

Threats on Hard Coral Community

Hard corals could be found within the same place during their lifecycles, and thus are usually considered as plants. In fact, they are sessile animals that belong to the phylum Cnidaria. Other Cnidarian included: soft corals, hydrozoans, jellyfishes and sea anemones. All Cnidarians have stinging cells (nematocysts), which are used for capturing prey and self-defense. Moreover, hard corals deposit limestone as skeleton, which makes them look like colourful boulders.



Actually, most hard corals skeleton are white and the soft living tissues are transparent. The eye-catching colours of corals are come from the symbiotic algae zooxanthella, a group of unicellular (brown) algae. The microscopic algae use the carbon dioxide released from hard corals for photosynthesis. They produced food for themselves and also share with the hard corals. On the other hand, the hard corals provide a stable environment for zooxanthella to grow and carry out photosynthesis. Therefore, most hard corals live in shallow water where there is high penetration of sunlight. Coral communities established in where water depth is less than 6 m at low tide, so regarded as wetlands as well.

Just like other wetlands, coral communities are shelters for many marine organisms such as reef fishes, sea horses and crabs. Therefore, hard coral community has a very high ecological value.


***Remarks:** Some hard corals do not live with symbiotic algae, such as the Tubastrea coral.





14.1.1 There are eight marine creatures below, please put a "✓" next to the picture of Hard Corals.





14.1.2 Coral communities are threatened due to the following aspects. Please give details of each of them.

Climatic Change:

Coastal Development:

Abandoned Nets (Ghost net):

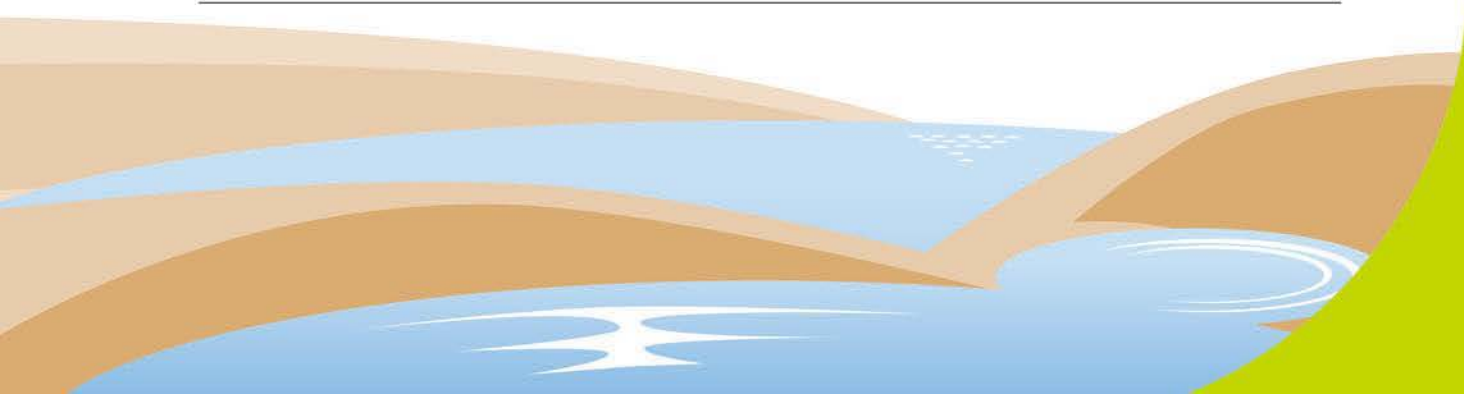
Trawling :

Destructive Fishing Practices:

Boat Anchoring:

Leisure Boating Activities:

Collection:





14.1.3 The growth rate of corals is very low. Once damaged, it takes a long time to recover. Therefore, we have to protect these fragile animals desperately. Suggest ways that we could protect the corals when we are having fun at coral area as well as in our daily life.

At coral area:

In our daily life:

