

# Coral Reefs



Most Caribbean islands have coral reefs. 25% (1/4) of ocean life lives on reefs and they all depend on each other to live.

The reef is made of tiny animals called polyps. Some are very hard like in brain coral and some are soft like in sea fans. They are all joined together to make a shape, it is like having a 1,000 brothers and sisters all squashed in your bedroom.

Living alongside the coral are tiny plants called algae. The polyps and algae grow together to form the reef.

Reefs grow close to the surface of the sea in warm, tropical waters so that plankton and algae can make energy from the sun. They also need waves to bring them food, nutrients and oxygen.

## **The Food Chain of the Ocean:**

- Plankton and algae get energy from the sun.
- Parrot fish and sea cucumbers are 2 of the sea creatures that feed on plankton and algae.
- Whales and penguins are 2 of the sea creatures that eat very small animals known as zooplankton.
- Sharks and killer whales eat almost everything.
- Can you draw some tropical fish?

Image from freepik.com