

The Great Barrier Reef

In 1768, the English navigator James Cook left for his first trip in the Pacific aboard the Endeavour. From Tahiti, traveling to south, he found, after New Zealand, Australia. After Cook, a lot of explorers, scientists and tourists have studied the barrier and its beauties.



The **Great Barrier Reef** is the world's largest coral reef system. It's in the north-east of Australia. The barrier extends for more than 2,000 kilometers on the coast of Queensland.



The Great Barrier Reef is one of the most important tourist destinations. The reef contains an abundance of marine life and comprises of over 3000 individual reef systems and coral cays and hundreds of tropical islands.

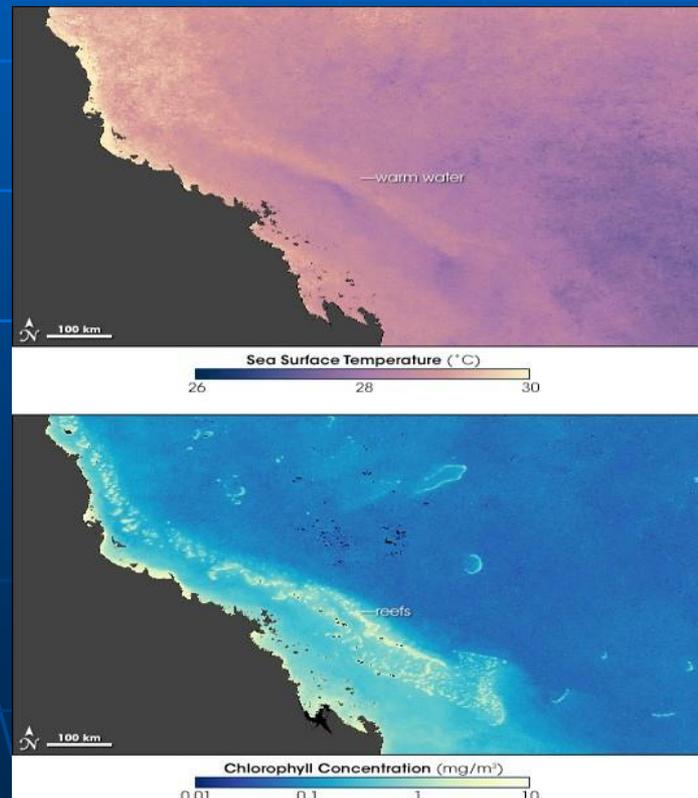


There are a lot of varieties of life: Thirty species of whales, dolphins, and porpoises have been recorded in the Great Barrier Reef; More than 1,500 fish species live on the reef, such as shellfish, clams, parrotfish, moray, hammerhead, and seahorse.

There are also 6 species of sea turtle, 125 species of shark and 215 species of bird .



Climate changes are the greatest danger for the barrier because they increase coral bleaching. Another threat is pollution and declining water quality. The rivers of north eastern Australia pollute the Reef during tropical flood events. There are other danger like eutrophication, the sediment runoff and the pesticides.



Over two million people visit the Great Barrier Reef each year .Tourism is concentrated in Cairns and The Whitsundays. The most popular tourist activities on the Reef are snorkeling and diving. It is a very popular destination for scuba diving. The fishing in the Great Barrier Reef is controlled by the Queensland Government. It employs about 2000 people, and it is used commercially and as a traditional means.

