

## **CORAL REEFS ENVIRONMENT IN THE RED SEA: DESTRUCTION, PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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The Red Sea is known as a "Coral Sea", since it contains the richest diversity of corals west of India. For hundreds of years, reef resources of the Red Sea were used sustainably. In the last few decades, increased population and the resultant increase of activities along its coastal areas, such as urbanization, industrialization and a growing tourist industry, have caused the damage of coral formations in the Red Sea. Corniche development along reef flats, landfill which extends municipal and private property, and shallow excavations associated with ports, all destroy reefs more or less permanently. Over and above, the Red Sea is a major oil tanker route and coral reefs have been threatened by oil spills. Accordingly, the protection of coral reefs is becoming increasingly difficult, particularly in the absence of a Regional Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan. This paper will focus on problems encountered with the coral reef environment of the Red Sea; its destruction, protection and sustainable development.