

A bird's eye view of Goff's Caye



Goff's Caye, an estimated 1.2-acre island, lies in the central province of the Belize Barrier Reef System (BBRS) and approximately 12 nautical miles east of Belize City (CZMI GIS Unit). This Caye and its surrounding environs are highly recognized as a popular recreational area, attracting Belizean residents and foreigners alike. Its natural beauty, sandy beach and easily accessible reefs draw, on an average, 500 tourists (CZMAI 1999) per week. Although small in size, this island and its marine environment have many important attributes.

From scuba diving and snorkeling to swimming, sailing, beach walking, sunbathing or simply relaxing, visitors to this small island are often mesmerized by its numerous attractions.

How Can You Help?

If you are visiting the island...

- Refrain from littering
- Collect and carry with you all trash generated during visit
- Do not remove shells, dead coral, etc.

If you are a boat operator visiting the area...

- Navigate carefully to avoid contact with coral reefs and other vulnerable ecosystems.
- Refrain from dropping anchor onto corals, anchor in sandy areas or at designated moorings.
- Have well maintained boat engines to avoid oil and gas leakage and spillage.
- Refrain from dumping trash overboard.
- Exercise caution and safety measures when operating around visitors.

If you dive or snorkel on the coral reefs...

- Refrain from touching, standing on or collecting corals.
- Try to maintain control of fins, gauges and other equipment so they don't collide with the reef or stir sediment.
- Report all observable coral reef damages to your dive operator(s) and any known scientific and conservation groups that monitor coral reef health in Belize, including the Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute.

For more information on Goff's Caye and other coastal resources issues, please contact the Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute (CZMAI) at 223-0719/223-2616/2235739 or write us at P.O. Box 1884, Belize City, Belize, email: czmbze@bt1.net

Belize Coastal Zone Management Authority & Institute

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Reefs of Goff's Caye

The reefs adjacent to and surrounding Goff's Caye are considered among the best representatives of healthy reef systems within Belize and are very important to the fisheries sector, functioning as very productive grounds for numerous species of lobster, conch and finfish (CZMI 1999). These reefs have also been the focus of several ecological studies and research (Cambridge Expedition 1959-60; McField 1999; Cambridge Expedition 2000; Kramer and Kramer 2000; Richards-Kramer *et al* 2001; CZMI Coral Reef Monitoring Program)

A large percentage of visitors to Goff's often choose to snorkel on the nearby reefs.



Corals on the backreef adjacent to Goff's Caye; a school of Grunts seeking shelter on the reefs near Goff's Caye; tourist snorkelling on the reefs at Goff's Caye; healthy seagrass bed adjacent to Goff's Caye.

Seagrass Beds

Within the barrier reef lagoon adjacent to Goff's Caye, one can also observe luxurious seagrass beds. These beds provide home and shelter to numerous marine organisms.

Current noticeable impacts

A prime attraction of Goff's Caye is its reef system, a marvel that lures divers and snorkellers alike. Yet, even with this innate quality, there have been some disturbing reports of pillaging ranging from boat anchors being thrown haphazardly on the reefs to visitors touching, walking, standing and even collecting corals on the reef.

It's a well-known fact that coral reefs are among the world's most fragile and endangered ecosystems, thus,



(Top) Boat anchor on coral at Goff's Caye. (Bottom) Visitors standing on reef at Goff's Caye.

it is very important that those, which remain, be preserved. Environmentally sound activities, including responsible diving and snorkelling are crucial to protecting them.



Goff's Caye's beaches offer many forms of recreation and its crystal waters are a huge attraction to many.