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Hello Middle East and Asia!

More sea life thru concrete

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UAE: Coral reefs have had a rough time. Natural and man-made causes have put them under sharp stress. Divers and hotels in the country takes action.

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The artificial reefs in Fujairah seem to be a success. According to Al Boom Diving, who initiated the project, plenty of hammour, puffer fish, banner fish and jacks have started to use it as there home. The goal is to have soft corals in five years. Long-term, the diving club hopes for hard corals.

The reef was created to restore damage done by a cyclone that destroyed some of the marine life outside Fujairah in January 2008. Last June, 15 reef balls were dropped 100 meters outside Le Méridien Al Aqua Hotel at the coast of Dibba. Since then, the reef has increased with additional 20 balls. To minimize eventual negative effects on the marine life, the balls are made of pH-neutral concrete. They weight between 500 kg and 2.5 tonnes and were lowered with cranes and parachutes.

In total, material and manpower has cost AED100,000 (USD27,000).

Abu Dhabi and Dubai might get reefs as well. According to a study made by Emirates Wildlife Society (EWS-WWF), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWFN) and the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD), 65 percent of the corals in Abu Dhabi are already lost due to natural disasters and human activities.

Discussions to create similar reefs around the emirates are being held.

"We have started talks to put a reef by the hotel off the Jebel Ali coast and we have had talks this week with people in Abu Dhabi due to the construction there," said Simon Tambling, managing partner at Al Boom Diving to Emirates Business.

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