

It is a multiple use Marine Park, offering protection to the plants and animals that call it home, while supporting activities that contribute to the lifestyles and livelihoods of many coastal communities.

It comprises more than 2900 reefs, 600 continental islands and 300 coral cays.

It is home to:

- approximately 1500 species of fish
- 350 kinds of hard corals
- about 800 kinds of echinoderms (such as sea stars and urchins)
- six of the world's seven species of marine turtles
- and more than 30 species of marine mammals including whales, dolphins and dugongs.



The Great Barrier Reef is one of the most complex and diverse ecosystems in the world. It is about 12,000 years old and is the largest natural feature on Earth. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park covers more than 344,400 square kilometres and stretches more than 2300 kilometres along the northeast coast of Australia from the tip of Cape York to just north of Bundaberg in Queensland.

our great barrier reef

The Great Barrier Reef comprises a range of marine plants and habitats including seagrass beds, mangroves, sponges gardens and muddy seabed communities.

Please report any injured or dead dugong, whales, dolphins or turtles to the Environmental Protection Agency Hotline on 1300 130 372

Whales, dolphins and dugongs are all marine mammals. Dugongs can grow up to three metres long and weigh up to 400 kilograms! They are closely related to elephants.

Doing your bit to look after it!

When some plants and corals that live on coral reefs are damaged or die, their skeletons and other debris is swept away by waves to make coral cays.

Corals are actually tiny animals that build colonies in a variety of shapes, sizes and colours to form the foundations of the Great Barrier Reef.

Marine turtles may travel vast distances throughout the year, but usually return to lay their eggs in the same region where they themselves were born.

Male seahorses give birth! They have a pouch on their belly, which holds the eggs until they hatch. Seahorses are the world's slowest fish!

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Animals and Plants of the Great Barrier Reef Thousands of marine animals and plants live in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, but... DID YOU KNOW?

Doing your bit to look after it

Declining water quality is one of the major threats facing the Great Barrier Reef. You can help to improve the water quality of the Reef when on the land and in your home, workplace or school.

Remember to:

- Keep drains and gutters free of chemicals and rubbish, because what goes into drains, creeks and rivers may end up in the ocean
- Put all litter in the bin and recycle to keep the Great Barrier Reef clear and free of litter
- Wash your car on the lawn instead of in your driveway or on the street, because detergents will wash into nearby drains and may end up in local waterways or the Great Barrier Reef
- Compost and use garden beds or vegetation strips around your home, farm or work area to capture rainwater and minimise runoff
- Minimise soil erosion by maintaining vegetation and groundcover around your home, farm or work area.

Want more information?

For more information about the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park contact the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority on 07 4750 0700 or visit our website at www.gbrmpa.gov.au or www.reefed.edu.au

In Townsville, you can also visit the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority office at:
2-68 Flinders Street,
Townsville Qld 4810

Australian Government
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

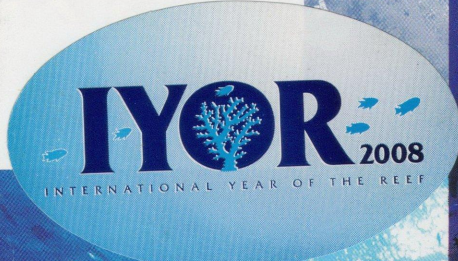


Experience the Reef up close Reef HQ aquarium

You can experience the wonders of the Great Barrier Reef without getting wet. Reef HQ aquarium, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Education Centre is the world's largest living coral reef aquarium and is located in Townsville, North Queensland. For more information visit www.reefHQ.com.au or phone 07 4750 0800.



Australian Government
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority



our great barrier reef
let's keep it great



Doing your bit to look after it
Where possible anchor in sand or mud, away from corals and take care not to damage fragile corals

