



Coral Reefs: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)

By Charles Sheppard

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Coral Reefs: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions) By Charles Sheppard

Coral reefs have been long regarded with awe by the millions of people who have encountered them over the centuries. Early seafarers were wary of them, naturalists were confused by them, yet many coastal people benefited greatly from these mysterious rocky structures that grew up to the surface of the sea. They have been rich in their supply of food, and they provided a breakwater from storms and high waves to countless coastal communities that developed from their protection. Their scale is enormous and their value high. Found in countless locations around the world, from the Indo-Pacific coral reef province to the Caribbean and Australia, they support both marine and human life.

In this *Very Short Introduction*, Charles Sheppard provides an account of what coral reefs are, how they are formed, how they have evolved, and the biological lessons we can learn from them. Today, the vibrancy and diversity of these fascinating ecosystems are under threat from over exploitation and could face future extinction, unless our conservation efforts are stepped up in order to save them.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Charles Sheppard is a professor of Life Sciences at the University of Warwick whose research focuses mainly on community ecology, particularly on ecosystem responses to climate change. He works for a number of UN, Governmental, and aid agencies to advise on topical marine and coastal developmental issues. He is the author or editor of 10 books, including *The Biology of Coral Reefs* (OUP, 2009).

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