

Scientists Discover Rose-shaped Coral Reef in Tahiti

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. stun /stən/ to shock someone so much that the person does not know how to react
Example: She was stunned by his generous offer.
2. biodiversity /ˌbɪɒdɪˈvɜrsədē, bɪɒˌdɪˈvɜrsədē/ the variety of life in the world or in a particular habitat or ecosystem.
Example: The biodiversity of this lake is extremely high, with several dozen species of fish and birds living in or near it.
3. pristine /ˈprɪs.tēn, priˈstēn/ in its original condition; unspoiled.
Example: The Philippines is rich in pristine beaches.
4. bleach /blēCH/ to remove the color from something or make it lighter, with the use of chemicals or by the effect of light from the sun; to become lighter in this way
Example: Romeo bleached his hair before coloring it gray.
5. coral reef /ˈkôrəl rēf/ a raised structure of rock in the sea formed by the growth and deposit of coral.
Example: The small island is enclosed in the middle of the coral reef.



Marine biologists have discovered an amazing coral reef off the coast of Tahiti in the South Pacific. The 3km-long reef lies at a depth of 30 meters. The scientists believe the formation of corals and ocean vegetation contains previously undiscovered marine species. They have already found hundreds of rose-shaped coral, some of which measure over two meters in diameter.

Deep-sea diver Alexis Rosenfeld said he was **stunned** when he came across the reef. He wrote: "It was magical to witness giant, beautiful rose corals which extend for as far as the eye can see. It was like a work of art." Scientist Laetitia Hedouin said: "It's a very healthy reef. In the middle of the **biodiversity** crisis, this is very good news."

Scientists say the location of the Tahiti reef means it is in **pristine** condition. Most of the world's reefs are in warmer waters. This makes them at risk of the **bleaching** effects of global warming. Tahiti's reef is deep enough to protect it from bleaching. There is still enough sunlight at 30 meters for coral to grow and reproduce.

UNESCO said: "We think that deeper reefs may be better protected from global warming." It believes the Tahiti reef is "one of the largest healthy **coral reefs** on record". It added that more mapping of the deep ocean needs to be undertaken. It said: "We know more about the surface of the Moon or the surface of Mars than the deeper part of the ocean."

DISCUSSION

1. How important is the discovery of the coral reef?
2. Why are coral reefs important?
3. What do you think of scuba diving?
4. Should we spend more money on ocean research than space research?
5. Is it more important to know about Mars or our oceans?
6. What questions would you like to ask the scientists?