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Boulder corals thrive in the shallows of a lagoon in Moorea, French Polynesia.

SCIENCE WITHOUT BORDERS

A global effort to assess coral-reef health

Prince Khaled bin Sultan of Saudi Arabia had a dream: to fund research expeditions focused on the health of the ocean. The dream became reality when the Living Oceans Foundation was founded in California.

The foundation has been running Global Reef Expeditions since 2011, and so far, teams have been to the Bahamas, St. Kitts and Nevis, Jamaica, Colombia, Fiji, Galapagos and French Polynesia. State-of-the-art technology enables the team to complete years of coral-reef research in just three weeks. The epic undertaking will eventually circumnavigate the globe.

The team provides host countries with coral ecosystem habitat maps along with data. From this analysis, recommendations are made to relevant government agencies and others.

"We hope to be able to identify the most important processes on the reef, which contribute to its resilience," says Capt. Philip G. Renaud, executive director of the Living Oceans Foundation. "If we identify remote reefs that have high indicators of resilience, we'll encourage those nations to develop management strategies to maintain those coral resources in good health."

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globalreefexpedition.org