

Tropical Marine Biology

Hi,

This is the first letter of the brand new course in tropical marine biology for the staff of Neptune Diving Unlimited in Moalboal. Today we start with a brief introduction to the course and the first two lessons, called *Introduction to Oceanography* and *Taxonomy*. Below you find a description of the course, the methods we will use, a recommended booklist and your first study assignments. I hope you will enjoy this somewhat different learning experience.

General description of the course

The main goal of the course is to give you a basic understanding of the marine environment, and especially so for the tropical reef outside your doorstep. The goal is not to teach you to recognize a whole lot of different species, this is something you can do on all that leisure time you have in paradise. Instead I will concentrate on the description of the environment and the different groups of living plants and animals we have in the oceans. If you become familiar and confident with this, it's easy to go further into the species level on your own. To suit all of you, I start from the beginning, so you do not need any specific biological education as prerequisite for the course. It's enough with common sense and a broad mind.

Course schedule

December	Oceanography and general taxonomy
January	Plants, Porifera and Cnidaria
February	Ctenophora, Platyhelminthes, Nemertini, Annelida and Arthropoda
March	Mollusca, Bryozoa, Phoronida and Brachiopoda
April	Echinodermata and Urochordata
May	Fish (Elasmobranchs and teleosts), Final exam

Methods

I will send you one letter every month with facts about the subject and with references to other texts. Enclosed you will also find some study assignments and questions to answer. The degree of difficulty will vary and most of the answers also tests your own power of deduction. The answers should be sent individually to me by e-mail, and I will give you feedback as soon as possible. I can't forbid you not to cooperate and in some instances I encourage you to do so, but try to understand the questions yourself - don't rely to someone else to answer them for you!

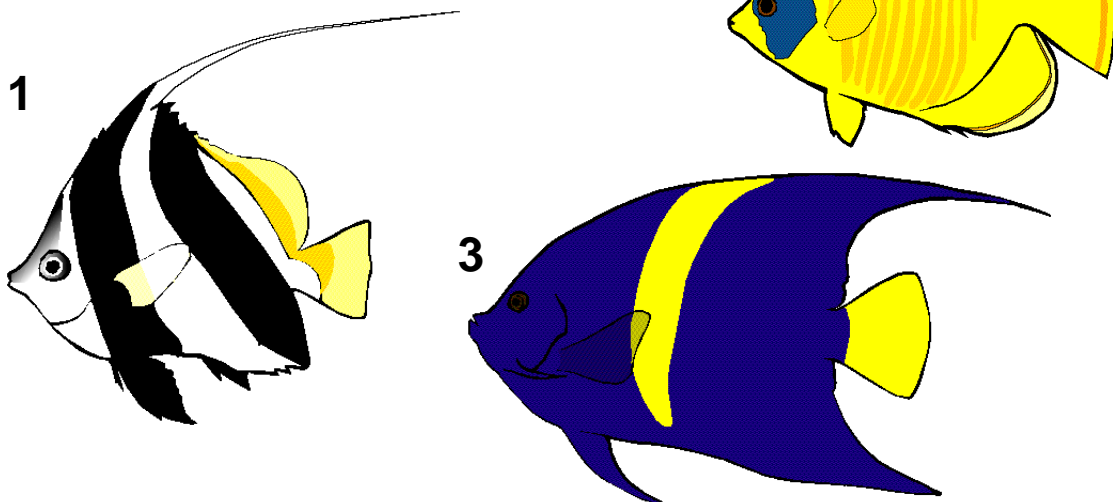
Jesper brought some slides with him from Sweden, all which are taken around Panagsama/Pescador or Balicasag. During most of the lessons I will refer to a group of slides or to a specific slide. By purpose I did not provide Jesper with a list of species on the slides. This will be one of your assignments. For some of the lessons I will also ask you to do an inventory of the species of one specific group of animals or plants on a specific part of the reef.

I will send my letters in PDF format. If you want to study on the screen or if you make print outs of the pages are up to you. I will enclose illustrations in the letters and most of them are in colour, so a combination are maybe the best, unless you have a good colour printer.

Finally, this is your course. If you have any suggestions on the way - please tell me right away!

Here are some quick questions to get used to the format:

Identify the species below.



Booklist for tropical marine biology in the Philippines

Below you find a list of some recommended books. You don't need all of them to be able to complete the course, but I have found the listed books useful for identification of the plants and creatures in the area. During the various lessons, I will mainly refer to *Indo-Pacific Coral Reef Field Guide* and *Collins Pocket Guide — Coral Reef Fishes*, so if you only want to buy two books - these are the ones.

Tropical Pacific Invertebrates

Patric L. Colin, Charles Arneson
Coral Reef Press
ISBN 0-9645625-0-2

Coral Reef Animals of the Indo Pacific

Terrence M. Gosliner, David W. Behrens, Gary C. Williams
Sea Challengers
ISBN 0-930118-21-9

Indo-Pacific Coral Reef Field Guide

Gerald R. Allen, Roger Steene
Tropical Reef Research
ISBN 981-00-5687-7

Collins Pocket Guide — Coral Reef Fishes

Ewald Lieske, Robert Myers
harper Collins Publishers
ISBN 0 00 219974-2

Shells of the Philippines

F.J. Springsteen, F.M. Leobrera
Carfel Sea Shell Museum
1786 A. Mabini Street, Malate, Metro Manila
ISBN 971-91029-0-x

Philippine Shore Fishes of the Western Sulu Sea

Robert E. Schroeder
National Media Production Center

South East Asian Cowries

Lim Chuan Fong, Victor T. H. Wee
Seaconus
ISBN 981-00-3828-3

Sea Shells of South East Asia

R. Tucker Abbott
Graham Brash Publishers
ISBN 9971-49-223-7

Nudibranchs and Sea Snails

Helmut Debelius
IKAN

South East Asia tropical Fish Guide

Kuiter/Debelius
IKAN

Guide to the Philippine Flora and Fauna

Volume I — Fungi/Seaweeds/Mosses
Volume V — Corals
Volume VI — Gastropods/Pelecypods/Annelids
Volume IX — Fishes
Volume X — Amphibians and Reptiles

PADIs Encyclopedia of Recreational Diving will be used for the introduction of the different groups of animals and for the discussion about oceanography.