

## **MENTOR TEXT – BOOKLET 22**

On Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2025, between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m., my family and I embarked on an outing, as we visited the Buccoo Reef in Tobago. This trip ended with me having an unexpected encounter with a school of stingrays. This report recounts what took place during this trip.

Around 9:00 a.m., my family arrived at the jetty in Buccoo Village, where we were expected to meet the boat's captain and other persons also going on the trip. We boarded a glass-bottom boat named "Frankie's Tours" and was off soon afterwards. After about fifteen minutes of sailing, the boat engine was stopped, and the boat was allowed to slowly drift above a shallow area over the reef. As the boat drifted, the captain pointed at different fishes through the boat's glass-bottom and gave a brief description of all the fishes and corals in our view.

By 10:30 a.m., all interested passengers were allowed to enter the water to swim among the fishes and corals. My family and I entered the water with our snorkelling gear. Underwater, various reef animals were observed. Fish of different colours, including blue, yellow, and striped, swam among the coral. Sea urchins were visible on the seabed. Small crabs moved between rocks. The water was clear as sunlight penetrated the reef below. My family swam among the observed marine life for approximately one hour.

Following the snorkelling activity, all passengers were instructed to return to the boat. As I swam towards the boat, a school of stingrays began circling me. The boat's captain immediately instructed me to stay calm and allow them to pass by, which I did. After about five minutes of them circling me, the school swam off towards another area of the reef. I then swam towards the boat and was pulled aboard by the captain.

The captain then explained to all passengers that this was an unusual experience since stingrays are not known to swim in large groups. A few minutes later, when everyone was once again seated, the captain started the boat's engine, and we left Buccoo Reef and headed towards Nylon Pool.

