

Vauxhall Reef & Environs, Folkestone MPA, Barbados

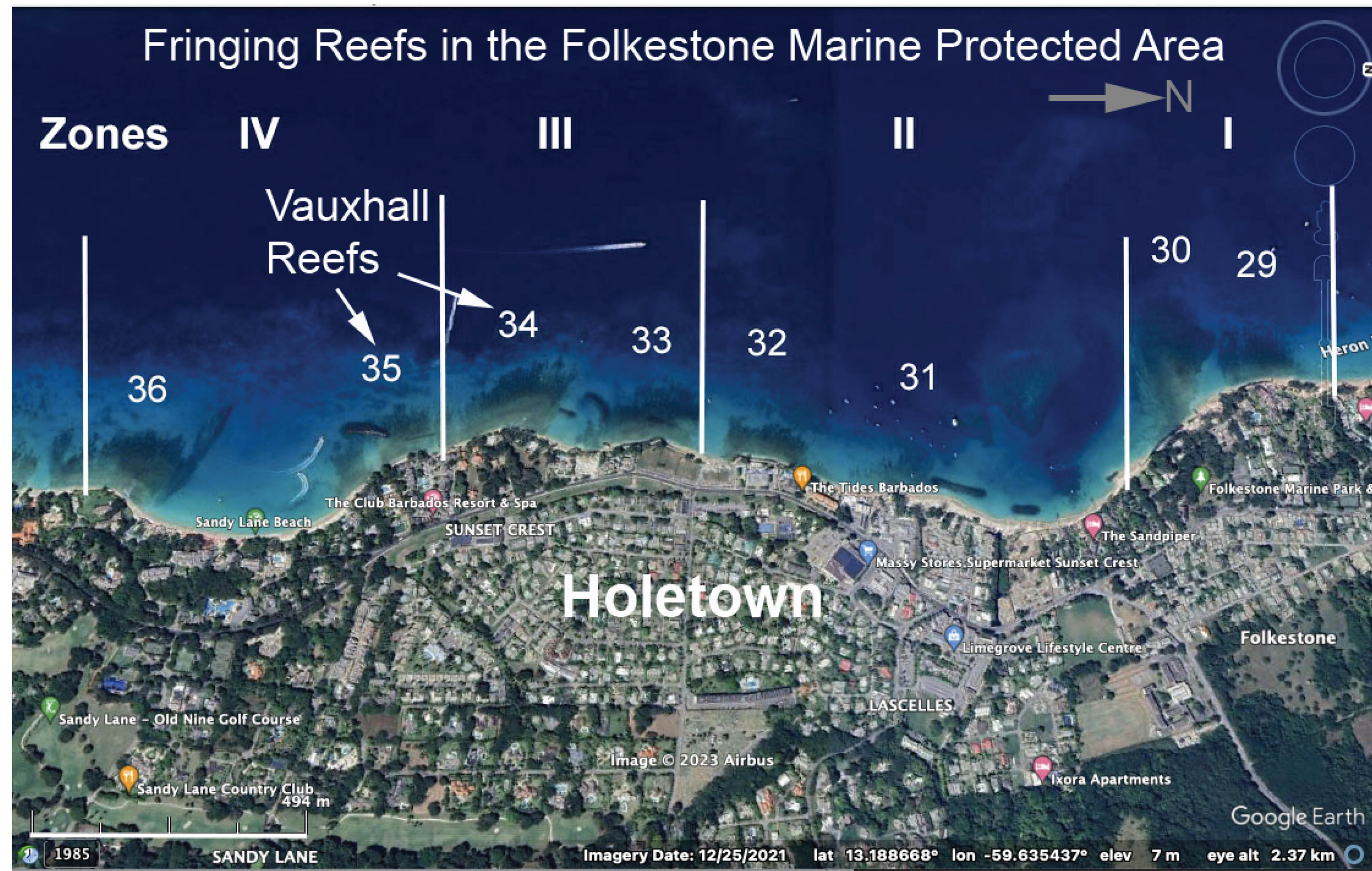
Jan to Apr 2023

A Photo-Diary





Vauxhall Reef & Environs are located on the west coast of Barbados in the area of Holetown

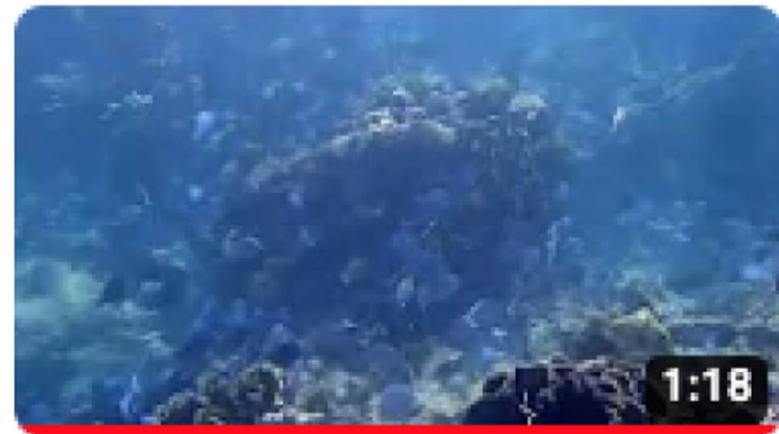


Many of these photos were taken in the area of Reef #34, the “Vauxhall Reef”; others on the route from Reef #30 to Reef # 34 inclusive of each. All lie within the **Folkestone Marine Protected Area**. View more info about the MPA at www.versicolor.ca/barbados/mpa

Barbados Fringing Reefs & Seagrass Beds

A Natural History Perspective

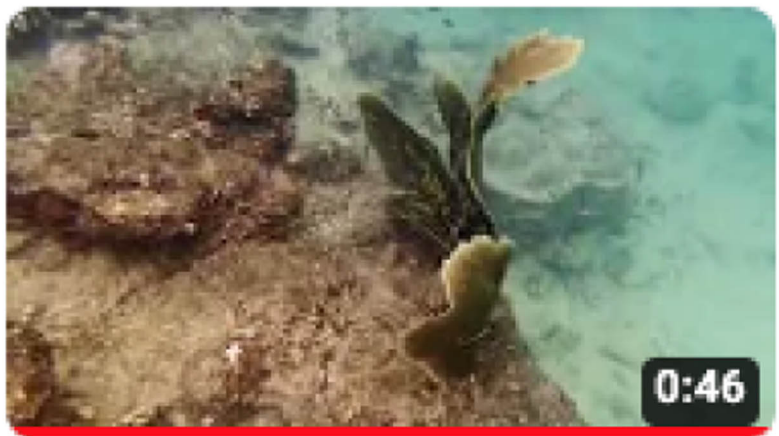
Reef Videos 2023



Blue Tang Therapy on the Vauxhall Reef (Barbados)

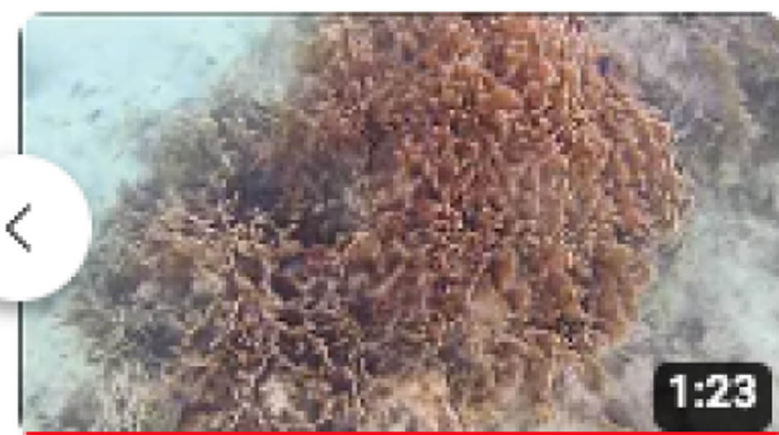
On Jan 25, 2023, I had been documenting the the initial appearance of an aggressive coral disease on this reef... and needed a break. There is nothing quite like drifting with a school of Blue Tang betwixt and between the coral outcrops; they seem completely unbothered by my presence, and I begin to feel like I am

one of them.



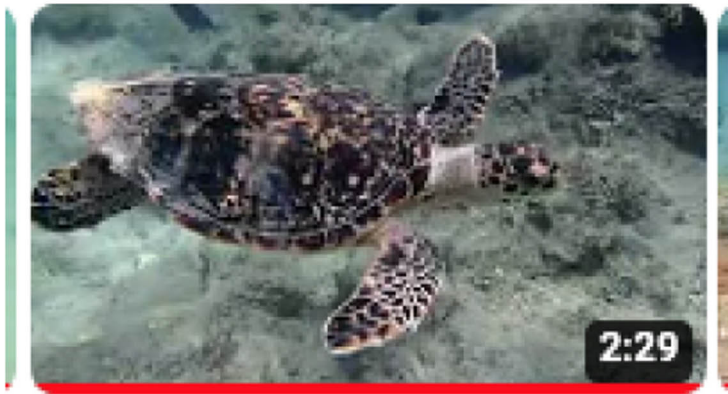
Venus Sea Fan

Feb 27, 2023. Venus Sea Fan on otherwise barren appearing landscape in the Folkestone Marine Protected Area in Barbados.



Cities of Gold

Mar 6, 2023. The “Cities of Gold” are formed by “Squarrose Stinging Coral”, consisting of many little boxes with many inhabitants, and always there is a swarm of little fish around them, some inside the boxes.



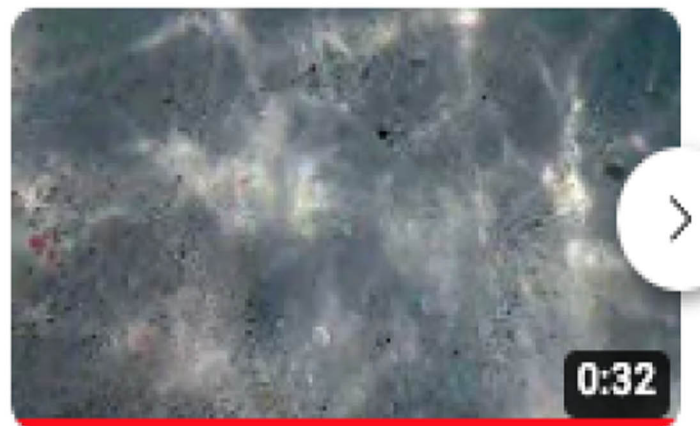
Turtle Daze

Mar 28, 2023. I spent a little time drifting with this Hawksbill turtle at Vauxhall Reef in the Folkestone Marine Protected Area, as it turned out, for one whole breath of the turtle.



Horse-eye Jacks

Mar 29, 2023. Horse Eye Jacks in the Folkestone Marine Protected Area in Barbados.

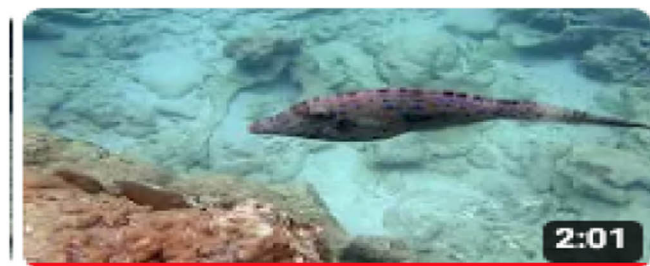


Follow the Flounder

Apr 2, 2023. A few moments with a Peacock Flounder in the Folkestone Marine Protected Area, Barbados.

5/11/23, 8:34 PM

Reef Videos 2023 | Barbados Fringing Reefs & Seagrass Beds




Scrawled File fish on the Fused Staghorn Coral Complex

Apr 3, 2024. Evidently, *Palythoa mammillosa* (a zooanthid) was on the menu. Video on Vauxhall Reef in the Folkestone Marine Protected Area, Barbados. There is a humming sound, apparently associated with the Filefish.



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 **David Graham Patriquin** January 8 · 🌐 ...

Late in the day, I headed right to this spot, last viewed 2020 with [Nina Patriquin](#)



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 **David Graham Patriquin** [January 8](#) · 

To check out these corals...Acropora prolifera

[Edit](#)



This photo is from a post. [View post](#)

 **David Graham Patriquin** January 8 · 🌐 ...

All healthy & have grown a lot...Good News!
<http://versicolor.ca/reef/> with **Nina Patriquin**



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[View post](#)



David Graham Patriquin



January 12 · 🌐

Good News, continued, from the Vauxhall Reef: side-by side images of *Acropora palmata* a few days ago and 8 years ago. It's grown a lot and is very healthy. With **Nina Patriquin**



Jan 11, 2023



Mar 18, 2015



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David Graham Patriquin



January 12 · 🌐


Good News, continued, from the Vauxhall Reef. The incredibly beautiful Princess Parrotfish is still common. With **Nina Patriquin**.

[Edit](#)



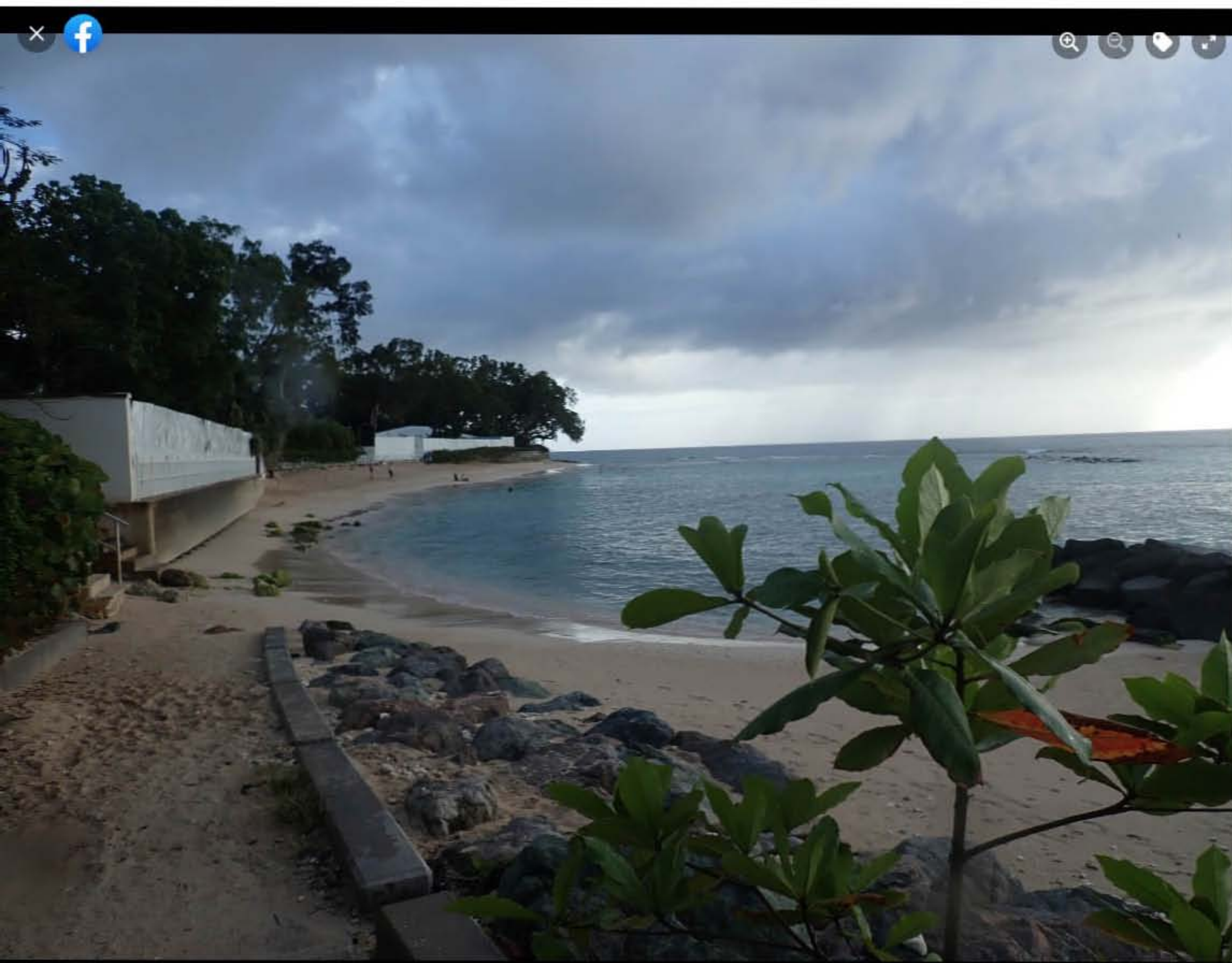


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 **David Graham Patriquin** January 12 · 🌐 ...

Not-So-Good News from the Vauxhall Reef: *Diplora labyrinthiformis* with Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease. It hadn't arrived in 2020, seems to be just getting started now. With [Nina Patriquin](#).

[Edit](#)



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 **David Graham Patriquin** January 17 · 🌐 ...

Unusually calm sea

[Edit](#)



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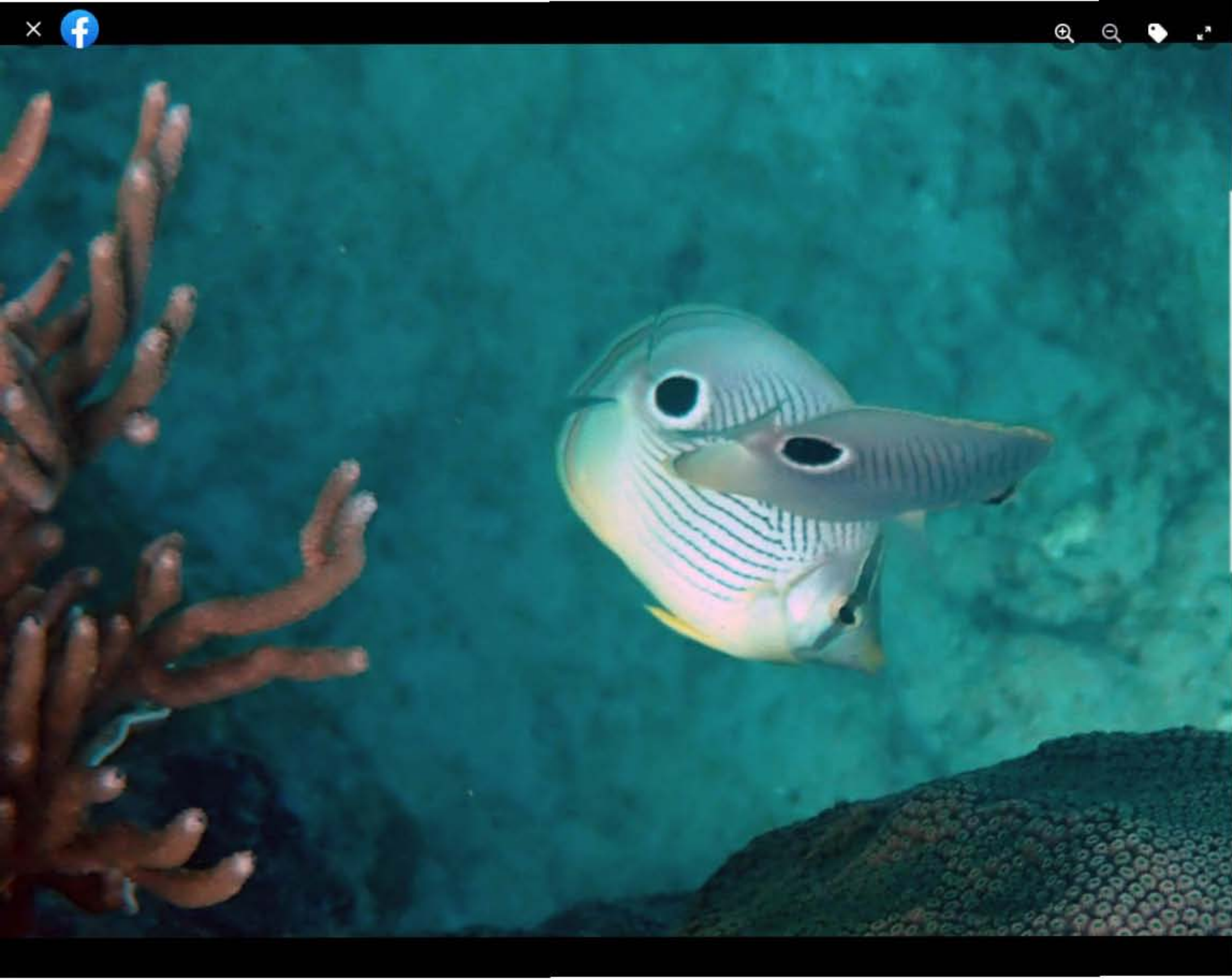
David Graham Patriquin



January 17 · 🌐

'Always happy to see Frigate Birds.





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David Graham Patriquin



January 17 · 🌐

'Hard to "catch" these ones, Butterfly fish, always in a pair, they apparently 'mate for life'



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David Graham Patriquin



January 17 · 🌐

Queen Parrotfish. This a small one, 'seen much bigger but hard to 'catch"



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 **David Graham Patriquin** January 17 ·  ...

The "Stoplight" Parrotfish.

[Edit](#)



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[View post](#)



David Graham Patriquin



January 17 · 🌐

Today... 'Luv it!

Edit





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 **David Graham Patriquin** January 20 · 🌐 ...

This fringing reef is largely dead in terms of coral cover, but there are always lots of fish, best place to find them is just seaward of the waves breaking on the reef crest, lots of small food flying about. Rod fishers catch some big ones here, they come in to feed on the abundant smaller fish. The reef lies in front of a storm water outfall which prob. explains the lack of coral cover (except near its seaward edge).



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David Graham Patriquin



January 20 · 🌐

Smallmouth grunts (many stripes) & yellow goatfish (1 stripe)

[Edit](#)





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 **David Graham Patriquin** January 20 · 🌐 ...

Edit



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David Graham Patriquin



January 20 · 🌐

Blue Tang. They seem quite comfortable with me swimming along with them.



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 **David Graham Patriquin** January 20 · 🌐 ...

In deeper water towards edge of the reef...
another diseased coral, early stage.




David Graham Patriquin
January 26 · 🌐

Yesterday, after a few hours documenting coral diseases, I needed some Blue Tang Therapy.





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 **David Graham Patriquin** January 31 · 🌐

The Good, the Bad & the Ugly... Jan 29th was a great day to take pics on 'The Vauxhall Reef'. 'Still lots to celebrate but a really bad disease is just getting started. I feel a compulsion to record the reef 'as it was'...it's much like the Wabanaki forest at home as individual tree species go down to devastating diseases. This particular reef is very healthy overall, really the best shallow water reef in whole Marine Protected Area. Those are snorkelling boats in the distan... [See more](#)





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 **David Graham Patriquin** January 31 · 🌐 ...

in shallow water, a coral doing really well, *Acropora prolifera*. I "discovered" it on this reef in 2015 (the first record of it there). It has continued to thrive on the Reef Flat up to the Reef Crest.




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 **David Graham Patriquin** January 31 · 🌐 ...

Diploria clivosa, big colonies characteristic of the Reef Flat in Barbados as documented by my "Coral Reef Mentor", John Lewis, in 1960. With




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 **David Graham Patriquin** January 31 · 🌐

Palythoa, a colonial zooanthid, and Millepora, so called "stinging coral" at the beginning of the Reef Crest as you go seaward. These species are not corals and will not be affected by SCTLD (Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease). <http://versicolor.ca/.../stony-coral-tissue-loss-in.../>



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 **David Graham Patriquin** January 31 · 🌐 ⋮

Typical assemblage on "Spurs" in the Reef Slope zone. The finger corals and stinging coral are not affected by SCTLD, but Starlet, greyish coral bottom left will likely be affected





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[View post](#)



David Graham Patriquin



January 31 · 🌐

There were many of these Bar Jacks. Stinging Coral and Finger Coral in background are not affected by SCTL.





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David Graham Patriquin



January 31 · 🌐

Yellow Goatfish.





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[View post](#)



David Graham Patriquin



January 31 · 🌐

Pillar Coral in foreground. It is susceptible to SCTLD. This is the "Spur & Groove" area of the reef, where coral spurs protrude seaward with sandy valleys between them. Living coral cover here is 80%+.





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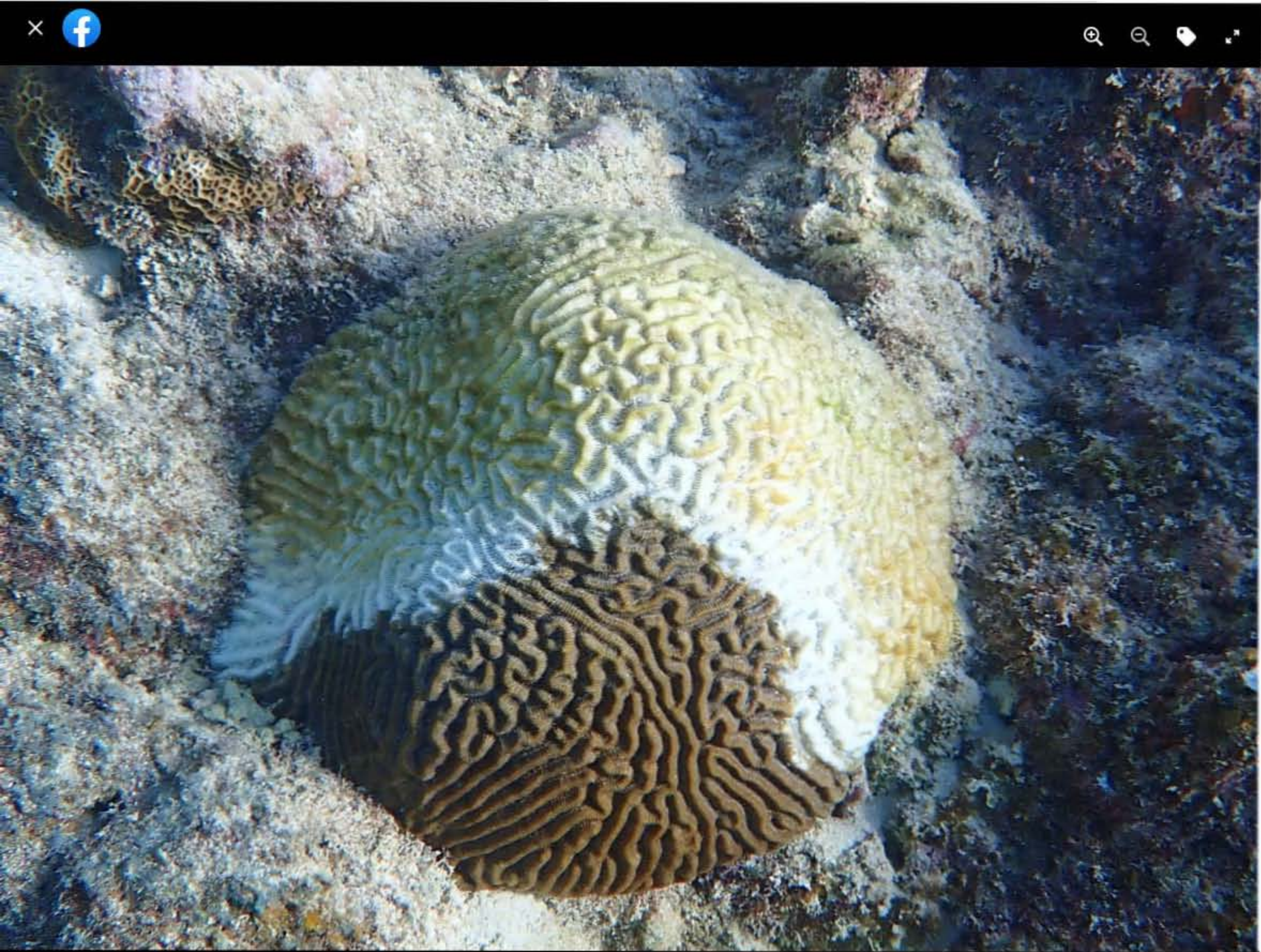
David Graham Patriquin



January 31 · 🌐

This trumpetfish has been around Blue Tang (it takes on colours of its surroundings)





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David Graham Patriquin



January 31 · 🌐

Oh Oh SCTLD ("presumptive") on *P. strigosa*, a highly susceptible species.



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David Graham Patriquin



January 31 · 🌐

I think it's a StopLight Parrotfish, but hard to tell from the view. 'Love the eyes. A Yellow Light I guess. Pillar coral below.





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David Graham Patriquin




January 31 · 🌐

Another Oh Oh. *Montastrea cavernosa*, first specimen of this species I have seen with the disease (presumptive).





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 **David Graham Patriquin** January 31 · 🌐 ...

Brown Chromis fish are plankton eaters, always seem to hang around these stinging coral colonies. In background, stinging coral and finger coral; and grey starlet coral, only the latter is susceptible to SCTLD. (But at the bottom, yellow pencil coral, is 'Presumed susceptible')





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David Graham Patriquin



January 31 · 🌐

Grunts hang around them too.

Edit





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David Graham Patriquin





January 31 · 🌐

'Saw at least a dozen Queen Parrotfish.





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 **David Graham Patriquin** [January 31](#) · 

Saw perhaps 6 pairs of 4-eyed butterfly fishes

[Edit](#)





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David Graham Patriquin



January 31 · 🌐

Navigating the stinging coral as I am getting back to shore at low tide. It's calm today, so not difficult.





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David Graham Patriquin



January 31 · 🌐

I call them Cities of Gold. In the 'Old Days' we resented these stinging corals (they are not closely related to real corals), today they maintain a lot of the diversity and structural integrity of the shallow water reefs. John Lewis wrote about them

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16782450/>





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David Graham Patriquin



February 5 · 🌐

A perfect morning to celebrate my last day as a
Seventies-Ager





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David Graham Patriquin



February 5 · 🌐

"Boys don't grow up", I was once told.





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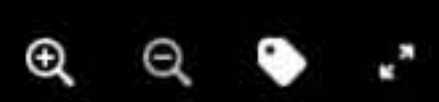
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 **David Graham Patriquin**

February 5 · 🌐



It's OK Dave, you can go snorkelling now...



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 **David Graham Patriquin** February 5 · 🌐 ...

One of the last times Nina put a mask on... (Carriacou, 1968 or 9). The next & very last time she came face to face with a huge barracuda; I had suggested she to put on a mask & snorkel in the very safe shallow water near shore at Bath instead of "just sitting in the sun" while she waited for me to come back from afar. She was sitting on the beach when I got back. "I saw a huge barracuda!" she said excitedly. "It was probably a pipe-fish" I said. But when I checked, indeed... [See more](#)



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David Graham Patriquin



February 5 · 🌐

My Catch-of-the-Day, Feb 5.





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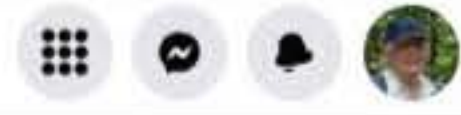
David Graham Patriquin




February 5 · 🌐

As an about 17-ager. I purchased an "aqua-lung" from a catalog, got a book on how to use it. One-piece Long John as a wet-suit - I'm still using long underwear as a wetsuit. (Nova Scotia in the late 1950s).





 **David Graham Patriquin**
February 5 · 🌐

Stop-light parrotfish, juvenile. Feb 5 They are hermaphrodites, change predominant gender with age, most young are female, older ones are males and keep "harems" according to scientific lit.





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 **David Graham Patriquin** February 12 · 🌐

No Net Sum Gain? Diseased brain coral with symptoms of SCTLD (Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease) in a coral nursery area, next to propagated Staghorn coral.

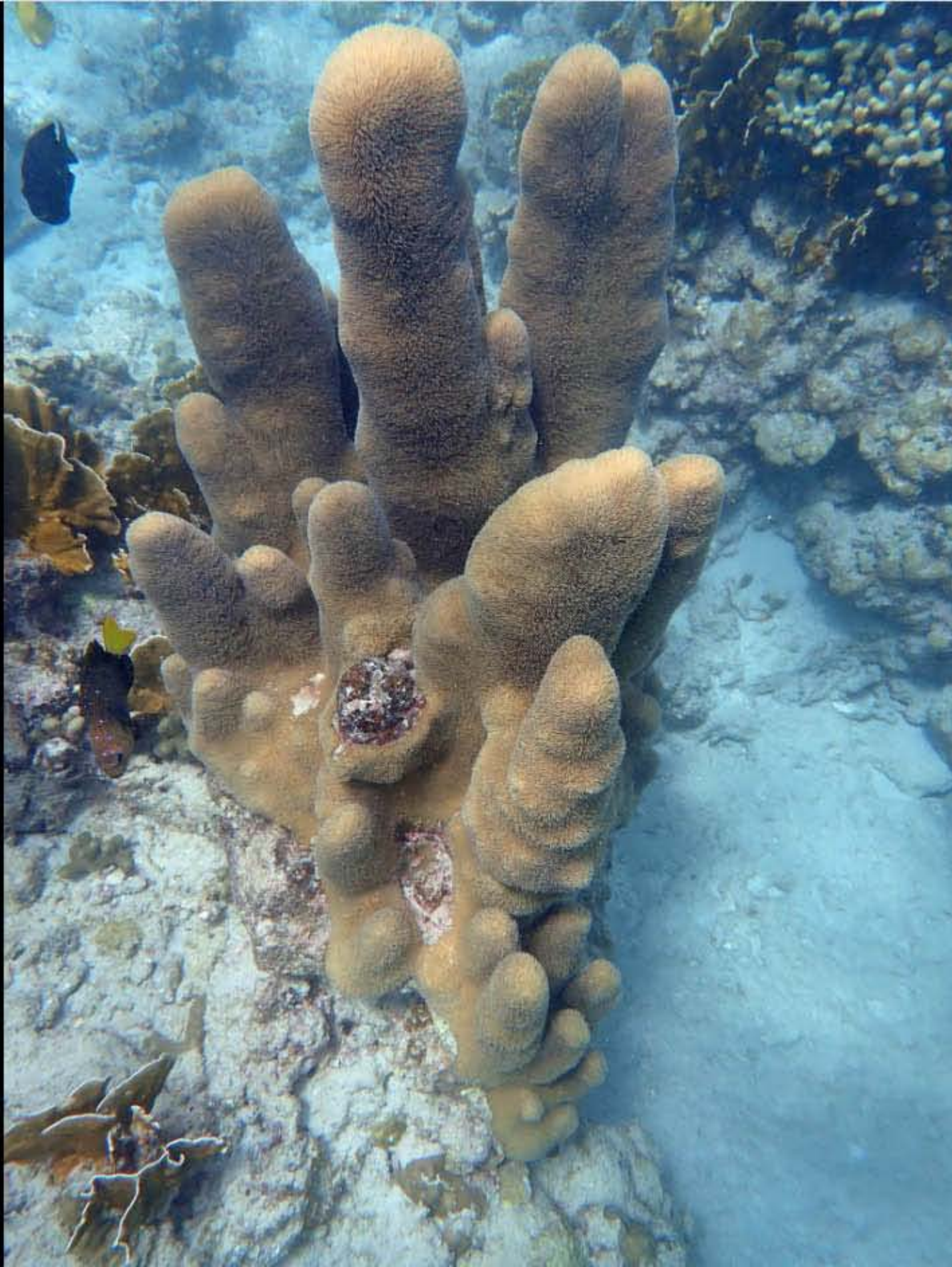




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 **David Graham Patriquin** February 12 · 🌐

But is there actually SCTLD on the Vauxhall Reef? Very curious, the Pillar corals are supposed to be highly susceptible, but I have seen no signs of any disease on them. As "they" have not identified a specific pathogen, it's hard to confirm that SCTLD is actually present on this reef... that's what I learned after talking to an expert on this disease. In the meantime, she said, it is helpful to take pics of both healthy and diseased corals, so that's what I'm doin' More at ... [See more](#)



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 **David Graham Patriquin** February 12 · 🌐 ...

Like a hand...



David Graham Patriquin



February 13 · 🌐

Catch-of-the-Day yesterday. French Angelfish, intermediate growth stage. I never see more than a few of these, always a highlight when I do. It was in the same area I have seen them in the past. With **Nina Patriquin** With **Claire Rodger**



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[View post](#)



David Graham Patriquin



February 15 · 🌐

Catch of the Day (Feb 14): a pair of Whitespotted Filefish. They change colour with the surroundings, feed on Stinging Coral, sponges... so not sure what they might taste like.





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David Graham Patriquin February 15 · 🌐

Stinging Coral- food for filefish. I call these colonies "Cities of Gold", perhaps bronze today.



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David Graham Patriquin



February 15 · 🌐

Also on the menu: Balyhoo in schools near the surface



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 **David Graham Patriquin** February 15 · 

Lionfish - the first I have seen this year. They flop about like plastic bags in the water. Serious invasive, but kept under pretty good control by fishing, they are apparently good eating. Not for me.







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 **David Graham Patriquin** February 15 · 🌐 ...

Ugh Spotted Scorpionfish (Stonefish). More than anything else, these are what are feared most in my seagrass research days, saw many, fortunately never got impaled by one. "The spines located on the back of the fish can inject venom, so these animals can pose a danger to humans. The venom is composed of hemorrhagic, hemolytic and proteolytic activities, as well as cardiotoxins, which result in a drop in blood pressure, and heart and respiratory rate. Symptoms include excrucia... [See more](#)




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 **David Graham Patriquin** February 15 · 

Green Turtle. In days gone by the eggs and meat were common menu items in Barbados. Not now.

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 **David Graham Patriquin** February 15 · 🌐

Tarpon, about 5 ft





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David Graham Patriquin



February 15 · 🌐

On the menu yesterday...but I was not going to eat it! Flying Gurnard, known locally as Bat Fish

[Edit](#)





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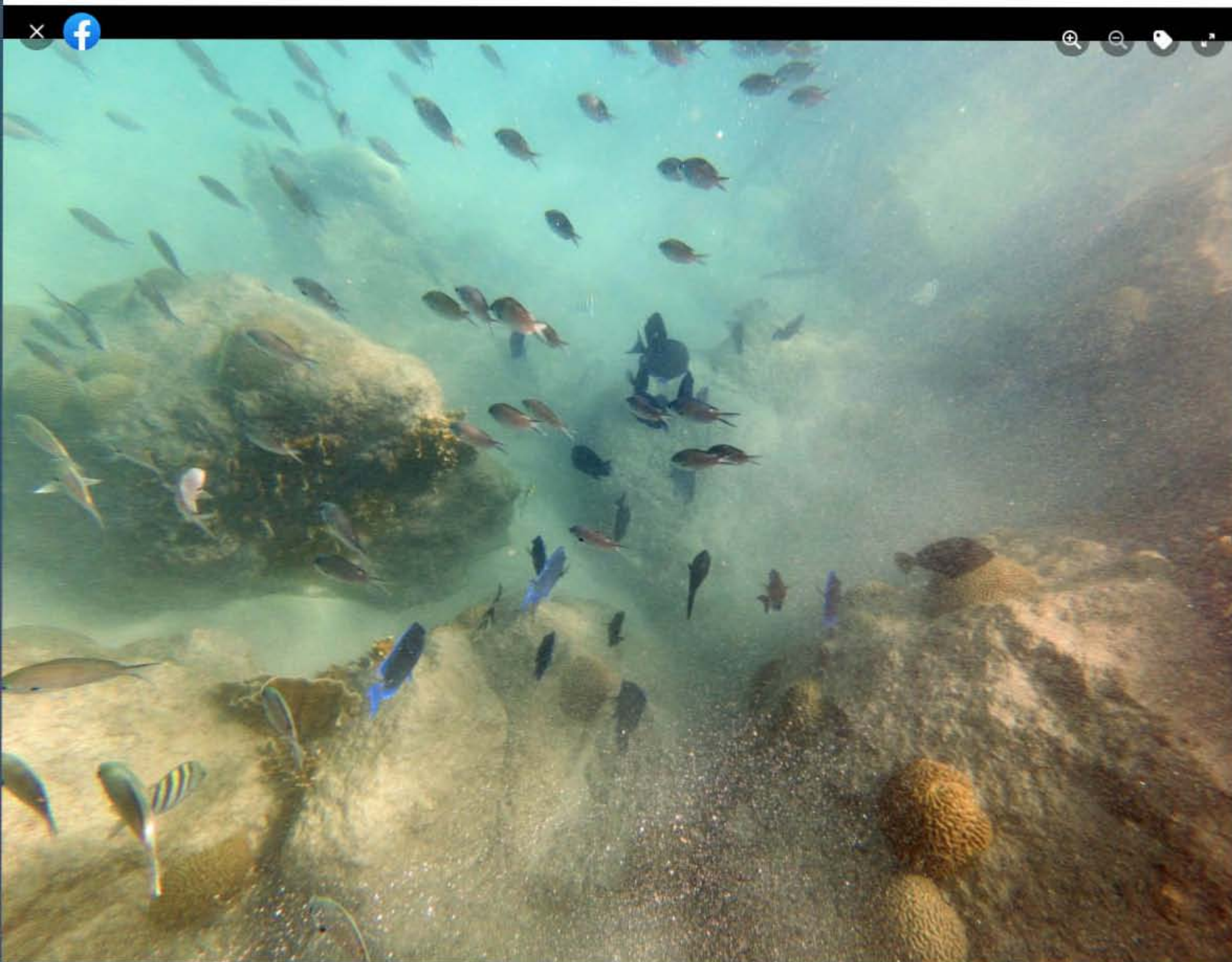
David Graham Patriquin





February 15 · 🌐

Final offering: Palometa (possibly) 'Hard to capture them against the sandy background





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 **David Graham Patriquin** February 19 ·  ...

Today's Fish Pics (Feb 19)



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[View post](#)



David Graham Patriquin



February 19 · 🌐

Got it this time (Palometa)





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 **David Graham Patriquin** February 19 · 🌐

Peacock Flounder Looking straight at me with left? eye!



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David Graham Patriquin




February 19 · 🌐

Bat fish in full flight. Thye are kind of creepy.

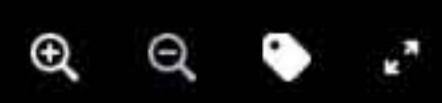




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 **David Graham Patriquin** February 28 · 🌐

Venus Sea Fan (*Gorgonia flabellum*) on reef just to the south of 'The Club'. Small side branches form on this species, not seen on the more common, Common Sea Fan (*Gorgonia ventalina*). This reef is pretty barren but has a few species I don't see elsewhere, this is one of them, a real beauty. With **Nina Patriquin** With **Claire Rodger**



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 **David Graham Patriquin**
February 28 · 

The more common, Common Sea Fan



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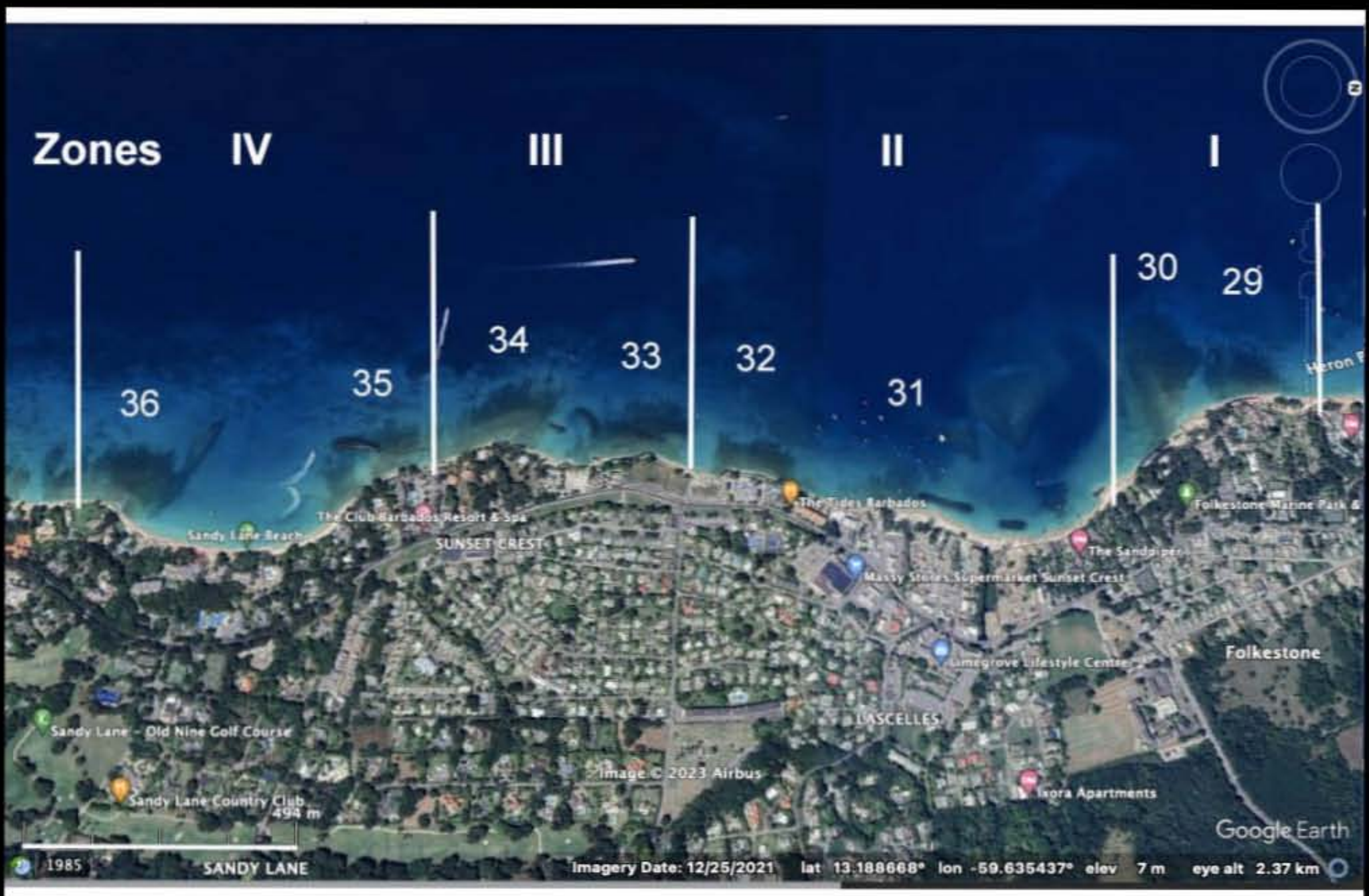


David Graham Patriquin

February 28 · 🌐



These are the "fringing reefs" in the Barbados MPA (Marine Protected Area). The Reef with the Venus Sea Fan is #33. More explanation here: <http://versicolor.ca/barbados/mpa/>





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David Graham Patriquin



March 5 · 🌐


What they saw...

Edit






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 **David Graham Patriquin** March 5 · 🌐 ...

Student days never end, I guess. In 1966, i took a field course at McGill's Bellairs Research Institute in Barbados, my intro to tropical marine biology. 'Last couple of days I volunteered with CORALL to help host a McGill geography student field class. CORALL: <https://www.facebook.com/Coral Reef Restoration Alliance - CORALL Barbados>



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 **David Graham Patriquin** March 5 · 🌐 ...

Their project: to document coral disease at several sites... here on a breakwater.




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 **David Graham Patriquin** March 5 · 🌐 ...

There was a turtle-feeding snorkel tourist activity nearby. They were also feeding sting rays... this ray followed us all to shore looking for more food... a lesson in something.



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 **David Graham Patriquin** March 5 · 🌐 ...

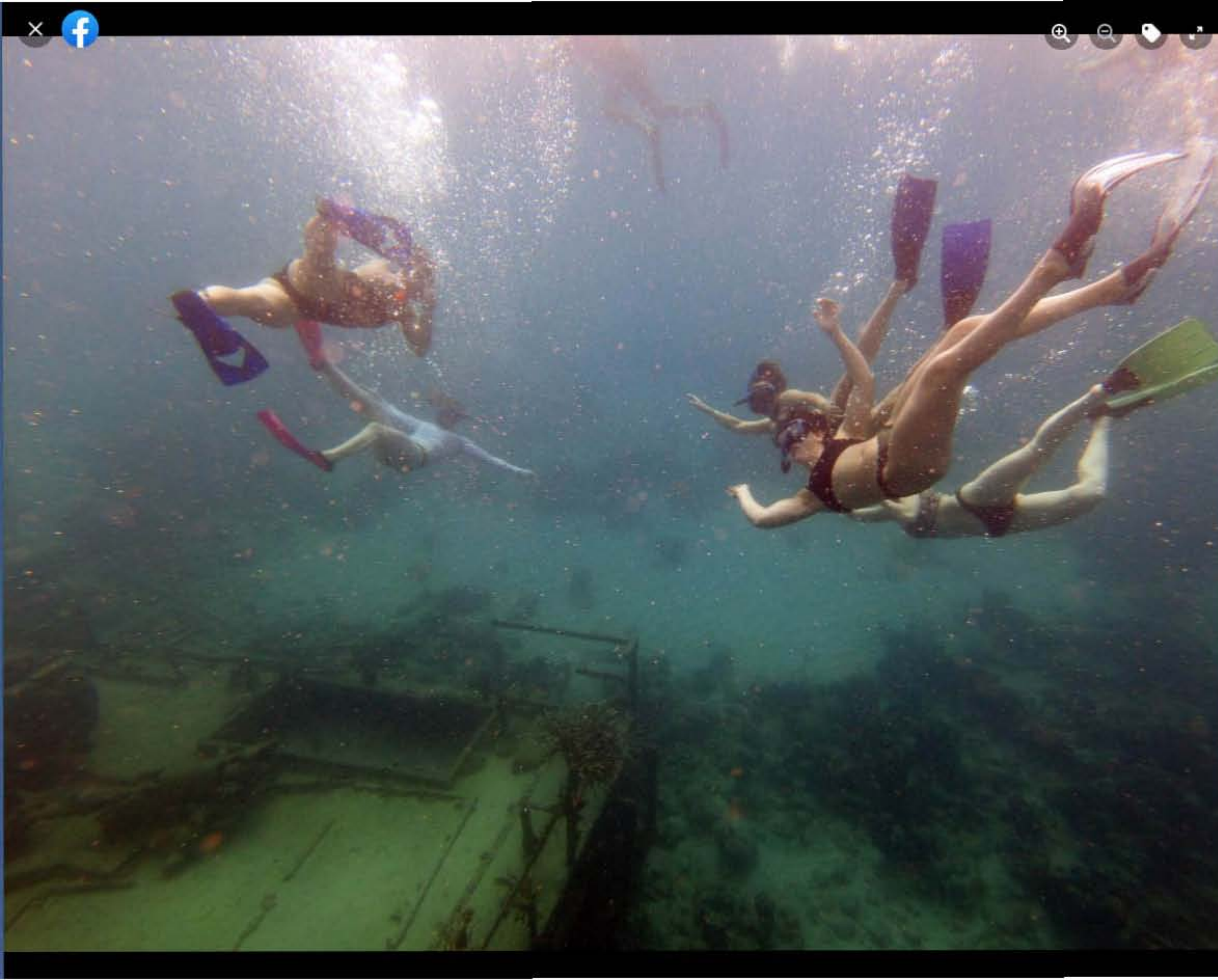
I gave them one of my 2 underwater cameras to document the corals and record their participation...



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David Graham Patriquin
March 5 · 🌐

Day 2, we go to a currently healthy reef to look for diseased corals. My oft-snorkelling partner **Claire Rodger** at left also helped coordinate "the kids"; they were wonderful.



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 **David Graham Patriquin** March 5 · 🌐 ...

On "The Wreck".



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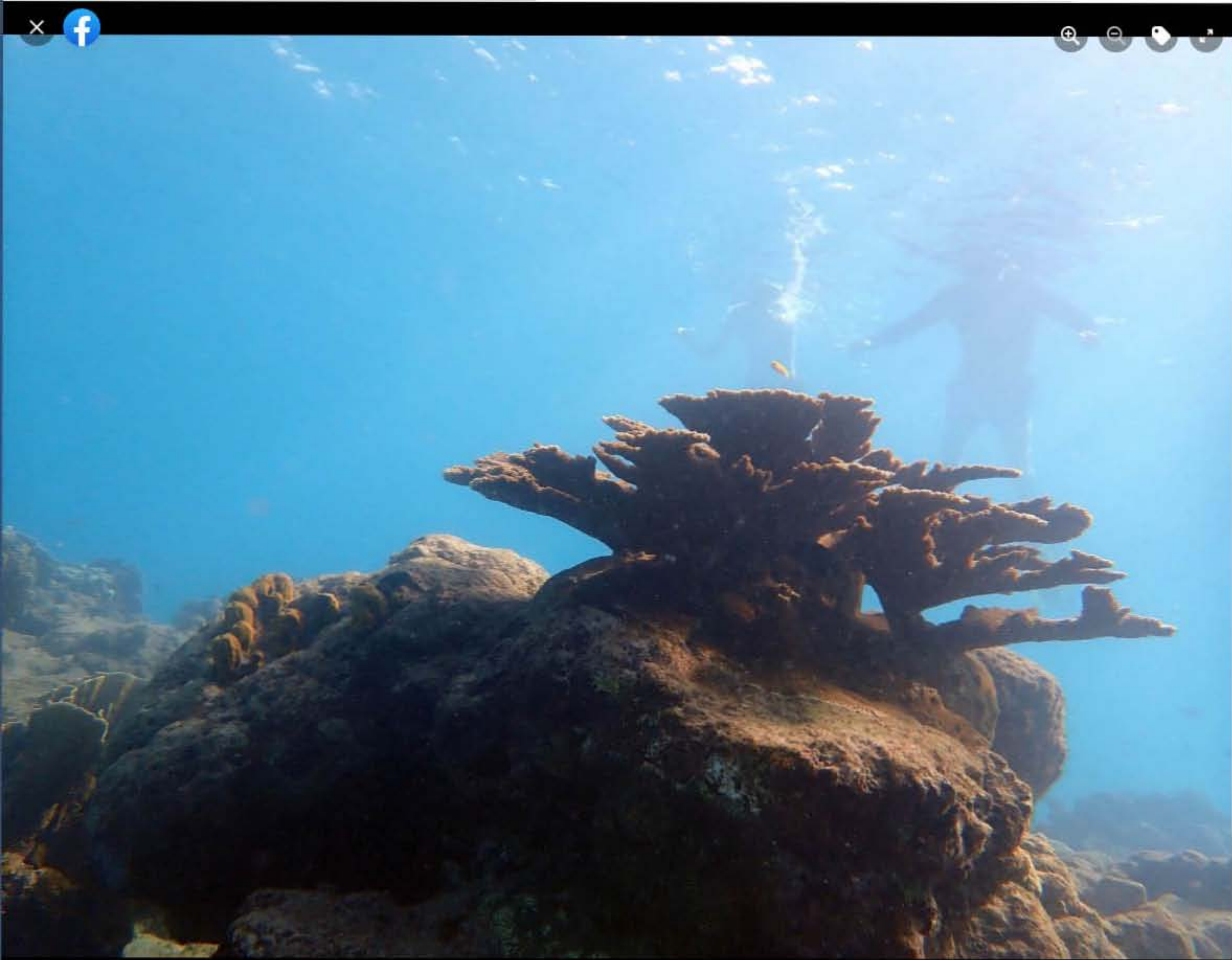


David Graham Patriquin



March 5 · 🌐

Healthy reef now, will it stay so? The dominant coral here is susceptible to the disease that's sweeping the Caribbean.



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 **David Graham Patriquin** March 5 ·  ...

This once prominent coral wasn't here in 1966 (it had been eliminated by the 1940s, mainly by agricultural runoff; then a disease swept the Caribbeans in the early 1980s). It started coming back in Barbados about 10 years ago. So there is some good news.



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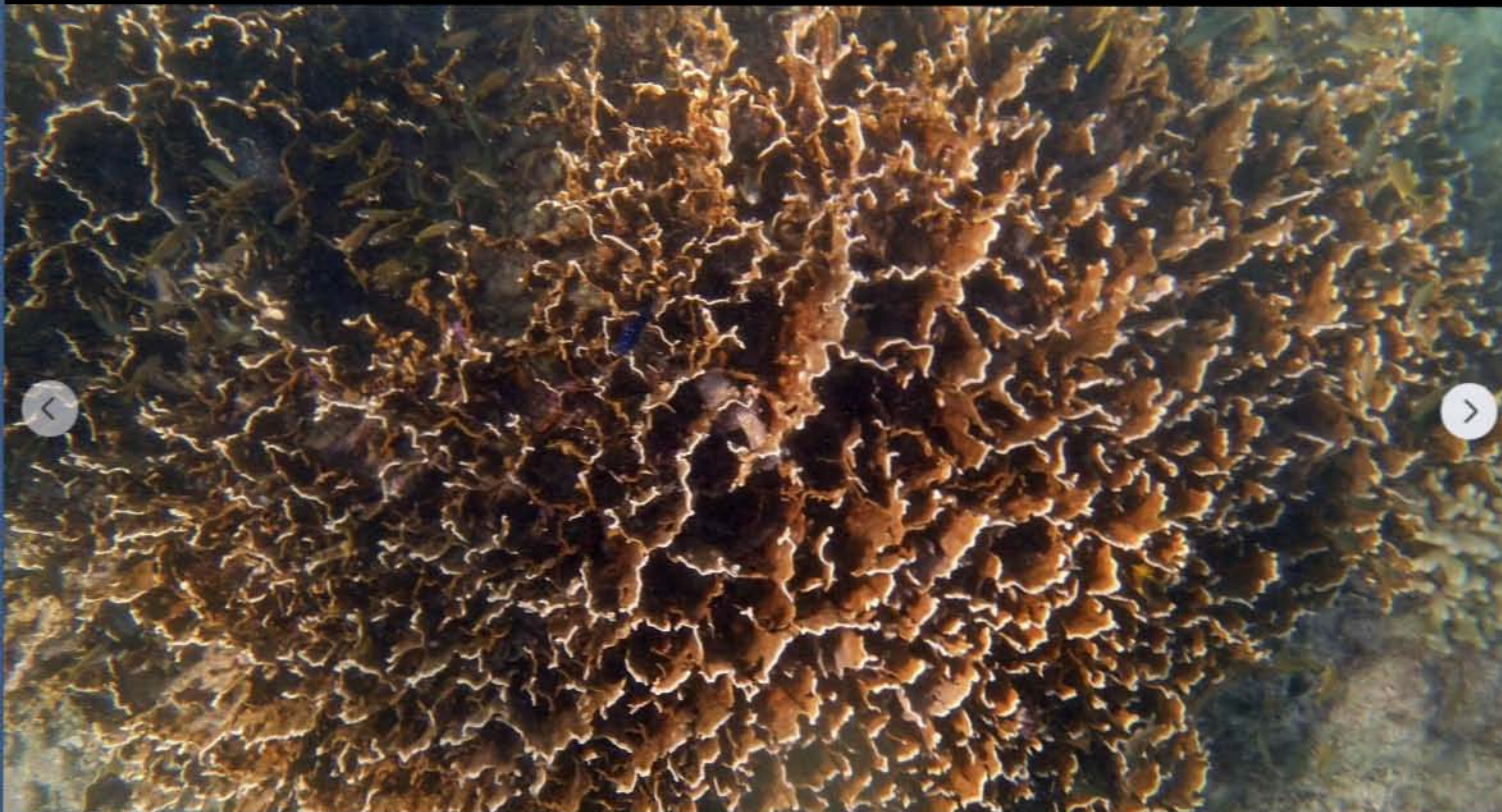


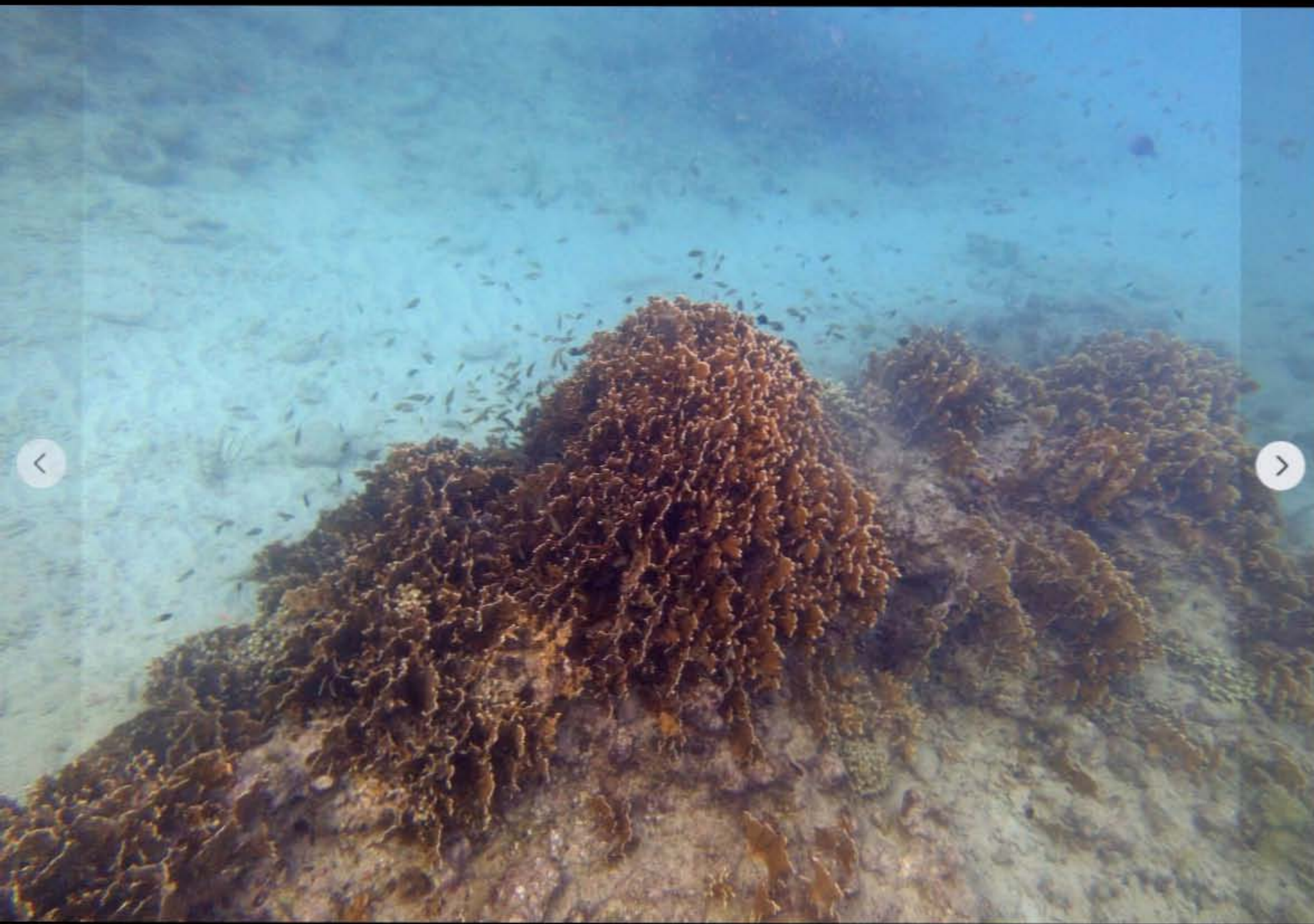
David Graham Patriquin



March 7 · 🌐

I introduced **Maria Jessica Patriquin** to the "Cities of Gold" yesterday.





This photo is from a post.

[View post](#)



David Graham Patriquin




March 7 · 🌐

The basic structure is formed by "Squarrose Stinging Coral", consisting of many little boxes with many inhabitants, and always a swarm of little fish around them, some inside the boxes.



This video is from a post. [View post](#)


 **David Graham Patriquin** March 7 · 🌐 ...

This video speed is reduced 50%, otherwise everything is moving too fast to see the individual fish. The blue fish with yellow tails and iridescent spots are Yellow Damselfish. They jealously guard their boxes. More about the inhabitants in this photo album: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/U7w3ZA1P3pSeCEUB6>

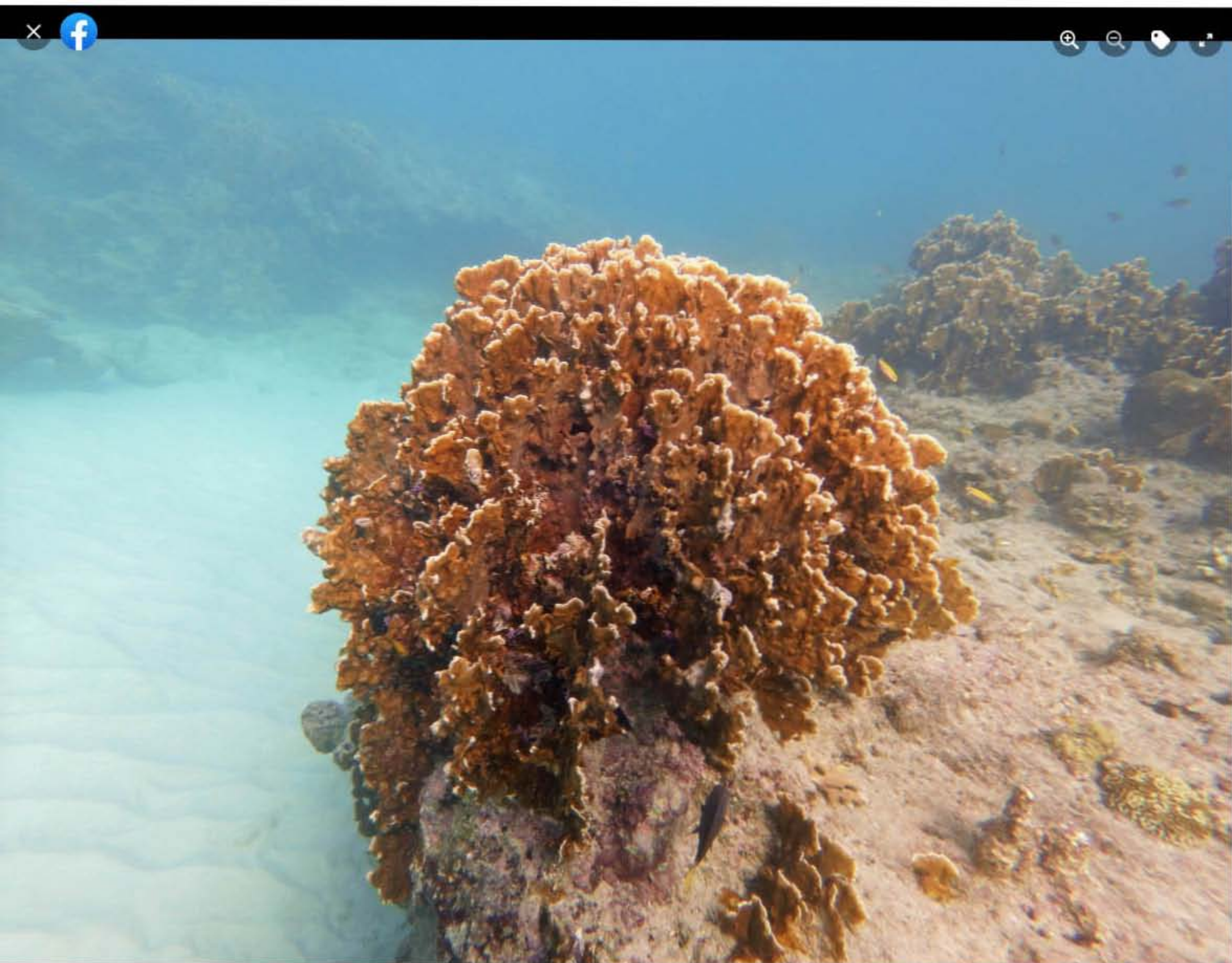





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 **David Graham Patriquin** March 7 · 🌐 ...

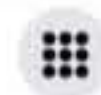
Also contributing to the ambiance of the landscape but not to the housing: Leafy Stinging Coral. J.B.Lewis (my PhD co-supervisor) wrote a review paper about this group (stinging corals, *Millepora* spp) in the Caribbean:
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16782450/>



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 **David Graham Patriquin** March 7 · 🌐 ...

Leafy Stinging Coral



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David Graham Patriquin



March 7 · 🌐

Leafy Stinging Coral

Edit

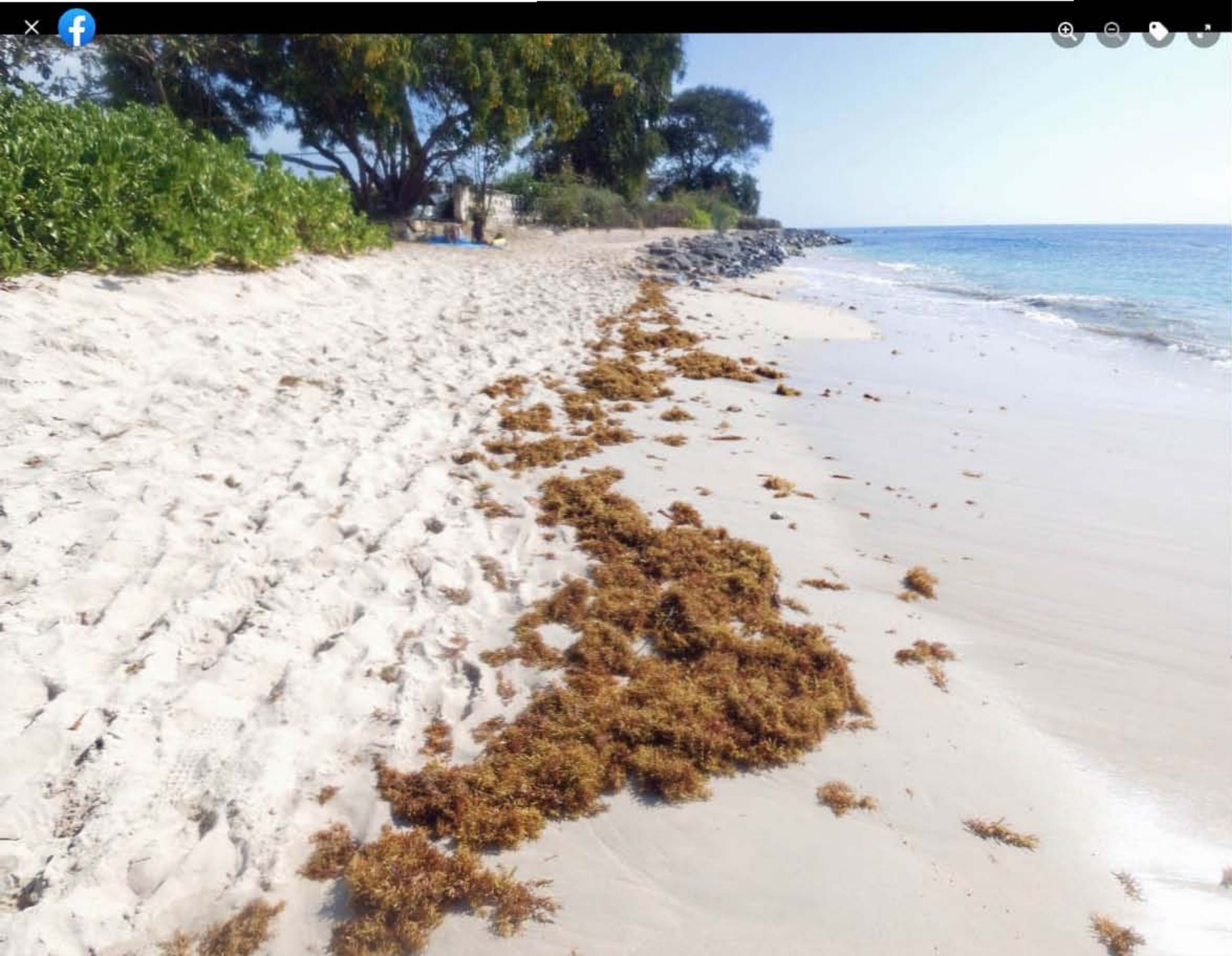





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 **David Graham Patriquin** March 10 · 🌐 ⋮

Today is the first time I have seen Sargassum weed in the Holetown area of Barbados



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 **David Graham Patriquin** March 10 · 🌐 ...

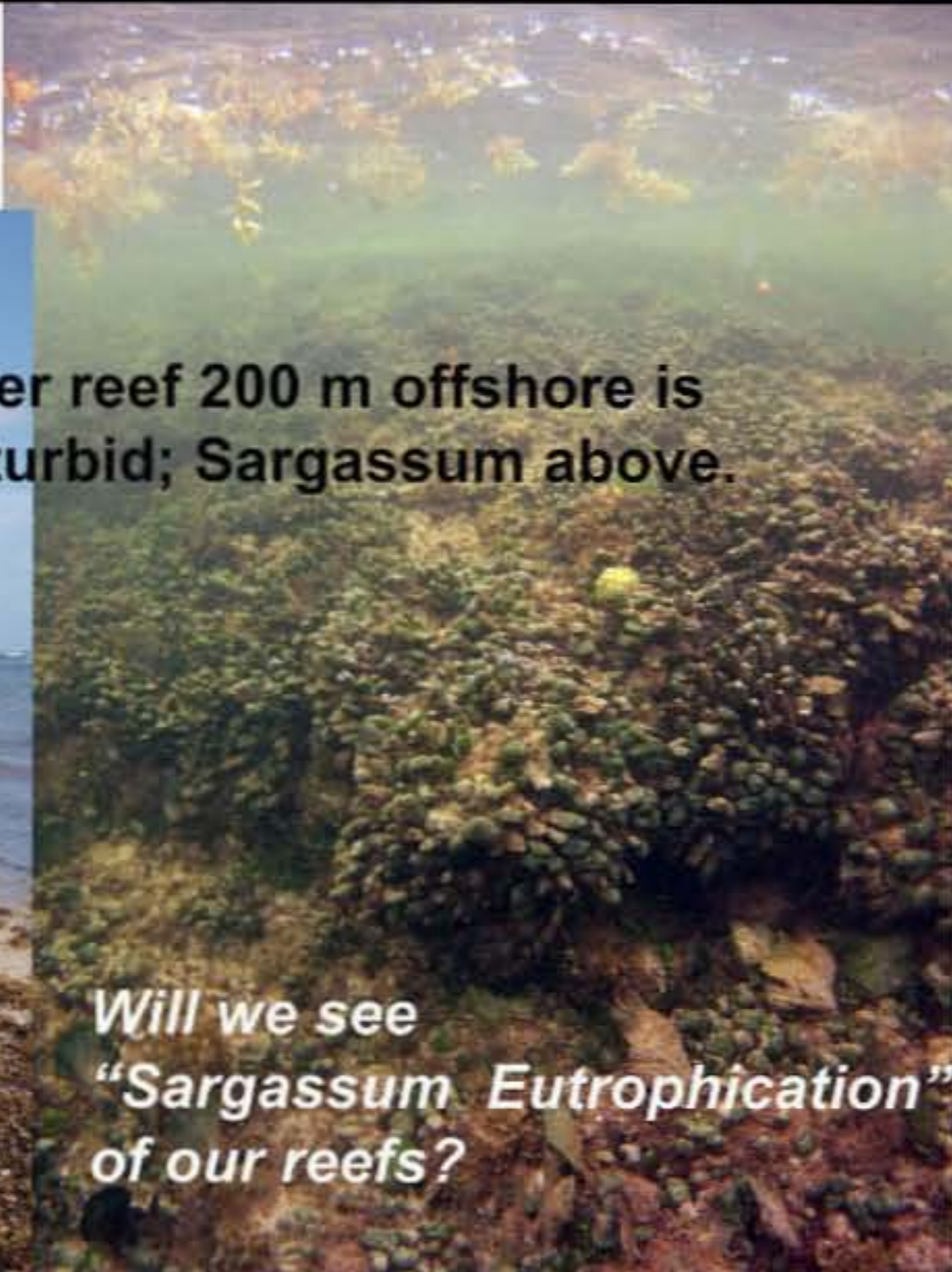
I am guessing it wont get a lot worse than this

Sargassum at Bath on Barbados East Coast

(April 6, 2015)



Water over reef 200 m offshore is green & turbid; Sargassum above.



Will we see "Sargassum Eutrophication" of our reefs?

This photo is from a post. View post

David Graham Patriquin
March 10 · 🌐

'Hardly a surprise to see a little on the West Coast, it's the east and south coasts that get piles like those in this pic taken at my seagrass research site in 2015. There was zero visibility for the first 50 m from shore. Read about the issue here: <https://sargassumhub.org/about-sargassum/> Also this recent scientific article: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10236-022-01511-1>



David Graham Patriquin



March 17 at 8:30 PM · 🌐

James & Carolyn arrived today, just as the waters calmed and cleared. James & I did a googles-and-flippers only tour of the reef/Cities of Gold. With **James Boyer** Next Day: Unfort., the next outing wont be for another week - Nina & I both tested positive for Covid this a.m., must stay 'at home' for a week.



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 **David Graham Patriquin** ...
March 27 at 9:24 AM · 

Peeps on the rock and one Laughng Gull Style





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David Graham Patriquin



March 27 at 9:24 AM · 🌐

What a week of strong wave action will do... remove about 4 ft of sand (top left) & knock a lot of the wall panels into the water. So the choice to get to 'The Little Beach' is now (i) rush by the wall between big waves, (ii) walk the 1 ft ledge above, (iii) swim, OR (iv) just enjoy the "Small Beach" (in foreground top pic, at right).

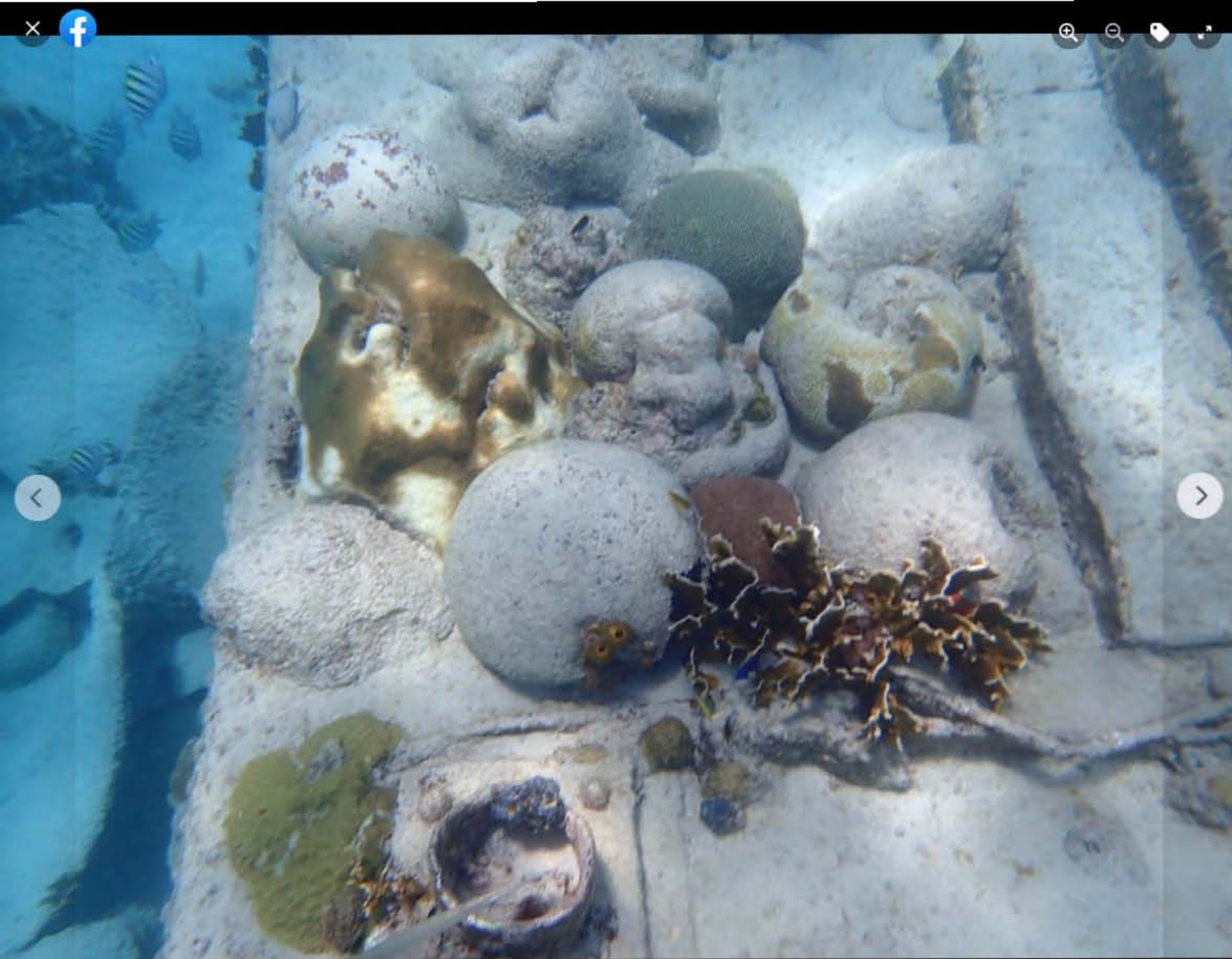






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 **David Graham Patriquin** [View profile](#)
March 27 at 9:24 AM · [Public](#) [...](#)

Horse-eye Jacks and Blue Tang



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 **David Graham Patriquin** March 27 at 9:24 AM ·  ...

On the wreck. Quite a change of scene from early Jan. Now most of the corals are infected/dead from disease



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 **David Graham Patriquin** 
March 27 at 9:24 AM · 

Still hopeful I thought. The Mountainous Star Coral, abundant in about 20-25ft on the forereef, has remained free of disease but poss. first signs today (lower pic)



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 **David Graham Patriquin** March 27 at 9:24 AM  ...

These corals on leading edge of the spurs are not affected by the new diseases.



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 **David Graham Patriquin** March 27 at 9:24 AM ·  ...

Pillar coral is still not infected.. It is highly susceptible SCTLD, so what's attacking may not be that disease or it has modified on its way from Miami to Barbados.



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David Graham Patriquin



March 27 at 9:24 AM ·

Princess Parrotfish and damselfish posed for me





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 **David Graham Patriquin** March 27 at 9:24 AM  ...

This guy wouldn't get out of my field of vision..
(Trumpet Fish)

[Edit](#)



David Graham Patriquin March 29 at 1:58 PM · 🌐 ⋮

Yesterday, I spent a little time drifting with this Hawksbill turtle, as it turned out, for one whole breath of the turtle. I tried to capture it taking a breath right at the beginning, captured it at the end. I decided I snorkel much like the turtle swims, drifting with the waves and expending as little energy otherwise as necessary.

Edit

Turtle Daze



Chromium



David Graham Patriquin



March 31 at 6:43 AM · 🌐

Swimming just beyond or just before (whichever is easier or safer) the Reef Crest, where the waves break, is a great place to see fish, esp late in the day. They seem attracted to the debris, invertebrates etc stirred up by the breaking waves; there are schools of smaller and larger fish and every now and then a really big fish (e.g., tarpon, bonefish or barracuda) will come in after them- hard to catch on vide as they are so fast but I think right at the end of this one ther... [See more](#)

Horse-eye Jacks



Bridge CS3

On "Reef 33" Mar 29, 2023

0:01 / 0:57





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David Graham Patriquin



April 1 at 6:18 PM · 🌐

By the 'Big Breakwater' at Beachlands yesterday, 'great place to see fish





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[View post](#)



David Graham Patriquin



April 1 at 6:18 PM · 🌐

There was a pair of Scrawled filefish. They change colours with the background.



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[View post](#)



David Graham Patriquin



April 1 at 6:18 PM ·

2nd Scrawled filefish






This photo is from a post. [View post](#)

 **David Graham Patriquin** April 1 at 6:18 PM · 🌐

There are lots of small brain corals on these rocks, just a few species. The two pics shpw progression of disease* on two *P. strigosa*, from roughly half infected Feb 12 to totally white and dead on Mar 31. Perhaps more interesting...will some remain completely free of infection over time? - Will find out next year! (I have lots of pics for comparison) *The disease is White Plague and/or Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease.



 **David Graham Patriquin** April 2 at 8:34 AM · 🌐

Today's Fish Flick: Follow the Peacock Flounder (if you can)



**Follow the
Flounder**

Mar 28, 2023



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 **David Graham Patriquin** April 4 at 6:23 AM ·  ...

Amidst all the bad news about coral reefs generally and the arrival of deadly diseases on Vauxhall Reef, there is some Good News: Fused Staghorn Coral (*Acropora prolifera*) continues to thrive on Vauxhall Reef. I just completed my 'annual survey' of this coral on Vauxhall Reef . I discovered it there in 2015, growing on the Reef Flat out to the Reef Crest zone. It's a hybrid between Staghorn coral (*Acropora cervicornis*) and Elkhorn coral (*Acropora prolifera*). More about it... [See more](#)



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David Graham Patriquin



April 4 at 6:23 AM ·

An individual colony on the Reef Flat



This photo is from a post. [View post](#)

David Graham Patriquin
April 4 at 6:23 AM · 🌐

Map shows the approximate area of Fused Staghorn Coral at Vauxhall Reef (that's the reef just to the south of the beach at "Beachlands"). There is a massive complex of colonies in the Reef Crest Zone where waves break, just south of the small breakwater - labelled "Dense A. prolifera..." on the map; and scattered individual colonies in a sweep towards shore. People generally don't swim in this area because it is quite shallow and waves break over the area. Best visited at Hig... [See more](#)





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David Graham Patriquin



April 4 at 6:23 AM ·

Towards the seaward limit, the coral forms a complex with a zooanthid (*Palythoa mammillosa*); and stinging coral (*Millepora*)



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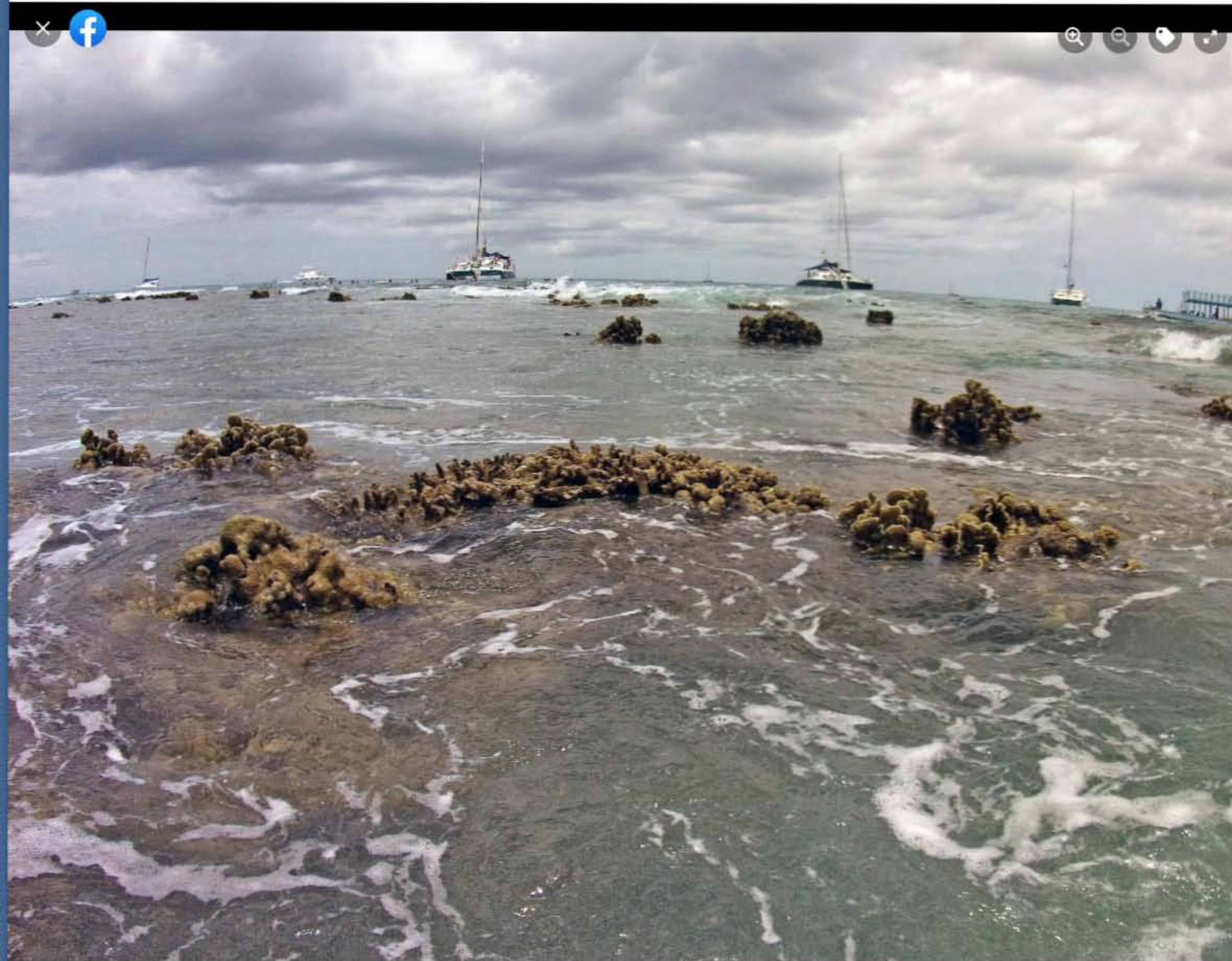


David Graham Patriquin




April 4 at 6:23 AM ·

This is a favourite: two *A. prolifera* colonies growing on the sides of a massive *Diploria clivosa* coral.



This photo is from a post. [View post](#)

 **David Graham Patriquin** April 4 at 6:23 AM 

A pic I took in 2015 during a very low tide. The arc in the foreground is formed by the Fused Staghorn Coral/Palythoa/Millepoa complex. The jagged outcrops further seaward are stinging coral (Millepora). There couldn't be a better place for new coral growth as its growth here increases coastal protection. (The boats in the distance are snorkelling ventures, moored near 'The Wreck'.)

 **David Graham Patriquin**
April 4 at 7:20 AM · 

Yesterday's fish companion: the Scrawled Filefish. Evidently, *Palythoa mammillosa* (a zooanthid) was on the menu.

Edit

Scrawled Filefish on Fused Staghorn Coral Complex



Vauxhall Reef, Holetown, Barbados, Apr 3, 2023

Play



This photo is from a post. [View post](#)

 **David Graham Patriquin** April 5 at 7:25 AM · 🌐

Over our 3 months, we ventured out of the Holetown area only 3X, one by bus to Bathsheba with the G'kids. another to Heywoods north of SpTown with **Eva Torsteinson**...and finally on April 5, we went on a small Cat cruise out of B'town with **James Boyer & friends**.





This photo is from a post. [View post](#)

 **David Graham Patriquin** April 5 at 7:25 AM · 

We had one snorkelling stop, in Carlise Bay, here on the "Bajan Queen", a wreck; at its shallowest only a few meters deep. As common practice on these snorkelling expeditions, fish in the wreck area are fed and there is a colourful oooh-ahhh assemblage to greet snorkellers.



This photo is from a post. [View post](#)

 **David Graham Patriquin** April 5 at 7:25 AM · 

This is what most interested me: what was the state of the corals on the wreck? As I had seen on 'The Wreck' at Vauxhall reef in Holetown, most of the corals were diseased...but here the disease was even more advanced - greater % infected, more totally dead. Clearly the disease got started here earlier than Holetown. I am pretty convinced that feeding the fish is a factor stimulating the disease to levels higher than it would be otherwise on these wrecks. It's a lesson that ... [See more](#)

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David Graham Patriquin April 5 at 7:25 AM · [🌐](#)

On the plus side, I was surprised to see *Oreaster reticulatus*, the big "Cushion Starfish" on the sparse seagrass at Carlisle Bay. It was once superabundant in seagrass beds in the W.I., not so now. I dont remember ever seeing it in Barbados in the past (back to 1966), although I know it was common 'in the old days (1950s and before)



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David Graham Patriquin



April 5 at 7:25 AM ·

We went through wafts of Sargassum weed, still blessedly sparse in the Holetown area.

[Edit](#)



This photo is from a post. [View post](#)

David Graham Patriquin
4d · 🌐

Holetown Reefs wrap-up for 2023. A few pics illustrating some of 'good things' and 'concerning things' I observed about these reefs in 2023. I have now been looking at them every year since 2015 except 2021 and 2022. These final observations for 2023 were conducted on Apr 4- at Reef 34/Vauxhall; and on Apr 6 when my Environmental-Colleague-at-Arms James Boyer and I took the route shown on the map, skirting the seaward edges of the fringing reefs (numbered 31 to 34 - see [htt...](#) **See more**





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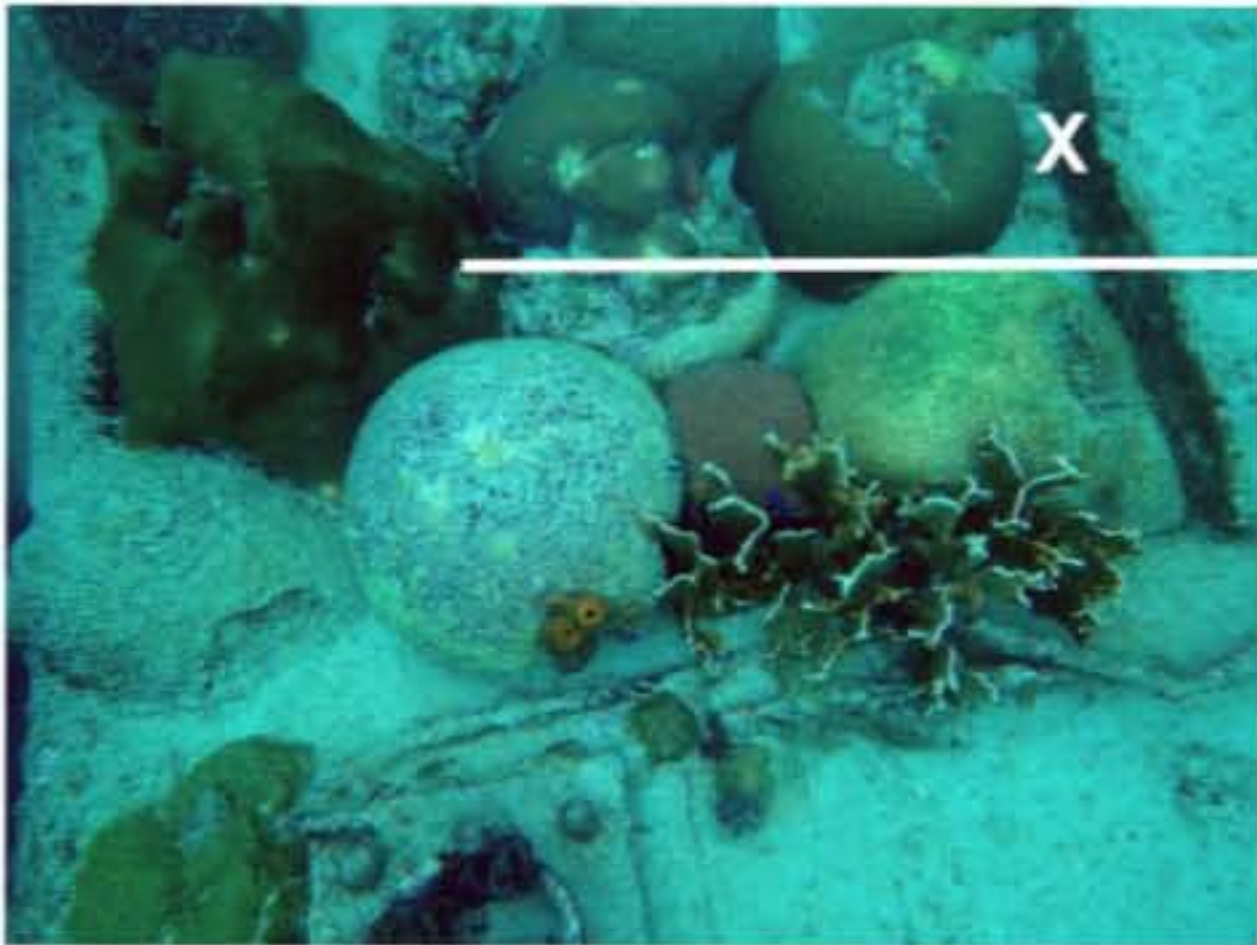


David Graham Patriquin

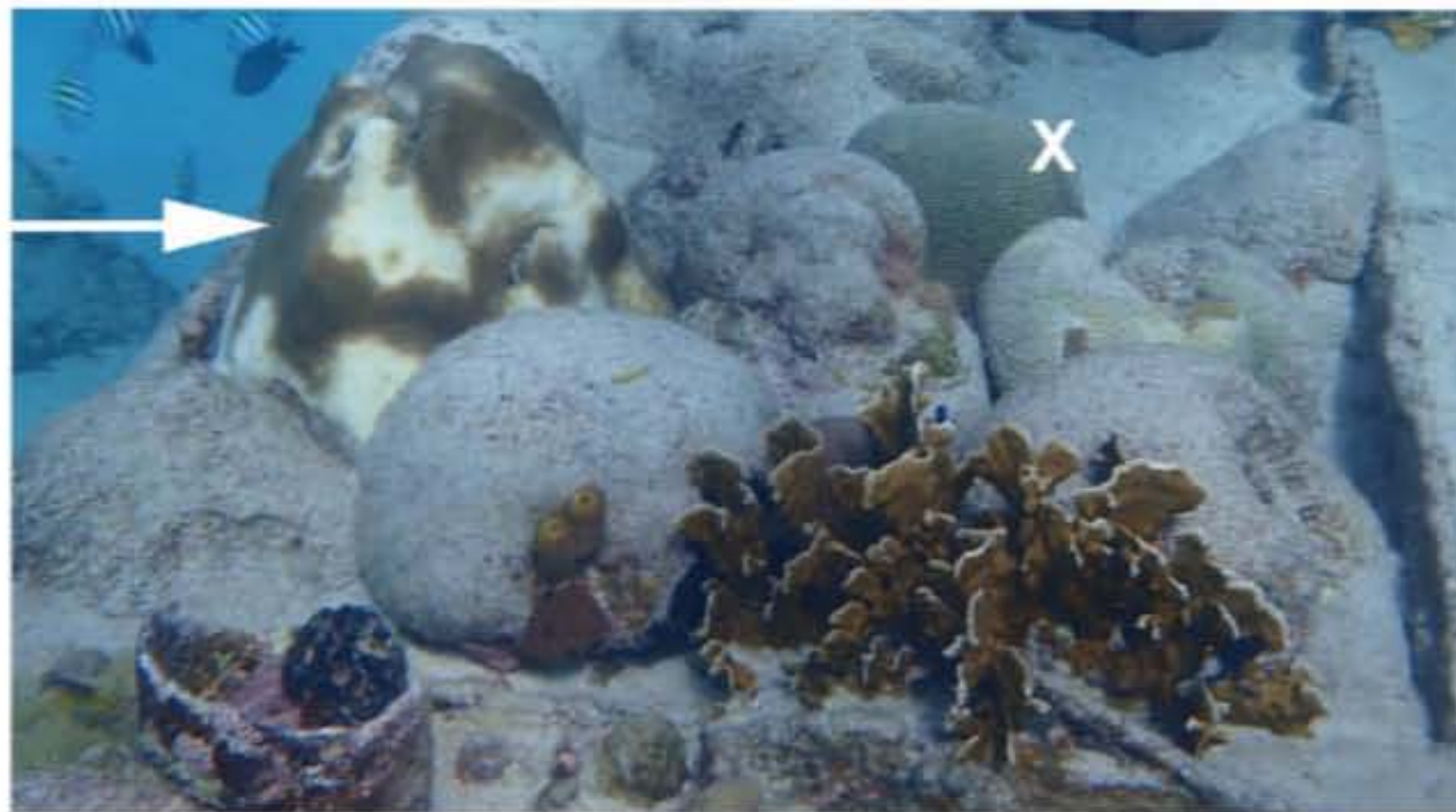
...

4d · 🌐

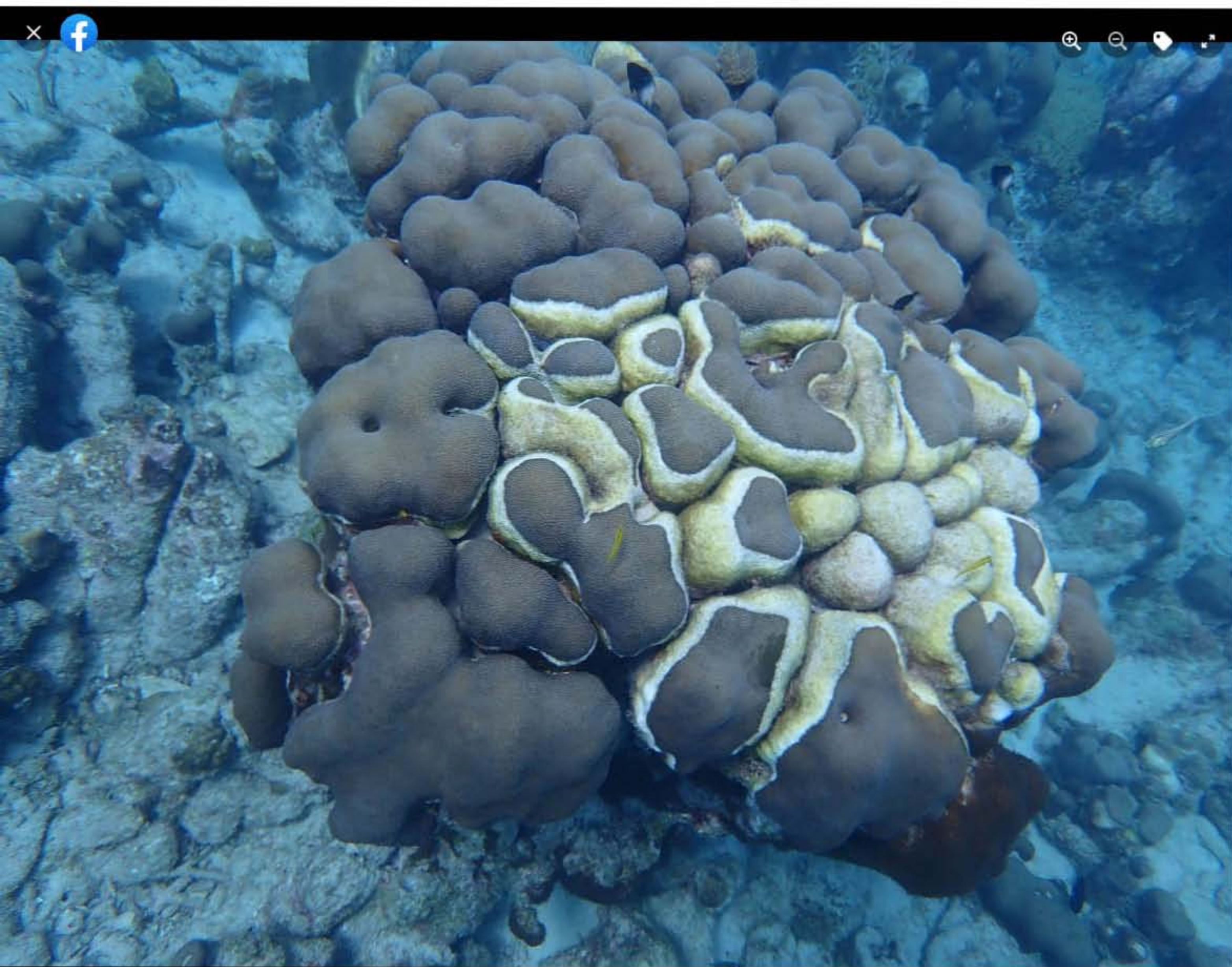
On 'The Wreck' at Vauxhall Reef, some changes in the corals from when I first arrived. The arrow points to a colony of *Oribicella annularis* (Mountainous Star Coral), the only one on the wreck. I had been watching it carefully for signs of SCTLD (Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease) as there is a lot of this coral on these reefs and it is reported to be highly susceptible to SCTLD but I wasn't seeing it. Here it sat amongst other corals that were affected by SCTLD or WPD (White Pl... [See more](#)



Jan 15, 2023




Apr 4, 2023



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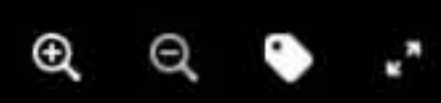
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 **David Graham Patriquin**

4d · 

...

A Big clump of *O. annularis* about 25 feet deep now heavily infected by, presumably, SCTLD.



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 **David Graham Patriquin** 4d ·  ...

But nearby another coral, Pillar Coral, an endangered species that is reported to be highly susceptible to SCTLD, but remained uninfected on Apr 4. It was located towards the end of a "spur" in the spur and groove/seaward slope part of the fringing reef.



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 **David Graham Patriquin** April 6 at 7:15 AM 

With **James Boyer**, about to set out on our final snorkel tour together. We had planned to do a lot more, but Nina and I got covid shortly after James & Carolyn arrived; Nina and I got better and then they got a gastro-intestinal thing and we finally had only a few days left. We made good use of them!



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David Graham Patriquin





4d ·

We started just past Surfside (popular partying spot)... "lets see if there are any tarpon today..." there were, we saw a half dozen or more 5ft+. On one I saw what looked like two Ramoras cleaning it (caught it on a poor video), which I hadn't seen before, I googled it, and ramoras are known to associate with tarpon (they are usually associated with sharks).



This photo is from a post. [View post](#)

 **David Graham Patriquin** 4d ·  ...

I ended up seeing about a dozen French Angelfish this year.





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 **David Graham Patriquin** 4d ·  ...

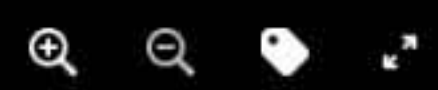
And lots of Hawksbill Turtle (Endangered Species), here on very sparse seagrass.





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 **David Graham Patriquin** 4d · 

A little beyond the edge of the fringing reefs, less affected by pollutants than closer to shore, there are some nice patches of coral. Here, a beautiful colony of *Siderastrea radians* (Starlet Coral), with some small *P. strigosa* brain corals.

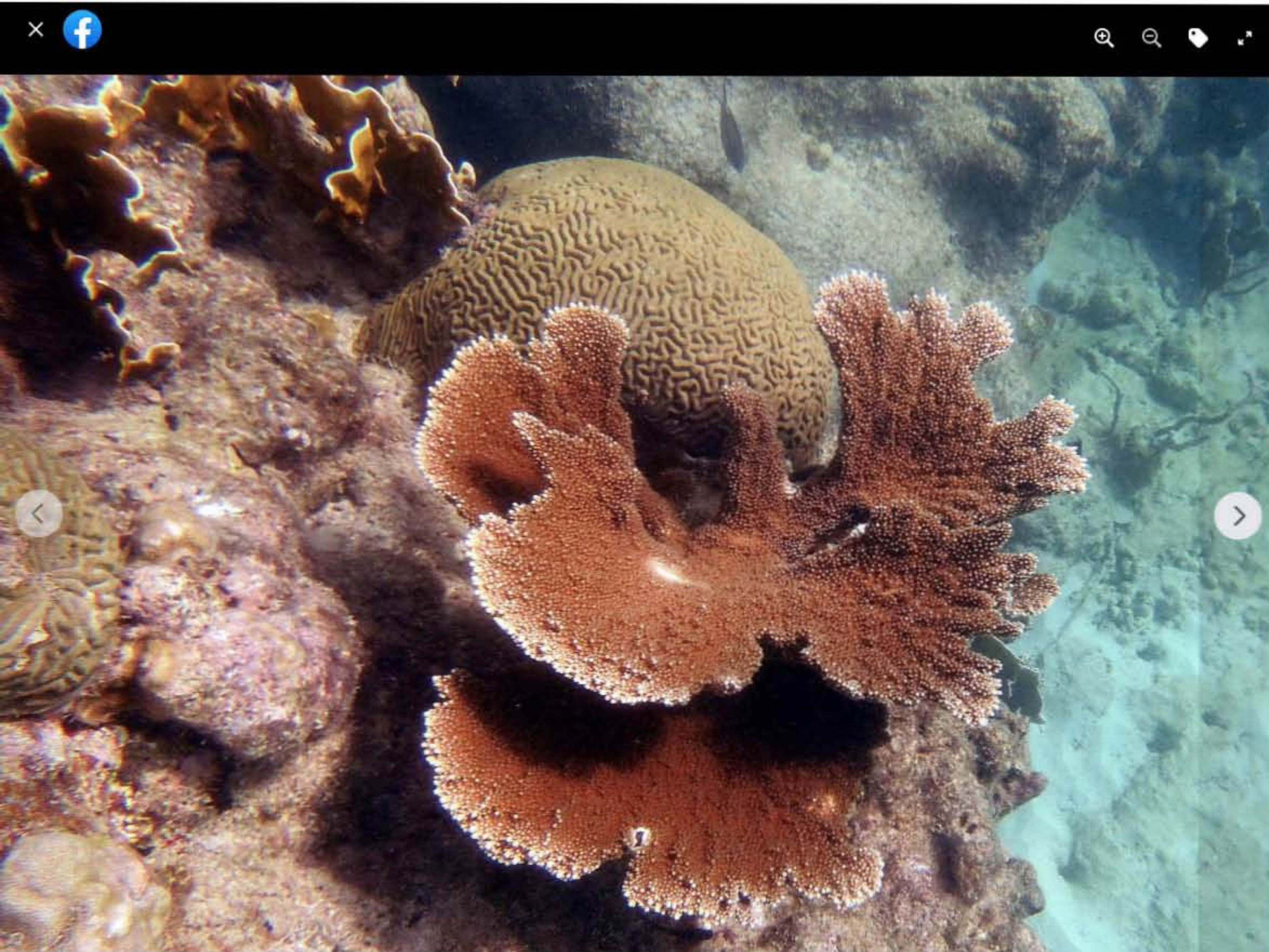


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 **David Graham Patriquin** 4d ·  [...](#)

A very colourful sponge,

[Edit](#)



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 **David Graham Patriquin** 4d ·  ...

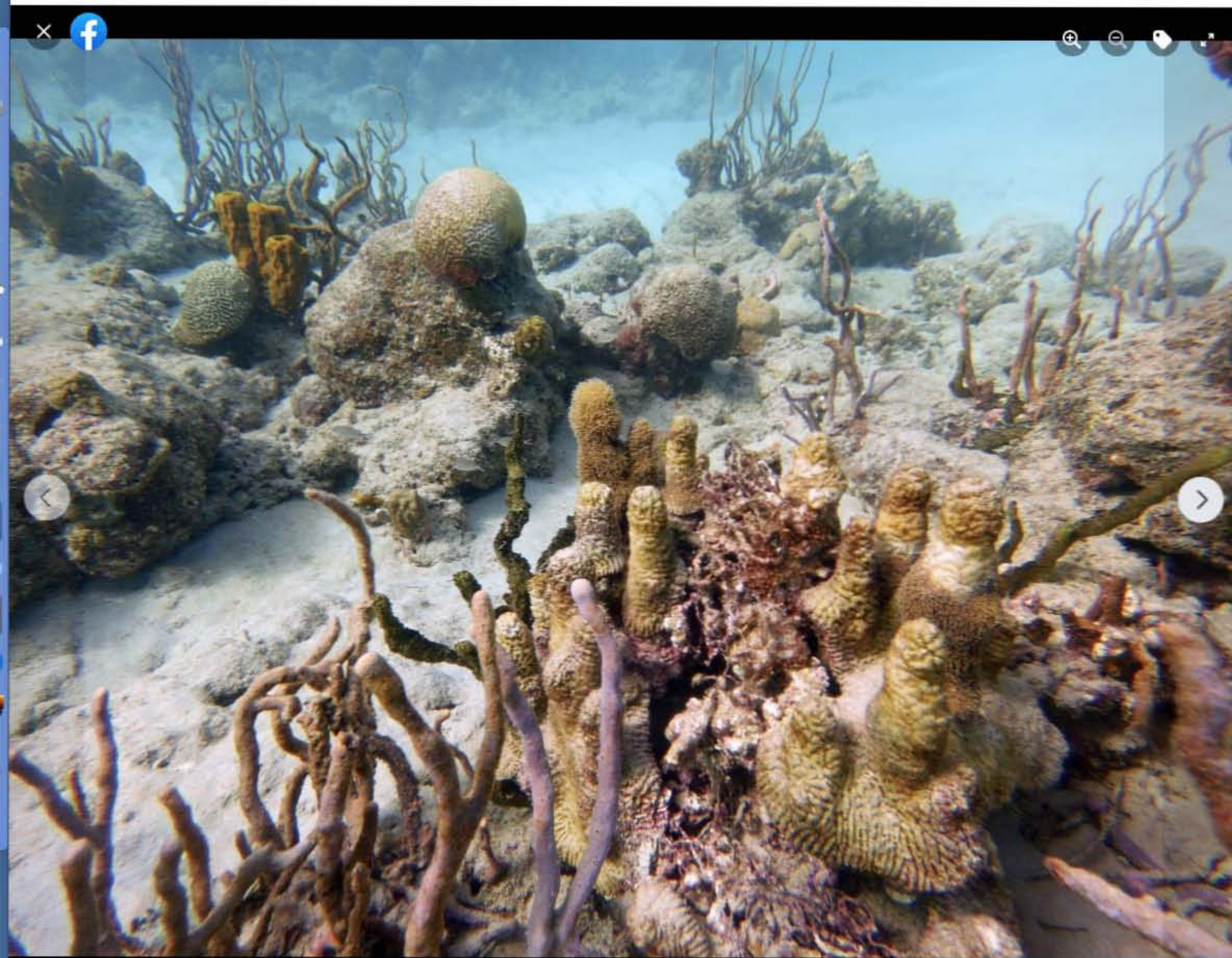
On the fringing reef, not far from 'The Club' a healthy colony of Elkhorn coral (*Acropora palmata*), a species not affected by these recent diseases; next to it. *P. strigosa* brain coral, so far, disease-free. (SCTLD and WPD affect many of the brain corals, and other 'massive corals'). Will it be infected when I revisit in 2024? That's my big question for next year- how many susceptible corals remain uninfected//are there signs of some resistance?



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 **David Graham Patriquin** 4d ·  ...

A "City of Gold" at the edge of the fringing reef. Formed by "Stinging Coral", not a true coral, they host a lot of invertebrate and fish life. Not affected by common coral diseases. In the middle, a *P. strigosa* brain coral, 2/3rds infected by SCTLD or WPD.



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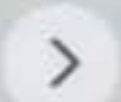
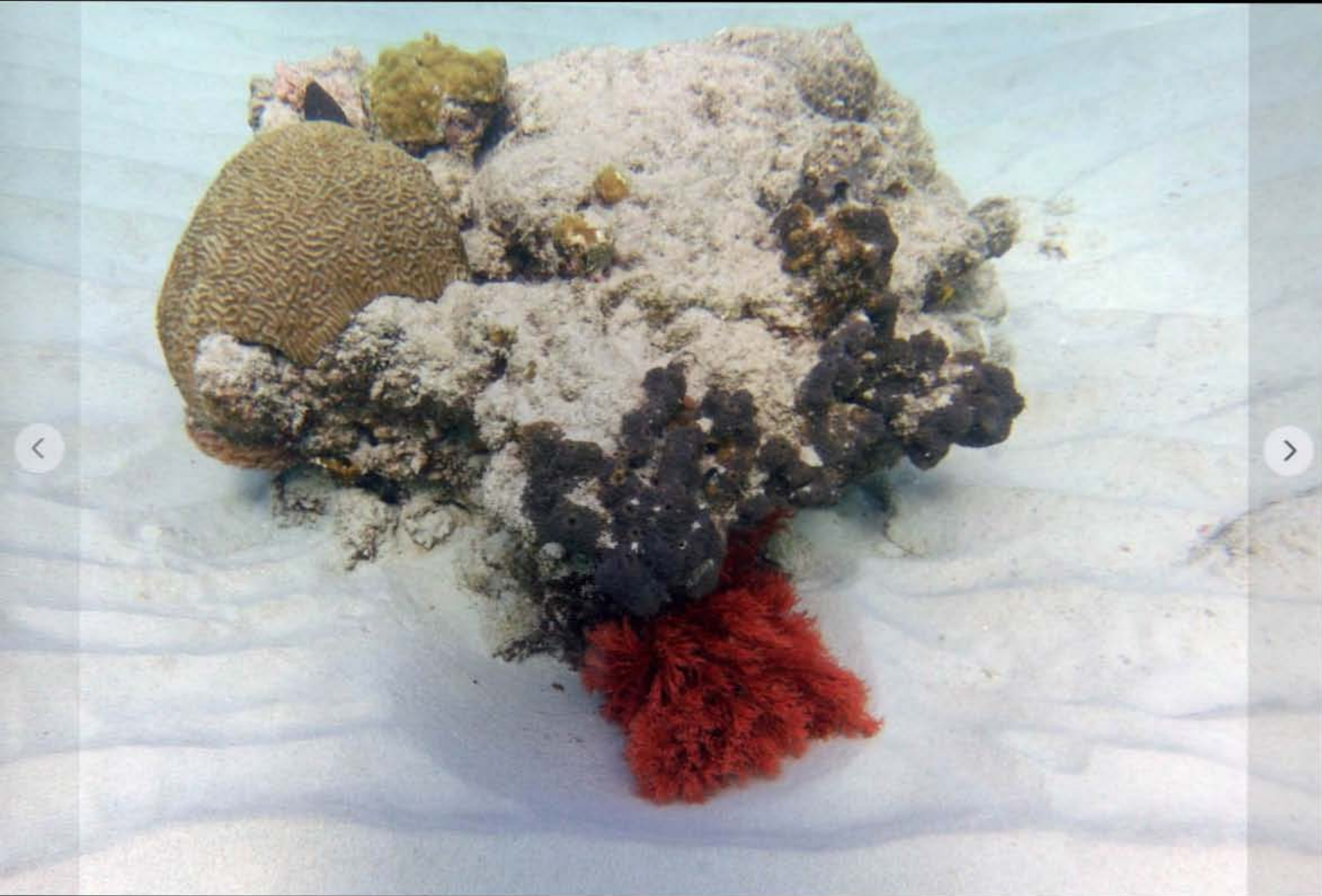
David Graham Patriquin 4d · [Public](#) Apr 6

Oh Oh. A little beyond the fringing reefs, about 20 ft deep, a patch of reef with Pillar Coral, seeming infected with SCTLD. The first and only time I saw any signs of infection on this species. It's a pretty good indication that we indeed have SCTLD here, probably WPD also.

This photo is from a post. [View post](#)



 **David Graham Patriquin** 4d ·  ...

A striking red alga, I think it is *Ochtodes scundiramea*; first time I have seen it in Barbados.





This photo is from a post. [View post](#)

 **David Graham Patriquin** 4d ·  ...

Another Oh-Oh. Infected Starlet coral.



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 **David Graham Patriquin** April 6 ...

& that's it for 2023 folks! Hopefully to be resumed in early 2024. Will post more at <http://versicolor.ca/barbados/>