



MEDIA RELEASE

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THE WHITSUNDAYS ANNUAL CORAL SPAWNING IS IN FULL BLOOM

The anticipated annual coral spawning, one of nature's greatest events, is in full bloom. This magical display of nature takes place every year around the November / December full moons. A successful spawning is a sign that the reef is alive and flourishing.

Daydream Island's Marine Biologist Johnny Gaskell was lucky enough to this year be part of the action "We were thrilled to see an increased number of coral species spawning this year compared to last year, further showing our reef's healthy ecosystem is thriving."

This mass reproduction which happens once a year, involves colonies and species of coral polyps simultaneously releasing their tiny egg and sperm bundles into the water. The spawning occurs after a full moon and only after rising water temperatures have stimulated the maturation of the gametes (the reproductive cells) within the adult coral. The day length, tide height and salinity levels also appear to be factors in deciding when the event will happen. And this year, with the help of all those factors the Whitsundays coral is reproducing.

The phenomenon, which only happens at night resembles an underwater snowstorm. However rather than being all white, there are also clouds of red, yellow and orange. All the bundles rise slowly to the surface where the process of fertilisation begins. While spawning takes place on a large scale, it doesn't happen across the entire reef all at once. The time of year that corals spawn depends on their location. Those on inshore reefs usually start spawning first, whereas the outer reef follows the next full moon.

Tourism Whitsundays CEO Tash Wheeler says "We look forward to the coral spawn every year, it's so encouraging to hear of the many new coral colonies spawning this year, such a great sign that our reefs are healthy, this will no doubt go along way in support of the newly announced next stage of the state and federally funded Underwater Tourism Infrastructure Reef Restoration Project."

Please watch this short video from Johnny Gaskell as he witnesses this years coral spawning event in the Whitsundays: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/tfihv0tsmw6imnf/Video%2029-11-18%2C%2011%2048%2058%20am.mp4?dl=0>

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