

CASE *Study*

Marine biodiversity: Lagoon protection and management at Bel Ombre

In 2017, Heritage Resorts installed three breakwaters and a groyne in a bid to mitigate the impact of rising sea levels on beach erosion. This project was implemented following the conclusion of a scientific study carried out by external stakeholders. Ten artificial reefs were further added to help restore marine biodiversity.

Over the past years, these structures are subject to regular monitoring and assessment to fully understand their impact on biodiversity. Field monitoring studies are now conducted every six months by Reef Conversation and Daymarine. The results thereof are compiled in Environmental Monitoring Reports (EMR), which provide accurate data on the positive impact of these structures, and identify additional measures, if needed. Outcomes for the Bel Ombre lagoon are positive: in the EMR of April 2023, 16 species of hard corals, 3 species of soft corals, 43 species of reef fish, 4 species of seagrasses, 3 species of algae and 10 species of invertebrates were observed, while the beach surface in some specific areas has increased by up to 5 meters, in addition to the stabilisation of the beach slope.

In that same perspective, Rogers Hospitality is working along with local stakeholders to come up with additional lagoon protection and management initiatives. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with other neighbouring hotels. Other projects are in the pipeline to encourage water sports activities that do not adversely impact marine biodiversity. Discussions are underway with all stakeholders. Such projects will help reduce human-related stress on the marine biodiversity in Bel Ombre and improve their resilience in the face of climate change.

