

VIETNAM: BATHERS BANNED FROM FAMOUS DIVING SPOT TO PROTECT THE CORAL



Divers and bathers will no longer be able to access the areas around Hon Mun Island, in the southern half of the country, known for the beauty of its corals.

Restricting tourism to protect nature. This is the choice that Vietnam has just made by prohibiting swimming around the island of Hon Mun. **A way to revive the coral reef which is quote damaged in places.** The tourist island located off the city of Nha Trang (the southern half of the country) is a popular diving spot because of the diversity of its ecosystem. Recent photographs taken off the coast showed bleached and damaged corals.

"The Nha Trang Bay Management Authority has decided to stop swimming and scuba diving activities in the areas around Hon Mun Island" until further notice, authorities said. In a statement, they said the ban was to "assess the condition of the sensitive area so that an appropriate plan can be developed" to save the corals.

According to state media, about 60% of the area's coastal bottoms were covered with live coral in 2020. That figure has dropped to less than 50% today. Authorities say powerful storms in 2019 and 2021 may have damaged the corals, but illegal fishing, dredging, littering and construction activities are also being blamed.

Divers have expressed anger at the decision. "Swimming and diving activities had the least influence on the coral reefs, compared to other activities," said diver Nguyen Son from Ho Chi Minh City. "Without any sense of responsibility, fishing boats came in and destroyed the seabed," said diver Trinh Ngoc Sang, for whom rebuilding the corals will take decades. Globally, corals are home to about 25% of marine biodiversity.

The communist nation enjoys 320 km of coastline with crystal clear waters, rich marine life and sandy beaches. **Coral reefs throughout Southeast Asia have been hit hard by global warming, with scientists warning that their degradation could have devastating economic and environmental impacts.**

Vietnam's decision follows a similar measure taken in Thailand, which restricted access to the famous Maya Bay beach, immortalized in the movie The Beach with Leo DiCaprio, for many months in order to give the local ecosystem a chance to recover.

Date: 2022-07-04

Article link: <https://www.tourism-review.com/popular-diving-spot-in-vietnam-closed-news12628>