

# CORAL & INVERTEBRATE IDENTIFICATION

Pages in Humann  
Reef Coral Book

## Phylum CNIDARIA

### Class **Hydrozoa**

Order **Milleporina** – Fire corals

*Millepora alcicornis* Branching Fire Coral 17

Mustard to brown in color with white tips. Hair or bristle-like polyps. Often encrusts and overgrows *gorgonians*.

*Millepora complanata* Blade Fire Coral 19

Thin upright blades or plates with uneven outer edges. Mustard to brown in color with white tips. Hair or bristles-like polyps.

### Class **Anthozoa**

Subclass **Octocorallia** (Octocorals, e.g. gorgonians and soft corals)

Order **Gorgonacea** – Gorgonians

*Gorgonia* spp. Sea Fans 57-61

Grows in a single plane. Tightly meshed branches. Commonly purple, may be yellow or gray.

*Plexaurella* spp. Slit-Pore Sea Rods 41-43

Bushy with stout stalks. Branch dichotomously (not on a plane). Pores are elliptical or slit-like.

*Pseudopterogorgia* spp. Sea Plumes 51-53

Feather-like plumes. Looks like a feather boa.

*Pterogorgia* spp. Sea Whips 53-57

Colonies heavily branched. Long, flattened, flexible branches. Polyps only on edges of branches.

Order **Scleractinia** - Stony corals

Family: Agariciidae

*Agaricia* spp. Lettuce Coral 145

Encrusting lobes which have many vertical plates. Looks like lettuce. Plates are very thin and have ridges.

Family: Acroporidae

*Acropora cervicornis* Staghorn Coral 91

Forms antler-like racks. Usually a yellowish color with white tips. Surface is covered with small, protruding corallites.

*Acropora palmata* Elkhorn Coral 93

Flattened branches that resemble moose horns. Tips are white. Prefer high wave action areas.

Family: Astrocoeniidae

*Stephanocoenia michelinii* Blushing star coral 111

Relatively smooth domes or boulders, occasionally encrusting. Outer rim of corallites are darker than surrounding area. Polyps normally extended. When approached or touched, polyps retract and appear to blush to a lighter shade.

## Family: Faviidae

<i>Favia fragum</i>	Golf Ball Coral	121
Usually about the size of a golf ball. Either round or encrusting in a circular shape. Corallites are oval and do not protrude as much as <i>Dichocoenia stokesii</i> . Inhabits shallow reefs and rocky areas.		
<i>Montastrea annularis</i>	Boulder Star Coral	113
Basic reef building coral. Small, evenly spaces corallites that look like ribbed volcanoes. 3 different morphs (shapes)...lobed, boulder, and sheet.		
<i>Montastrea cavernosa</i>	Great Star Coral	115
Colonies usually form boulders or domes. Corallites are prominent, and large and look like push-buttons or rounded dimples.		
<i>Colpophyllia natans</i>	Boulder Brain Coral	133
Large rounded domes, occasionally encrusting. One ridge, one valley. Thin, but distinct groove runs along ridgetop...grooved ridges. Thin line approximately halfway down ridge, where ridge slope decreases in angle. Staggered septae, like a zipper.		
<i>Diploria labyrinthiformis</i>	Grooved Brain Coral	127
Colonies form hemispherical heads. Two ridges and one valley. Valleys are highly convoluted and regularly connected.		
<i>Diploria strigosa</i>	Symmetrical Brain Coral	125
Colonies form smoothly contoured plates or hemispherical domes. Ridges evenly rounded usually without a top groove and septae line up. One ridge and one valley		
<i>Manicina areolata</i>	Rose Coral	131
Small, elliptical colonies with one long, continuous valley. Max size about a potato. Visible septae.		

## Family: Meandrinidae

<i>Dichocoenia stokesii</i>	Elliptical Star Coral	119
Corallites protrude/ slightly raised. Colonies may be flat or round.		
<i>Meandrina meandrites</i>	Maze Coral	129
Colonies form hemispherical heads or flattened plates. Ridges created by smooth, widely spaced septae with a thin line along ridgetops. Looks like a zipper.		
<i>Dendrogyra cylindrus</i>	Pillar Coral	97
Colonies form heavy cylindrical spires that grow upward from an encrusting base mass. Polyps are normally extended giving the coral a fuzzy appearance.		
<i>Eusmilia fastigiata</i>	Smooth Flower Coral	163
Clumps of widely spaced polyps on long stalk. Corallites round to oval with pronounced septae. "you smell the flowers".		

## Family: Mussidae

<i>Isophyllastrea rigida</i>	Rough Star Coral	155
Small oval or hemispherical colonies (like a soccer ball). Fleshy ridges with rough, irregular shaped enclosed valleys.		
<i>Isophyllia sinuosa</i>	Sinuuous Cactus Coral	155
Colonies form small oval to hemispherical domes. Highly convoluted with fleshy ridges and deep valleys. Fleshy, highly convoluted ridges with deep valleys that are not enclosed.		

## Family: Pocilloporidae

<i>Madracis mirabilis</i>	Yellow Pencil Coral	103
Densely packed clumps of pencil sized branches with blunt tips. Most commonly yellow in color.		

## Family: Poritidae

<i>Porites astreoides</i>	Mustard Hill Coral	121
Encrusting in shallow water, forms domes or heads in deeper water. Surface is lumpy, and covered with small, closely set corallites...looks like a slurpy. Most commonly yellow-green to yellow-brown.		
<i>Porites porites</i>	Finger Coral	95
Smooth and rounded branches. Deeper colonies can be large with stout, stubby branches. Can be white, purple or yellowish in color.		

## Family: Siderastreida

<i>Siderastrea radians</i>	Lesser Starlet Coral	123
Usually flat, encrusting plates. Occasionally small, irregularly rounded domes. Corallites are small, deep pitted, with pronounced septae and dark centers. Prefers high sedimentation areas in less than 10 feet of water.		
<i>Siderastrea siderea</i>	Massive Starlet Coral	123
Forms rounded heads, boulders, or domes. Corallites are small, symmetrically round and pitted. Corallites shallower, more open, and the septae are less pronounced than <i>radians</i> .		

## Order Actiniaria – Anemones

<i>Bartholomea annulata</i>	Corkscrew Anemone	91
Numerous long, thin tentacles which are translucent and marked with whitish spiral markings (corkscrew). Usually found in crevices of the reef or conch shells.		

## Order Zoanthidea - Zoanthids

<i>Palythoa caribaeorum</i>	White Encrusting Zoanthid	103
Brownish to white colonies which form mats. Oral disks push against each other when fully expanded and have rows of tentacles around their edges. Can look spongy.		

## Phylum PORIFERA

Sponges	Any example	17
Porous surface. Many shapes, colors and sizes.		

## Phylum ANNELIDA

### Class POLYCHAETA

<i>Bispira brunnea</i>	Social Featherduster	129
Grow in clusters. Crowns in circular patterns of variable colors. Extend from parchment-like tubes that are usually exposed.		
<i>Spirobranchus giganteus</i>	Christmas Tree Worm	137
Two spiraled crowns. Color and pattern variable. Tubes usually hidden. Look like Christmas trees.		

## Phylum ARTHROPODA

### Subphylum CRUSTACEA

<i>Stenopus hispidus</i>	Banded Coral Shrimp	147
About 1.5 to 2 inches in size. Red and white banded body and claws. Two pairs of white antennae. Usually found in very dark holes or sponges.		
<i>Periclimenes pedersoni</i>	Pederson Cleaning Shrimp	151
About 1 inch in size. Transparent body and legs covered with purple spots. Often live in/with anemones.		
<i>Panulirus argus</i>	Caribbean Spiny Lobster	155
Carapace has shaded areas of brown and tan with a few dark spots. Abdomen is banded. Tail has white spots. Long, conical antennae. Sharp horns above eyes. Swims backwards.		

<i>Anilocra laticaudata</i>	Soldierfish Isopod	183
Bug-like segmented arthropod which attaches itself to the head or gill plates of fishes.		
<i>Mysidium</i>	Mysid Shrimp	183
Tiny shrimp found in small clouds. Appear white specs. Frequently hover near urchins or anemones.		

## Phylum MOLLUSCA

<i>Cyphoma gibbosum</i>	Flamingo Tongue	215
Orange spots on cream shell. Mantle (containing spots) usually covers entire shell. Often found on gorgonians.		

## Phylum ECHINODERMATA

### Class CRINOIDEA

<i>Davidaster rubiginosa</i>	Golden Crinoid	269
Looks like little, golden colored ferns. Often found in crevices in the reef or under overhangs.		

### Class OPHIUROIDEA

Brittle Stars	Any example	281
Long mobile arms radiate from this central disk. Arms are often spiny. Extremely mobile and active at night, usually hiding during the day.		

### Class ECHINOIDEA

<i>Diadema antillarum</i>	Long-spined Urchin	287
Numerous long, thin, sharp spines on spherical bodies. Usually all black. Spines are toxic.		
<i>Echinometra lucunter</i>	Rock-boring Urchin	289
Short, thick pointed spines. Black to reddish brown. Bores holes in substrate.		