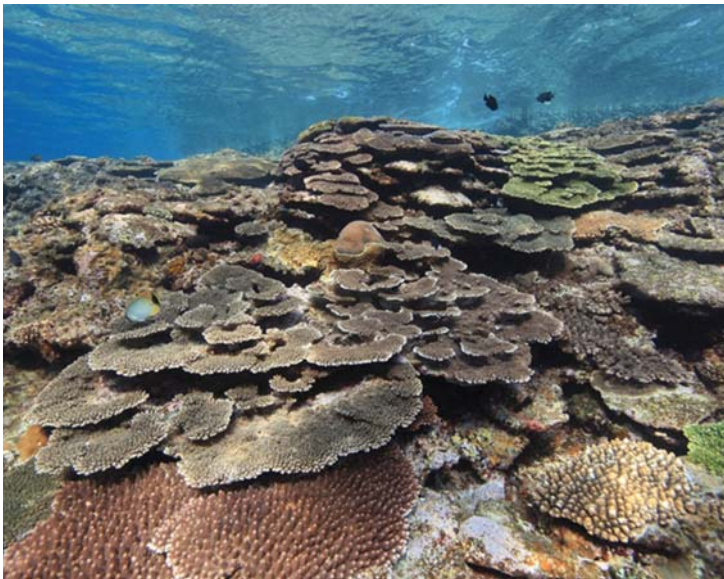


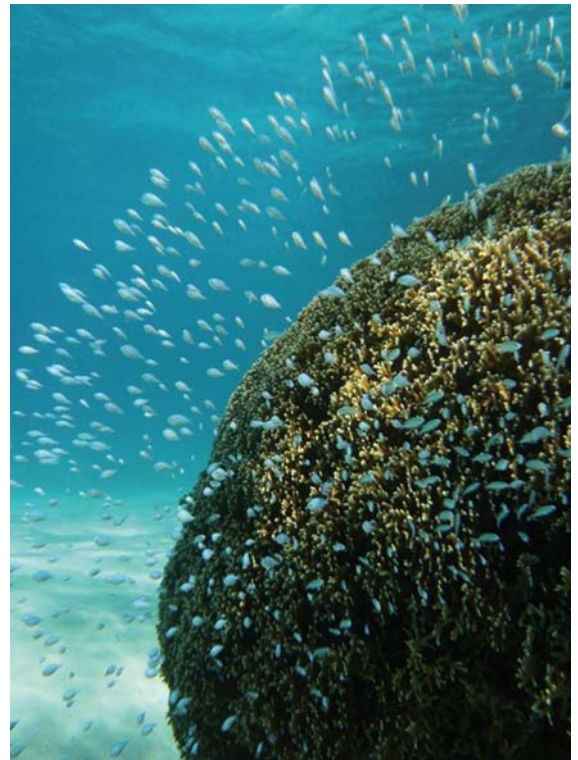
# Keramashoto Coral Reef

## Coral Reef

Geographical Coordinates: 26°12N, 127°21' E / Altitude: 0m / Area: 8290ha / Major Type of Wetland: Coral reef / Designation: Marine Park Area of National Park / Municipalities Involved: Zamami Village and Tokashiki Village, Okinawa Prefecture / Ramsar Designation: November 2005 / Ramsar Criteria: 1, 2, 3, 8



A high density of reef-building coral colonies



Coral reefs are diverse ecosystems like tropical forests



North coast of Geruma Island

### General Overview:

The Keramashoto Islands consist of a little more than 30 islands, which include Tokashiki Island, Zamami Island, Aka Island and Geruma Island and are situated 20–40km west of the Okinawa Island, the southernmost prefecture in Japan. Tokashiki Island, the largest of Keramashoto Islands, has an area of 1500ha. The population of the two villages, Tokashiki and Zamami, is a little less than 2000. It is one of the most beautiful and pristine marine area in Japan.

The 353ha marine area, 120ha along the west coast of Tokashiki Island and 233ha between Zamami Island and Aka Island, was designated as a Ramsar site in 2005. After the area was designated as Keramashoto National Park in 2014, the area of the Ramsar site was expanded to cover the entire marine park area (8290 ha) of the national park.

### The Coral Reef:

In the Keramashoto Coral Reef, a high density of reef-building coral colonies are found in various shapes like tables, branches, antlers and blocks and 248

species of corals have been identified here. Along the western coast of Tokashiki Island, in particular, large populations of *Acropora corals*

in table or branch shapes are found, and, in some places, more than 90% of the area is covered with corals.

Keramashoto Coral Reef supplies coral larvae to the surrounding waters. It is an important sea not only for its beautiful scenery but also for its scientific value. Coral reefs are biologically diverse ecosystems, just as are tropical forests, with a variety of colorful fish typical of coral reefs such as damselfish and butterfly fish.

### Eco-tourism:

With the clear water and warm climate along with the warm water, an average monthly temperature of 20 degrees C, Keramashoto Coral Reef is an ideal place for scuba diving and many divers visit here annually. Ever since the area was almost completely destroyed by Crown-of-thorns starfish, local people have been engaged in an active eradication of the starfish to protect the coral reef.

People can enjoy whale watching in winter as well.

**[Reef-building Corals]** Some of the coral species form coral reefs and some do not. Reef-building corals maintain symbiotic relationships with the algae *Zooxanthellae* that live in the coral polyp. The photosynthesis of these algae promotes the secretion of calcium carbonate by corals to build coral reefs. The common reef-building coral in genus *Acropora* develops into various shapes such as tables, branches and blocks.

### Contact Information:

Zamami Village Office  
<http://www.vill.zamami.okinawa.jp/>  
Tokashiki Village Office  
<http://www.vill.tokashiki.okinawa.jp/>

