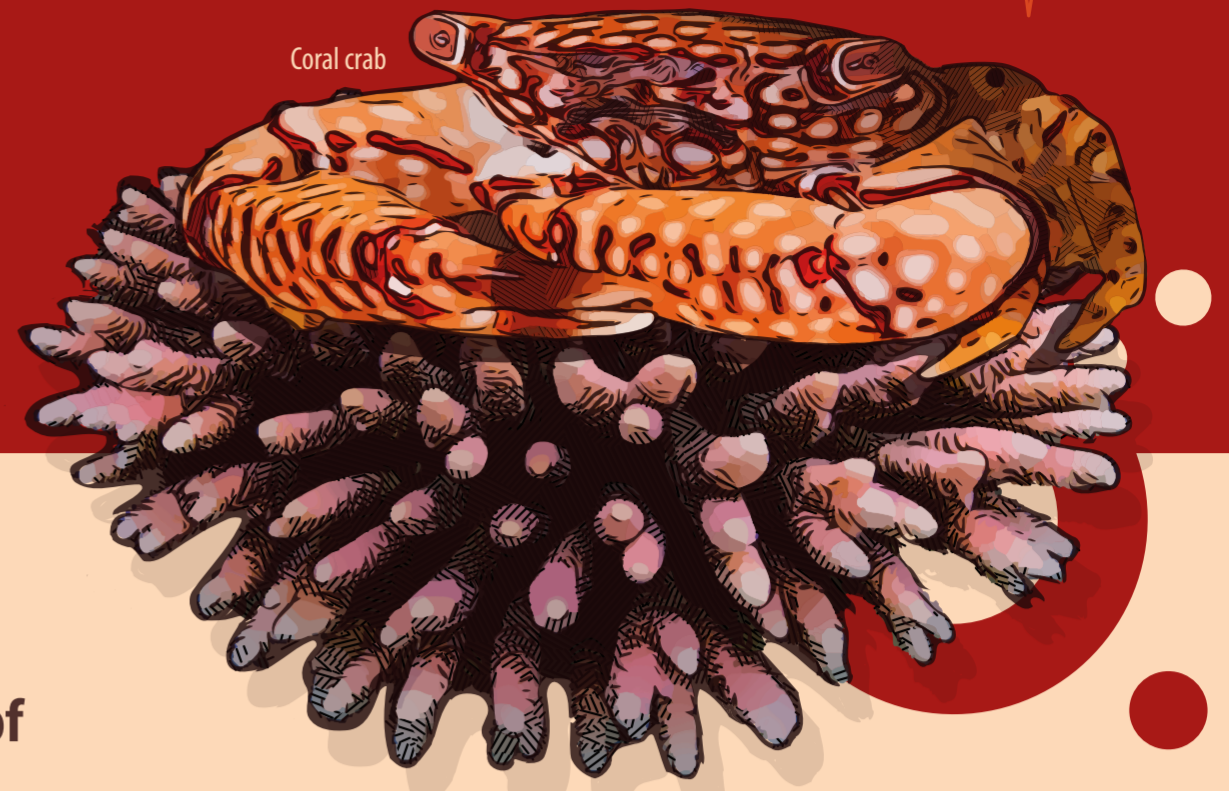


CRYPTIC CRAWLY CREATURES



- The Great Barrier Reef is home to millions of creatures. A lot of them are too small for us to notice.
- Coral crabs live between the branches of coral. They are a type of invertebrate, which means they do not have a backbone.
- Coral crabs protect their coral home from the crown-of-thorns starfish. A crown-of-thorns starfish will climb over coral to eat it. The coral crab attacks by nipping at the starfish's tube feet and scares it away.

Take care of the security guard!



"I keep my fins away from coral when I snorkel."

Michelle Barry - Master Reef Guide



What can I do?

- Report crown-of-thorns starfish via the Eye on the Reef app.
- Practice safe anchoring – anchor away from corals.
- Leave shells on the beach – they are home to hermit crabs.

Share these tips with others.

Dr David Wachenfeld
Chief Scientist, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority



These crabs do such a good job keeping the corals safe from crown-of-thorns starfish. When snorkelling, I watch where I am kicking so I do not break any coral or disturb any coral crabs. The currents created by your fins can damage coral so be very careful!

Crown-of-thorns starfish

Crown-of-thorns starfish are native to the Great Barrier Reef and eat live coral. They grow quickly, produce lots of babies, and can reach outbreak populations that cause a lot of damage to coral reefs.

An adult crown-of-thorns starfish can eat 250 square centimetres of live healthy coral in one day! Some reefs with a severe outbreak can have over 10,000 crown-of-thorns starfish. This many starfish could damage 25 square kilometres of reef every day.



Australian Government
Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority

The Outlook Report 2019 states the current condition for most invertebrates on the Great Barrier Reef is poor and has declined. You can help protect these animals by being Reef Smart and taking care of coral while on the Great Barrier Reef.