

DISCOVERING LIFE BENEATH SAADIYAT'S SHALLOW WATERS

A journey through science and innovation to reveal the biodiversity of one of Abu Dhabi's most visited and vibrant coastal areas.

WHAT WE DID

We explored the shallow waters (**1-5 m deep**) of **Saadiyat Marine National Park**, over **1,400 hectares** from shore to 1.5 km offshore.

These are waters where people swim, snorkel, and enjoy the beach — but also where marine life depends on healthy habitats.



HOW WE EXPLORED IT



ENVIRONMENTAL DNA

Collected water samples across different sites and months to detect invisible DNA traces left by fish, turtles, and other marine life.



BAITED UNDERWATER CAMERAS

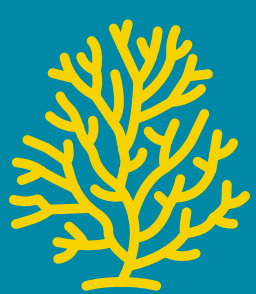
Captured over 200 hours of footage to reveal fish, sharks, and other mobile species.



SCIENTIFIC DIVES

Logged more than 30 hours of diving in biodiversity hotspots identified from videos, capturing photos of small or hidden species and ecological interactions.

WHAT WE FOUND

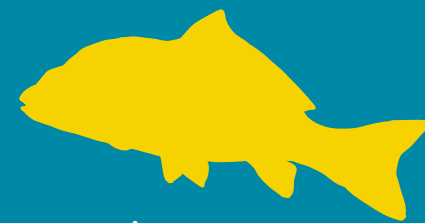


6 HABITATS

Including seagrass meadows, sandy bottom, reef framework, oyster beds, artificial reefs and macroalgae.

65 FISH SPECIES

From small reef fish to commercially important species.



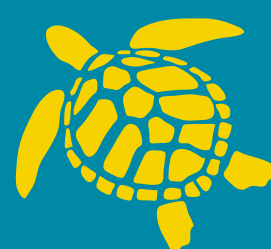
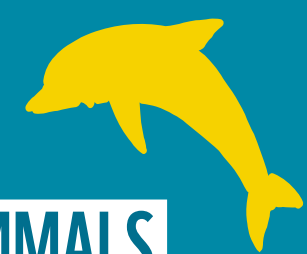
10 SPECIES OF SHARKS AND RAYS

Including the Arabian carpetshark, and the critically endangered Halavi and Giant guitarfish.



2 MARINE MAMMALS

Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin and Dugong.



2 TURTLE SPECIES

Green turtle (Endangered), Hawksbill turtle (Critically Endangered).

HIDDEN BIODIVERSITY

Nudibranchs, tiny crabs, and more.



WHY IT MATTERS

These shallow waters may seem calm, but they support a vibrant underwater world that protects coastlines, sustains marine life, and helps fight climate change.



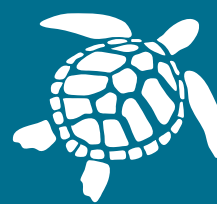
SEAGRASS & MACROALGAE HABITATS

Nursery grounds for fish and natural carbon sinks.



PATCHY REEF

Provide refuge for sharks, rays, and cuttlefish — and support local fisheries.



RAYs, SHARKs, TURTLES

Indicators of ecosystem health and drivers of eco-tourism.

This study offers science-based data to guide the better use of coastal waters — the same waters enjoyed by residents and tourists — helping us manage these ecosystems sustainably and ensure they remain full of life for future generations.

WHAT YOU CAN DO - VISITOR CODE OF CONDUCT*



Go slow — turtles and dolphins live here.



Don't fish or jet ski in protected areas.



Leave no litter — or help clean up.



They might be harmless, but they are still wild - don't touch or disturb marine life.

These waters are shared by people and wildlife. Let's care for them together.

To report any issues in the area please contact the Abu Dhabi Government hotline at **800 555** or email **customerhappiness@ead.gov.ae**.

*These shallow waters are part of the Saadiyat Marine National Park and follow EAD management rules beyond this code of conduct.