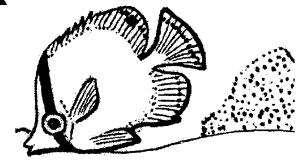


EXUMA CAYS LAND & SEA PARK

Dinghy & Snorkeling Guide



Exuma Park, **a no take zone by land and sea**, was established in 1958 to preserve and maintain the delicate ecological balance of marine life in the Bahamas. Snorkeling offers every visitor the opportunity to enjoy the natural beauty of our underwater environment. This guide is designed to help you safely locate and enjoy prime snorkeling areas by dinghy.

Before you start your snorkeling adventure we ask that you read the following guidelines that are designed to protect this unique and beautiful environment and to protect you.

Respect Our Environment - Please Don't Damage the Coral

- ◆ **Look but don't disturb.** Coral reefs are hundreds of years old built by very slow growing micro organisms and many of our reefs were in the Bahamas to welcome Columbus to the new world. **The damage you see today is caused by careless human contact.**
- ◆ Many of the reefs in this guide are very shallow, especially at low tide. These locations are included so their beauty may be enjoyed by every age group but it is critical that you do not touch the coral, damage the reef with your outboard motor, kick it with your fins while swimming or stand on the coral to clear your mask.
- ◆ We have placed dinghy moorings at many of the locations indicated in our guide. Please use these moorings to avoid damaging the reefs with your anchor. It's OK for several dinghies to share the same mooring. If a dinghy mooring is not available please anchor in sand a safe distance from the reef.
- ◆ You will also notice **bleaching and green algae** on much of the coral that is not constantly cleaned by tidal currents. Bleaching and algae growth are directly related to the warmer waters caused by global warming.

Snorkel Safely - Respect the Tide and Current

- ◆ Our most colorful reefs are cleaned twice a day by **strong tidal currents** and snorkeling these reefs is safest with minimal current at either slack low or slack high tide. Displaying a **dive flag** is recommended and you should always **keep one person in your dinghy** to watch your snorkelers and be ready to rescue anyone who gets caught in the current.
- ◆ Inexperienced snorkelers may wish to swim with some type of flotation or use a glass bottom bucket from your dinghy to view underwater marine life.
- ◆ Use waterproof charts (available at the Ranger Station) to help locate the reefs and please take a working portable marine radio with you. Please notify "Exuma Park" on channel 16 if you encounter any problems.

You will see a wide variety of marine life on the reefs; coral, tropical fish, lobster, sting rays, barracuda and the occasional shark. Take photos (we have underwater cameras at the Park Office) and use our waterproof guides to help identify the marine life you see. Remember – no fishing, shelling, conching, or lobstering is permitted in the park. Please don't feed the fish!

Take Only Photographs – Leave Only Bubbles

Thank you for helping us to preserve the natural beauty of The Bahamas.