



CTA-056-Reef Protection-Cayman

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Vic Ferguson

The World Federation for Coral Reef Conservation 281.971.7703 P.O. Box 311117 Houston Texas 77231
6/9/16

FORWARD: This article is a good description of what is happening around the world, yet unknown by the rest of the world. This government has recognized that a problem is developing in coastal regions of their country and are making an effort to minimize the results. Uncontrolled coastal development and construction is one of the largest problems in coastal management. As it happens here, it will happen elsewhere. The worst cast already exists somewhere in the world.....

"We all should realize that there is a problem with our oceans and should be addressed globally, it's our ocean to save.....Executive Director WFCRC



CaymanNewsService

[Reefs need more protection, says Panton](#)

[Cayman News](#) | 08/06/2016 | [13 Comments](#)

Cayman Islands coral reef (Photo courtesy Department of Environment)



(CNS): The environment minister has warned that Cayman's reefs are still under threat and are in need of further legal protection to halt the decline. Wayne Panton has said he is committed to steering through proposed enhancements to the marine parks in the face of the mounting threats. "The threats are real and growing and we must respond," he said in a message marking World Oceans Day. Cayman has been through an extensive consultation period, which began several years ago, to find the best way to enhance marine protection while still allowing Caymanians to fish but it has not yet enacted the necessary legislation.

One of the first countries in the region to enact comprehensive marine conservation measures, Cayman has maintained a relatively healthy marine habitat. But over the past few years the environment has faced increased fishing pressure, coastal development, mangrove removal, climate-change induced coral bleaching and the invasive red lionfish. In the face of the growing threats, experts have confirmed Cayman must take action to preserve what it has left of its coral reefs.



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Panton said that while Cayman had made significant strides in protecting the ocean, there was still more to be done to provide “continued and appropriate protections to our fragile marine environment”. The minister pointed out, “It provides us with so many benefits, both economic, in terms of tourism jobs, and social, through recreation and enjoyment.”

He said the goal of the proposals for enhanced marine parks, “which have been the subject of extended public consultation over the past couple of years”, was to secure the future of local reefs, which are critical to a healthy marine environment.

“Research carried out by the DoE and its Darwin Initiative project partners, Bangor University and The Nature Conservancy, has shown that marine protected areas are the most effective, most efficient and most economical way to conserve our marine resources for future generations,” Panton added.

He said that over the last 30 years the marine parks have served Cayman well and preserved marine life. However, the reefs are still in decline in a world where the threats are even more significant and more diverse than in the 1980’s when Cayman first enacted its marine park laws.

The minister said that he was committed to adopting as soon as possible the proposed enhancements to the marine parks recommended by the Department of Environment (DoE) and endorsed by the National Conservation Council.

The proposal is currently with Cabinet, and while Panton is fully committed to it, pressure from a vocal minority that oppose any new enhancements threatening fishing rights are understood to be stalling the move.

Despite the battle to win hearts and minds when it comes to conservation, Panton made history in 2013 when he steered through the National Conservation Law, with the support of the entire Legislative Assembly, after decades of controversy and disagreement among legislators.

As a result, conservationists and those in the community that want to see Cayman step up and enhance the protection of the country’s valuable marine resources are hopeful that Panton can, once again, win the support of his political peers, despite concerns reportedly coming not just from the opposition benches but his own government colleagues.

[Environment Minister Panton’s statement on World Oceans Day and World Environment Day 2016, 7 June 2016](#)

Wayne, if you really want to protect our reefs, stop talking foolishness about more marine parks. Fix the dump and stop septic tanks discharging untreated effluent into our groundwater. We all know that nutrient loading from land-based sources is a bigger problem for marine degradation than someone catching a Grunt from one of your expanded marine parks. So please stop tinkering with the fringes of the issue and tackle the real problem.

[08/06/2016 at 10:29 pm](#)

Yes minister Panton from the ministry of stating the obvious. Stop talking about it and just get it done for goodness sake.

[09/06/2016 at 8:20 am](#)

None of this is helped by the dumping of yards of marl on the beach near the fish market. In spite of orders from CPA the developer has done nothing about it nor screening off the huge hole built for the septic tank which is a huge danger to passing



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tourists.. The marl will wash into the sea thereby damaging the reef further. This unwanted development is an eyesore and totally against the beautification project in George Town. It is mickey mouse and it is just not wanted. Mr Thompson please get that marl off the beach so it can be used and put a fence against the hole. No man is above the law in particularly you.

[08/06/2016 at 1:12 pm](#)

The two biggest threats to our reefs are:

1. Lack of funding for DOE to enforce marine laws.
2. The cruise berthing facility.

Our government has the power and resources to remedy both of these issues but they won't. Sad.:[08/06/2016 at 2:55 pm](#)

3. Coral bleaching caused by climate change/El Nino... Which is sorta outta our governments control.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-36473928>

[09/06/2016 at 8:08 am](#)

Think you will find our Dump does a pretty good job with all the leaching into the North Sound.

[08/06/2016 at 1:08 pm](#)

Sounds all good Panton, now how about being concerned about of the all red tape being dished out on all of us Caymanian small business owners by YOUR ministry. 2017 can't come too soon....

[08/06/2016 at 12:52 pm](#)

Aplaud minister Panton for making strides and commitment to protect the reef but they need to revisit some of the laws because it give the doe chief too much absolute power with no recourse to government.

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*The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing"....**Edmund Burke***