entering information into the gray fields.

The reference year is set to 2010, but you can change if you want to deliver observations made in previous years.

Enter the name of the diving center and of the instructor or guide. If there are multiple observers each one can fill out a separate form providing him/her own observations.

In the first column indicate the name usually used to refer to each dive site.

In the second column indicate the geographical coordinates of the dive site. This information is essential to display the data provided on the maps. The coordinates can be expressed in three equivalent formats: full Degrees and fractions of a degree as decimals (**DEG**), Degrees and Minutes and decimals of Minute (**DM**), Degrees Minutes and Seconds and decimal of a Second (**DMS**). The following table shows examples expressing the same point in these three formats (datum WGS84).

Format	Latitude	Longitude
DEG	44.38608° N	12.58157° E
DM	44° 23.165' N	12° 34.894' E
DMS	44° 23' 09.90" N	12° 34' 53.67" E

For each species indicate the estimated abundance and the minimum and maximum depth where it is found. The classes of abundance are:

<p>for the Red coral:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't know</li> <li>• Absent</li> <li>• 1 isolated specimen</li> <li>• some isolated specimens</li> <li>• several isolated specimens</li> <li>• 1 dense area</li> <li>• some dense areas</li> <li>• several dense areas</li> </ul>	<p>for gorgonians:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't know</li> <li>• Absent</li> <li>• 1</li> <li>• 2</li> <li>• from 3 to 5</li> <li>• from 6 to 10</li> <li>• from 11 to 50</li> <li>• more than 51</li> </ul>
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If you remember that this species is not present is essential to indicate "**Absent**". In case of doubt or uncertainty, leave the words "I don't know".

After you have compiled it, save the file and send it via email to [postmaster@reefcheckitalia.it](mailto:postmaster@reefcheckitalia.it)

Information on the species and how to recognize them can be found at [http://www.progettomac.it/specie\\_censite.asp](http://www.progettomac.it/specie_censite.asp)