**Life on the Bahamian Coral Reef**

Coral Reefs cover less than 1% of the sea floor, but contain 25% of all marine species. These species depend on each other for their survival. Some organisms that live on our reefs are:


**Coral Reefs provide:**
- a habitat for marine organisms
- a supply of seafood
- shoreline protection
- employment through fishing and tourism
- sand and beaches
- recreation for locals and tourists
- opportunities for scientific research
- medicinal and commercial products

**Coral Reefs of The Bahamas**

Coral reefs provide us with food, jobs, recreation and storm protection. Let’s do our part to protect our precious Coral Reefs.

**Benefits of Reefs**

- Reefs provide food, jobs, recreation and storm protection. Let’s do our part to protect our precious Coral Reefs.

**Photo credits:**
- Sandra Voegeli
- Kemit-Amon Lewis
- John Knowles
- Catherine Booker

**Coral Reef Conservation in The Bahamas**

**Coral Reef Education** - BREEF and other conservation partners raise awareness of coral reefs through school programmes, field trips, public campaigns and teacher training workshops.

**Protection of Connected Habitats** - Marine habitats are interlinked; many reef species need several different habitats, including coral reefs, wetlands, seagrass beds, beaches, tidal flats and deep sea areas, to complete their life cycle. Protected areas, land use planning, proper waste disposal and removal of invasive species, help to protect these habitats.

**Scientific Research** - Scientists collect useful data to guide management efforts.

**Legislation to Protect Important Species** - The harvest of coral, sea turtles and commercial shark fishing is prohibited in The Bahamas. Closed seasons, size limits, gear restrictions, bag limits for sport-fishing and restricted entry into the fishery are designed to prevent over exploitation of marine resources.

**Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)** - Marine Parks and Reserves protect critical marine habitats. National Parks are managed by The Bahamas National Trust. Marine Reserves are managed by the Department of Marine Resources. The Government of The Bahamas has committed to expand the protected area network by protecting 20% of the Bahamas’ marine environment by 2020.

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**MPAs that protect Coral Reefs (2012)**

- **Abacos**
  - Walker’s Cay National Park
  - No Name Cay Marine Reserve
  - Fish Cay National Park
  - Pelican Cay Land and Sea Park

- **Andros**
  - North and South Marine Parks

- **Exuma**
  - Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park
  - Mosquito Harbor Cay National Park
  - The Exumas (Jewfish Cay) Marine Reserve

- **Others**
  - The Conception Island National Park
  - Little Harbour National Park
  - South Berry Islands Marine Reserve

A third of the Caribbean’s coral reefs are located in The Bahamas. Barrier reefs are generally found on the eastern (windward) side of islands. Fringing reefs are located near shore and patch reefs are found on the shallower banks.

**www.breef.org**