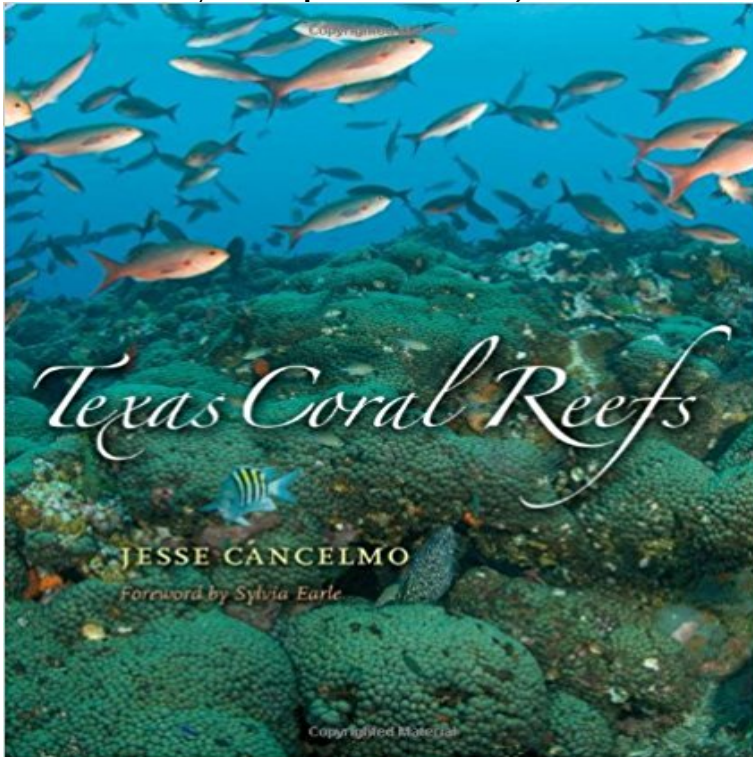


Texas Coral Reefs (Gulf Coast Books, sponsored by Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi)



Just one hundred and ten miles south of the Texas-Louisiana border, beneath the waters of the Gulf of Mexico, lie two coral reefs, together called the Flower Garden Banks. This coral community, the northernmost reef system in the United States and a national marine sanctuary, is home to hundreds of kinds of fish and other tropical sea life. Manta rays and turtles visit regularly, as do whale sharks and schools of hammerhead sharks. Other wonders include the annual mass coral spawns and a briny depression called Gollum Lake.

Nearby are two other reefs. Stetson Bank, its top spotted with hard corals, mollusks, and sponges, is known for its diversity from black sea hares to golden smooth trunkfish. At Geyer Bank, thousands of butterfly fish dominate a huge population of tropical fish whose density rivals that of the coral reefs in the South Pacific. Protruding from the flat, muddy continental shelf, these and thirty other natural reefs support an exceptional amount and variety of sea life in Texas waters. They sit amid hundreds of oil and gas platforms, which create their own special reef ecosystems. These reefs, equal in their profusion of life and color to the storied reefs of Florida and Hawaii, have not been widely known to Texans outside of a small group of scientists and divers. With extraordinary photographs and a knowledgeable first-person narrative, author Jesse Cancelmo instills an appreciation for the beauty and fragility of one of the states least-known natural environments. Texas Coral Reefs will inspire adventurers both the underwater and armchair varieties to enjoy these spectacular but little-known sites that lie so close to home.

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