

To: Editor, ST Forum

We refer to the letter ST Forum, 12 Sep "Coral reefs need help to restore themselves" by Dr Chou Loke Ming.

We agree with Dr Chou that our coral reefs in Singapore do need all the help they can get given the dire straits they are in now. We also appreciate the fact that such artificial reef modules are proposed only for sites devoid of corals.

In addition we would like to suggest a few more actions to this restoration efforts.

1. Conduct an extensive monitoring or biodiversity survey of all our southern islands' reefs to ascertain their current status. The last one was done some 15 years ago and we think it is time for another one. Just as the last one was done with assistance from public volunteers, perhaps this one could be done similarly and the findings made known to the public.

2. We strongly urged for the establishment of marine parks or reserves in some of our southern islands. Just as we have terrestrial parks like Bukit Timah and Sungei Buloh, we believe Singaporeans deserve similar ones in our waters to conserve the last remaining marine habitats. To date there are no marine parks or marine reserves gazetted in Singapore. A proposal some years ago by the Singapore Underwater Federation for Pulau Hantu as Singapore's Marine Community Park has been rejected. We strongly urge that this proposal be reconsidered. Water sports especially scuba diving and angling continues to be popular in Singapore, but these activities require not only clean water but also intact marine habitats.

3. A Blue Plan should be formulated as an integral part of the Singapore Green Plan to oversee the marine biodiversity and habitats. The Blue Plan should include a legal and regulatory framework with an identified central or coordinating government agency.

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