



NOAA FISHERIES

Protected Resources

Threatened Coral Species

Seven coral species are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. If you find a piece of live rock material with a threatened coral species attached, you **MUST** leave that piece of rock on the bottom. Do not touch or collect the coral.

Staghorn coral

Staghorn coral (*Acropora cervicornis*) typically grows in water 15-45 feet deep. Colonies are antler-like with cylindrical branches that are straight or slightly curved.



Left: Adult staghorn coral. **Right:** Juvenile staghorn coral.

Elkhorn coral

Elkhorn coral (*Acropora palmata*) generally grows in water 3 to 15 feet deep. Colonies are flattened to near round with frond-like branches. Branches typically radiate outward from a central trunk.



Left: Adult elkhorn coral (photo: MyFWC Research, www.flickr.com/photos/myfwc). **Right:** Juvenile elkhorn coral.

Star corals

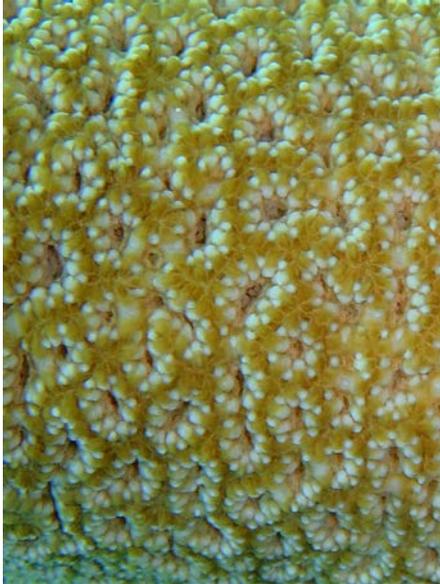
There are three species of star coral that are listed under the Endangered Species Act: boulder star coral, lobed star coral, and mountainous star coral. Collectively the species grow in waters 2 to 270 feet deep. The species can be difficult to tell apart, especially if colonies are small (top right photo). Boulder star coral (*Orbicella franksi*) has large, unevenly-arranged polyps that make the surface of the coral look irregular (top left photo). Mountainous star coral (*Orbicella faveolata*) grows in heads or sheets, and the surface can be smooth, bumpy, or ridged (bottom left photo). Lobed star coral (*Orbicella annularis*) grows in lobes, and the surface usually does not have ridges or bumps (bottom right photo).



Top left: Boulder star coral. **Top right:** Juvenile star coral (photo: Kristin Marhaver). **Bottom left:** Mountainous star coral. **Bottom right:** Lobed star coral.

Pillar coral

Pillar coral (*Dendrogyra cylindrus*) grows in water 3 to 75 feet. It forms cylindrical columns on top of encrusting bases. The colony may appear “furry” if the tentacles are out.



Top left: Adult pillar coral (photo: Cindy Lewis). **Top right:** Close-up view of adult coral pillar coral (photo: Kristin Marhaver). **Bottom left:** Close-up view of pillar coral with polyps retracted (photo: Cindy Lewis). **Bottom right:** Juvenile pillar coral before it develops into its characteristic pillar shape (photo: Karen Neely).

Rough cactus coral

Rough cactus coral (*Mycetophyllia ferox*) grows in water 15 to 270 feet deep. It forms a thin, encrusting plate and has valleys and walls of contrasting colors.



Top: Adult rough cactus coral (photo: C. Sheppard, www.Coralpedia.bio.warwick.ac.uk). **Bottom left:** Close-up rough cactus coral (photo: MyFWC Research, www.flickr.com/photos/myfwc). **Bottom right:** Close-up rough cactus coral.

To report a violation, please call the NOAA Fisheries Service Office of Law Enforcement at 1-800-853-1964. *The maximum fine for violating the U.S. Endangered Species Act is \$25,000 and 6 months in jail.*

For additional information on coral species listed under the Endangered Species Act, visit http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/protected_resources/coral/index.html or contact the NOAA Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, Protected Resources Division at 727-824-5312.