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SPECIES IDENTIFICATION

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





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Acropora aspera (cover), *Euphyllia paraancora* (shown above)

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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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Acanthastrea hemprichii

(starry cup coral)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Acanthastrea hemprichii* can range from encrusting (i.e., grows over hard surfaces)(i.e., grows flat along the surface) to massive (i.e., large and boulder-like) and frequently grow to be over 1 meter across. Colonies have fleshy tissue over the skeleton, but this is not thick enough to mask underlying skeletal features. Colonies are mottled browns and greens in color, commonly with polyps that have brown walls and green mouth discs (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acanthastrea hemprichii grows in most reef environments (Carpenter et al., 2008; Veron, 2000).



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Acanthastrea ishigakiensis

(starry cup coral)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Acanthastrea ishigakiensis* usually form rounded balls or are semi-circular with irregular shaped cups on the surface, and often grow to be more than 0.5 meters across. Colonies have thick fleshy tissue over the skeleton. Colonies are uniform blue-grey or mixtures of grey, brown, cream and green in color, usually with polyp mouths, oral discs and walls with different colors (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acanthastrea ishigakiensis grows in shallow protected reef environments (Veron, 2000).



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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 dendrum

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Acropora dendrum* form plates of clustered branches with other widely spaced, tapering smaller branches growing from the main branches. Colonies are pale brown or cream in color (Veron, 2000). Maximum colony size is 100 centimeters.

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acropora dendrum is considered to be a rare species, and grows on upper reef slopes.



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Acropora donei

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Acropora donei* are table-like, and can grow up to 2 meters across. Colonies consist of masses of fused horizontal branches and can be green, white, cream, or rarely pale brown in color (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acropora donei grows in subtidal (i.e., below the low tide mark but still shallow and close to shore) areas on upper reef slopes or submerged reefs, apparently restricted to shallow fringing reefs and upper reef slopes where *Acropora* diversity is high (Veron, 2000). This species is considered uncommon but easy to identify.





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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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Acropora horrida

(blue staghorn coral)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Acropora horrida* are usually open branched, and can have a bush-like appearance in some locations such as upper reef slopes and shallow lagoons. The surface of the branches is rough and tentacles from the polyps are usually extended during the day (shown below). Colonies are usually pale blue (which may photograph pink or purple), sometimes dark blue or pale yellow or brown. Polyps are pale blue or white (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acropora horrida grows on fringing reefs with murky water (Veron 2000), subtidal (i.e., below the low-tide mark but still shallow and close to shore) sheltered habitats, protected deepwater flats, lagoons, and sandy slopes (Wallace, 1999).



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Acropora jacquelineae

(plating acropora)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Acropora jacquelineae* look like flat plates or tables that can grow up to 1 meter across. Viewed from above, the plates are covered with a mass of fine, delicately-curved polyps, giving an almost moss-like appearance. Colonies are grey-brown or pinkish in color (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acropora jacquelineae grows on subtidal (i.e., below the low tide mark but still shallow and close to shore) walls, ledges on walls, and shallow reef slopes protected from wave action (Veron, 2000; Wallace, 1999).



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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 lokani

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Acropora lokani* are composed of full-bodied horizontal main branches that usually grow away from each other. The main branches grow short upright smaller branchlets that also grow away from each other. Polyps on the end of branches are large and tube-like. Colonies are cream, brown or blue (which may photograph pink) in color (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acropora lokani grows in sheltered lagoon patch reefs and shallow reef environments (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 pharaonis

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Acropora pharaonis* can either be large horizontal tables or irregular clusters of horizontal or upright interlinked twisty, knobby branches. Colonies are grey-brown in color, usually with pale branch tips (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acropora pharaonis grows on sheltered reef slopes (Veron, 2000) and 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 rudis

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Acropora rudis* are tree-like with large, tapered branches that grow towards the bottom and spread out across the bottom. Colonies are dark tan in color with pale branch tips (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acropora rudis grows in shallow to deep rocky foreshores (areas between high and low tide marks) (Veron, 2000) and may be restricted to fringing reefs (Richards, 2009; Wallace et al., 2001).



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Acropora speciosa

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Acropora speciosa* form thick cushions or bottlebrush branches. They have large, stretched out polyps on the end of the branches that create the bottlebrush appearance. Colonies are cream in color with delicately colored branch tips (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acropora speciosa grows in protected environments with clear water and high diversity of *Acropora* (Veron, 2000) and steep slopes or deep, shaded waters (IUCN, 2010).



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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 tenella

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Acropora tenella forms horizontal, platy, colonies with flattened branches that stretch out from the colony like spread fingers. Colonies are cream color with blue/white tips.

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acropora tenella grows on lower slopes below 40 meters (Veron, 2000), protected slopes and shelves as deep as 70 meters (Richards, 2009), and apparently prefer calm, deep conditions (Wallace et al., 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).



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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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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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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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Anacropora puertogalerae

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Anacropora puertogalerae* have thin, compact branches, typically less than 13 millimeters across that narrow toward the tips. Colonies are pale brown in color, occasionally with white tips (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Anacropora puertogalerae grows in shallow reef environments (Veron, 2000), though it has also been found separated from reefs (Veron, 1995).





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Anacropora spinosa

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Anacropora spinosa* have compact branches, less than 1 centimeter across and grow narrow toward the tips. They have stretched out, crowded, irregular shaped polyps that are not pointy, but still have spines beneath them. Colonies are pale brown in color, occasionally with white tips (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Anacropora spinosa grows in shallow reef environments generally in clear or slightly murky water and on soft substrates of lower reef slopes (IUCN, 2010). *Anacropora spinosa* has also been found separated from reefs (Veron, 1995).





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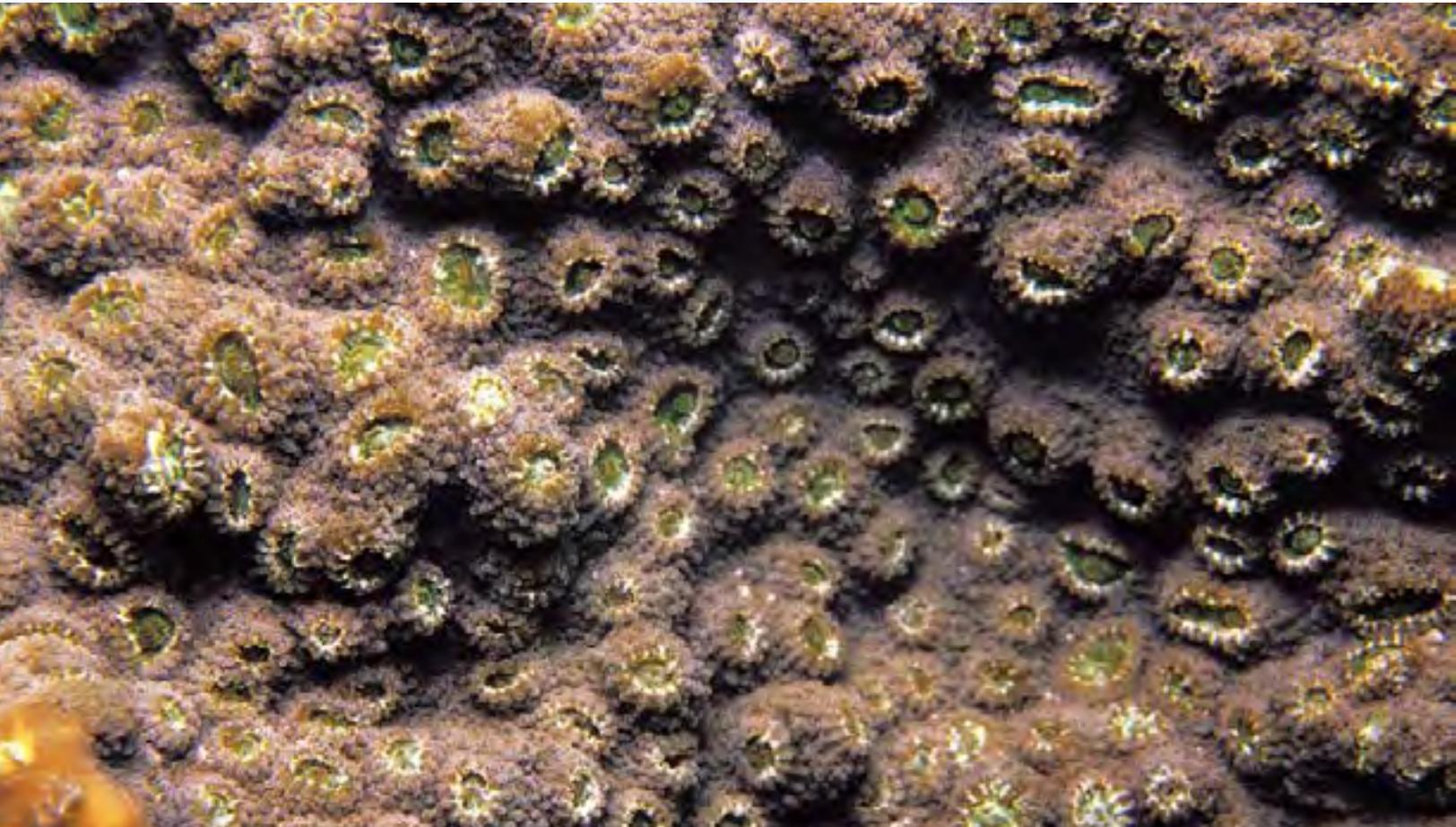
Astreopora cucullata

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Astreopora cucullata has thick or encrusting (i.e., grows flat over hard surfaces) plate-like colonies. They have irregular shaped polyps that seem to be absorbed into the skeletal structure on curved in surfaces but protrude on rounded surfaces. The polyps often have egg-shaped openings which sometimes have little bumps around the opening that form a hood. Colonies are pale brown or cream in color (Veron, 2000), tan or rust-colored (Lamberts, 1980).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Astreopora cucullata grows in protected reef environments (Veron, 2000).



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Barabattoia laddi

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Barabattoia laddi* look like bunched clusters of short ridged tubes. Colonies are pale brown in color (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Barabattoia laddi has only been reported to grow in shallow lagoons (Veron, 2000).



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Caulastrea echinulata

(trumpet coral)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

The polyps of *Caulastrea echinulata* grow close together and are shaped like the horn of a trumpet. Each trumpet-shaped polyp grows on its own stalk, but is tightly compacted together. This species gets its common name from the fact that the oral disc is “deeper” inside, and the corallite walls are taller than those on other *Caulastrea* species. Colonies are tan or dark brown in color, with pale oral discs.

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Caulastrea echinulata has been known to grow on horizontal surfaces in cloudy waters that are protected from wave action (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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Euphyllia paradivisa

(frogspawn coral)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Euphyllia paradivisa* are made up of separate bunches of branching polyps compacted together that have large tentacles extended during the day and night. These tentacles resemble a mass of fish eggs or frog eggs, hence one of its common names (frogspawn). Colonies are pale greenish-grey with lighter tentacle tips.

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Euphyllia paradivisa grows in shallow or mid-slope reef areas that are protected from wave action.



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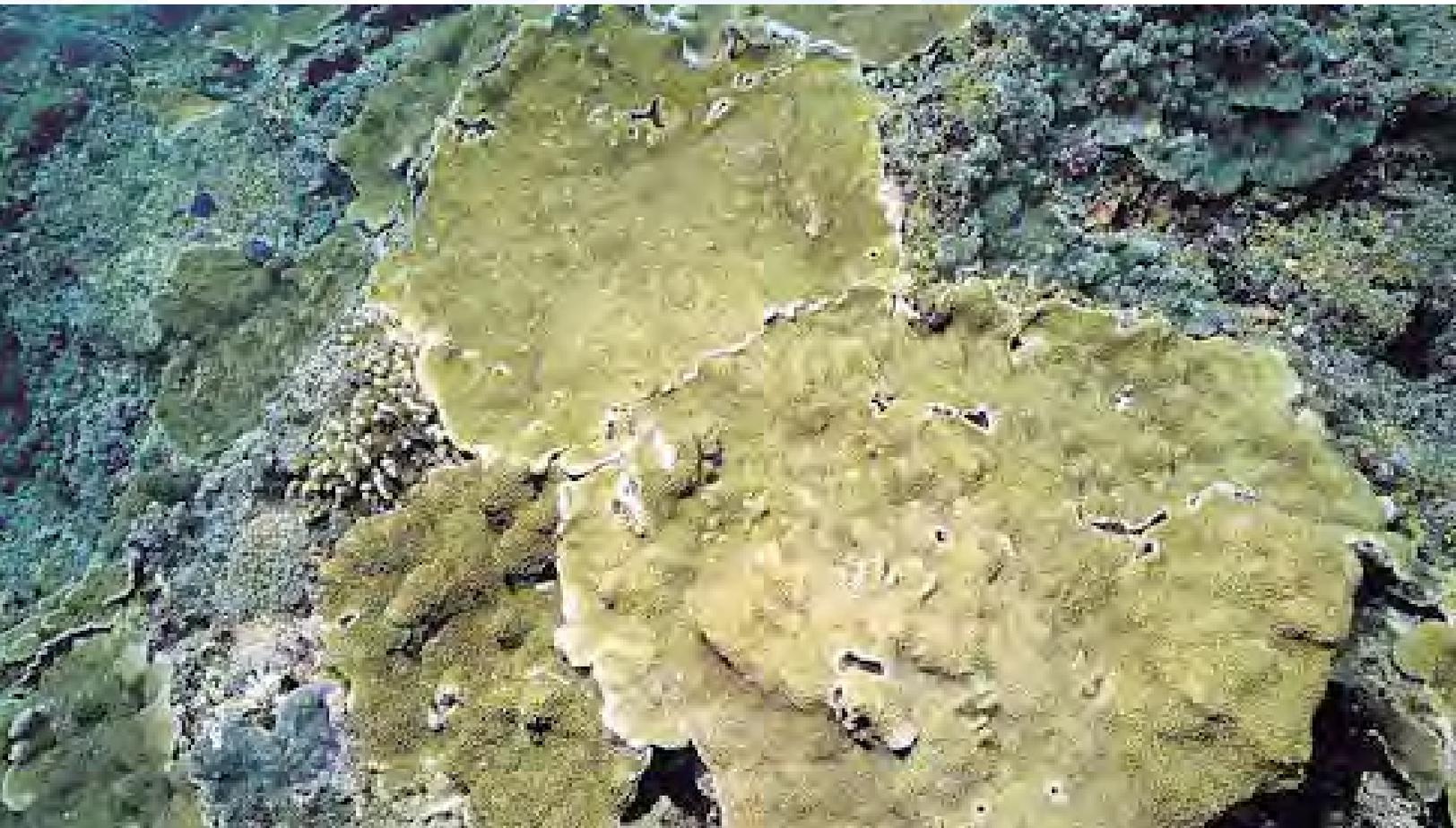
Isopora crateriformis

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Isopora crateriformis look like flattened solid encrusting (i.e., grows flat over hard surfaces) plates and are sometimes referred to as “cowpies.” They can sometimes be over a meter across in size. Colonies are brown in color (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Isopora crateriformis commonly grow in shallow, high-wave energy environments.





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Isopora cuneata

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Isopora cuneata can form flattened solid encrusting (i.e., grows flat over hard surfaces) plates like *Isopora crateriformis* but usually also form “Mohawk” ridges in the same direction as the main wave motion in that particular location, or short flattened blades. Colonies are brown or pale cream (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Isopora cuneata commonly grows in shallow, high-wave energy environments. Although it is occasionally found on sheltered reef slopes and backreef lagoons, it is more typical of reef crests and inner reef flats (Ayre et al., 1991).



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Millepora foveolata

(fire coral)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Millepora foveolata* form thin encrusting (i.e., grows flat over hard surfaces) sheets that stick close to the underlying surface. The colony surfaces exposed to light swell upward into low ridges around individual pores or groups of pores (Randall and Cheng, 1984). Living colonies are yellowish, ranging from pale pinkish-yellow to yellowish-beige in shaded or hidden areas, changing towards a brighter yellow as the area becomes more exposed to light (Randall and Cheng, 1984).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Millepora foveolata have been found at the forefront reef slope on the upper surface of buttress ridges (Randall and Cheng, 1984).



PROPOSED AS THREATENED

**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Pacific Islands Region

corals

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.



PROPOSED AS THREATENED



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Pacific Islands Region

corals

Montipora angulata

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Montipora angulata* have extensive encrusting (i.e., grows flat over hard surfaces) bases with short branches that form a compact clump. The polyps are slightly funnel-shaped and depressed into the surrounding tissue. The tissue between polyps is either smooth or forms thin ridges between the polyps. Colonies are pale brown in color (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Montipora angulata grows on fringing reefs and reef flats (Veron, 2000).



PROPOSED AS THREATENED



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Pacific Islands Region

corals

Montipora australiensis

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Montipora australiensis* are pale brown, forming thick plates and irregular shaped columns.

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Montipora australiensis grows in shallow reef environments with high-wave action.



PROPOSED AS THREATENED



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Pacific Islands Region

corals

Montipora calcareo

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Montipora calcareo* are pale brown or blue, which may photograph purple. Colonies form irregular shaped thick plates with column-like growths that protrude upwards.

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Montipora calcareo typically grows in shallow reef environments.





**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Pacific Islands Region

corals

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.





**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Pacific Islands Region

corals

PROPOSED AS THREATENED

Montipora flabellata/ M. dilatata/M. turgescens

(blue rice coral)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Montipora flabellata: Colonies are encrusting (see below), with uneven lobe-like growths. Colonies are usually blue (which may photograph pink), also brown or purple (Veron, 2000).

Montipora dilatata: Colonies are encrusting to submassive, which means they grow as a flat sheet along the substrate, and can also form knobs, columns or wedges that protrude up from the encrusting base. *M. dilatata* also has irregular shaped branch-like growths that grow upwards and become flattened near their ends. Colonies are pale to dark brown in color (Veron, 2000).

Montipora turgescens: Colonies can either be massive (ball-shaped or boulder-like), flat, semi-circular or form columns. Colonies are brown, cream or purple (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Montipora flabellata/M. dilatata/M. turgescens grows in most reef environments (Veron, 2000).

INTERESTING FACT

The Biological Review Team decided to group these three species together into a “species complex” and review them as a single unit since specimens examined from Hawai`i are impossible to tell apart genetically, and the physical characteristics of these species can take on many different forms, shapes, sizes, etc.

Montipora flabellata (left), *Montipora dilatata* (middle), *Montipora turgescens* (right)



PROPOSED AS THREATENED



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Pacific Islands Region

corals

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 lobulata commonly grows in shallow reef areas.





**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Pacific Islands Region

corals

PROPOSED AS THREATENED

Montipora patula/ M. verrilli

(spreading or sandpaper rice coral)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Montipora patula: 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)



PROPOSED AS THREATENED



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Pacific Islands Region

corals

Pachyseris rugosa

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Pachyseris rugosa* are upright, irregular shaped, intertwining two-sided plates. The coral has an uneven surface that looks like it is almost ruffled with twisting and turning grooves and valleys. This coral is sometimes referred to as “elephant skin coral” due to its rugged and wrinkled appearance. Colonies are often over 1 meter across and can be brown or deep blue-grey in color.

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Pachyseris rugosa may develop into large mound-shaped colonies in shallow water but smaller colonies grow in a wide range of areas including those exposed to strong wave action (Veron, 2000).





**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Pacific Islands Region

corals

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).



PROPOSED AS THREATENED

**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Pacific Islands Region

corals

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).



PROPOSED AS THREATENED



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Pacific Islands Region

corals

Physogyra lichtensteini

(pearl bubble/grape coral)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Physogyra lichtensteini* can either be massive (boulder-like) or thick and platy. During the day, this species looks like a large mass of grapes. Colonies are pale grey in color, sometimes dull green.

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Physogyra lichtensteini typically grows in murky reef environments (Veron, 2000). It is commonly found in protected areas such as crevices and overhangs, especially in murky waters with tidal currents. *Physogyra lichtensteini* is also known to prefer caves and caverns as well as shallow but shaded waters.



PROPOSED AS THREATENED



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Pacific Islands Region

corals

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.





**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Pacific Islands Region

corals

PROPOSED AS ENDANGERED
(Eastern Pacific)

PROPOSED AS THREATENED
(Indo-Pacific)

Pocillopora elegans

(cauliflower coral)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Pocillopora elegans* are usually compact clumps composed of even, thick, primarily upright cluster-like branches with flattened ends. This coral is covered in wart-like growths that are rounded and smooth. Colonies are cream, brown-green or pink in color.

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Pocillopora elegans grows in shallow reef areas.

INTERESTING FACT

The Biological Review Team decided to split *P. elegans* into two separate species (Indo-Pacific and Eastern Pacific) due to distinct reproductive differences and no evidence of the two species reproducing together.



PROPOSED AS THREATENED



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Pacific Islands Region

corals

Porites horizontalata

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).



PROPOSED AS THREATENED



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Pacific Islands Region

corals

Porites napapora

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Porites napapora* are broad plates near the colony base with clumps of irregularly fused branches that narrow towards the tips. Colonies are brown in color with white polyp centers (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

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





**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Pacific Islands Region

corals

PROPOSED AS THREATENED

Porites nigrescens

(rough finger coral)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Porites nigrescens* form clumps of coarse branches that narrow to square ends. The surface of this coral has a “pitted” appearance making the surface look rough. It is sometimes referred to as “rough finger coral” as a result. Colonies are brown or cream in color.

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Porites nigrescens grows on lower reef slopes and lagoons protected from wave action (Veron 2000).



PROPOSED AS THREATENED



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Pacific Islands Region

corals

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).

