



GUIDELINES FOR SAFE & PROPER USE OF ANCHOR MOORING BUOYS SAVING THE REEF ONE BUOY AT A TIME



BELIZE'S REEF AND MOORING BUOY'S

The reef system off the coast of Belize is a part of the Mesoamerican Reef, which stretches from the northern Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico, all the way south to the Bay Islands of Honduras. It is a world heritage site and is the second largest barrier reef in the world. A healthy reef is home to a colorful myriad of different corals, fish and reef creatures. Belize's reef is vital to the economy of Belize, providing lively hood for the people of Belize. Through Fishing - providing fish and lobster from its nurseries and Tourism offering a wonderful visual spectacle for divers and snorkelers who venture into this unique world. Healthy reefs protect the coastline from storm-wave erosion by reducing the energy in waves caused by severe storms e.g. hurricanes.

Every year the use of traditional anchors and their dragging chains used for mooring commercial and recreational boats causes millions of dollars in damage to coral reefs around the world. A mooring buoy is a device which protects coral reefs by allowing boats to easily fix their position without dropping an anchor. By using anchor moorings at all times when available you can make a difference helping us to preserve and protect the reef and its fragile eco-system. Please do NOT anchor on live coral reef areas or in the dead coral rubble. Anchoring in sandy areas is acceptable only when mooring buoys are unavailable or in any case of emergency. If you must use an anchor make sure your anchor is not dragging and that the anchor chain and line do not contact with corals or tear up grass beds which are also integral to the health of the reef and its creatures.



KNOW THE MAIN BUOY TYPES FOUND IN BELIZE

There are four main types of buoys used in Belize waters - channel marker buoys, demarcation buoys, marker buoys (used by fishermen or to mark particular marine hazards) and anchor mooring buoys. Anchor mooring buoys are the only buoys which have a pick up line attached to the buoy, this is to assist vessels hooking up to the buoy using the deck rope or bow-line as a "scope" line. "Scope" is the distance of line/rope between the vessel and buoy, the more scope the less stress on the anchor mooring buoy. As a general rule the distance between the buoy and the securing cleat on the bow or stern where line/rope is attached should be a minimum of half the length of the vessel moored to the buoy. Anchor mooring buoys offer marine vessels an environmentally friendly method of anchorage without causing permanent damage to the living coral reef and sea grass beds below often caused by traditional anchors. Belizean law states ALL buoys in Belize waters become the property of the Government of Belize under the Belize National Mooring Program. Therefore, none GOB entities cannot charge a user fee for the use of mooring buoys, donations to the various voluntary community mooring projects under the program in Belize are always welcome.



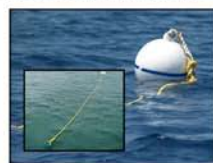
Channel Marker



Demarcation



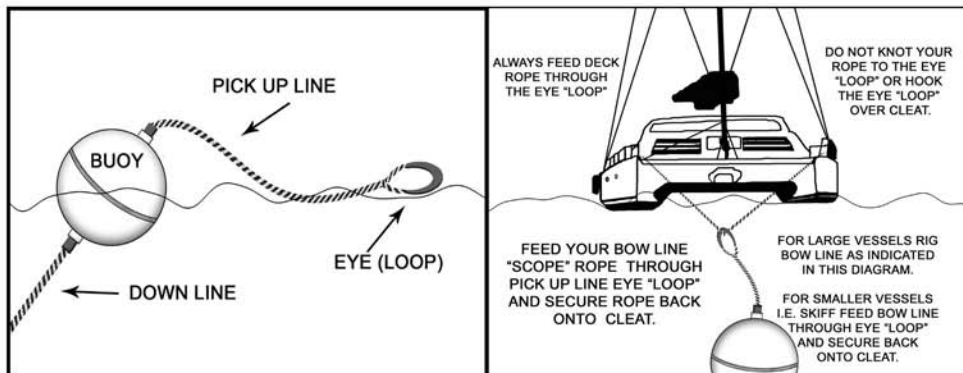
Marker



Mooring Buoy

NOTE: Any vessel which runs aground on the reef in Belize MUST IMMEDIATELY report the incident to the Police, Belize Ports Authority and Belize Department Of Fisheries. This is a legal requirement. Offenders who do not report these incidents will be fined and/or prosecuted.

HOW TO USE A MOORING BUOY



1. Approach from Down-Wind/Down-Current. The pickup line will indicate the direction of the current, some mooring buoys have an additional small buoy on the pickup line to assist with line visibility. **BE AWARE** of surroundings at all times such as lines, snorkelers, divers, buoys and other boats.

2. If in a large boat you will need a boat hook ready to hand, it is worth briefing a novice crew to pull along the length of the boat hook, not to lift with it at arm's length, it is easy to break a hook if it is used like a crane rather than to pull with.

3. Secure one end of your OWN line to bow cleat, then feed bow-line through the floating pick-up line's eye "loop" extending the line back to your boat in a continuous loop from the buoy securing it back to bow cleat. Where possible only attach to the bow of your vessel. Have a minimum of 20 feet of your line "scope" between boat and attachment point at the eye "loop".

4. Allow the boat to EASE back onto the line. **DO NOT** Strain/Use engines against the mooring. Sailboats should not leave large sails up as steadying sails when on a buoy. This puts too much strain on the mooring pin. Shut down engine and check all lines are secure. You are responsible for ensuring your vessel is properly secured.

** Buoys marked for DIVE Sites may not be used as permanent anchorage points and must be made available at all times to Licensed Dive Operators. Belizean Law prohibits vessels chartered in Belize and NOT captained by a Belizean licensed captain to go outside the reef.

DISENGAGING FROM A MOORING BUOY

1. Engage engine and slowly ease forward giving slack to your line attached to the buoy.

2. Put engine in neutral and release your line tied to cleat and swiftly draw your line back in to your boat.

3. Engage engine and slowly move away from the buoy and lines. Be aware of your surroundings especially lines, snorkelers, divers, buoys and other boats. Move carefully and slowly from shallow to deeper waters before going to full speed or raising sails.

PLEASE REPORT ANY DAMAGED OR MISSING BUOYS TO THE BELIZE FISHERIES DEPARTMENT.

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