

Bali Daily



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World Ocean Day to focus on conservation

BY DESY NURHAYATI ON 2013-06-04

A series of events will be held to mark World Ocean Day this Saturday (June 8), with the focus on engaging art and tourism in marine conservation.

Organized by Reef Check Foundation, Coral Reef Alliance and The Marine Foundation, the event will feature an exhibition of underwater photography at Beachwalk mall, Kuta, which will run from June 8 to June 29.

The photography exhibition was part of the Art for Oceans program by The Marine Foundation and focused on addressing the issue of coral reef degradation and raising awareness of the pressing need to protect the health of the oceans, said the founder Celia Gregory.

"Hopefully, people who have never been underwater will be interested in the subject. We will also launch an artificial reef sculpture design competition to invite local talent to express their creativity to help coral rehabilitation."

Coral rehabilitation and marine management in Bali are issues to be discussed in the workshop themed "Involvement of art and tourism in supporting the protection of natural resources and sustainable development in Bali".

Coral reefs in Bali had been facing rising threats, while at the same time, the number of people relying on marine resources for their livelihood was also increasing, said Naneng Setiasih, coral triangle regional manager for Coral Reef Alliance.

"Just like in other places in the world, coral reefs in Bali have been significantly threatened by the impact of development on land and in coastal areas, destructive and overfishing, as well as global warming. It needs cooperation between local communities, the government and related stakeholders to recover the damage."

"On the other hand, many people on the island rely on marine tourism for their livelihoods. And since Bali is also well known for its art and creativity, art and tourism could be engaged to be part of the campaign to raise public awareness about marine conservation," she said.

With more local communities realizing the importance of preserving marine resources, many of them have actively started to allow coral reefs to recover in their respective areas, including in Pemuteran, Tejakula, Amed and Nusa Dua, by placing artificial reef structures to stabilize the rubble of damaged corals.

"The structures create new habitats for marine biota, thus helping the recovery. Besides, the structures are art works that could attract divers and snorkelers, thus benefiting local tourism," she said.

The provincial administration and conservationists have taken the initiative to develop a network of marine conservation areas in Bali, strengthening collaboration between related sectors for the management of marine resources to support the livelihoods of coastal communities.

These pressing issues will be discussed in the workshop commemorating World Ocean Day.

In the workshop, Nyoman Wardawan, head of promotion at the Bali Tourism Agency, will talk about the impact of tourism development in Bali on society, the economy and the environment, while architect Popo Danes from Danes Art Veranda will talk about the strength of art and culture in sustainable development.

The subject of threats and solutions for coral reef management will be presented by Naneng Setiasih from the Coral Reef Alliance.

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Representing the tourism and art sectors will be speakers including Celia Gregory of The Marine Foundation and Agung Prana from Karang Lestari Foundation in Pemuteran.

The workshop is aimed at sharing knowledge and experiences of coral reefs in Bali, and what can be done by tourism and art stakeholders to help overcome the threat against marine resources.

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