

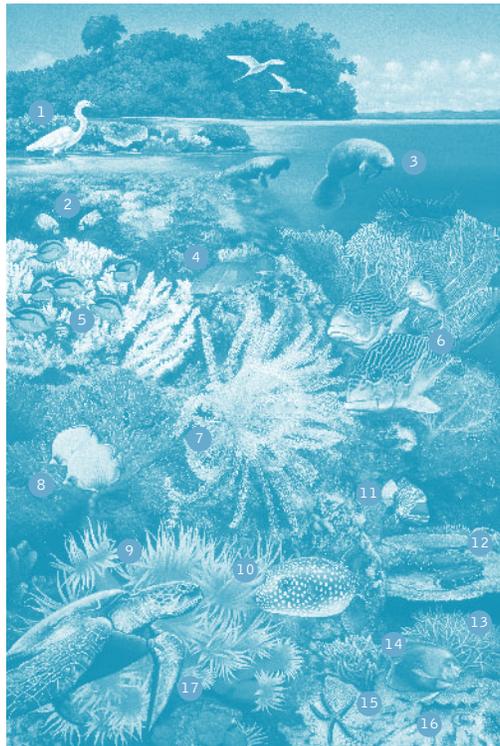
Earth Day 2008



E a r t h ☪ D a y 🐚 2 0 0 8

In the world's seas there is a thriving universe, a delicate marine ecosystem teeming with fish and blooming coral structures. The reefs serve as the "rainforests" of the ocean, providing food and shelter for many varieties of fish and invertebrate species. Their diversity and beauty have been a source of wonder to all who have seen them. But, through the years, coral reefs have become damaged, overfished, weathered, and polluted, to the point that immediate action needs to be taken to heal them. These are international treasures that with time and care can be restored and protected.

- 1 Egret
- 2 Emperor Angelfish
- 3 Manatee
- 4 Spotted Grouper
- 5 Blue Tang Surgeonfish
- 6 French Grunt
- 7 Feather Stars
- 8 Butterfly Fish
- 9 Turret Coral



- 10 Spiny Puffer Fish
- 11 Trigger Fish
- 12 Coral Lobster
- 13 Staghorn Coral
- 14 Clarion Angelfish
- 15 Blue Starfish
- 16 Elkhorn Coral
- 17 Green Sea Turtle

Humans have certainly contributed to reef destruction through industrial run-off pollution, coastline development, and overfishing. Other factors, such as highly variable seasons with severe storms, coral bleaching due to an increase in water temperature, earthquakes, and erupting volcanoes are responsible, too. 🐚 In the Pacific regions, the coral-eating Crown of Thorns starfish plays a big part in the relationship between the reefs and the tender coral polyps that it consumes. The natural enemy of this starfish is the beautiful triton, whose shells are over-collected. The triton population is endangered or locally extinct in most areas of the Pacific, thus the ecological balance is disrupted and the starfish are free to prey on the coral. ✨ The first International Year of the Reef was in 1997 and it proved to be very successful. Eleven years later there is still an urgent need to strengthen awareness, improve understanding, and generate action to provide effective management strategies for saving the reefs of the world. 🌊