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corals

GUAM SPECIES IDENTIFICATION

of the 59 Indo-Pacific coral species being proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act

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PROPOSED AS THREATENED

Acanthastrea brevis

(starry/spiny cup coral)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Acanthastrea brevis* are attached to the surface and form mostly submassive colonies (i.e., colonies with knobs, columns or wedges protruding from an encrusting (i.e., grows flat over hard surfaces) base). The polyps look like little cups along the surface with spiny ridges. Colonies are usually not fleshy and can be mottled brown, yellow or green in color (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acanthastrea brevis has been reported to like shallow reef environments (Veron, 2000), and all types of reef habitats (Carpenter et al., 2008).

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PROPOSED AS THREATENED

Acanthastrea regularis

(starry cup coral)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Acanthastrea regularis* are large and boulder-like with ridged polyps forming little cups all over its surface. Colonies do not have thick tissue over the skeleton and are come in various colors of brown and yellow-brown, usually with contrasting colors between outer polyp tissue and oral centers (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acanthastrea regularis grows in shallow reef areas.

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Acropora aculeus

(bottlebrush acropora)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Acropora aculeus forms flattened colonies with flower-like clusters that are typically either flat-topped, clumped together, or look table-like in shape. The colonies are formed by horizontal branches that protrude short slender vertical branches. Colonies are usually a pale grey-green in color but can be bright blue-green or yellow. The tips of the branches can be yellow, lime-green, pale blue or brown.

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acropora aculeus has a broad depth range. It is particularly common in shallow lagoons and most areas where it is protected from direct wave action.

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Acropora acuminata

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Acropora acuminata* typically form a table-like base of fused horizontal branches that turn upward and narrow to points. Colonies are most often pale or bright brown or blue.

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acropora acuminata has a very broad range and can be found on upper or lower reef slopes ranging in depth from 15 to 20 meters.

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Acropora aspera

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Acropora aspera colonies form tree-like or interlocking bush-like clumps of thick, relatively chubby branches. The thickness of the branches can be different, depending on their exposure to waves. Taller colonies can be found in shallow protected areas. *Acropora aspera* colonies are pale brown, beige, or pale blue-grey, green or cream.

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acropora aspera grows in all types of reef environments and habitats. The physical characteristics of colonies can be different depending on their location (Wallace, 1999).

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Acropora globiceps

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Acropora globiceps* are usually small and resemble the shape of a spread hand with finger-like branches. The size and appearance of branches depend on degree of exposure to wave action but are always short and closely compacted. Colonies exposed to strong wave action have pyramid-shaped branchlets. Colonies are either blue (which may photograph purple) or cream in color (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acropora globiceps has been reported from intertidal (i.e., area between high and low tide marks), upper reef slopes and reef flats (Veron, 2000).

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PROPOSED AS THREATENED

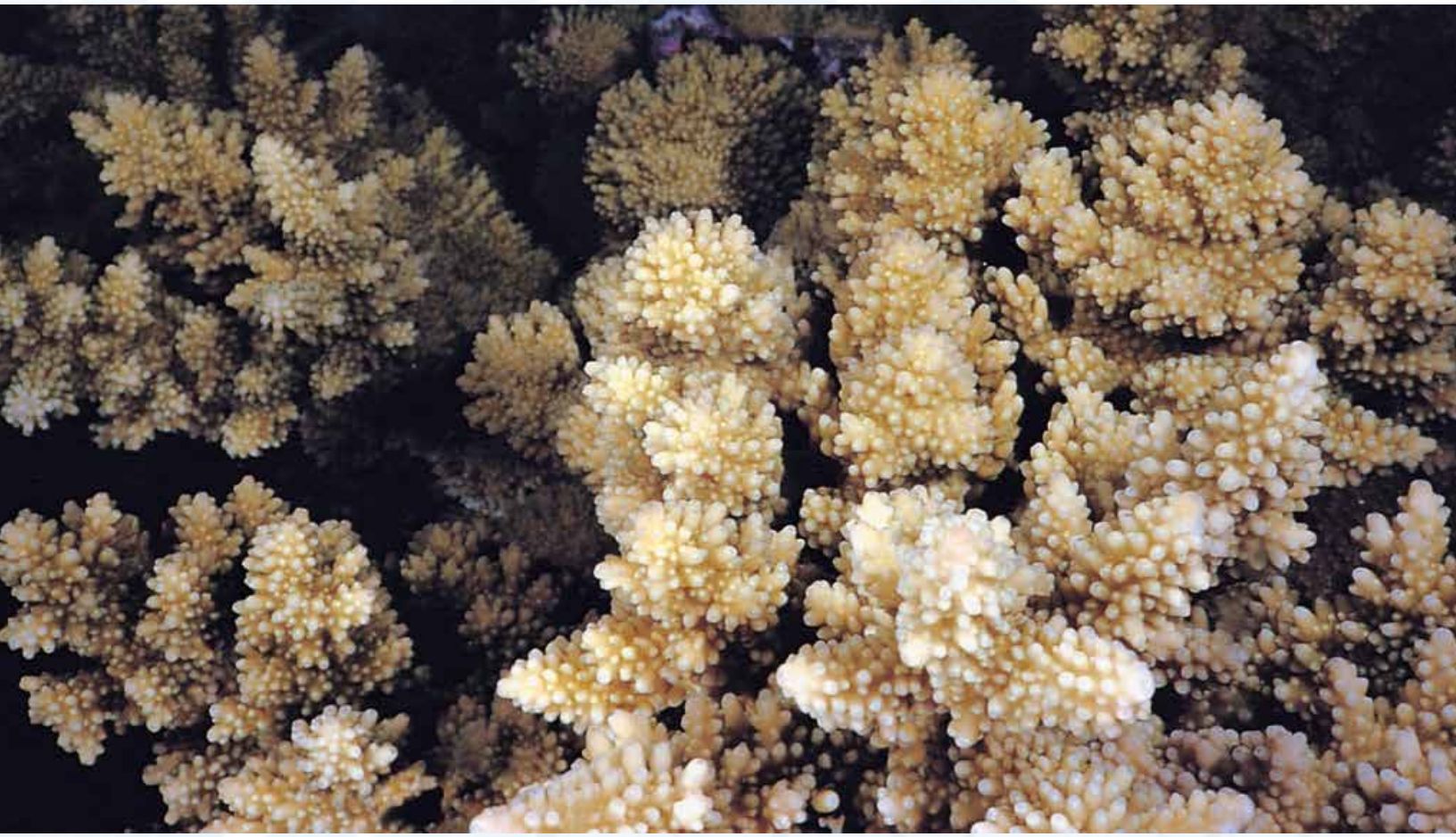
Acropora listeri

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Acropora listeri* look like irregular clumps or flower-like clustered plates with thick branches of highly irregular length and shape. Colonies are cream or brown in color (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acropora listeri has been reported from subtidal (i.e., below the low tide mark but still shallow and close to shore) shallow reef edges, upper reef slopes, and in strong wave action (Veron, 2000; Wallace, 1999).



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Acropora microclados

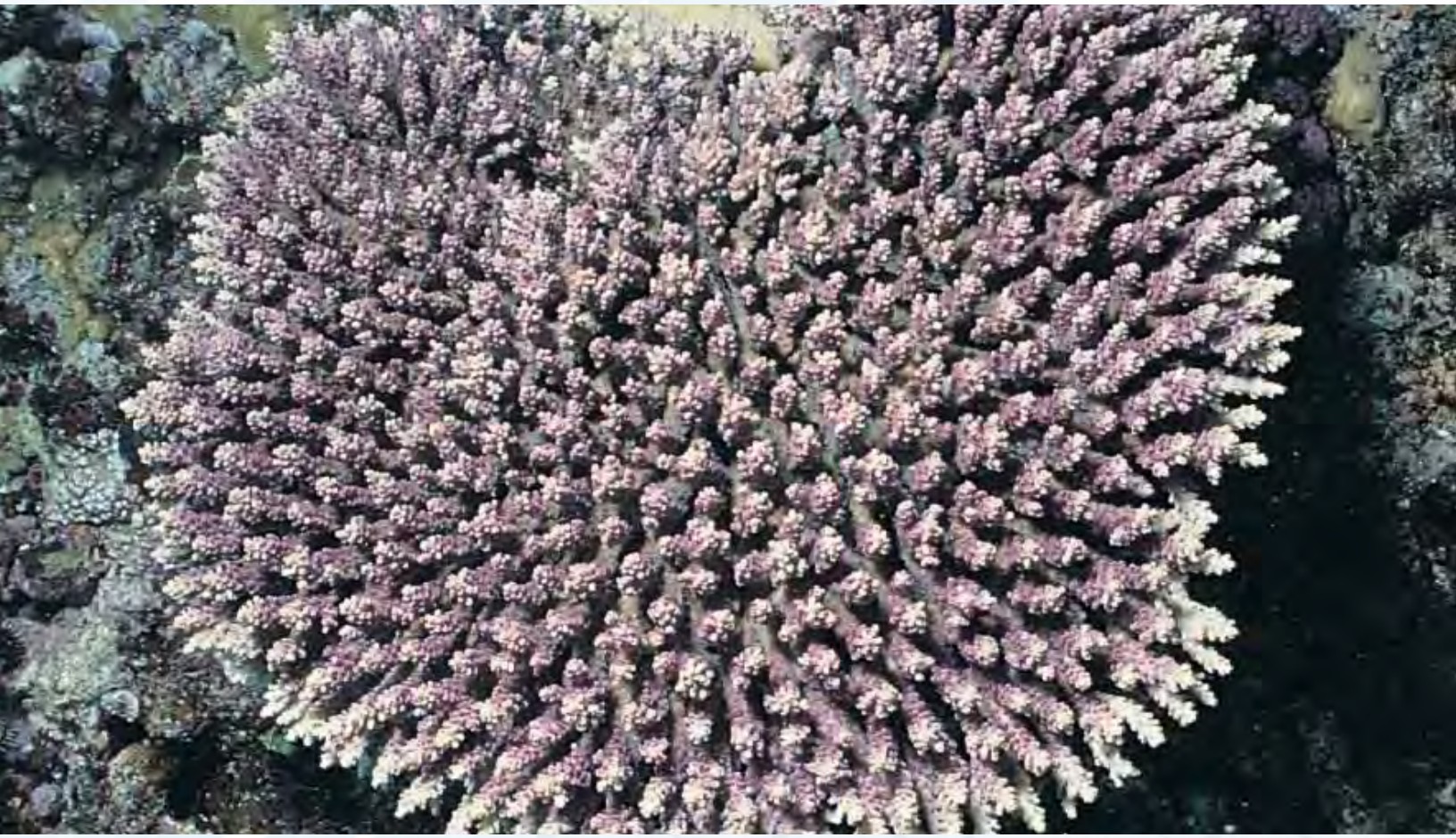
(strawberry shortcake acropora)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Acropora microclados* look like flat-topped plates with flower-like clusters that grow up to approximately 1 meter across, with short, uniform, evenly spaced, narrowed branchlets at the base. Colonies are usually a distinctive pale pinkish-brown in color but are occasionally other colors. Pale grey tentacles are often extended during the day (Veron, 2000; Veron and Wallace, 1984).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Colonies of *Acropora microclados* have been reported to grow on upper reef slopes (Veron, 2000) and subtidal (i.e., below the low tide mark but still shallow and close to shore) reef edges (Carpenter et al., 2008).



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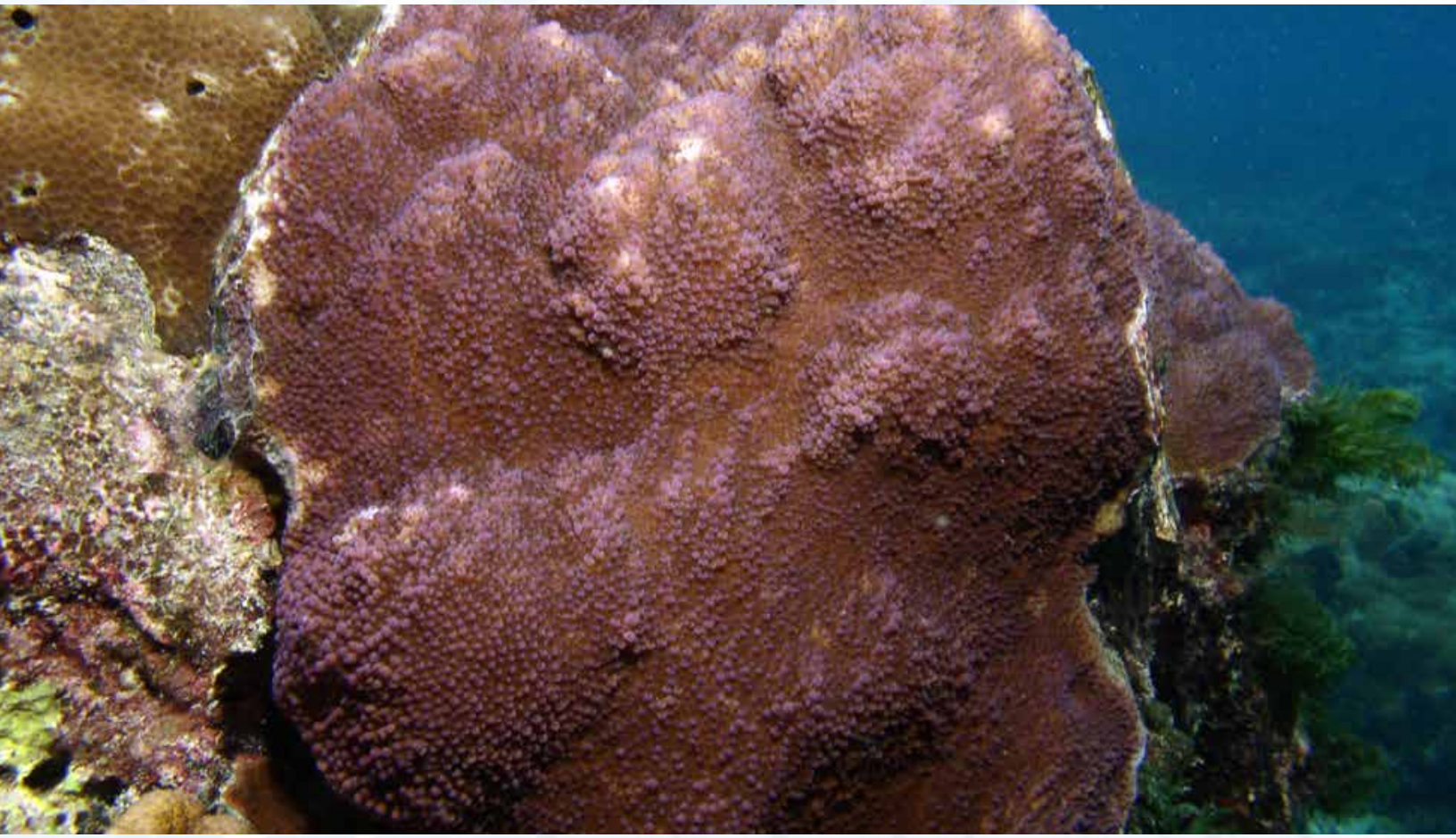
Acropora palmerae

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Acropora palmerae* are encrusting (i.e., grows flat over hard surfaces) and may or may not have short, irregularly shaped branches. Colonies rarely grow more than 1 meter across. Colonies are greenish- or pinkish-brown in color (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acropora palmerae grows on reef flats exposed to strong wave action and lagoons (Veron, 2000) and intertidal (i.e., between high and low tide marks), subtidal (i.e., below the low tide mark but still shallow and close to shore), shallow, reef tops, reef flats, and reef edges (Carpenter et al., 2008).



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Acropora paniculata

(fuzzy table coral)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Acropora paniculata* are large plates or tables that can frequently grow up to greater than 1 meter across. Branchlets are short and compact. Colonies are cream, grey or blue in color (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acropora paniculata grows on upper reef slopes, just subtidal (i.e., below the low tide mark but still shallow and close to shore), reef edges, and sheltered lagoons (Carpenter et al., 2008).

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Acropora polystoma

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Acropora polystoma* look like irregular clumps or flower-like clustered plates with upright branches all of similar length and shape that narrow to a point. Colonies are cream, blue (which may photograph pink) or yellow in color (Veron, 2000; Veron and Wallace, 1984).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acropora polystoma grows on upper reef slopes exposed to strong wave action (Veron, 2000) and intertidal (i.e., between the high and low tide marks), just subtidal (i.e., below the low tide mark but still shallow and close to shore) reef tops, reef edges, and areas with strong currents (Carpenter et al., 2008).

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Acropora retusa

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Acropora retusa* look like flat plates with short, thick, uniform finger-like branchlets. Colonies are brown in color.

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acropora retusa grows on upper reef slopes and tidal pools (Veron, 2000; Veron and Wallace, 1984).

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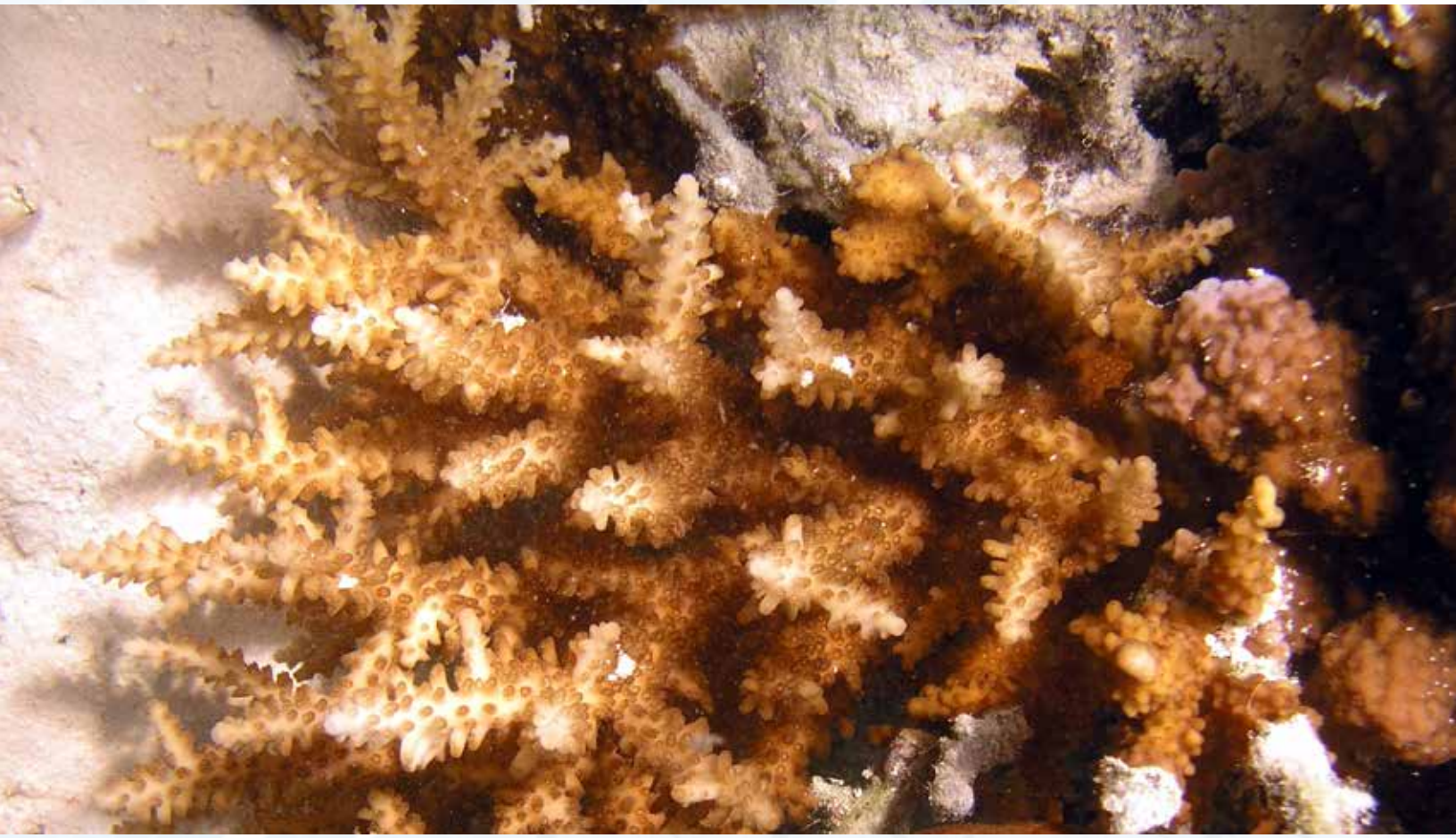
Acropora striata

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Acropora striata* form dense thickets with short cylinder-shaped branches. Colonies are grey-brown in color with white branch tips. (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acropora striata grows on shallow rocky foreshores and shallow reef flats (Veron, 2000).



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Acropora vaughani

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Acropora vaughani forms colonies with open-branched, bushy, tree-like clumps. Colonies are blue, cream or pale brown in color (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acropora vaughani grows on fringing reefs with murky water (Veron, 2000), protected lagoons and sandy slopes (IUCN, 2010), or protected subtidal (i.e., below the low tide mark but still shallow and close to shore) waters (Richards, 2009).

PROPOSED AS THREATENED

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Acropora verweyi

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Acropora verweyi forms colonies with branches that look like flower-like clustered clumps. This coral is nearly always a creamy-brown color with yellow tips (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acropora verweyi seems to prefer shallow waters. It lives on upper reef slopes or other parts of the reef where there is good water circulation.

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PROPOSED AS THREATENED

Alveopora allingi

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Alveopora allingi* are encrusting (i.e., grows flat over hard surfaces) or have short irregular lobes with rounded surfaces or form columns. Colonies are usually yellow, green or brown in color with white oral cones (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Alveopora allingi grows in protected reef areas (Veron, 2000).

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PROPOSED AS THREATENED

Alveopora fenestrata

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Alveopora fenestrata* are generally crescent-shaped with the surface divided into lobes. Polyps are long, with long tentacles giving a ragged appearance. Colonies are grey or greenish-brown in color, sometimes with white oral cones (Veron, 2000). Maximum colony size is 30 centimeters.

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Alveopora fenestrata grows in shallow reef areas (Veron, 2000).

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Alveopora verrilliana

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Alveopora verrilliana* are composed of short irregularly dividing knob-like branches. Polyps are long when extended. Colonies are dark greenish-brown, grey or chocolate in color, sometimes with white oral cones and/or tentacle tips (Veron, 2000). Maximum colony size is 100 centimeters.

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Alveopora verrilliana grows in shallow reef areas (Veron, 2000).

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Euphyllia cristata

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Euphyllia cristata* resemble sea anemone-like animals, with large, fleshy polyps that have large tubular tentacles and knob-like tips. Polyps are usually pale grey or green, with different colored tips in comparison to the tentacles.

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Euphyllia cristata grows in shallow reef areas, although this species is found mostly within moderate depths (near the surface down to 35 meters).

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Euphyllia paraancora

(anchor/hammer coral)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Euphyllia paraancora* are made up of separate bunches of branching polyps compacted together that have large tentacles with anchor-shaped ends, resulting in the common name "Anchor Coral." Generally, colonies are pale tan or greenish-brown in color (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Euphyllia paraancora grows in both shallow and deep reef areas that are protected from wave action.

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PROPOSED AS THREATENED

Millepora tuberosa

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Millepora tuberosa* form thin to moderately thick encrusting (i.e., grows flat over hard surfaces) sheets that stick close to the underlying surface (Randall and Cheng, 1984). They are always encrusting and so do not make vertical plates or branches, although they can be nodular or lumpy, especially when they grow over rubble. *Millepora tuberosa* is often found as small colonies (5–30 centimeters across) but can be found having widths greater than a meter (Randall and Cheng, 1984). Living colonies are unique purplish-red or wine-colored.

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Millepora tuberosa grows in a variety of habitats, including the forereef and lagoonal areas.

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PROPOSED AS THREATENED

Montipora caliculata

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Montipora caliculata colonies are massive (i.e., boulder-like) with irregular lump-like growths. The polyps are either depressed into the surrounding tissue or look like little funnels. Colonies are either brown or blue.

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Montipora caliculata colonies can be found in most reef environments.

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Montipora lobulata

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Montipora lobulata* are mottled brown or white and submassive (i.e., forms knobs, wedges, or columns from an encrusting base). As such, colony surfaces consist of irregular shaped mounds.

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Montipora lobualta commonly grows in shallow reef areas.

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Montipora patula/ M. verrilli

(spreading or sandpaper rice coral)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Montipora patula: Colonies colonies are tan, most often with little purple polyps, and either grows flat along the surface (i.e., encrusting) or forms plate-like tiers that overlap each other.

Montipora verrilli has similar characteristics, but is described only as encrusting.

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Montipora patula grows in shallow reef environments and reef flats (Veron, 2000). *Montipora patula* is common in environments with considerable wave action, but less so in areas that are impacted by pollution and sediments in the water (Jokiel et al., 2007). *Montipora patula/M. verrilli* also has a very restricted range, centered in the main and Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

INTERESTING FACT

The Biological Review Team decided to evaluate *Montipora patula/M. verrilli* as a single unit since they are impossible to tell apart genetically and their skeletons are physically indistinguishable on a microscopic scale (Forsman et al., 2010).

Montipora patula (left), Montipora verrilli (right)

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PROPOSED AS THREATENED

Pavona diffluens

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Pavona diffluens* form knobs, columns, or wedges that grow up from an encrusting (i.e., grows flat over hard surfaces) base. Polyps are deep and have a star-like shape covering the surface. Colonies are tan colored (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Pavona diffluens grows in most reef habitats (Veron, 2000).

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Pectinia alcicornis

(antler coral)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Pectinia alcicornis* look like irregular clusters with flat, wavy, thin plates, and tall, upward-projecting spires that can dominate the appearance. Colonies are green, yellow, brown, or mixtures of colors. The center of colonies is usually darker than colony edges (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Pectinia alcicornis seems to thrive in murky water, often on horizontal surfaces (Veron, 2000). It is found in most reef areas, both shallow and deep (Wood, 1983).

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Pocillopora danae

(cauliflower coral)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Pocillopora danae* may be greater than 1 meter across and can be solid and dome-shaped, or have branches that are either flattened and blade-like, or fine and irregularly shaped. The branches tend to form a three-dimensional tangled maze. This coral is also covered with wart-like growths and looks somewhat like a head of cauliflower, hence the common name "Cauliflower coral." Colonies are usually cream, brown or pink in color.

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Pocillopora danae grows on partly protected reef slopes.

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Porites horizontilata

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Porites horizontalata* are a combination of encrusting (i.e., grows flat over hard surfaces) sheets and knotty, twisted branches that fuse together. Colonies are pale brown in color with cream on tips of branches and plates; sometimes they are brightly colored in shallow water (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Porites horizontalata grows in shallow reef areas (Veron, 2000).

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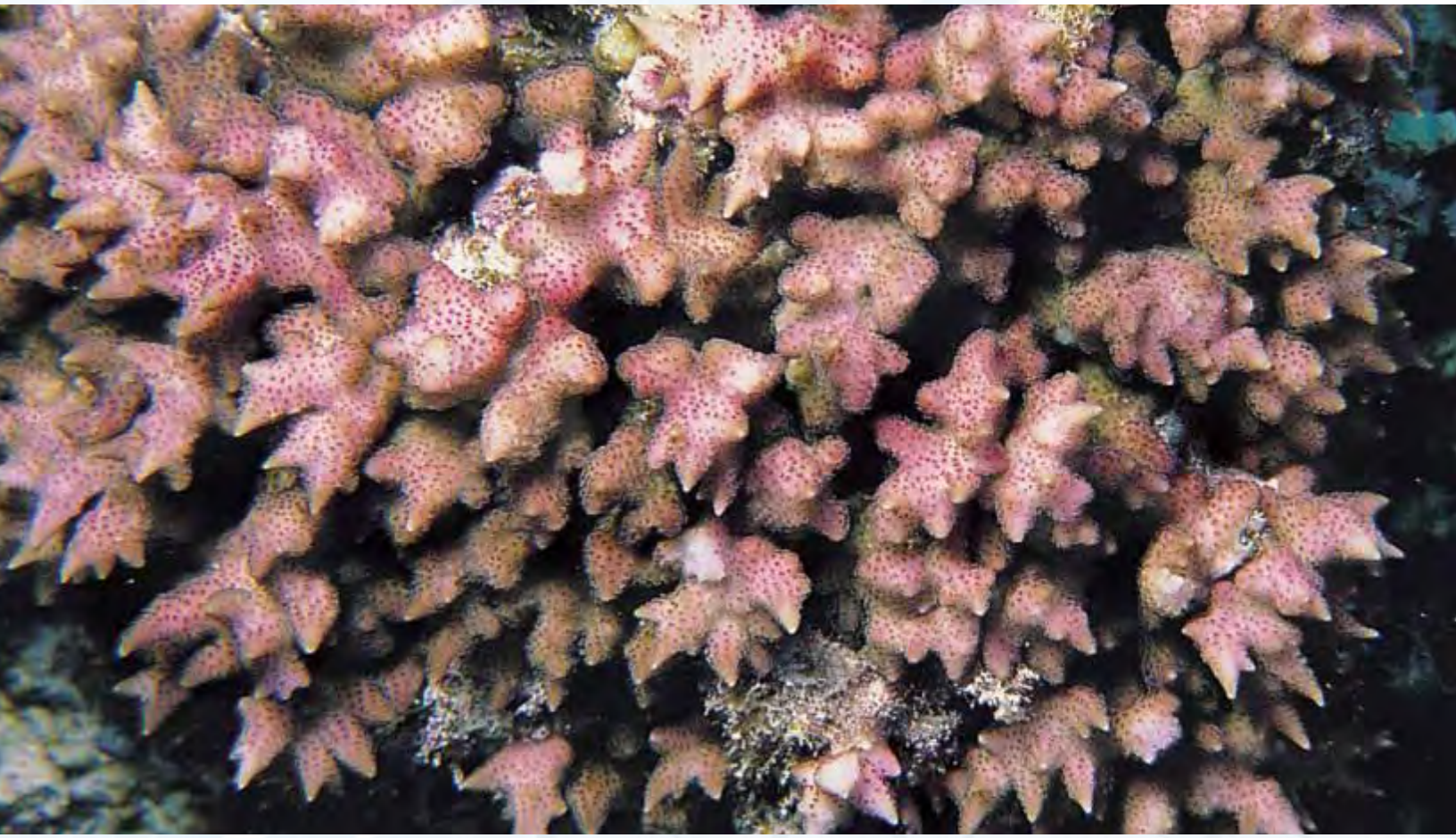
PROPOSED AS THREATENED

Seriatopora aculeata

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Seriatopora aculeata* have thick, short, tapered branches, usually in fused spiky-looking clumps. Their polyps are unevenly distributed over the coral, and tentacles are commonly extended during the day. Colonies are pink or cream in color (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Seriatopora aculeata grows in shallow reef areas (Veron, 2000).