

Discovery Channel School Video Library for Scott Foresman-Addison Wesley Mathematics



SEGMENT 9: CORAL REEFS

Under the surface of the water in Truk Lagoon lives the largest coral reef in Micronesia.

Like all coral reefs, this one began with single polyps, small coral animals best seen at night when they stretch out their tentacles to feed on floating plankton.

Polyps attach themselves to hard surfaces and excrete a cup like skeleton for a home. In Truk Lagoon, the wrecks of Japanese ships sunk in a battle during World War II laid the foundation for one of the most diverse ecosystems on Earth.

This blue chromis fish lives in a gun barrel.

Over the last half century, thousands of coral skeletons became the hills and valleys of a reef.

Other animals move into the reef seeking food and shelter. Coral reefs house over twenty-five percent of all marine life. Commercial fish like this grouper live in reefs, and some sharks rely on the reefs for food.

Although coral reefs cover a tiny fraction of the ocean, they are the rainforests of the sea: diverse, fragile, vital.