

Map Legend:

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Dense Seagrass
This habitat is dominated by the seagrass *Thalassia*, also called Turtle Grass, but may contain the tube-like seagrass *Syringodium*. Dense Seagrass habitats have high biomass (tall plants, high density) and a low amount of visible sand and silt. This habitat is found in lagoonal environments where sediment is deep enough for the seagrasses to take root.
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Medium Density Seagrass
This habitat is dominated by the seagrass *Thalassia*, also called Turtle Grass, but may contain the tube-like seagrass *Syringodium* and the thin-bladed seagrass *Halodule*. Occasionally one also finds small coral colonies within the seagrass. Medium Density Seagrass habitats have medium biomass (medium plant height, medium density) and a medium amount of substratum is visible, when compared to Dense and Sparse Seagrass. This habitat is found in lagoonal environments.
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Sparse Seagrass
This habitat is dominated by the seagrass *Thalassia*, also called Turtle Grass, but may contain the tube-like seagrass *Syringodium* and the thin-bladed seagrass *Halodule*. Occasionally one also finds small coral colonies within the seagrass. Sparse Seagrass habitats have relatively low biomass (short plants, low density) and a high amount of substratum is visible. This habitat is found in lagoonal environments where sediment is deep enough for the seagrasses to take root.
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Sand and Sparse Algae
This habitat includes both clean sand and sand with a sparse algal community. It is abundant inshore of San Salvador's northern cays and western reefs.
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Sand with Silt
Silt, which is finer than sand, is often present in San Salvador's near-shore areas, creeks, and lakes. Seagrass and algae are also often present in this shallow water habitat.
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Sargassum on Hardbottom
This habitat contains numerous *Sargassum* plants, typically on a hardbottom with a limited covering of sediment. *Sargassum* plants can reach more than 1 meter tall. Other algae often occur between the *Sargassum* plants. This habitat occurs in large areas off the eastern side which is exposed to San Salvador's strong prevailing winds.
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Dense Gorgonians and Algae
Gorgonians include sea fans, sea feather plumes, sea whips, and sea rods. This habitat is composed of gorgonians on a hardbottom with some algae. In San Salvador, this community is commonly found along the western edge of Graham's Harbour.
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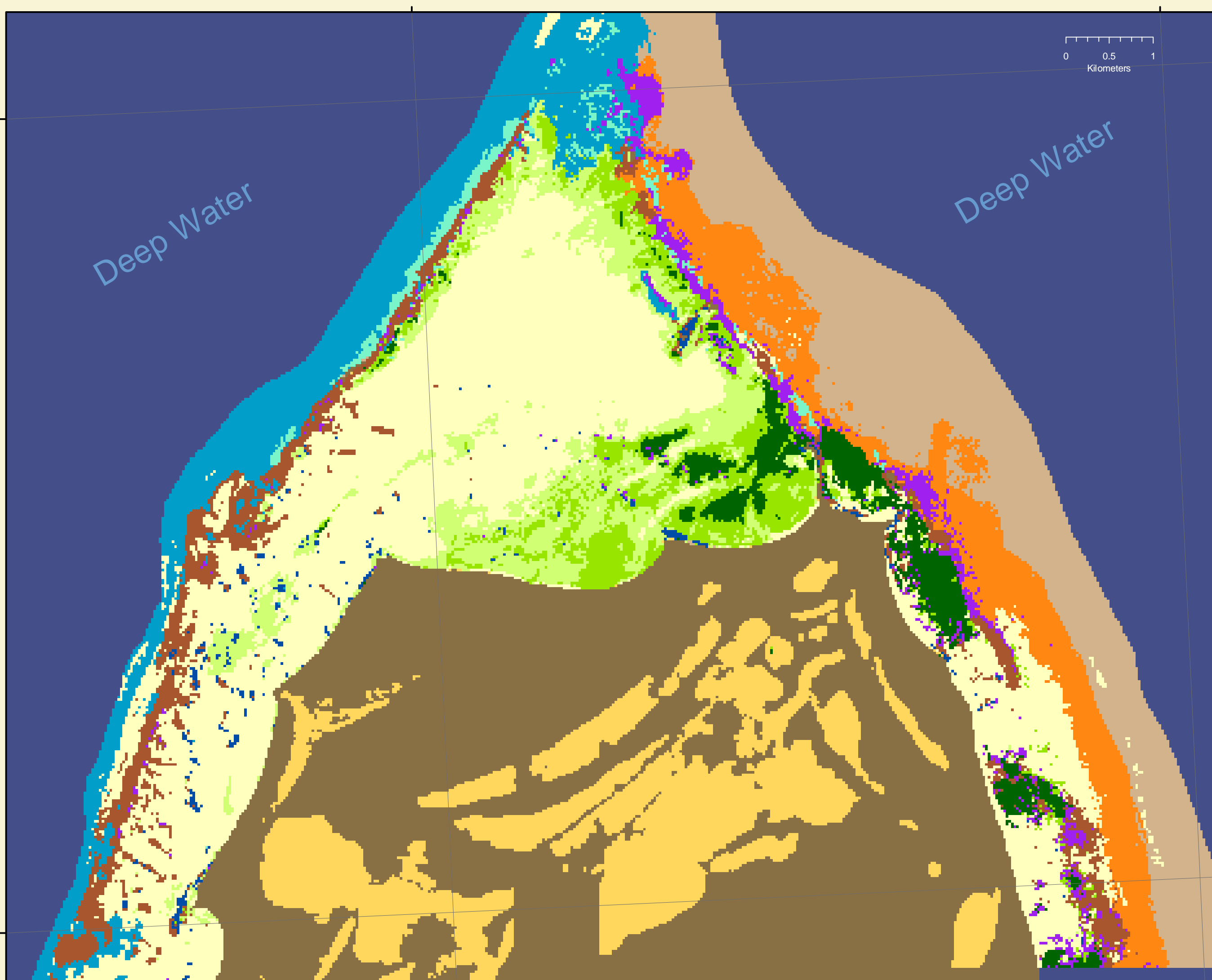

Uncolonized Pavement
This habitat is found on the west side of San Salvador between areas of shallow foreereef. This habitat is similar to the Dense Gorgonians and Algae habitat but it has very few gorgonians and algae on the hard, sloping bottom.
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High Relief Foreereef
This unusual habitat is found on shallow, very exposed foreereefs, such as those on the east side of San Salvador. The habitat consists of a mix of spurs and patches of coral separated by grooves of sand or hardbottom. This habitat supports a relatively rich community including corals, gorgonians, algae, and some fish.
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***Acropora palmata* Reef**
Reefs with the coral *Acropora palmata*, also called Elkhorn Coral, typically have high vertical relief. This habitat is found at the crest of the reef. Although *A. palmata* is generally the most common coral in this habitat, the bottom community also includes other stony corals, gorgonians, and algae. This habitat is found between approximately 1 and 5 meters deep.
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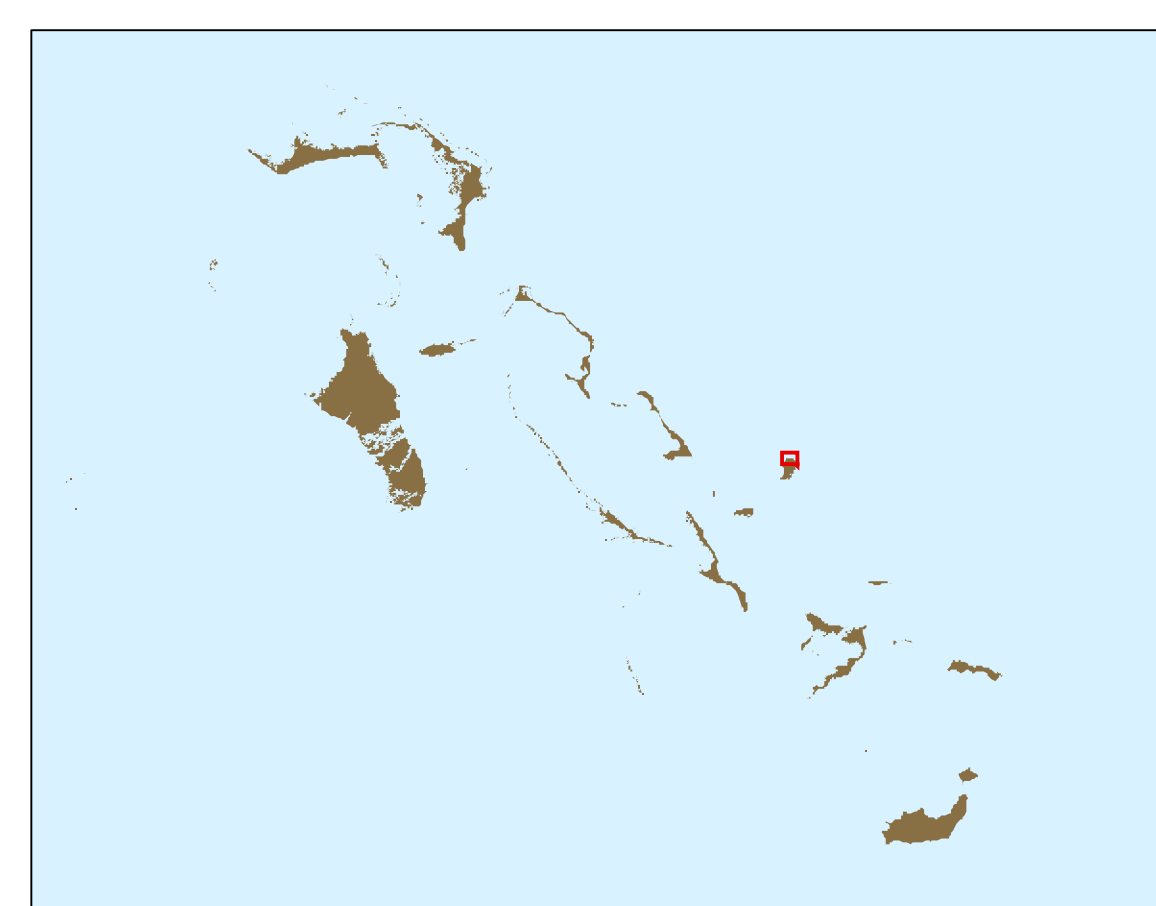

Patch Reef
Patch reefs are reef formations often found in lagoons and surrounded by seagrass beds. They commonly have a small 'halo' around them of relatively clear sand cleaned by grazing fish and invertebrates. They support much more diverse invertebrate and fish communities than surrounding habitats.
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Dead Coral and *Microdictyon*
In some areas, many of the corals have died, possibly during bleaching events. These habitats appear to have been similar to other nearby reef communities. They still have the rough structure of a coral rich area. The mesh-like algae *Microdictyon* (see inset, bar=1 cm) is seasonally common and covers the substrate, presumably flourishing after the loss of live coral colonies. This habitat is found in shallow water, particularly on the west side of the island.



Images of the northern end of San Salvador, The Bahamas. The depicted area is approximately 11 km from north to south and 13.5 km from east to west.

The 2 photo-like images on the top were created from spectral data collected by the IKONOS satellite sensor in March 2003 and combined. The habitat map on the bottom, including the 12 common, shallow bottom habitat types represented to the right, was constructed from this spectral data as well. The habitat classification process used habitat-type data from ground-truthing spot surveys to assist with and verify classifications. This poster was designed for research and educational purposes only and is not intended for either navigation or quantitative assessments of all habitat types.



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