

IYOR Germany Coordination Team: Georg A. Heiss¹, Reinhold Leinfelder¹, Franz Brümmer², Marcos Gektidis³, Götz-Bodo-Reinicke⁴, Gert Wörheide⁵

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January 25: Official launch of IYOR at the »boot«-fair in Düsseldorf

The launch of IYOR 2008 in Germany with a press conference and public presentation at the largest European watersports and diving fair »boot« in Düsseldorf. (from left: Reinhold Leinfelder, Helmut Schuhmacher, Arved Fuchs, Franz Brümmer, Georg Heiss)

Coral reefs have attracted much attention in developed countries in recent years. The effect of global climate change on coral reefs and the accelerated loss of biodiversity have been of major concern to politicians, the media and the general public. The fact that coral reef ecosystems are seen as being the first victims of climate change has contributed to this situation. Therefore ICRI declared 2008 as the International Year of the Reef - IYOR.

Shortly after the declaration of IYOR 2008 in October 2006, German scientists, NGOs and government representatives came together to form an IYOR coordination team and an Advisory Council, which started their activities in early 2007.



Media attention in German media is very good. Daily and weekly print publications, TV and radio stations, diving and travel magazines, as well as popular scientific publications are focusing on coral reef themes, and in particular on the global coral reef crisis, throughout the year.

In the first half of 2008 IYOR was featured in Germany in more than 40 unique printed articles and interviews in magazines and newspapers, more than 30 unique webarticles (most of them published on several websites), 2 TV-reports, and 5 radio reports.

Symposia and photo exhibitions are in preparation and seminar series for the general public are held in several cities. 50.000 information leaflets were printed and distributed.



April 8–September 30: Special exhibition »abgetaucht« at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin

A special exhibition on reefs was opened on April 8 in Berlin (Museum of Natural History) by Secretary of State Astrid Klug and will be shown in other cities. »abgetaucht« («dived», »immersed« or »submerged») as the title and motto of this exhibition should convince visitors that looking- or diving-away is no solution. More than 500 exhibits are displayed on 400 m² in the special exhibitions hall of one of the world's five largest natural history museums. The reef habitat offers many opportunities to combine amazing impressions with scientific facts. The exhibition shows original specimens, but also emotional elements. The large reef-diorama, 3D-films or a tour in a glass-bottomed boat over a fringing reef in the Red Sea offer a graphic experience of this wonderful world under water. Other exhibitions have been shown or are in preparation (Bremen, Siegsdorf, Stralsund, Stuttgart).

The year of the reef gained immediate attention by German politicians, and Federal Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel agreed to act as the patron of IYOR 2008 Germany.

Main goals of IYOR Germany are to inform the public and decision makers about the threats coral reefs are facing, and to intensify international cooperation between Germany, coral reef countries and international organisations in research, conservation, public outreach and sustainable development.



The Federal Ministry of the Environment, in co-operation with IYOR Germany, produced a topic magazine on reefs, of which 100.000 hard copies are being distributed for free (also available as free PDF on the web).

New Books on coral reefs were produced, an educational DVD set on reefs is in preparation, a DVD collection of Cousteau's historic films and TV-shows will be published under the IYOR-umbrella.

Movie theatres feature films about coral reefs, an updated IYOR 1997 school resources book is still available as free PDF, and special resource articles for schools have been launched, available at www.riffe.de.

The federal government, private foundations and companies support activities in-kind and financially.



April 15–28: Research Expedition Belize Barrier Reef, onboard Aldebaran

The research project »Diversity of Invertebrates of cryptic habitats in the Belizean Barrier Reef« was launched with an expedition to the Belizean Barrier Reef and three offshore atolls (Lighthouse, Glovers, Turneffe). Three groups of invertebrates are being investigated: The microscopic fauna of the interstitial of coral rubble with emphasis on gastrotriches, gnathostomulids and kinorhynch; brachiopods of cavernous reef structures, especially the subgroup Thecideida; and the diversity of amphipods in cryptic habitats of coral reefs. The specimens will be studied at the Zoological Museum Hamburg and the Natural History Museum Berlin.



May 26: IYOR side event at CBD COP9 (Convention on Biodiversity Conference of the Parties) in Bonn, Germany

ICRI, IYOR and CBD secretariat organized a side event on »Marine Biodiversity and the International Year of the Reef« with presentations by Christine Dawson, US Department of State, Ahmed Djoghla, CBD, Georg Heiss, Museum für Naturkunde Berlin, Germany, Francis Staub, IYOR 2008, Clive Wilkinson, Global Reef Monitoring Network, Stefan Hain, UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre, Syamsal Ma'arif, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Indonesia, Atsuhiro Yoshinaka, Ministry of Environment, Japan, and Salvatore Arico, IOC-UNESCO.



May 26–30: IYOR booth at Expo of diversity, CBD COP9 in Bonn, Germany

An information booth was prepared by IYOR Germany and VDST (Association of German Divers) during the »Expo of Diversity«, which was directed to conference participants and the interested public.



Official Web site of IYOR Germany

The Web site at www.iyor2008.de is the main information exchange platform and provides an event calendar, links to IYOR partners, videos, reef news, downloadable information and educational materials as well as a network of experts and press documentation.

A new website (www.reefstudent.de) informs prospective students about coral reef ecology and biodiversity courses run by German-speaking Universities, with focus on the Red Sea.