

Saudi Red Sea - Cave Reef (Thuwal)

Thuwal · surveyed 2024-02-09



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Coral Health Index: TBD

What was done. The figure is the author's own manual point count, annotated by hand over 68 photographs. 2 further methods were run on the same frames and are reported on the site page. The written account of the site is a review of its photographs, not a second survey.

HARD CORAL COVER
17%
manual point count (68 photos) · other methods on the site page

TODAY'S HEAT LOAD
33.4°C **3.6°C-weeks**
16 Sep 2026 · +2.9°C vs the annual mean (30.5 °C)
· [NOAA](#) Bleaching Warning

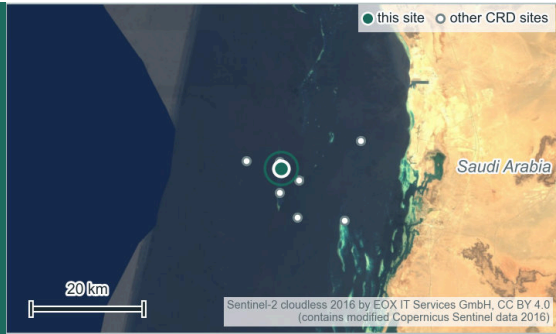
HEAT STRESS (5-YR MEAN ANNUAL MAX. DHW)
14.3°C-weeks 🔥
[NOAA](#) annual peaks averaging 12–16 °C-weeks

MAX. DEPTH
27.2 m

WATER TEMP. (SURVEY)
24.0°C
-5.2°C vs the 2024 mean sea temperature (29.2°C)
Note: [NOAA](#)'s regional station series averages 1.9°C warmer than the satellite pixel nearest this site (2.1 km away), which is used here instead.

PHOTOGRAPHS
50
on file for this site

POSITION
22.3875, 38.8600



Cave Reef, named for its caverns and overhangs, is a field of eroded, heavily bioeroded limestone pinnacles rising from sand, with coral patchy and mostly small - massive *Lobophyllia*, faviid domes, and giant clams rather than a continuous framework. A single February 2024 visit found 17% cover with 26.8% of coral tissue bleached despite zero accumulated heat stress at the time, and fresh parrotfish grazing scars ('fish bites,' in Anderson's own caption) were visible on several faviid colonies.

العربية. شعبة الكهف، المسماة على كهوفها وتوابعها المتدلية، حقل من أبراج جييرية متناكلة ومتناكلة حيويّاً بشدة ترتفع من الرمل، والمرجان فيها متفرق وصغير في معظمه: *Lobophyllia* كتلي، وقباب من فصيلة *Faviidae*، ومحار عملاق، بدلاً من بنية متصلة. ترجمة هذا الملخص بالذكاء الاصطناعي: النص الإنجليزي هو المعتمد.

CV model comparison (hard-coral cover, %): Manual (published) 16.5 · In-house DINOv3 47.5 · Claude 23.9

Photographs: Anderson Mayfield/Coral Reef Diagnostics — 1 of 50 on file; watermarked · Full site record: <https://api.coralreefdiagnostics.com/site-pages/saudi-red-sea-cave-reef-thuwal.html> · Heat stress is the mean of the latest five annual maxima of [NOAA Coral Reef Watch](#) degree-heating weeks for this reef's [NOAA CRW](#) virtual station (Makkah-Madine Saudi Arabia) — a five-year heat history for the station's waters, not a measurement at this site on the dive date.