



Star Coral

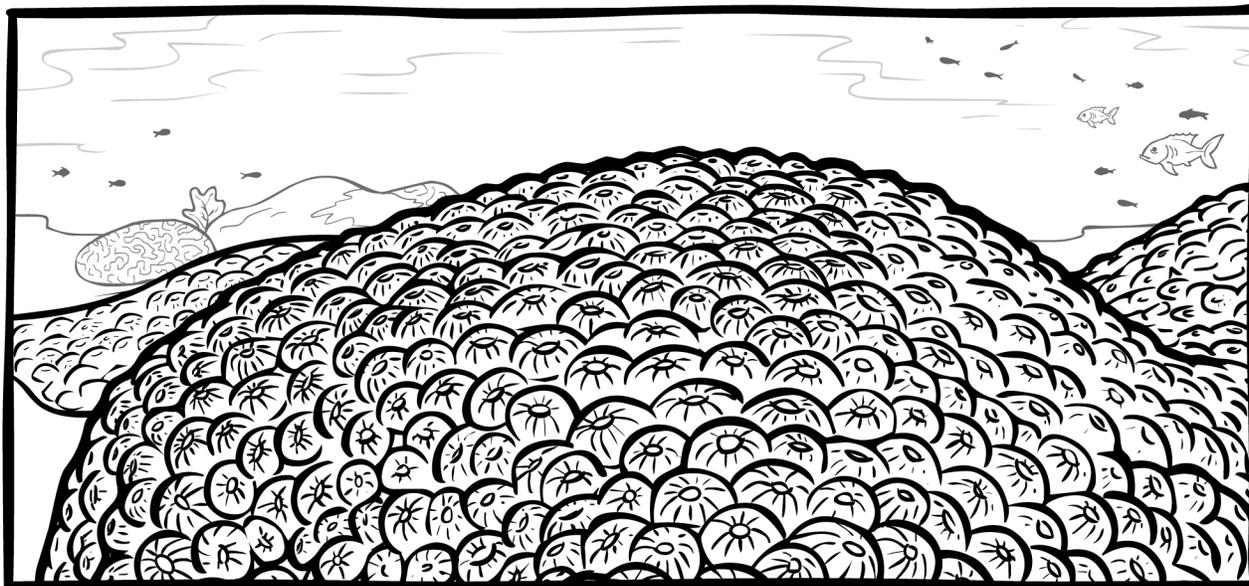
Star Coral *(Montastraea cavernosa)*

Instant ID

- Massive, dome-like collection of invertebrates (animals without a backbone)
- Puffy polyps (individual sections) look like stars during the day
- Grows up to five feet in diameter
- Wide range of possible colors including green, brown and orange

Native Niches

- Common on lower slopes of coral reefs
- Found in reefs throughout the Atlantic Ocean
- Primarily in the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, Florida, the Bahamas and Bermuda



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Favorite Foods

- Gets nourishment from symbiotic (living together and benefiting each other) algae living in their tissues
- Catch tiny floating animals called zooplankton

Critter Characteristics

- Thousands of tiny animals called polyps form colonies
- Can survive in water up to 275 feet deep
- Other names include false knob coral and great star coral
- Sticky tentacles come out at night to catch food

Population Protection

- Impacted by black band disease, white plague and bleaching
- Learn more at <https://FloridasCoralReef.org>