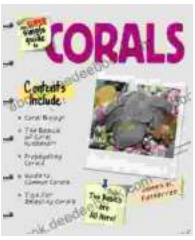
Super Simple Guide to Corals: Everything You Need to Know

Corals are fascinating marine creatures that play a vital role in the ocean ecosystem. They are often mistaken for plants, but they are actually animals. Corals come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and colors, and they can be found in all the world's oceans.

In this guide, we'll cover everything you need to know about corals, including:



Super Simple Guide Corals (Super Simple Guide To...)

by James W. Fatherree

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- What are corals?
- Where do corals live?
- What do corals eat?
- How do corals reproduce?
- What are the threats to corals?

- How can we protect corals?

What are Corals?

Corals are marine invertebrates that belong to the phylum Cnidaria. They are related to jellyfish and sea anemones. Corals have a hard outer skeleton made of calcium carbonate. The skeleton is formed by the coral's polyps, which are tiny animals that live in colonies.

Coral polyps have a mouth, a stomach, and tentacles. The tentacles are used to capture food, which is then passed to the mouth. Corals eat a variety of small organisms, including plankton, algae, and fish.

Where do Corals Live?

Corals are found in all the world's oceans. They typically live in shallow water, where they can get plenty of sunlight. Corals need sunlight to photosynthesize, which is the process by which they convert sunlight into energy.

Corals can be found in a variety of habitats, including coral reefs, rocky shores, and seagrass beds. Coral reefs are large underwater structures that are made up of the skeletons of dead corals. Coral reefs are home to a variety of marine life, including fish, mollusks, and crustaceans.

What do Corals Eat?

Corals eat a variety of small organisms, including plankton, algae, and fish. Corals capture food using their tentacles, which are then passed to the mouth.

Some corals also have a symbiotic relationship with algae. The algae live in the coral's tissues and provide the coral with food through photosynthesis. In return, the coral provides the algae with a protected environment.

How do Corals Reproduce?

Corals can reproduce both sexually and asexually. Sexual reproduction occurs when two corals release eggs and sperm into the water. The eggs and sperm fertilize, and the resulting larvae drift in the water until they find a suitable place to settle down and grow.

Asexual reproduction occurs when a coral breaks into two or more pieces. Each piece can then grow into a new coral colony.

What are the Threats to Corals?

Corals are threatened by a number of human activities, including:

- Climate change: Climate change is causing the ocean to become warmer and more acidic. Warmer water can cause corals to bleach, which is a process by which they expel the algae that live in their tissues. Coral bleaching can lead to the death of the coral. More acidic water can also damage the coral's skeleton.
- Pollution: Pollution can enter the ocean from a variety of sources, including sewage, agricultural runoff, and industrial waste. Pollution can damage coral reefs and kill corals.
- Overfishing: Overfishing can remove the fish that eat algae from coral reefs. This can lead to an increase in algae growth, which can smother corals.

- Coastal development: Coastal development can destroy coral reefs and other marine habitats. Coastal development can also increase the amount of pollution that enters the ocean.

How can we Protect Corals?

There are a number of things we can do to protect corals, including:

- Reduce our carbon emissions: Reducing our carbon emissions will help to slow the pace of climate change and reduce the impact on corals.
- Reduce our pollution: Reducing our pollution will help to keep the ocean clean and healthy for corals.
- Support sustainable fishing practices: Supporting sustainable fishing practices will help to protect the fish that eat algae from coral reefs.
- Protect coastal habitats: Protecting coastal habitats will help to protect coral reefs and other marine ecosystems.

Corals are fascinating marine creatures that play a vital role in the ocean ecosystem. They are threatened by a number of human activities, but there are a number of things we can do to protect them. By taking action to protect corals, we can help to ensure that they continue to thrive for generations to come.

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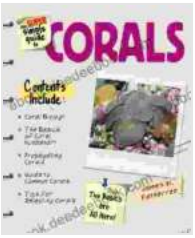

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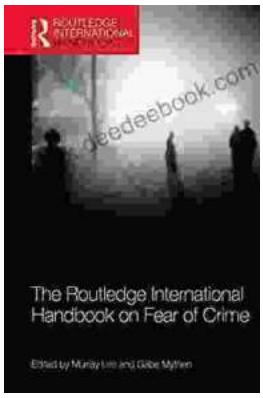

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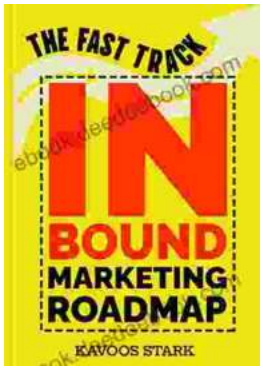

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