

PRESS RELEASE



Monday 27th September 2004

DEEP LAUNCHES PROJECT - CORAL RESCUE

The Deep, Hull's £45.5 million Millennium Commission lottery project is launching Project-Coral Rescue, an activity filled October, aimed at raising awareness of the threats facing our native corals. It is a surprise to most of us that the North Sea is home to endangered coral reefs. We are far more familiar with the threats facing corals in warmer climes. Project-Coral Rescue is highlighting the plight of two North Sea species – the reefbuilding white coral *Lophelia pertusa* and the pink sea fan, *Eunicella verrucosa*.

The Deep is working on a groundbreaking research project with the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) investigating the biology of *Lophelia*, which will eventually be displayed in the Twilight Zone (opening March 2005). The Deep's samples have been collected from the legs of decommissioned North Sea oil platforms, where they have to be removed regularly for rig safety.

Activities, including quizzes, badge-making, family talks, drawing sessions and an evening guest speaker, will enable visitors to find out more.

Dr David Gibson, The Deep's Director of Husbandry and Operations explains "Project Coral Rescue epitomises The Deep's approach to conservation and learning. October will be filled with all kinds of fun filled family activities with a serious environmental message. A highlight for me will be the evening talk by Dr Murray Roberts leading figure in coral conservation, from SAMS our research partner"

To further visitors' understanding of the importance of native coral conservation, The Deep guides have devised a programme of lively and fun events for families.

Activities within The Deep include:

- Badge-making* (weekends and 23-31 Oct)
- Family talks and quizzes (daily)
- Displays on endangered native coral species (daily)
- Drawing activities, as part of The Big Draw, national drawing initiative (October 16-17)
- Evening talk* by Dr Murray Roberts October 27th "Coral in Deep Water" (places must be prebooked)

* Nominal activity charge applies, all proceeds will go to coral conservation

For further information and booking, please call The Deep, 01482 381000

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