



# Department of Fisheries

## PRESS RELEASE

### ILLEGAL COLLECTION AND USE OF CORAL

The Department of Fisheries is extremely concerned over the prevalent use of coral by business houses, restaurants, hotels, craft vendors and home owners. There appears to be an increasing trend to use corals for decoration and making handicraft.

Under the Fisheries Act Cap 7:15, it is illegal to collect, damage, use, sell, buy or be in possession of any type of coral. This includes live and dead coral, and refers to both the "hard" and "soft" corals (including sea fans, sea whips, black coral, and brown coral). The prohibited use includes the collection, use of coral from the wild and all coral rubble which may be found on the beach or along the coastline.

Coral found on the beach breaks down over time and form the basis of our white sandy beaches. These beaches provide critical habitats for numerous species and areas for recreation by locals and visitors alike. Constant extraction or removal of coral from the environment can impact our beaches and have long term negative implications.

These regulations are in place to protect our coral reefs and beaches. Coral Reefs serve as natural barriers for shoreline protection, interesting sites for scuba and snorkel tourism, and as a biologically rich critical marine resource.

In light of the above, the Department urges the general public, business houses, crafts vendors, business owners and operators of souvenir shops to adhere to these regulations.

Anyone found with coral, coral-based items or engaging in the sale of such items may be liable to a fine of up to \$5,000.

Contact the Department of Fisheries at 468-4135 or 468-4141 to obtain further information, arrange educational activities or discuss any other fisheries related matter.

## **DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES**

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Physical Planning, Natural Resources and Co-operatives