



# A DIVE INTO THE WORLD OF CORAL | 01

## ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING LIFE FORMS ON THE PLANET. 10 SURPRISING FACTS ABOUT CORAL REEFS.

### 1. A QUARTER OF ALL MARINE SPECIES LIVE ON CORAL REEFS

They make up a fraction of the ocean – less than 1% – but they provide a home to around 25% of all the world's marine life. Over 4,000 different species of fish rely on **CORAL REEFS!**

### 2. CORALS ARE ANIMALS, NOT PLANTS

A common misconception is that corals are plants or rocks, but in actual fact they are animals. They are made up of hard and soft varieties of coral which live together in large groups called colonies.

### 3. HALF A BILLION PEOPLE RELY ON CORAL REEFS FOR FOOD

They provide food for a variety of fish, which in turn provides food for humans. It's estimated that around 500 million people in the world consume the fish found on **CORAL REEFS.**

### 4. CORAL REEFS NEED SUNLIGHT TO GROW...

Clear and shallow water is where **CORAL REEFS** thrive. They generally grow best at depths shallower than 70 metres where sunlight can easily reach.

### 5. ...BUT TOO MUCH HEAT CAN BE HARMFUL

Corals and algae have a symbiotic relationship, but if the ocean gets too warm the corals expel their algae which causes them to turn white. This process is known as bleaching. In a desperate attempt to survive increasing ocean temperatures, some corals have been shown to emit vibrant colours, a phenomenon which has led to the 'Global Glowing Campaign'.

### 6. THEY ACT AS A BARRIER DURING STORMS

**CORAL REEFS** play an important role in protecting coastal communities from storms and water surges. They act as a buffer, and are able to slow down the flow of water as well as prevent coastal erosion.

### 7. CORAL REEFS CLEAN THE WATER THEY'RE IN

You won't find **CORAL REEFS** living in murky water! Many corals and sponges feed on particles found in the ocean, which in turn leaves the water incredibly clear.

### 8. THEY ARE A HUGE DRIVER OF TOURISM

In a pre-COVID-19 world, around 71 million people each year visited **CORAL REEFS** for recreation. This tourism is hugely important to local economies, particularly so in those lesser-known destinations that rely on international tourism.

### 9. CORAL REEFS DATE BACK AROUND 240 MILLION YEARS

It's been recorded that **CORAL REEFS** began forming as far back as 240 million years ago! Established **CORAL REEFS** today are between 5,000 – 10,000 years old, although some individual corals may only live a couple of years.

### 10. THEY DON'T JUST LIVE IN WARM WATERS

Although more commonly associated with tropical waters, **CORAL REEFS** have been found in temperatures as low as 4°C and at depths of 2,000 metres. These deep-sea corals don't rely on photosynthesis to survive like their warm-water counterparts do. Instead, they feed solely on food particles from the surrounding water.

Information sourced from content at <https://reef-world.org/blog/surprising-coral-facts>