

Just like a forest ecosystem, the marine ecosystem contains a wide range of organisms that play specific roles in the **reef food pyramid**.

- **Top predators**
- **Tertiary consumers**
- **Secondary consumers**
- **Primary consumers**
- **Primary producers**



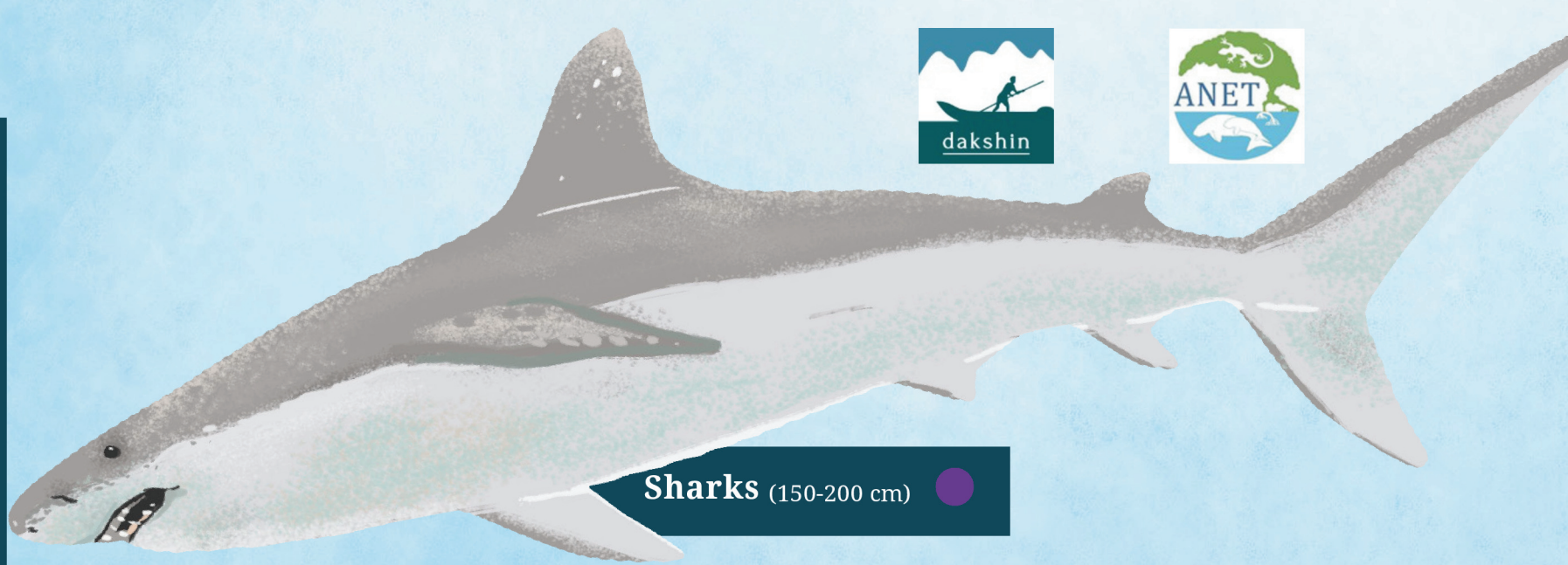
Hazardous

These are species that may possess stinging cells and venomous spines. Some, like barracudas and moustache triggerfish, are known to attack divers.

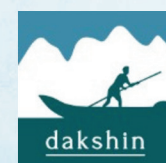


Protected species

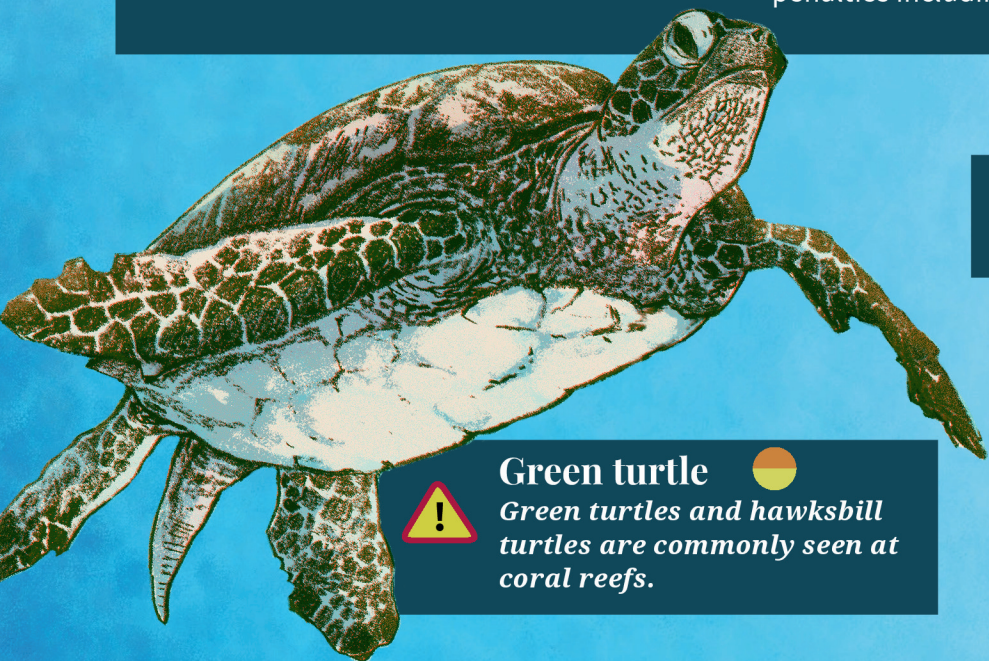
These are scheduled species protected under the Wildlife Protection Act. Possession and trade of these species, dead or alive, results in heavy penalties including imprisonment.



Sharks (150-200 cm)



Top predators are like tigers of the sea; they are at the top of the food chain.



Green turtle

Green turtles and hawksbill turtles are commonly seen at coral reefs.



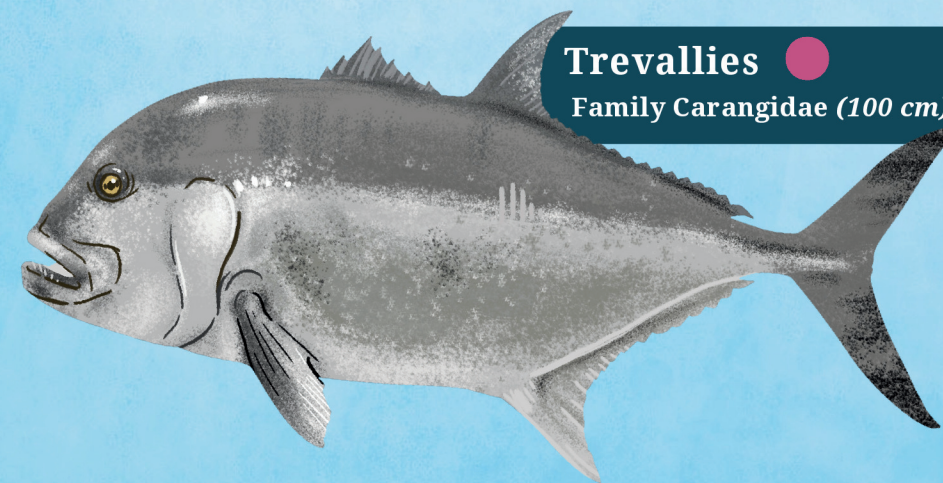
Barracudas

Family Sphyraenidae (80-120 cm)



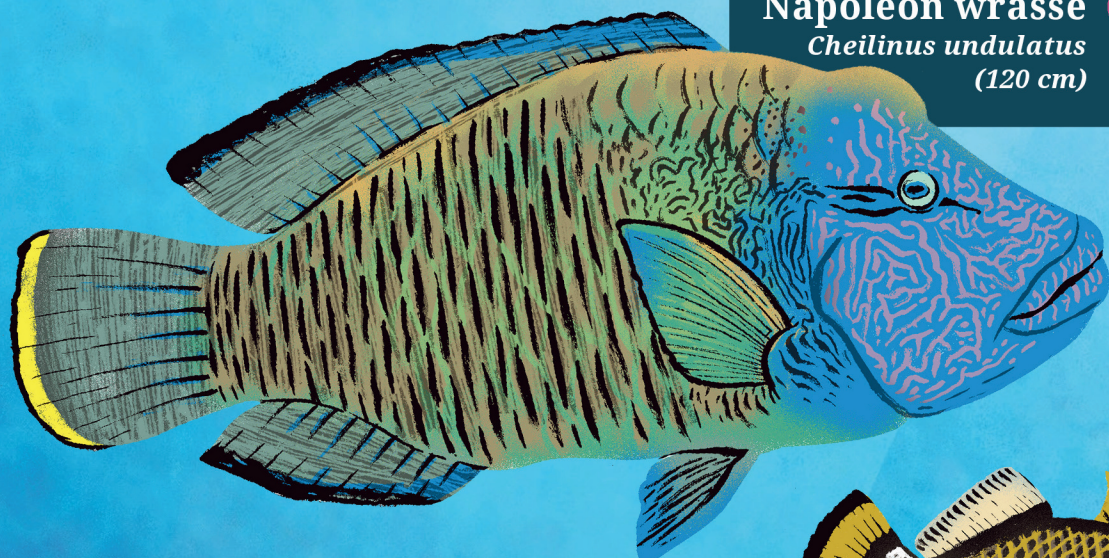
Leopard coral grouper

Plectropomus leopardus (60 cm)



Trevallies

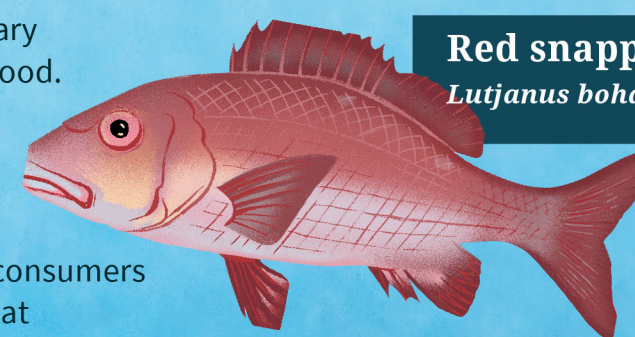
Family Carangidae (100 cm)



Napoleon wrasse

Cheilinus undulatus (120 cm)

Tertiary consumers, e.g. snappers and triggerfish, eat primary and secondary consumers as their main source of food.



Red snapper

Lutjanus bohar (50 cm)

Secondary consumers eat primary consumers as their main source of food. They eat zooplankton (planktivores), fish (piscivores) and invertebrates (invertivores).



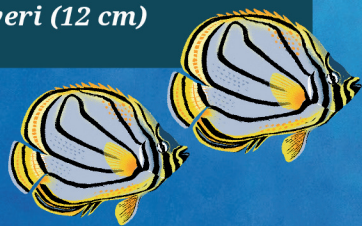
Moustache triggerfish

Balistoides viridescens (40 cm)

Primary consumers are organisms that feed on the producers. These include herbivores such as zooplankton, parrotfish, surgeonfish, urchins, certain snails and sea stars. These may also include filter-feeding planktivores like sponges, anemones, as well as organisms that feed only on coral (corallivores) including the crown-of-thorns seastar and some butterflyfish.

Meyer's butterflyfish

Chaetodon meyeri (12 cm)



Striped surgeonfish

Acanthurus lineatus (20 cm)



Fusiliers

Family Caesionidae (15 cm)

Emperor angelfish

Pomacanthus imperator (30 cm)



Sea fan

Long-armed sea star

Linckia sp. (20 cm)

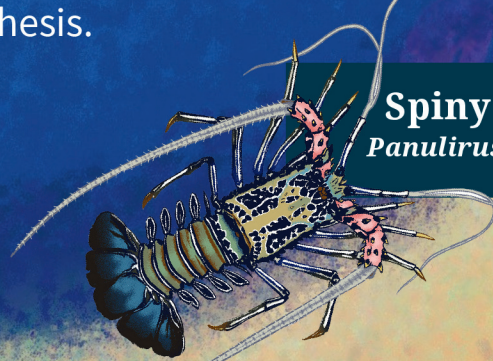


Barrel sponge

Xestospongia testudinaria (50 cm)

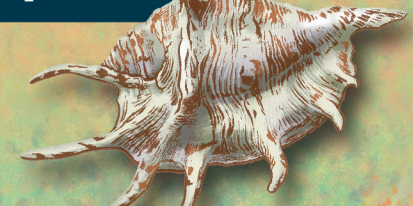
Spiny lobster

Panulirus sp. (15 cm)



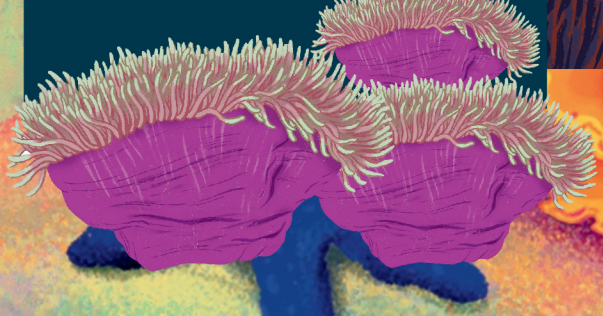
Spider conch

Lambis sp. (20 cm)



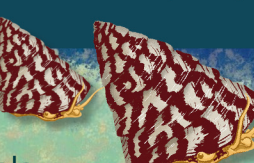
Magnificent a nemone

Heteractis magnifica (10 cm)



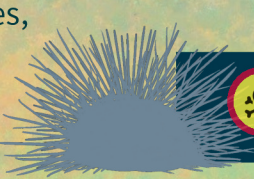
Trochus snail

Trochus (5 cm)



Urchin

(10 cm)



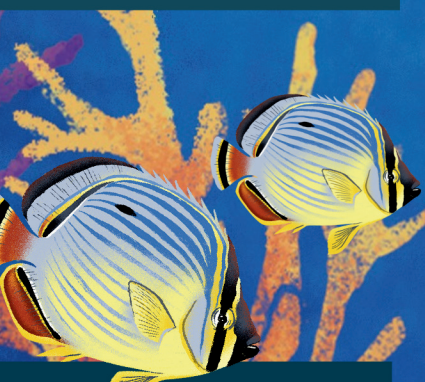
CORAL REEFS of the ANDAMAN and NICOBAR ISLANDS

Jewels of the islands, coral reefs are highly diverse and fringe the island coastline. Found in shallow water, reef-building corals are colonial animals closely related to jellyfish and are capable of creating a calcium carbonate skeleton. Coral grow in clear, nutrient poor waters thanks to a symbiotic relationship with single-celled algae called zooxanthellae that live within the coral animal tissue and produce food by photosynthesis.

Primary producers are plants and animals capable of producing their own food by utilizing the sun's energy, e.g. seagrasses, phytoplankton, reef-building coral.



Branching coral



Redfin butterflyfish

Chaetodon trifasciatus (10 cm)



Crown-of-thorns sea star

Acanthaster planci (25 cm)



Giant clam

Tridacna sp. (15 cm)



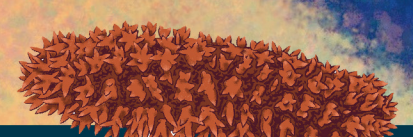
Mushroom coral

Fungia sp. & *Ctenactis* sp. (15 cm)



Pineapple sea cucumber

Thelenota ananas (35 cm)



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