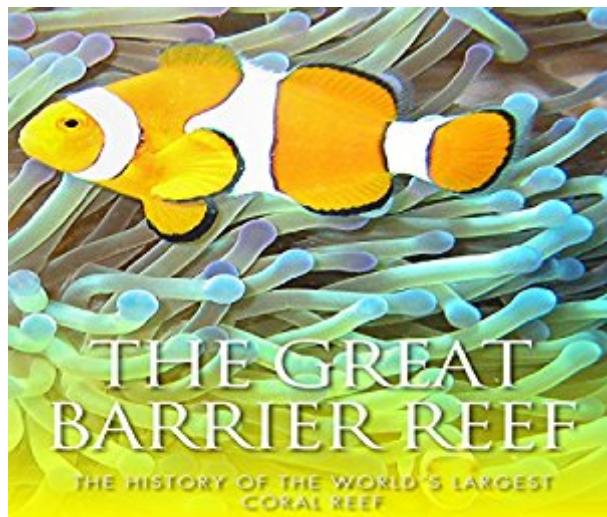


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The Great Barrier Reef: The History Of The World's Largest Coral Reef



Synopsis

"Coral is a very beautiful and unusual animal. Each coral head consists of thousand[s] of individual polyps. These polyps are continually budding and branching into genetically identical neighbors." (Antony Garrett List) People have always loved to build things, whether it's a feat of engineering in an underground subway or the construction of the world's tallest skyscraper. Thus, it's somewhat ironic that the largest structure ever built was not made by humans, but by incredibly tiny organisms known as coral polyps. Over the course of tens of thousands of years, these small organisms have put together a collection of nearly 3,000 reefs that form a collective stretching across 130,000 square miles. It is often mistakenly claimed that the Great Wall of China can be seen in space, but it's absolutely true that the enormous Great Barrier Reef is visible. The sheer size of the Great Barrier Reef is mind boggling, but its importance extends far past its physical extent. Put simply, the Great Barrier Reef is one of the most beautiful spots on the planet, offering kaleidoscopic colors thanks to the coral and the species that call it home. This is understandable because a staggering number of species inhabit the Great Barrier Reef, ranging from starfish and turtles, to alligators and birds. Scientists have counted about 1,500 different fish species that use the reef, and it's estimated that 1.5 million birds use the site. In designating it a World Heritage Site, UNESCO wrote of the Great Barrier Reef, "The Great Barrier Reef is a site of remarkable variety and beauty on the north-east coast of Australia. It contains the world's largest collection of coral reefs...."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a very nice, albeit, short book detailing the history of the Great Barrier Reef. It starts with a color photo of a giant clam on the reef. That's followed by a page about the Charles Rivers Editors. After that there's an introduction that tells you exactly what the Great Barrier Reef is and where it is. (Just in case you didn't know.) The next page is the Table of Contents and it is integrated with the book. There are 5 chapters and a bibliography. Chapter 1: The history of the Great Barrier Reef starts with James Cook's exploration of the area in 1770. There's a color photo of Captain Cook and two color photos of his ship, the HMS Endeavour. The first photo is of a replica of Cook's ship and the second photo is an illustration depicting the ship. At the end of this chapter, there are two aerial photos of parts of the reef. Chapter 2: This chapter pertains to Captain Matthew Flinders and others who sailed around the Great Barrier Reef. In addition to the photo of Flinders, there are several beautiful color photos of sea life in this section. (A clownfish, a blue starfish resting on coral, and a crown-of-thorns starfish) Chapter 3: This chapter is about naturalist, Joseph Beete Jukes, who was charged with investigating the geological character of the Great Barrier Reef. In addition to the history and photo of Jukes, there are photos of; coral Turbinaria Mesenteriana, orange sun coral, corals of various colors, lizardfish and sponges on the reef, banded coral shrimp, two photos of Lady Elliot Island and the surrounding reef, reef stonefish, Crescent-tail Bigeyes swimming along the reef, an aerial view of One-Tree Island, aerial photos of Heron Island, Anemonefish among the coral, and an Amphiprion akindynos among the coral.

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