

CORAL REEFS (PART 1)

By Baron Barnett

Hi. This is a report on coral reefs. You might think “Why would coral reefs be so important?” Coral reefs are important because they provide a good environment for fish and other creatures to live. If you’re really liking fish, there are lots of different types of fish on coral reefs.

Coral reefs are formed by little single celled creatures called polyps. You can think of polyps as though they are mini seeds for coral to grow. The polyps float down from the surface of the ocean to the sea floor. It takes about 100 years for a coral reef to grow 3 meters horizontally. That means that they grow really slowly.

Coral reefs are important for feeding other creatures. They keep reef eco systems alive. And if we are not careful, we could destroy those eco systems by harming coral reefs. So try and be careful not to damage those eco systems by taking them because they are beautiful, by taking animals from the reef or introducing new invasive species, like lion fish.

Note: enjoy the coral reefs while you can, because scientists estimate that by 2050, 90% of the coral reefs will die.

How to help save coral reefs

1. No invasive species, or eradicate the species
2. Use reef-save sunscreens
3. Educate people so they know what to do and what not to do
4. Watch where you throw your anchor

Coral Reefs part 2: Saving the coral reefs

Coral reefs are important because they provide an environment for many animals, they buffer shorelines from the effects of hurricanes. An estimated 500 million people earn their livelihoods from the fishing stocks and tourism opportunities reefs provide. The tiny animals that give rise to reefs are even offering hope for new drugs to treat cancer and other diseases. But, warming waters, pollution, ocean acidification, overfishing, and physical destruction are killing coral reefs¹.

Ocean acidification is the decrease in the ocean's pH levels, caused primarily by increased carbon dioxide. Ocean acidification threatens corals and shellfish². Higher levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere lead to higher levels of carbonic acid in the water. More carbonic acid means less calcium carbonate. Coral reefs need calcium carbonate to build their protective shells and exoskeletons. Without

¹ <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/2020/06/scientists-work-to-save-coral-reefs-climate-change-marine-parks/>

² <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/media/acidification-reefs/>

it, shells grow slowly and become weak. Coral reefs with breakable, slow-growing corals erode more quickly than they grow. Reefs can disappear, and the extinction of entire species is possible.

Some effective ways to reduce your own carbon footprint are to buy less: recycling programs are not as effective as people think. It's better to buy less and reuse as much as you can, than to rely on recycling programs. Every bit helps, always try your best. One day I would like to take all the carbon dioxide from cars and planes and build them differently so they don't put out as much or any carbon dioxide, and use the exhaust pipe in a different way. And I also think that there should be less race car races, because race cars they use a lot of carbon dioxide.