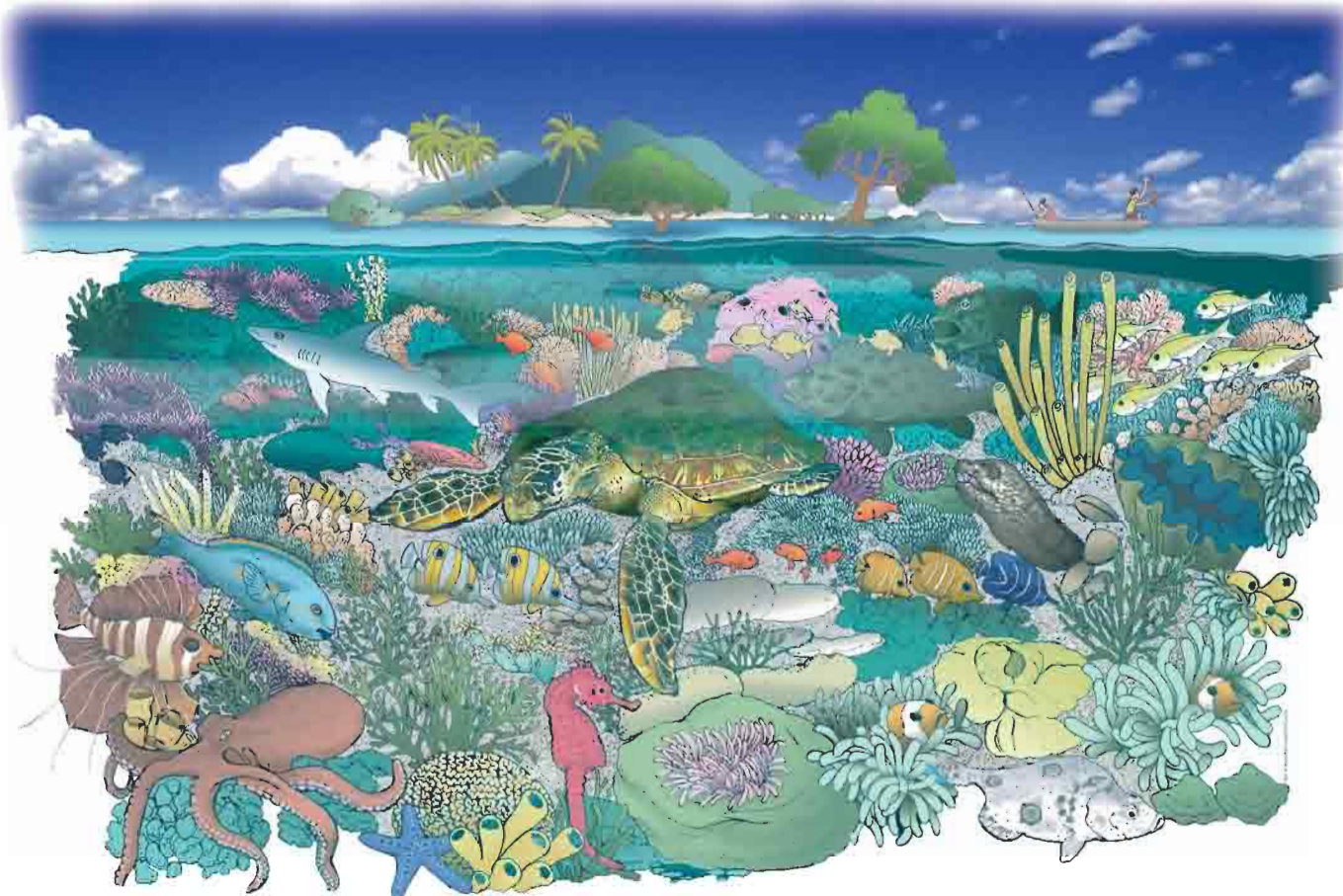


# WHY ARE CORAL REEFS IMPORTANT?



CORAL REEFS PROVIDE A PLACE FOR FISH AND OTHER KINDS OF SEA ANIMALS TO HIDE FROM THEIR PREDATORS.



PEOPLE IN COASTAL COMMUNITIES DEPEND ON FISH, LOBSTERS, GIANT CLAMS, AND OTHER SEA ANIMALS FOR FOOD.



DRUGS AND MEDICINES MADE FROM CORAL REEF ANIMALS AND PLANTS CAN CURE CANCER AND OTHER DISEASES.



SOME REEF ANIMALS WORK AS A TEAM: THE ANEMONE'S TENTACLES PROVIDE SAFETY AND PROTECTION FOR THE ANEMONEFISH AND ITS EGGS, WHILE THE ANEMONEFISH PROTECTS THE ANEMONE FROM PREDATORS, SUCH AS BUTTERFLYFISH.



HEALTHY REEFS ATTRACT TOURISTS, WHOSE SPENDING HELPS SUPPORT LOCAL ECONOMIES.



THE SOLID STRUCTURE OF CORAL REEFS PROTECTS SHORELINES, MANGROVE FORESTS, AND LAGOON AREAS FROM EROSION AND STORM WAVE DAMAGE.



HEALTHY CORAL REEFS SUPPORT FISHERIES WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE LIVELIHOODS OF COASTAL COMMUNITIES.



SPONGES ARE A SOURCE OF FOOD FOR SOME KINDS OF TURTLES, AND PROVIDE SHELTER FOR FISH, SHRIMPS, CRABS, AND OTHER SMALL ANIMALS.



BUTTERFLYFISH REQUIRE HEALTHY CORAL FOR THEIR DIET. IF A REEF HAS BEEN DAMAGED OR DESTROYED, THE BUTTERFLYFISH WILL MOVE TO ANOTHER AREA.



CORAL REEFS ARE IMPORTANT NURSERIES AND BREEDING AREAS FOR FISH, LOBSTERS, OCTOPUS AND MANY OTHER KINDS OF SEA ANIMALS.