

Center for Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM)

Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba

CBRM Database

Date:	September 30, 2014	Entry Number:	1332
Case Study Name:	Artificial Reefs and Mass Marine Ecotourism		
Authors:	Amir Shani, Omer Polak, and Nadav Shashar		
Document Type:	Paper in Scientific Journal		
Year:	2012		
Language:	English		
Document Location:	<i>Tourism Geographies</i>		
Full Citation:	Shani, A. <i>et al.</i> 2012. Artificial Reefs and Mass Marine Ecotourism. <i>Tourism Geographies</i> , 14 (3): 361-382		
Region:	Central Asia		
Country:	Israel		
Ecosystem Type:	Coral Reef, artificial reef, coastal marine		
Social Characteristics:	Community inside protected area, ecotourism		
Scale of Study:	Protected areas, regional, national		
Resource Type:	Habitat conservation, protected area, biodiversity conservation, tourism, ecotourism		
Type of Initiative:	Research driven project, community initiative		
Community-Based Work:	Resource management, conservation, environmental health, ecosystem restoration, environmental education		
Keywords:	Ecotourism, recreational SCUBA diving, artificial reefs, conservation, tourist preferences, Red Sea, Israel		
Summary:	Deploying artificial reefs on the seabed has become popular in diving management. This practice has been advocated as a means towards meeting both ecological concerns and recreational divers'		

demands for diversification and themed experiences. Nevertheless, the perceptions of the user community itself - the scuba divers - regarding the establishment of artificial reefs have received only limited attention in the literature. Their views on critical issues concerning artificial reefs remain, as a result, fairly vague and speculative. The aim of the current paper is to bridge this gap in the literature by presenting the results of a study exploring divers' attitudes and preferences with regards to the plan for a new artificial reef along the northern shore of the Red Sea in Eilat, Israel. The findings indicate that the potential integration of this artificial reef was well perceived by the divers, regarding its contribution both to the diving experience and to the natural environment. The divers also expressed their preference for large objects with a themed structure as artificial reefs, such as naval ships and airplanes, rather than more generic and amorphous forms, such as concrete blocks or pipes. Overall, the study points toward the marketing potential of developing mass marine ecotourism through the deployment of artificial reefs at diving sites, as well as the prospect of promoting soft ecotourism in modified marine environments.