

Guide to Commonly Seen Caribbean Shallow-water Stony Corals

June 2026
Leona Kustra



This guide was updated in June 2026 and was created for snorkelers, SCUBA divers and those in the tourism industry to help identify commonly seen stony corals of Caribbean shallow waters. This guide is for all who visit, work and play on reefs and wish to identify the remaining coral that provide ecosystem services for coastal residents and a beautiful underwater oasis for all. In the face of the multiple threats to the survival of tropical coral including the climate crisis and local threats like overfishing and poor water quality, observing coral in the Caribbean is a rare and precious experience.

“The teeming life of the beautiful and complex ecosystems that are coral reefs can be saved, given the will”, Charles Sheppard. This guide is dedicated to the memory of Professor Charles Sheppard who was a talented scientist and passionate advocate for the creation of the Chagos Archipelago MPA. His work advanced our understanding of how climate change affects coral reefs and continues to inspire others in conserving coral reefs.

If you plan to visit a reef or want to improve your snorkel skills, a short (free) [Reef-Safe Snorkeling Essentials course](#) is available for you. To share this snorkel course with reef managers, tourism operators, NGOs or anyone else, this QR code can be used.



The order of species in this guide is roughly the most to least commonly observed in iNaturalist. This guide was predominately built in iNaturalist using research grade observations. iNaturalist helps you identify plants and animals around you while generating data for science and conservation. If you would like to contribute your observations to iNaturalist, visit [iNaturalist.org](https://www.inaturalist.org).

The IUCN Red List status for Critically Endangered coral species were added manually to this .pdf guide. There are currently 20 critically endangered species of commonly seen stony corals in this guide. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2025(2) status was updated as of May 2026. (Ref: IUCN <2025>. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. <2025-2>. <https://www.iucnredlist.org>. Downloaded on <08Feb2026>.)

To view this guide in a different sort order (e.g. by scientific name or common name), to view macro photos of coral polyps, or to filter coral species by conservation status e.g., Critically Endangered, view the online [iNaturalist guide](#).

If you would like to collaborate on this guide or let us know of any errors or omissions, please contact @lkustra on iNaturalist or email us at coralconserve@gmail.com.

Thank you,
Leona Kustra
Coral Conservation Society

www.coralconserve.org



Caribbean Coral: Shallow-water Stony Corals Commonly Seen



Branching Fire Coral
*Millepora alcicornis*¹



Mustard Hill Coral
*Porites astreoides*²



Lettuce Coral
*Agaricia agaricites*³



Elkhorn Coral
*Acropora palmata*⁴
Critically Endangered



Blade Fire Coral
*Millepora complanata*⁴
Critically Endangered



Greater Star Coral
*Montastraea cavernosa*⁵



Symmetrical Brain Coral
*Pseudodiploria strigosa*⁴
Critically Endangered



Massive Starlet Coral
*Siderastrea siderea*¹
Critically Endangered



Mountainous Star Coral
*Orbicella faveolata*⁶



Finger Coral
*Porites porites*⁷



Groove Brain Coral
*Diploria labyrinthiformis*⁴
Critically Endangered



Lobed Star Coral
*Orbicella annularis*⁸



Staghorn Coral
*Acropora cervicornis*⁹
Critically Endangered



Boulder Brain Coral
*Colpophyllia natans*¹



Knobby Brain Coral
*Pseudodiploria clivosa*⁴



Thin Leaf Lettuce Coral
*Agaricia tenuifolia*¹⁰
Critically Endangered



Smooth Flower Coral
*Eusmilia fastigiata*¹
Critically Endangered



Lamarck's Sheet Coral
*Agaricia lamarcki*¹¹
Critically Endangered



Lesser Starlet Coral
*Siderastrea radians*¹



Maze Coral
*Meandrina meandrites*¹²
Critically Endangered



Pillar Coral
*Dendrogyra cylindrus*¹³
Critically Endangered



Rose Coral
*Manicina areolata*¹⁴



Rose Lace Coral
*Stylaster roseus*¹⁵



Artichoke Coral
*Scolymia cubensis*¹⁶
Critically Endangered



Low Relief Lettuce Coral
*Agaricia humilis*¹¹
Critically Endangered



Elliptical Star Coral
*Dichocoenia stokesii*¹



Blushing Star Coral
*Stephanocoenia intersepta*¹



Yellow Pencil Coral
*Madracis auretenra*¹⁷



Sunray Lettuce Coral
*Helioseris cucullata*¹⁸
Critically Endangered



Large Flower Coral
*Mussa angulosa*⁷



Orange Cup Coral
*Tubastraea coccinea*¹⁹



Ten-ray Star Coral
*Madracis decactis*¹
Critically Endangered



Golf Ball Coral
*Favia fragum*¹



Fused Staghorn Coral
*Acropora prolifera*²⁰



Tube Coral
*Cladocora arbuscula*¹



Box Fire Coral
*Millepora squarrosa*²¹
Critically Endangered



Mycetophyllia danaana
*Mycetophyllia danaana*²²
Critically Endangered



Isophyllia rigida
*Isophyllia rigida*¹⁰



Ridged Cactus Coral
*Mycetophyllia lamarckiana*¹



Solenastrea bournoni
*Solenastrea bournoni*¹



Northern Star Coral
*Astrangia poculata*²³



Knobby Cactus Coral
*Mycetophyllia aliciae*¹



Boulder Star Coral
*Orbicella franksi*²⁴



Thin Finger Coral
*Porites divaricata*²⁵



Phyllangia americana
Phyllangia americana ¹



Knobby Star Coral
Solenastrea hyades ²⁶



Fleshy Disc Coral
Scolymia lacera ²⁷
Critically Endangered



Isophyllia sinuosa
Isophyllia sinuosa ²⁸



Branched Finger Coral
Porites furcata ²⁹



Porites branneri
Porites branneri ³⁰



Oculina diffusa
Oculina diffusa ³¹



Mycetophyllia ferox
Mycetophyllia ferox ¹⁰
Critically Endangered



Agaricia grahamae
Agaricia grahamae ³²



Madracis carmabi
Madracis carmabi ¹⁵



Ridged Fire Coral
Millepora striata ³³



Fragile Saucer Coral
Agaricia fragilis ²⁸



Madracis pharensis
Madracis pharensis ³⁴



Madracis senaria
Madracis senaria ¹¹



Dwarf Cup Coral
Astrangia solitaria ³⁵



Cladopsammia manuelensis
Cladopsammia manuelensis ³⁶



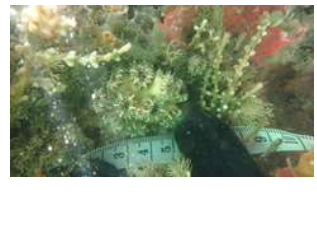
Madracis formosa
Madracis formosa ³⁷



White Maze Coral
Meandrina jacksoni ³⁸
Critically Endangered



Oculina robusta
Oculina robusta ¹



Phyllangia pequegnatae
Phyllangia pequegnatae ³⁹



Ivory Tree Coral
Oculina varicosa ⁴⁰

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