

# The Great Barrier Reef



## Where Is the Great Barrier Reef?

The Great Barrier Reef is a huge living formation in Australia. It has 2900 reefs and 900 islands. The Great Barrier Reef is in the Coral Sea, off the coast of Queensland, Australia. It runs along the Queensland coast, from near the southern town of Bundaberg to up past Cape York.

## How Big Is the Great Barrier Reef?

The Great Barrier Reef is 2600 kilometres long. It is not only the world's largest reef but also the world's largest living structure. The Great Barrier Reef is bigger than Tasmania and Victoria put together. Astronauts can even see it from outer space!

## Which Animals Live in the Great Barrier Reef?

The Great Barrier Reef is home to many animals, such as fish, sea turtles, giant clam, seahorses, sea snakes, sea turtles, stingrays, sharks and more. One of the most interesting is the dugong. These unusual animals are closely related to dolphins and whales. They are large mammals and are herbivores. Dugongs feed on the many plants of the Great Barrier Reef. They are hunted by sharks and saltwater crocodiles. Today, there are more than 50,000 dugongs living in Australian waters.

## What Else Lives in the Great Barrier Reef?

Many other species live in the Great Barrier Reef; including corals and sponges. 360 species of hard coral grow there, including bottlebrush coral, bubble coral, brain coral, mushroom coral, staghorn coral, tabletop coral and needle coral. Hot weather and warm water are bad for coral and cause 'coral bleaching'.

## How do Aboriginal people use the Great Barrier Reef?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the traditional owners of the Great Barrier Reef. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have used the sea to give them food for thousands of years. Today, food from the sea is important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who still collect food and prepare meals using their traditional foods.



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1. Where is the Great Barrier Reef?

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2. How long is the Great Barrier Reef?

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3. From where can the Great Barrier Reef be seen?

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4. Why is this possible?

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5. In alphabetical order, list examples of animals that live in the Great Barrier Reef.

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6. Are dugongs extinct? Give reasons for your answer.

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7. What does 'herbivore' mean?

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8. What do you think 'coral bleaching' means?

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9. Using information from the text, draw a detailed and labelled picture of the Great Barrier Reef.

