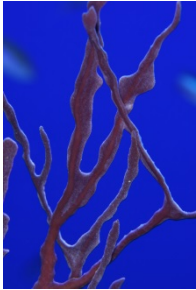


Thumbnail



Caption

Plates of foliose corals look like terraces in the bank. This is a common sight on the bank and characteristic of mesophotic reefs, found at depths from 30 meters (100 feet) to 150 meters (492 feet).
© OCEANA/UPLB



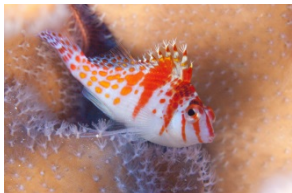
Sponges provide food for sea turtles and slugs.
© OCEANA/UPLB



Old massive corals grow in the bank undisturbed. This slow-growing coral may have a life span of up to 900 years.
© OCEANA/UPLB



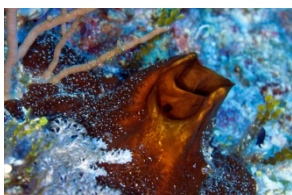
Branching corals contribute to the complexity of the reef. This is why they are home to reef fishes such as damselfishes, butterflyfishes and cardinalfishes.
© OCEANA/UPLB



Hawkfish (*Cirrhichthys falco*) resting on coral. Hawkfish lead a solitary life and are usually spotted at reef drop-offs.
© OCEANA/UPLB

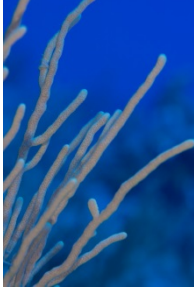


Hallimeda is abundant in most parts of Benham Bank. This type of green algae calcifies and contributes to the substrate of the bank.
© OCEANA/UPLB



Sponges provide a vital habitat for marine organisms like small fishes.
© OCEANA/UPLB

Thumbnail



Caption

Sponges feed siphon water into their bodies and filter small particles to feed themselves.

© OCEANA/UPLB



Bryozoans or moss animals are colonial animals that encrust corals and rocky surfaces. Bryostatin, a compound produced by common marine bryozoan, is under serious testing for possible anti-cancer properties.

© OCEANA/UPLB



Mesophotic zone from the Latin words, “meso”, i.e., mid- and “photos”, i.e., light, are found in depths from 30 meters (ca. 100 ft) down to 150 meters (492 feet). Even with low light penetrating this zone, corals and photosynthetic algae can still grow.

© OCEANA/UPLB



Filamentous red algae is one of the primary food of fish and invertebrates such as crabs, shells, and shrimps.

© OCEANA/UPLB



A team of technical divers in one of their safety stops as they ascend from the bank. Safety stops are very important in dives deeper than 30 meters (100ft) to prevent divers from getting decompression sickness.

© OCEANA/UPLB



Solitary oriental wrasse (*Oxycheilinus rhodochrous*) is known to inhabit coral reefs with abundant invertebrates, which they feed on.

© OCEANA/UPLB

Thumbnail



Caption

Blue corals (*Heliopora*) have cnidocytes or stinging cells that cause inflammation of the skin upon contact.
© OCEANA/UPLB



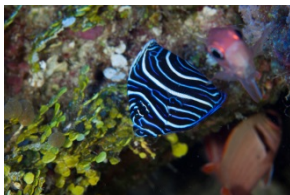
Porites are the most common coral species in the tropics. This is a reef-building coral and is important to the integrity of a coral reef.
© OCEANA/UPLB



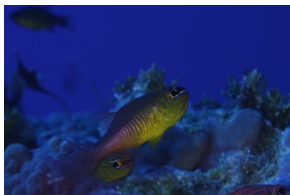
A technical diver collects sediment samples for fauna and flora analyses.
© OCEANA/UPLB



Arc-eye hawkfish (*Paracirrhites arcatus*) is a cryptic reef fish that usually hides in holes and crevices.
© OCEANA/UPLB



A juvenile semicircle angelfish (*Pomacanthus semicirculatus*) and epaulette soldierfish (*Myripristis kuntee*) taking shelter amongst *Hallimeda* underneath boulders.
© OCEANA/UPLB



Cardinalfishes (*Apogon* sp.) are mouth brooders and live on urchins and branching corals.
© OCEANA/UPLB



Powerful lights reveal the true colors of branching corals in deep sea reefs.
© OCEANA/UPLB

