HAWAII’S LIVING REEF IMPORTANCE

Thanks to our living reef, Hawaii has sandy beaches…

*Beach sand is primarily made up of worn fragments of coral, shell, urchin, and calcified algae, as well as foraminifera and other minute organisms that float around the ocean.*

Thanks to our living reef, Hawaii has big wave surfing…

*The shape of the reef is one of the important determinants of how big a wave gets. Without Oahu’s reefs, the world famous surf breaks at Pipeline and Sunset would not exist.*

Thanks to our living reef, Hawaii is home to millions of marine life – many of them found nowhere else on earth…

*The rich algae and coral growth on our reefs provides food and shelter that fish require to survive and grow, from keiki to adult. No reef, no fish.*

*Over 25% of Hawaiian reef animals are endemic, found nowhere else on the planet. Included in this count are one fourth of all Hawaiian reef fishes, the highest percentage of unique native species for warm water marine fishes anywhere on earth.*

Thanks to our living reef, Hawaii consistently ranks as one of the top tourist destinations in the world…

*Our reefs form sandy beaches that are ranked among the top beaches in the world. Market research indicates that participating in diving and snorkeling activities ranks as one of the top five activities for our visitors from the West. Our reefs consistently rank as one of the top scuba diving destinations worldwide in dive magazine surveys.*

Thanks to our living reef, the native Hawaiians were incredible watermen/women and reef stewards…

*The reefs provided sustenance, as well as a basis for leisure. From fishing to sailing to surfing, many of the activities pursued by the ancient Hawaiians are still popular today. Board surfing is Hawaii’s premier contribution to the world of ocean recreation. Early Hawaiians recognized the importance of corals and the coral reef as a major component of the building blocks of our Islands. The coral (Ko’a) is mentioned in the*
beginning versus of the Kumulipo, the creation chant of Hawaii. The coral polyp was the first creature to emerge during creation according to Hawaiian mythology. The importance of the reefs was not lost upon Hawaii’s earliest residents; in fact, corals were often presented as offerings during religious ceremonies. The intimate knowledge that the protection and maintenance of reef resources was, is, and continues to be central in the Hawaiian way of life.