

# Coral Reef Facts

“Pool Noodle Coral Reefs! With Jill Jackson” July 2020

## What is a barrier reef?

According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary, a coral reef is a reef composed of a large colony of corals including the stony skeletons of both living and dead corals. Coral reefs are made from thousands of individual animals called polyps, which form colonies.

## How many barrier reefs are there?

Thousands of coral reefs exist around the world including:

- The Great Barrier Reef in the Coral Sea off the coast of Queensland, Australia
- The Red Sea Coral Reef in the Red Sea near Egypt and Israel
- The Florida Reef in the Gulf of Mexico right here off the coast of Florida

## A few fun facts about the Great Barrier Reef in Australia:

- It is the biggest reef system in the world
  - Contains over 2,900 individual reefs
  - Has more than 900 islands across 1,600 miles
- Is the only **living** thing can be viewed from outer space
  - Is about half the size of Texas
- Is home to dolphins, porpoises, and more than 30 species of whales
  - Is where 6 species of sea turtles go to start their families
    - 17 species of sea snakes live on the reef
  - There are more than 1,500 different species of fish
    - 10% of the fish in the world live there
    - Is thought to be 20 million years old
- Has over 400 different types of coral, 350 of which are hard corals

