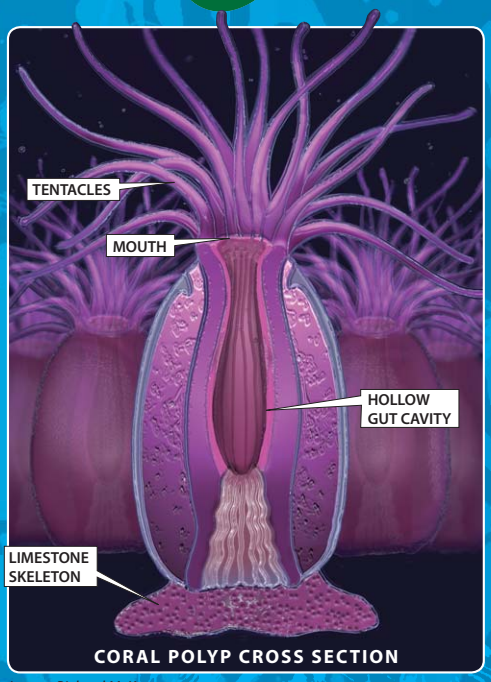
Coral Reef Communities



CORAL POLYP CROSS SECTION

Image: Richard McKenna

Coral reefs grow off Western Australia's coastline from the far north all the way down to Rottnest Island. The most significant coral reefs are found along Western Australia's so-called Coral Coast, stretching some 1,000 kilometres from Cervantes in the south to Exmouth in the north.

Coral reefs can take on various forms such as fringing, barrier and atoll reefs.

Corals are colonies of tiny tubular animals called polyps and are generally classified as either hard or soft corals. The hard coral polyp secretes a cup-shaped limestone skeletal case that supports and protects the soft body of the coral polyp. When the polyp dies, the hard skeleton remains. Coral reefs are formed over thousands of years with the build up of millions of these coral skeletons.

Reef building coral polyps are in a symbiotic (mutually beneficial) partnership with zooxanthellae – tiny, single-celled algae contained in the cells of the polyps. The zooxanthellae provide nutrients for the coral polyps and in return the coral protects the algae.

Unscramble each of the clue words. Then copy the letters in the numbered cells to other cells with the same number to reveal the message.

CORLA POPLYS

2	44	43	31		54	27		26	58	12

TANHLLEEXAOZO

53	59			36	13	62		9	55		5	18

CNSETTALE

60	24	20	63	33	28	6	19	50

TUMHO

16	14		15	41

SILNEEMOT KELSONTE

32	11	49	8	48		29	38	37		52		25	42	40	39	61

NIGFIGRN

10	4	22	56	35	47	46	45

BERRIAR

1	7	23	57			30

TALLO

17	21	3	34	51

1		2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9	10		11	12		13	14	15		16	17	D	18		19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

27	10		28	29	30	31	32		33	34	35	36	37		1	38	D		39	40	41	42	43			

44	4	45	1	46	47	48	49	50		1	51	52	53		54	55	33	26		1	56		57	16	58	59	30	60	1	61	62

54	1	43	63

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