



Coral Reefs of the Southern Gulf of Mexico (Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies)

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Coral reefs declined worldwide during the 1980s and 1990s, making them perhaps the most endangered marine ecosystem on Earth. This realization spurred John W. Tunnell Jr. and others to write a comprehensive book that would raise awareness of coral reefs and their plight. Tunnell and coeditors Ernesto A. Chávez and Kim Withers present an integrated and broad-ranging synthesis, while Mexican and U.S. experts assess the current state of these fragile systems and offer a framework for their restoration.

Beginning with a history of the research done in this region, *Coral Reefs of the Southern Gulf of Mexico* covers the geography, geology, oceanography, ecology, and biodiversity of the thirty-eight “emergent” or platform-type coral reefs in the southern Gulf. The editors include chapters on the biota—from algae to fish—followed by a look at environmental impacts, both natural (such as hurricanes and red tides) and human (such as ship groundings and dredging). The book closes with a discussion of conservation issues, which is both descriptive and prescriptive in its assessment of what has been done and what should be done to protect and manage these vital ecosystems.

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