



“Patay na yung corals...”

“

... or there’s only quite a few of them left.” Thus declared marine biologist Edwin D. Garchitorena, Ph.D. He is studying ways to rehabilitate ailing coral reefs.

Dr. Garchitorena proposes the following ways to save our coral reefs:

1. Transplant living coral on dead and dying reefs.
2. Restock the dead or dying reefs with giant clams.
3. Educate the local communities to take care of giant clams.

The giant clam is a flagship species. Its presence in a reef means the reef is healthy and other organisms will survive there as well.

Corals will return to life and fish will come back to feed in a healthy reef.

“As the corals grow and the giant clams grow, they will then provide shelter for a lot of organisms,” Dr. Garchitorena says. Ultimately, this will increase the fish catch, a very important food resource for Filipinos. ★



"Giant Clam", Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopedia 2001.

Focus: Giant of the Reefs

Tridacna gigas, or the giant clam, is a threatened species. There is a law now banning its export.

The giant clam is a common garden ornament or altar pew fixture because of its basin-like shell. It may grow to a meter in diameter. Its flesh is a prized food delicacy.

Like corals, giant clams harbor photosynthetic algae in their tissues. Like corals, too, they secrete calcium carbonate. In corals, this skeletal secretion forms the reef structure. In giant clams, this is in the form of their heavy shells which add to the calcium carbonate in the coral reef system. ★

Guessing Game

I am the biggest fish in the world. I eat tons of plankton and small shrimp. That’s why I may be sighted in deep water near the coral reefs where the concentration of plankton is high. I neither eat meat nor people — divers often come near me. People should stop catching me because there are very few of my kind nowadays.

Who am I?

(Choose one from 3 answers.)



Moray eel

Green sea turtle

Whale shark





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Save Our Coral Reefs Now!

ProREEF is a school-based club dedicated to saving our coral reefs. It disseminates information and puts up exhibits to promote awareness and appreciation of the country's coral reefs.



References:
Articles on 1st Page UDate Jan-Feb 2001
Articles on 2nd Page Inquirer Magazine, 2002



We're on the web:

<http://www.geocities.com/proreef>

Anilao Rivals Tubbataha

It is possible that the coral reefs off Anilao, Batangas are more diverse than those of Tubbataha, the famous reef in the middle of the Sulu Sea which is a World Heritage Site. According to Faye Conner, an American marine biologist who works with the Australian Institute for Marine Sciences, he counted 240 coral species after 19 dives in Tubbataha Reef while in Anilao, after 18 dives, he was able to identify 290 species of corals.

Moreover, Conner reported 29 species of corals in Anilao that have never before been documented in Philippine publications. He saw the rare coral species *Eguchipsammia sp*

in Anilao in its natural habitat for the first time. A few hundred specimens (considered a dense population) of another uncommon species, *Halomitra clavator*, was also found there by Fenner. ★



Acropora sp.

Answer to Guessing Game: Whale shark

Coral care tips:

How to do your part in protecting our ocean wealth

1. **Don't throw plastic bags into the sea. Plastic bags can smother the corals and kill the polyps.**
2. **Report dynamite fishing.**
3. **Support activities that will control deforestation and prevent soil erosion. The eroded soil goes to the sea, smothering the corals and blocking sunlight. ★**

