

Madrepora oculata

What is *Madrepora oculata*?

Along with corals like *Lophelia pertusa* and *Goniocorella dumosa*, *Madrepora oculata* is a stony coral. It has a hard calcareous skeleton which can form reefs. *Madrepora* grows in small (30 - 50 cm high) fan-shaped colonies. Unlike *Lophelia*, the skeleton of *Madrepora* is very fragile, limiting its framework building capability. *Madrepora*-dominated coral structures are usually characterised by thickets or areas of rubble rather than large reefs.

Where can it be found?

It can be found in many oceans of the world, it dominates coral communities in the Mediterranean Sea and the North east Atlantic. It is often found sharing reefs with *Lophelia* and in the Western Atlantic it overlaps with *M. carolina*.

It is usually found throughout a wide depth range, with the shallowest recorded at 55 m off the coast of Brazil, and the deepest found at 1,950 m on the Reykjanes Ridge, Iceland.

Secondary reef framework

The fragility of *Madrepora* leads to many colonies co-occurring amongst stronger corals such as *Lophelia* and *Goniocorella dumosa*. Being a secondary framework-builder does have its advantages, as the coral gains shelter and protection amongst the branches of the primary coral.

What are the pictures?

Images from top: *Madrepora oculata* collected from among *Lophelia* banks in the South Atlantic Bight (© S.W. Ross et al. 2002). A museum specimen of *Madrepora*, South Pacific (© Anthozoa.com, 2005). *Madrepora oculata*, Mississippi Canyon (© NOAA Ocean Explorer).

This fact-sheet was downloaded from <http://www.lophelia.org> and produced for the Deep-sea Conservation for the United Kingdom Project.



***Madrepora* is found in many of the worlds oceans, mainly occurring with other species such as *Lophelia*.**

