

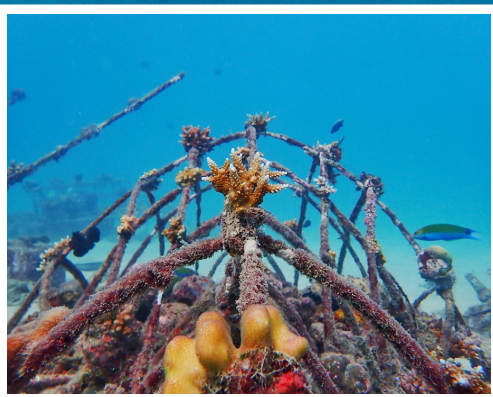
3rd January 2022



REEF GUARDIAN

Dear Blue Voice,

We would like to thank you once again for becoming a Reef Guardian! Your section of restored reef called the Hillock-1 can be found at the coordinates 11.48250 N, 092.70706 E, off the village of Chidiyatapu, South Andaman Island. Here is an update with the latest pictures of your reef and some of its recent inhabitants. We hope you enjoy your update!



These past few months have seen the artificial reef experience a marked growth in fish and invertebrate numbers. With the algal overgrowth being cleaned and the sponges removed by our staff, we went about reinstalling the mineral accretion device in November, with some minor adjustments to make the entire system more robust. Following this, we conducted our first baseline monitoring of the season. The data collected in this round will set the basis for what will hopefully be a long uninterrupted season of monitoring with the mineral accretion device installed. This will provide us with critical data on the positive effect of this device in the long run. On the left are some recent pictures of the Hillock-1 and its coral fragments.

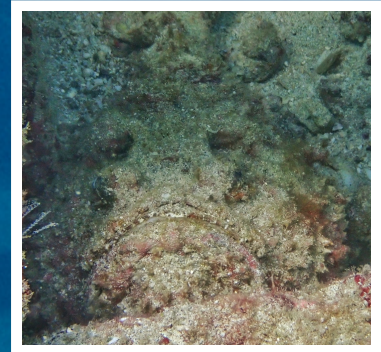
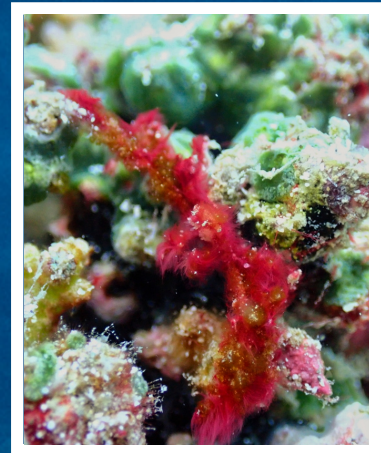


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It is the year the 'little girl' pays us a visit, providing much needed relief to coral reefs around the world! La Niña ('little girl' in Spanish) is an oceanic and atmospheric phenomenon that occurs every 2-7 years. In a normal year, trade winds along the equator push warm water westward. As the warm water moves west, nutrient rich cold water rises from the deep, in what we call 'upwellings'. During the year of La Niña, we see stronger winds that increase this upwelling and make the ocean a few degrees colder than usual. Even this small change in the ocean's temperature can affect global weather patterns. Since coral reefs thrive in temperatures between 22-28 degrees, we anticipate that La Niña will give our reefs some much needed respite from the generally higher temperatures that they have been experiencing of late.

Pictured on the right are two new inhabitants of the Hillock-1 – The elusive Stonefish and the rare Orangutan Crab.

What reef creature is tiny, hairy and looks like an Orangutan? An Orangutan Crab of course. These little artists belong to the decorator crab family and are only 2 cm in size. They have relatively long arms and can be found near bubble coral. Stone fish, the world's most venomous fish, are masters of camouflage, their shape and colour matching perfectly with rocky reefs. The good news is that these ambush predators use their stinging spines defensively and not for offence.



On behalf of the entire ReefWatch team, we would like to wish you a Happy New Year! We hope that this coming year brings good health, happiness and some great travel to you and your loved ones. If you have any questions regarding the artificial reef or any of the work we do, please feel free to email us at admin@reefwatchindia.org. We hope you enjoyed this update and we sincerely hope that its not long before we meet in Andamans.

Warmly,

Angustava Jain



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