



### Threats to coral reefs?

- Pollution and over-fishing are the most serious threats to these ecosystems.
- Extensive and poorly managed land development can threaten the survival of coral reefs.
- Dynamite fishing is another extremely destructive method that fishermen use to harvest small fish and in turn destroys corals
- Pollution, especially from increased sedimentation (from poor land use) that smothers the coral tissue and nutrients (from runoff) that promote algae growth which, in turn, suffocates the corals.
- Physical damage from tourists damaging the reefs, anchors dropped in coral beds, and ships colliding with reefs.
- Alteration of coastline /Island habitats, such as deforestation, coastal development and so on.

### What we can do to protect coral reefs?

- Don't pollute, never put garbage or human waste in the water.
- Report dumping or other illegal activities to authorities.
- Keep it clean. You may be in the habit of picking up your own trash. You may even participate in an organized cleanup. But have you considered carrying away the trash that others have left behind?
- Only buy marine aquarium fish if you know they have been collected in an ecologically sound manner.
- Don't anchor on the reef.
- If you dive, don't touch! Take only pictures and leave only bubbles! Keep your fins' gear, and hands away from the coral,
- Make sure that sewage from your boat, from others' boats, and from land is correctly treated. The nutrients from sewage feed growing algae that can smother an kill corals.



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# CORAL REEFS

Living museums



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## What are coral reefs?

Many of you might wonder, what are corals – Plants or Animals?

They are actually animals with plants living inside them. A coral structure is actually composed of hundreds or thousands of these tiny animals growing together as a colony which make a coral. They are one of the Earth's most beautiful, ancient and complex ecosystems. They play an essential role in sustaining life in the sea and serve as a source of food and protection for human

communities. But coral reefs face an uncertain future. As a result of growing human and environmental attack, reefs are among the most threatened ecosystems on earth.

## Why coral reefs are important?

- Coral reefs are the most diverse communities on the planet.
- They are one of the earth's most beautiful ecosystems
- More than 25,000 described species live in reef habitats
- Many endangered organisms live in the coral reef ecosystem.
- Reef formation is very slow so we need to protect them.
- Coral reefs are often considered the medicine cabinets of the 21st century.

They offer great promise for pharmaceuticals now being developed as possible cures for cancer, arthritis, human bacterial infections, viruses and other diseases.

- Coral reefs protect shore line from erosion and damage.

## Coral reefs of India

Andaman and Nicobar, Lakshadweep, Gulf of Mannar (Tamilnadu), Gulf of Kutch (Gujrat) are well known for their coral reefs. Coral patches occur at some intertidal locations and submerged banks on the continental shelf along the west coast. Coral diversity at these sites is generally restricted to few genera.

