

Anchoring around coral

Each year sailboats cruising in the Tuamotus get into trouble at anchor: they get trapped on lee shores after a shift in the wind direction, foul their anchor and/or chain in coral and the results are stressful manoeuvres to get the anchor back up, bent bow rollers and ruined or even ripped out windlasses. Of course the fragile coral structures get badly damaged with each of these messed up manoeuvres. Isn't an anchorage with colourful coral and fishies much nicer than a dead rubble field?

It is **easy to avoid damage** to the coral and your boat if you

- anchor in conditions with **good visibility** (don't drop your anchor blindly)
- try to find a big, **sandy spot** to drop your hook
- anchor in **shallow** water where...
 - ... you can see the bottom
 - ... usually fewer coral heads grow on the sandy shelves
 - ... you only need a short chain

- float the chain so that the boat can swing around in shifting winds without getting the chain caught in coral heads
- keep an eye on the **weather forecast** and move to a safe anchorage before the wind shifts

Floating the chain is a simple procedure. You just need

- 2 buoys or medium-sized fenders
 - 2 carabiners that fit into your chain
1. Drop the anchor in the middle of the biggest sandy spot you can find
 2. Pay out chain while reversing gently
 3. Look around at the surrounding coral heads to estimate the swinging radius and hook in the first float before the chain could touch any of them.
 4. Pay out some more chain and set the anchor gently pulling in reverse.
 5. If the scope is still not sufficient, a second float can be added followed by more chain.

For more info visit www.pitufa.at. Enjoy the Gambier and Tuamotus!

