

# Osprey Reef

remote, rare and remarkable

"... an oasis for living creatures of all kinds."

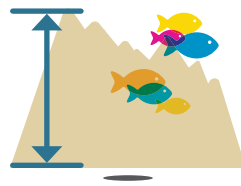
Sir David Attenborough

Image: © Mike Ball Dive Expeditions  
Photographer: Julia Sumnerling

On an isolated seamount more than 300 km from Cairns sits Osprey Reef, a jewel of the Coral Sea Marine Park. Its breathtaking corals, plummeting drop-offs and crystalline waters make this one of the best tropical dive sites in the world.

In contrast to the more sheltered Great Barrier Reef, Osprey Reef is truly wild and remote. But for the many rare, beautiful and strange creatures that return here year after year or ride past on the south equatorial current it's an oasis in the vast, tumultuous ocean.

Did you know?



**2000 m high**

Osprey Reef sits atop an underwater mountain rising almost vertically from the ocean floor.



**30 m to 60 m**

Underwater visibility when diving at Osprey is extraordinary.



**Almost 30 km long**

Over 180 km<sup>2</sup> in area, Osprey Reef is one of the biggest in the region.



Image: © Mike Ball Dive Expeditions  
Photographer: Howard Wormsley



Photographer: Allyazza

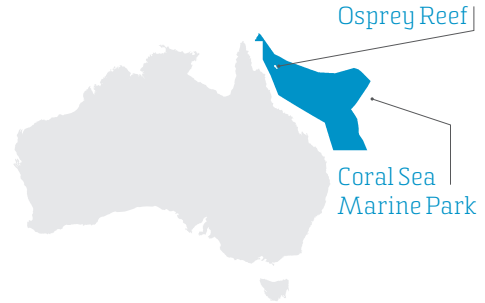


Photographer: Allyazza

# An underwater mountain

home to extraordinary creatures

Osprey Reef is vast and grand. Its exceptional architecture, with vertical walls, drop-offs and swim-throughs, is the summit of a great mountain that rises sharply from the ocean floor. A combination of light, temperature and geological conditions support strikingly different plant and animal communities at different depths.



## Lost worlds

In 2009 a team of researchers from Australia and Germany launched the Deep Down Under expedition, which sent remotely operated underwater vehicles to undiveable depths at Osprey Reef. Among the otherworldly discoveries were a deep-sea fish, the sea toad, previously only found in South America, and gardens of plant-like creatures – some new to science – including stalked sea lilies and glass sponges that would have dominated the ocean tens to hundreds of millions of years ago.

## Explore it for yourself

At dive sites like North Horn, Admiralty and False Entrance you'll find walls stepping down to 1000 m, caves and grottoes to explore, and overhangs covered in huge soft corals. Close encounters with schools of trevally, giant potato cod, green turtles, moray eels, octopuses, and a variety of sharks are all but guaranteed.

Osprey Reef is for experienced divers. Most sites can be dived year round with Coral Sea live-aboard dive expeditions.

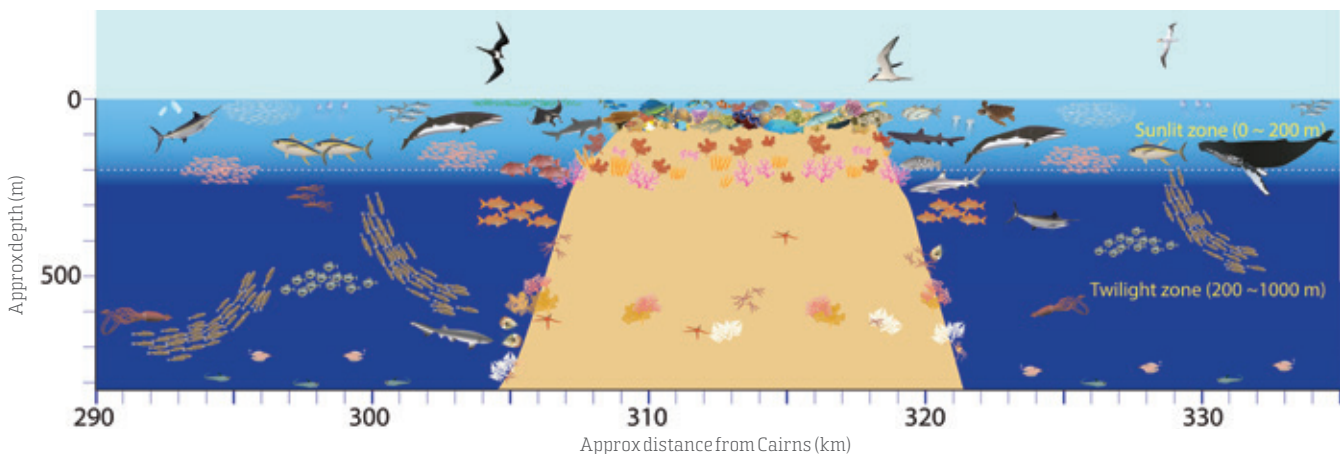
## Shark heaven

While it's home to the world's third-smallest fish, the stout infantfish, Osprey Reef is more famous for sharks.

Grey reef whaler sharks and whitetip reef sharks are abundant year round. At North Horn, divers often see majestic silvertip sharks and, in cooler months, scalloped hammerhead sharks aggregate off the coral reef walls.

Manta rays can sometimes be found at their cleaning station at Round the Bend, and big-eye trevally, barracuda and black marlin cruise the surrounding waters.

One of the most extraordinary residents is the ancient chambered nautilus. Almost unchanged for 500 million years, it's considered a living fossil. That iconic spiralling shell is a precise buoyancy device, much like the dive tanks of a submarine, enabling nautilus to travel from their deepwater homes to feed in shallow waters at night.



## Learn more

About the Coral Sea Marine Park: [parksaustralia.gov.au/coralsea](http://parksaustralia.gov.au/coralsea)

About Deep Down Under: [deepdownunder.de](http://deepdownunder.de)

About Osprey Reef: [attenboroughsreef.com](http://attenboroughsreef.com)

About visiting the Coral Sea: [tropicalnorthqueensland.org.au](http://tropicalnorthqueensland.org.au)



Australian Government  
Parks Australia



Australian  
Marine Parks