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Glossary

Abiotic (factor) - describes a physico-chemical factor (in contrast to a biotic or biological factor) of the environment in which an organism lives.

Alcyonaceans - animals belonging to the phylum Cnidaria, with eight tentacles, generally living in colonies, often called soft corals.

Allele - a particular form of a gene at a particular locus.

Allopatric populations - populations that are contiguous but separated by space across which migration occurs only at very low frequency.

Anthropogenic - resulting from human activities.

Aragonite - a natural form of calcium carbonate.

Azooxanthellate corals - corals which do not have zooxanthellae.

Benthic - living on or near the bottom of the ocean. The benthos is the group of organisms living on or near the bottom of the ocean.

Biodiversity - the term has recently acquired many meanings, but can be considered synonymous with 'systematic diversity'.

Biogeography - the study of the geographic distribution of life and the reasons for it. In practice, biogeography is divisible into observations of distributions and explanations of those observations.

Biological species concept - species as are defined as genetically similar populations capable of interbreeding and which, through genetically determined isolation mechanisms, evolve in a way isolated or distinct from other populations (Mayr, 1963).

Biomass - total mass of living organisms, population explosion of an animal or plant.

Biotope - a geographic area that is under the influence of environmental parameters, the dominant

characteristics of which are homogeneous. Biotopes are generally the smallest ecological units that can be delimited by convenient boundaries and which are characterised by their biota.

Branching colonies - any growth-form where branches are formed.

Caespitose - a descriptive term for branches which interlock similarly in three dimensions. Applied only to the genus *Acropora*.

Calcite - a natural form of calcium carbonate.

Calcitic skeletons - skeletons primarily composed of the calcite form of calcium carbonate. All Rugosa and molluscs have calcite skeletons.

Calice - the upper surface of a corallite to which the soft parts of an individual polyp are attached.

Ceriod corals - massive corals that have corallites sharing common walls.

Climax - ideal equilibrium state reached by a community in a particular environment.

Coenosteum - thin horizontal skeletal plates between corallites.

Colonial corals - corals composed of many individuals. There is no clear distinction between single individuals with many mouths and colonies of individuals with single mouths.

Commensal - a species which lives in association with another, but without harming it. hidden.

Community - a group of organisms of different species that co-occur in the same habitat or area and interact through trophic and spatial relationships. Communities are typically characterised by reference to one or more dominant species.

Concepts of species — terminology issues common terms and concepts are used differently by different authors.

Corallite - the skeleton of an individual coral polyp.

Corallum - the skeleton of a coral colony.

Corymbose - a descriptive term for colonies which have horizontal interlocking branches and also

have short upright branchlets, usually used for some *Acropora* species.

Dissepiments - blistery horizontal plates of calcium carbonate adjoining corallites.

Ecological niche - all the conditions relating to habitat, feeding regime and habits specific to a given species.

Ecomorphs - morphological variants of species that may have an environmental and/or genetic origin.

Epibiota - animals and plants living attached to or resting upon a substratum, or on another living organism.

Epibiotic - living as epibiota

Gastropods - class of molluscs crawling around on a large ventral foot, often having a dorsal spiral shell.

Genetic distance - any of several measures of the degree of genetic difference between populations, based on differences in allele frequencies.

Genotype - the set of genes possessed by an individual organism.

Habitat – a vague word indicating the particular type of environment occupied by an organism.

Hermatypic - literally 'reef building' but commonly used as a descriptor for marine invertebrates that have photosynthetic plants living symbiotically within their tissues.

Holotype - the specimen on which a named species is based.

Hydrozoans - class of cnidarians including, among others, the fire coral *Millepora platyphylla*.

Meandroid - massive corals that have corallite mouths aligned in valleys such that there are no individual polyps.

Molluscs - phylum of invertebrate animals with soft bodies and generally a shell.

Mutation - a vague term for processes that cause a change in a nucleotide sequence in an organism.

Nominal species - species that exist in name only. These are usually synonymised with operational species.

Paliform lobes - upright skeletal rods or plates at the inner margin of septa formed by upward growth of the septum

Phaceloid corals - corals that have corallites adjoined only towards their base.

Phenotype - the sum total of observable structural and functional properties of an organism; the product of the interaction between the genotype and the environment.

Photosynthetic - related to chlorophyll-linked assimilation.

Phylogeny - the evolutionary history of a group or lineage.

Phylogenesis - the evolutionary history of a taxon.

Phylogenetics - the description of evolutionary relationships using cladistic methods.

Planulae - larvae of coral.

Plocoid coral - massive corals that have corallites with separate walls.

Polychaete - segmented worm with numerous lateral bristles, belonging to the phylum Annelida.

Polyp - an individual coral including soft tissues and skeleton.

Population - a group of conspecific organisms that exhibit reproductive continuity. It is generally presumed that ecological and reproductive interactions are more frequent among members within a population than with members of other populations.

Reef flat - the flat intertidal part of reefs that are exposed to wave action.

Reef slope - the sloping part of reefs below the reef flat.

Scleractinian (corals) - corals living in symbiosis with microscopic algae, the zooxanthellae. They produce calcium carbonate in quantities sufficient to build coral reefs. Most 'hard' corals are Scleractinia.

Sessile (fauna) - attached fauna in contrast to mobile fauna (unattached).

Septa - radial skeletal elements projecting inwards from the corallite wall.

Spur-and-groove zone - morphological feature of the upper part of the outer slope, made up of ridges (spurs) aligned more or less perpendicular to the outer slope and separated by grooves.

Sympatric populations - populations that encounter one another with 'moderate' frequency. Such populations may be different isolating mechanisms.

Synonymy - the list of names considered by a taxonomist to apply to a given taxon other than the name by which the taxon should be known.

Systematics - the study of evolutionary and genetic relationships of organisms.

Taxon - a taxonomic unit. Taxa are arranged in hierarchies of taxonomic levels.

Taxonomy - the naming and classification of organisms.

Type specimen - the specimen on which a nominal (named) species is based.

Zoanthid - animal belonging to the phylum Cnidaria, with anemone-like appearance and no skeleton, either solitary or colonial.

Zooxanthellae - unicellular dinoflagellate algae living in the tissues of certain animals (corals and giant clams), to which they supply nutritional substances directly useable by their host.

Zooxanthellate corals - Corals which have photosynthetic endosymbiotic algae.

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In the book it is supposed to describe 348 species of Scleractinian, reefs of Vietnam and their role in reef ecosystem of the Pacific, to consider a problem of species for corals, to discuss taxonomic histories at a level from species up to family, and to consider bases of terminology taxonomic peculiarities and methods of definition of corals. The text and the description of corals will be supplied with 50 black-and-white and 25 color tables which are accompanied more than 200 color underwater photos of alive corals.

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