

Mesophotic Coral Ecosystems: Coral Reefs of the World 12

Mesophotic coral ecosystems (MCEs) are underwater ecosystems that exist at depths of 30 to 150 meters. They are found in tropical and subtropical waters around the world and are home to a diverse array of marine life. MCEs are often referred to as the "twilight zone" of the ocean because they receive less sunlight than shallow-water coral reefs.



Mesophotic Coral Ecosystems (Coral Reefs of the World Book 12) by Giovanni Diaz

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Discovery of MCEs

MCEs were first discovered in the 19th century by scientists using dredging equipment. However, it was not until the advent of scuba diving in the 20th century that scientists were able to explore these ecosystems in detail. In the 1970s, scientists began to recognize that MCEs were distinct from shallow-water coral reefs and that they supported a unique community of marine life.

Characteristics of MCEs

MCEs are characterized by their low levels of sunlight, cold temperatures, and high pressure. These conditions make them a challenging environment for marine life, but they also support a unique community of species that have adapted to these conditions.

The most common types of corals found in MCEs are soft corals and octocorals. These corals are able to survive in low-light conditions and do not require the same amount of sunlight as hard corals. MCEs are also home to a variety of other marine life, including fish, invertebrates, and algae.

Importance of MCEs

MCEs are important for a number of reasons. They provide habitat for a diverse array of marine life, they help to regulate the ocean's climate, and they are a source of food and income for people around the world.

MCEs are also important for scientific research. They provide a unique opportunity to study the effects of climate change and other human activities on marine ecosystems.

Threats to MCEs

MCEs are threatened by a number of human activities, including climate change, pollution, and overfishing.

Climate change is causing the ocean's temperature to rise and the water to become more acidic. These changes are making it difficult for corals to survive and are causing MCEs to decline.

Pollution is also a major threat to MCEs. Sewage, agricultural runoff, and industrial waste can all pollute the water and harm marine life.

Overfishing is another threat to MCEs. Fish are an important part of the MCE ecosystem, but overfishing can reduce their numbers and disrupt the balance of the ecosystem.

Protecting MCEs

There are a number of things that can be done to protect MCEs. These include:

* Reducing greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate climate change *
Reducing pollution by treating sewage and agricultural runoff * Managing fisheries sustainably to avoid overfishing * Establishing marine protected areas to protect MCEs from human activities

MCEs are important and unique ecosystems that are threatened by a number of human activities. It is important to take action to protect these ecosystems so that they can continue to provide habitat for marine life, regulate the ocean's climate, and support human communities.



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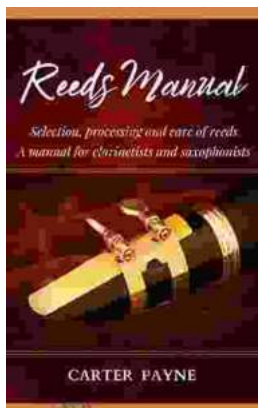
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