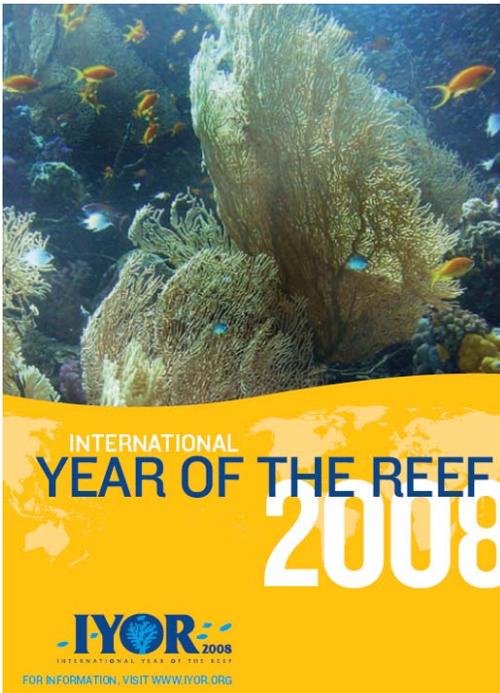


NOAA Nautical Charting Calendar

Coral Reefs



Corals are invertebrate animals belonging to a large group of colorful and fascinating animals called Cnidaria. Corals are generally classified as either "hard coral" or "soft coral". There are around 800 known species of hard coral which are also known as the reef building corals.

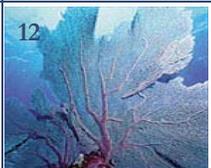
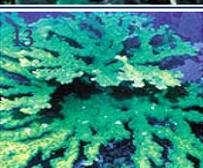
Hard corals extract calcium from surrounding seawater and use this to create a hardened carbonate structure for protection and growth. Hard corals are generally colonial organisms and coral reefs are formed by colonies of hundreds to hundreds of thousands of individual polyps. Reefs support more species per unit area than any other marine environment and are the largest living structure on the planet.

The **International Year of the Reef (IYOR 2008)** recognizes that there continues to be an urgent need to increase awareness and understanding of coral reefs, and to further conserve and manage valuable coral reef and associated ecosystems. Why should we care about coral reefs? Coral reefs are important to our future. Reefs are:

- home and nursery for almost a million fish and other species, many that we rely on for food;
- some of the earth's most diverse living ecosystems;
- full of new and undiscovered biomedical resources that we've only just begun to explore;
- important protection for coastal communities from storms, wave damage and erosion.

Visit www.iyor.org or www.coralreef.noaa.gov for more information.

Prepared by the Office of Coast Survey, National Ocean Service, NOAA, www.NauticalCharts.NOAA.gov, 1-301-713-2770.

April 2008						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
6 th – Boulder star coral 13 th – Elkhorn coral 20 th – Pillar coral 27 th – Cavernous star coral		1	2	3	4	
 6	7	8	9	10	11	 12
 13	14	15	16	17	18	 19
 20	21	22	23	24	25	 26
 27	28	29	30	5 th – Vase sponge with star coral inside 12 th – Sea fan, a soft coral 19 th – Orange elephant ear sponge 26 th – A knobby purple sea rod		