

BLOG POST

## 25 FUN FACTS ABOUT THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

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As you'd expect from one of the seven Natural Wonders of the World, the Great Barrier Reef is home to some weird, wonderful and just plain loveable creatures. Here's 25 fun Great Barrier Reef facts about a marine world larger than Italy.

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## Did you know?

- The Whalesong of a humpback whale can produce sounds up to 170 decibels (a Boeing 737 aircraft emits around 165 decibels).
- Nautilus are jet-propelled by sucking in seawater and are considered living fossils unchanged for millions of years.
- When a dominant male maori wrasse dies, the largest female of the group changes sex to take its place.

- The average lifespan of a sea turtle is 60 to 80 years.
- The Great Barrier Reef is 250 kilometres at its widest point yet is immediately accessible by boat from Cairns.
- One single coral polyp attaching itself to a rock is all it takes to start a coral reef.
- Sharks may lose up to 30,000 teeth during their lifetime.
- In 1985 the Great Barrier Reef was the first coral reef ecosystem in the world to be awarded World Heritage status.
- Tiger sharks can weigh up to 900 kilograms, equivalent to a small rhinoceros.
- 10 percent of the world's entire fish species inhabit Great Barrier Reef waters.

- There are 12 shipping ports on the Great Barrier Reef coast: the Port of Cairns is the major port for visitors to the Great Barrier Reef.
- Whale sharks (which are actually fish not sharks) can grow up to 30 metres long.
- Red-footed booby birds are nimble and sharp-eyed enough to snatch flying fish from the air.
- Coral spawning is the world's largest orgasm as gazillions of coral release their eggs in unison each Spring.
- Male seahorses gestate eggs before giving birth to baby seahorses.
- Turtle hatchlings have an internal GPS to enable them to return to the beach of their birth.
- Slender pearl fish live inside the body cavities of sea cucumbers, star fish and clams.

- Dwarf Minke Whales migrate north each year to the Great Barrier Reef but they weren't discovered until the 1980's.
- Dugongs were known as 'mermaids of the sea' by sailors of old who mistook their elegant shape for the female form.
- Male anemone fish (otherwise known as clown fish) can change sex to become the dominant female of a group.
- The sex of baby turtles is determined by the temperature of the sand around their nest – boys are cool, girls are hot.
- The lungs of an adult humpback whale are the size of a small car.
- Adult manta rays can have a wing span up to 7 metres, enabling them to briefly fly when leaping out of the water.
- Humpback whales travel 10,000 km on their annual migration to and from Antarctica.
- Anemone fish secrete a layer of mucus for protection from the lethal sting of the sea anemone that they inhabit.

## Discover

There's more to the world's largest coral reef than these 25 fun facts.

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Gareth Phillips snorkelling on the reef

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Minke whale article tile

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With the highest biodiversity out of any marine area in the world, there's plenty more to learn about the Great Barrier Reef.

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