Measuring Coral Health

using random surveys

Learning Objectives

At the end of this field activity, students will be able to:

• Monitor the health of corals using the Coral Health Chart. while performing a random survey.

Equipment

- If snorkelling mask snorkel, fins
- If reef-walking booties, hat and sunscreen
- Waterproof DATA slate (see picture) with pencil
- Coral Health Chart
- Thermometer
- Underwater camera (if available)
- Viewing tube (if available)
- GPS (if available)





Example of CoralWatch data slate.

Instructions

The most important part of a random survey is that it is truly random - don't pick the corals you like or choose them because they are bleached.

- 1. Choose how often you will measure a coral colony (e.g. every 6 steps or 2 fin-kicks).
- 2. Begin in a clear direction drawing an imaginary line in your direction of travel.
- 3. Every 2 fin-kicks, measure the colour scores and coral type of the coral colony closest to you.
- 4. Repeat this for at least 20 corals.

Teacher notes

- This activity can be conducted snorkelling or reef-walking.
- The CoralWatch Virtual Reef Activity is useful preparation for using the Coral Health Chart in the field.
- The CoralWatch data slates contains all required survey details. You can also create your own data slates by transcribing all the information onto a blank slate. Make sure you don't miss any details!
- Use the same tips for monitoring and instructions for the use of the Coral Health Chart from Exercise 6.



This reef walker has chosen to survey a coral every 6 steps (or 2 metres). You can choose to survey your corals closer together or further apart - as long as the distance you choose is consistent throughout the survey.

