Coral reef case study: Maldives

Location

* The Maldives is a group of Coral Islands in the Indian Ocean
* West of India and Sri Lanka
* Capital is Malée
* On the Equator.
* Low lying islands consist of about 1200 islands.
* Some smaller than a football field and some of the
* Largest 1 - 2 miles long

Why are coral reefs important?

* Coral reefs are greatly important for the future of the Maldives
* Whole country is built on coral
* Main attractions for tourists in the area
* Tourism has become the country's major source income
* Tourism is expected to increase as the government infrastructure improvement projects
* Projects include upgrades in transportation, communications, sanitation, water supply, and other support facilities are put into place.
* Therefore the coral reefs need to be sustained

How are they being damaged?

* Contamination of the water due to the sewage outlets
* Pollution from agriculture, sewage and industries
* Dynamite fishing is a huge problem (kills vast amount of fish and blows up the corals in which the fish live, breed, eat in
* Coral mining is illegal, some corals and fish are very expensive and are sold on the black market to the West
* Water disposal of ships passing slowly contaminates the water as the Maldives is in international waters
* Rising sea levels will kill off the deepest corals slowly, causes a massive impact
* Fishing nets smash corals
* Tourism is actively disturbing the environment

How are they being protected?

* Education and training for the public to raise their awareness of the effect they are having on the corals
* Banning dynamite fishing and coral mining
* The set up of 19 different sites to protect and monitor e.g. Gama island
* Land use zoning for regulated development
* Marine conservation parks set up as tourist attractions

Evaluate how successful this has been

* The Maldives is involved in partnerships concerning conservation and management of coral reefs
* MOFA organization aims to maintain coral management
* IRRM focuses on the main issues of reef resources management, and plans to resolve these issues
* Cannot stop everyone
* Still selling corals and fish on the black market
* Global warming is a global issue and is still affecting the Maldives