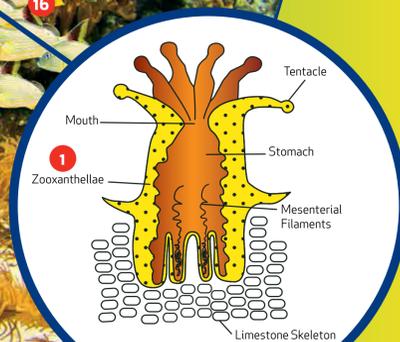


Life on the Bahamian Coral Reef

Coral Reefs are areas of tremendous biodiversity. They cover less than 1% of the ocean floor but contain 25% of all marine species. Some of the species and organisms contributing to coral reef biodiversity include:

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Zooxanthellae | 5. Sponge | 9. Long-Spined Urchin | 15. Butterflyfish | 20. Green Moray Eel |
| 2. Phytoplankton / Microscopic Algae | 6. Seafan (Soft Coral) | 10. Queen Conch | 16. Grunts | 21. Barracuda |
| 3. Marine Algae / Seaweed | 7. Hard Corals a. Elkhorn Coral b. Brain Coral | 11. Silversides/Pilchards | 17. Snappers | 22. Nurse Shark |
| 4. Seagrass | 8. Sea Cucumber | 12. Parrotfish | 18. Black Grouper | 23. Caribbean Reef Shark |
| | | 13. Queen Angelfish | 19. Nassau Grouper | 24. Hawksbill Turtle |
| | | 14. Spiny Lobster/Crawfish | 25. Seastar | |



Tiny colonial animals called coral polyps, secrete a limestone skeleton which builds the structure of the reef. Microscopic algae called zooxanthellae live symbiotically inside the polyps' tissues.



Benefits of Reefs

- Reefs provide:**
- a habitat for marine organisms
 - seafood and food security
 - shoreline protection from storms
 - employment through fishing and tourism
 - sand and beaches
 - recreation for locals and tourists
 - opportunities for scientific research
 - pharmaceutical products



Coral Reef Conservation in The Bahamas

Coral Reef Education - BREEF and other conservation partners raise awareness of coral reefs through school programmes, field studies, public campaigns and marine conservation 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 and community volunteers collect data to guide management decisions. Coral reef surveys, coral propagation activities, conch, grouper and crawfish studies, invasive lionfish research and removals are being conducted in The Bahamas. BREEF monitors corals at our Sculpture Garden and coral nurseries.

Legislation to Protect Important Species - The harvest of corals, sea turtles and sharks 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 Bahamas Government continues to fulfill its commitment to expand Marine Protected Areas.

Habitat Protection

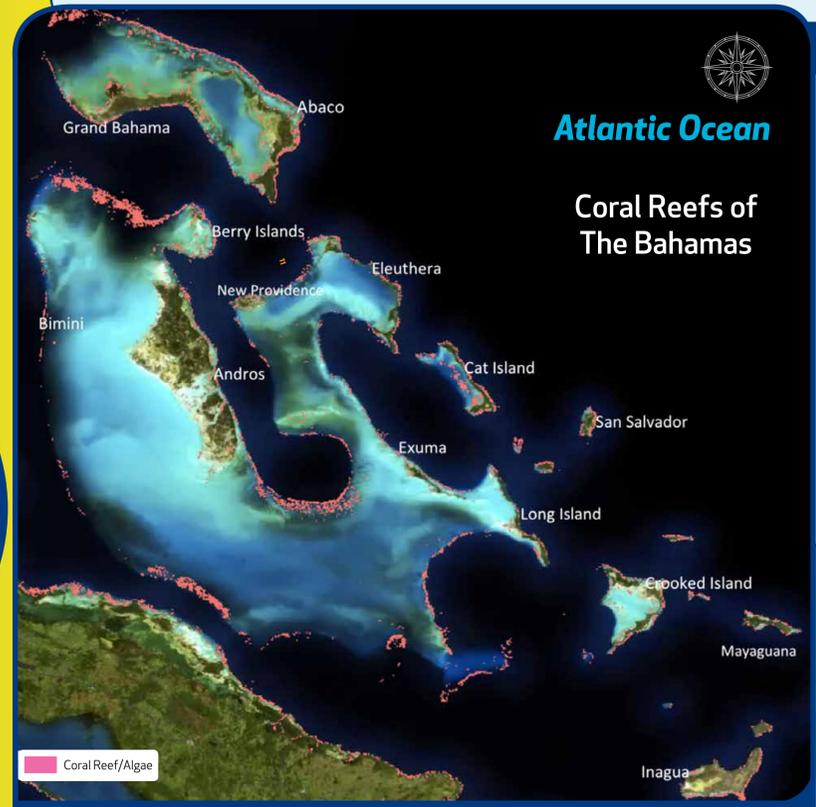
Legislation & enforcement

Protected Areas



Education

Scientific Research



Coral Restoration:

- utilizes coral propagation techniques including coral nurseries to grow corals.
- helps corals adapt to stressors and changing environments, examples: warming oceans, ocean acidification and hurricanes.
- provides corals that can be added to the reef to help restore areas that are stressed or endangered.

BREEF maintains coral nurseries at the BREEF Sir Nicholas Nuttall Coral Reef Sculpture Garden and on the Andros Barrier Reef where endangered Staghorn coral (*Acropora cervicornis*) is grown.

BREEF is a part of the Reef Rescue Network in The Bahamas.

A third of the wider 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 shallow banks. Andros Barrier Reef is the third largest Barrier Reef in the world.

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Vibrant Oceans Initiative
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Reefs provide us with food, jobs, recreation and storm protection. Let's do our part to protect our precious Bahamian Coral Reefs.

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