



Harmful Behavior Can Kill Coral

Coral reefs are important habitats for animals such as sea turtles, sharks, eels, and many colorful fish.



Don't trash the reef

Never allow trash to go overboard. Trash can damage corals, and plastics can be fatal when ingested by fish or sea turtles.



Never anchor on a reef

Anchoring on the reef can damage corals, which may take hundreds of years to re-grow.



Never stand on, kick, or touch coral

Use small kicks and arm movements to avoid damaging corals or smothering them with sand. You'll see more the slower you go! Keep a safe distance from the reef. Snorkelers should stay horizontal, and SCUBA divers should maintain neutral buoyancy. Even light contact can cause permanent damage to coral.

Coral Courtesy

What is Coral?

Corals are tiny animals related to sea anemones and jellyfish. Individual animals, known as polyps, live in colonies that make up a coral head. As polyps live and die their stony skeletons slowly contribute to the growth of the coral heads, creating a reef.



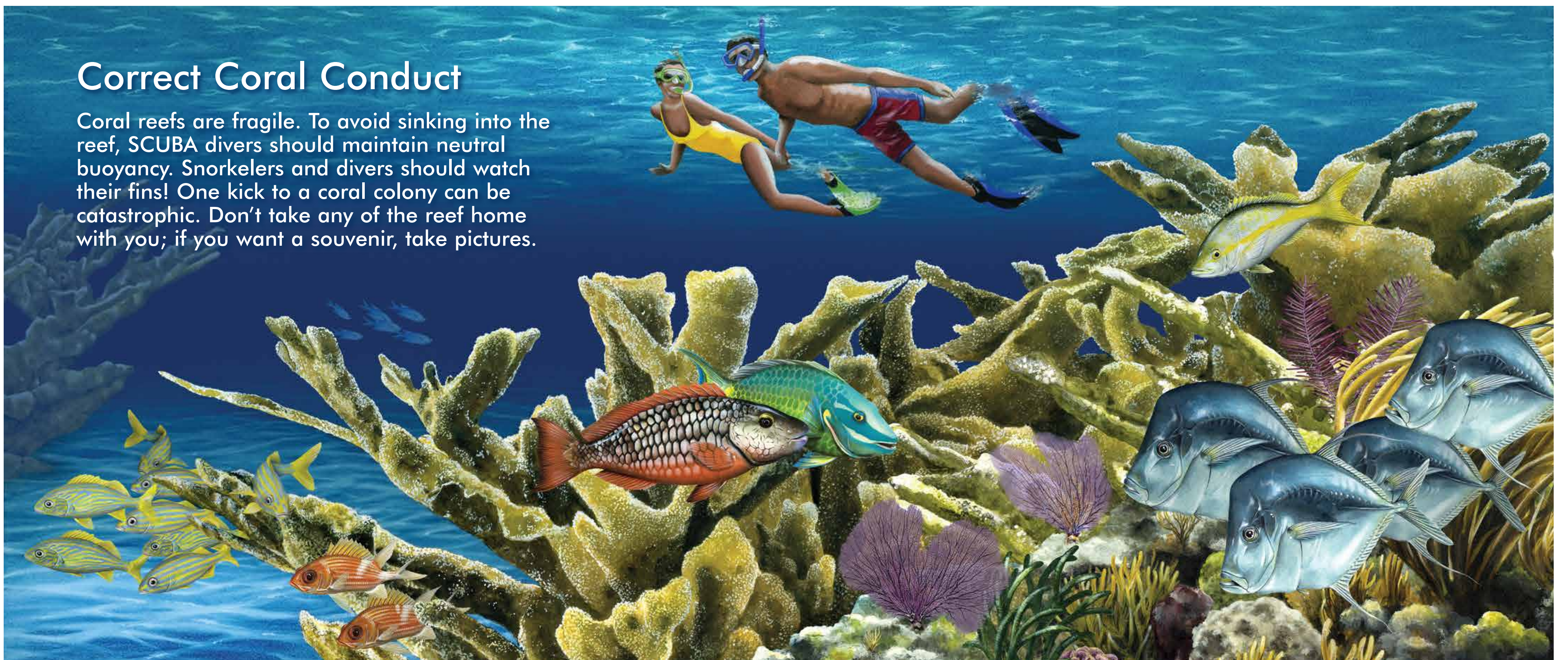
Staghorn coral
Acropora cervicornis

Brain coral
Diploria spp.

Elkhorn coral
Acropora palmata

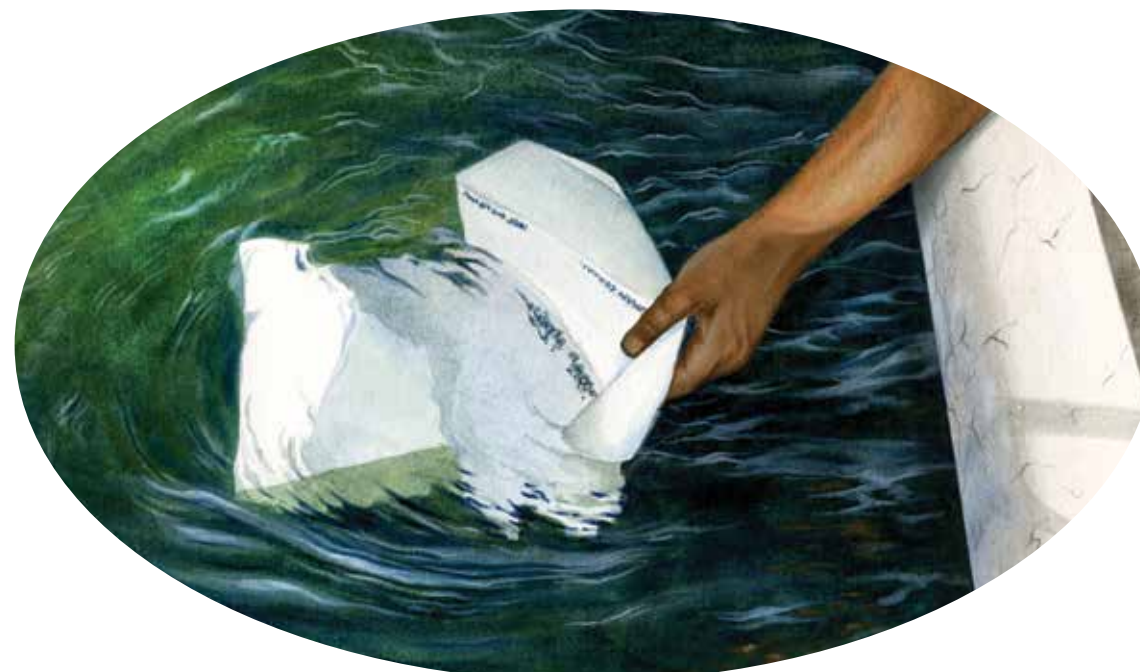
Correct Coral Conduct

Coral reefs are fragile. To avoid sinking into the reef, SCUBA divers should maintain neutral buoyancy. Snorkelers and divers should watch their fins! One kick to a coral colony can be catastrophic. Don't take any of the reef home with you; if you want a souvenir, take pictures.



Your Good Habits Will Save Our Reefs

Coral reefs make up a small portion of the ocean environment but are home to more than 6000 different plants and animals.



Always pick up debris

Debris is harmful to reef residents. A reef without debris is healthier and even more beautiful.



Always dispose of fishing and trap lines responsibly

Abandoned fishing and trap line entangles and kills corals, sea turtles, and other reef life. These lines are also a danger to divers and snorkelers.



Always use mooring buoys or anchor in sand away from the reef

Mooring buoys allow you to visit a reef without anchoring. Select boat operators that use permanent mooring buoys. If you must anchor, select a sandy area safely away from the reef and ensure that your anchor does not drag.

Please help conserve this valuable ecosystem

Coral reefs around the world are threatened by pollution, overfishing, disease, and climate change.

• Learn about coral reefs and how to help by visiting this website: www.coralreef.noaa.gov

• Limit pesticides and fertilizers on lawns

Chemicals commonly used on lawns can be harmful to corals. Avoid their use and prevent over-watering, which creates run-off.

• Donate time or funding to organizations trying to save coral reefs

Contact non-profit groups who are working to raise awareness of coral conservation and learn how you might contribute to the effort.

• Be aware of the products you are purchasing

Illegally harvested corals are sometimes sold as souvenirs. Avoid buying products containing coral.

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PIMS Poster Series No. 5