

Book Review

Coral Reefs of Trinidad and Tobago by Anjani Ganase, 2024

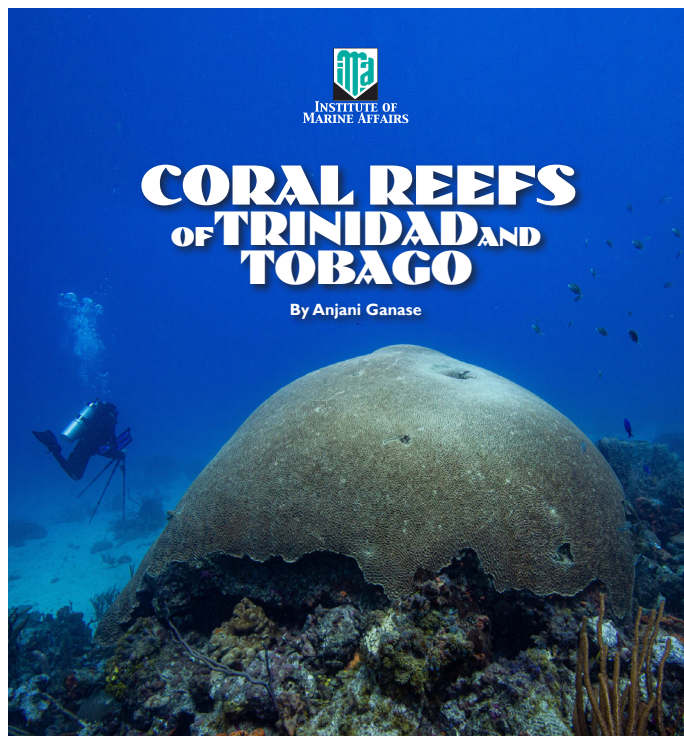
It was an absolute delight to delve into Ganase's Coral Reefs of Trinidad and Tobago. Before one opens the book, the cover photograph of the iconic brain coral at Speyside, Tobago (the largest in the Western Hemisphere), immediately captures the attention of the reader. I imagine that for those well-acquainted with the marine environment of Trinidad and Tobago, they can immediately pinpoint the type of coral as well as its location. However, for those that are unfamiliar, the photograph stimulates a sense of curiosity and wonder that urges the reader to delve further into the text.

Ganase (2024) is the most comprehensive book that our country has on coral reef ecosystems. I believe that it is an excellent resource for biology students, specifically those with an interest in coral reefs. Beyond that, I believe that the book will capture the attention of a wide range of users of the marine environment (e.g. recreational divers, tour boat operators, tourists, environmentalists). Overall, this book can contribute to building ocean literacy among nationals of Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean Region.

In Part 1, the reader is introduced to corals and coral reefs. For biology students, this section is important as it lays the foundation on taxonomy, coral life cycle, reproduction, coral reef classifications (fringing, barrier, atolls) and coral reef zones. This section also provides a global overview of the distribution of reefs, highlighting some of the most iconic locations (Coral Triangle, Great Barrier Reef, Red Sea). It ends by providing a snapshot of the regional distribution of reefs in the Caribbean.

In Part 2, the reader is provided with an overview of the importance of coral reefs. All the points presented point towards the diversity of ecosystem services (provisioning, regulating, supporting, cultural) that coral reefs provide us with and helps us appreciate nature's contribution to people. This section also provides an overview of the natural and anthropogenic stressors that threaten Caribbean reefs. It ends with a case study on the invasive lionfish in Tobago.

In Part 3, the reader is first oriented about the marine environment of Trinidad and Tobago and its connectivity at the regional scale. Snapshots are then presented about the reefs on the various coasts of Tobago. The Buccoo Reef Marine Park, Trinidad and Tobago's only Marine Protected Area (MPA) is highlighted as one example of an area that is in dire need of management. Another case study in this section is North-East Tobago which was designated as a UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Reserve, the largest in the English-speaking Caribbean. Snapshots are also presented about the



Lead Author: Anjani Ganase (Ganase, A.)
Contributing Authors: Farahnaz Solomon, Hannah Lochan, Edward Albada, Michelle Cazabon-Mannette and Nikia Gooding.
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coral reefs of Trinidad. This part of the book also presents an overview of various corals and other reef residents that one can find in the coral reefs of Trinidad and Tobago. This underscores the importance of coral reefs as important habitats for resident and migratory marine organisms.

In Part 4, the reader is presented with a snapshot of some of the individuals that have dedicated many years of their life to working on the coral reefs of Trinidad and Tobago. This part of the book also provides a historical account of the Institute of Marine Affairs' (IMA) efforts as it relates to coral reef research over the past four decades (1980 – 2024). Some of the highlights include the extensive spatial and temporal monitoring of Tobago's reefs, the Maritime Ocean Collection, Coral Bleaching Response Plan, Coral Reef Early Warning System and the Marine Resilience Initiative in Tobago. Readers are also given a glimpse of the IMA researchers involved in coral reef research. This

part of the book ends with a commentary on the future of Trinidad and Tobago's reefs, highlighting adaptation and innovation (e.g. coral restoration efforts) as well as education and awareness as viable strategies for the way forward.

For some, coral reefs are 'out of sight, out of mind'. Yet, I believe that the high-quality photographs and figures in this book will undoubtedly capture the attention of the reader. Additionally, the book contains an excellent compilation of coral reef publications by year. This will be very useful for undergraduate and graduate students whose research projects are focused on coral reefs. To cater for individuals that do not have a biology background, the book contains a glossary.

Coastal ecosystems in the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) are under threat from numerous natural

and anthropogenic stressors. However, in the context of a changing climate, coral reef ecosystems in the Caribbean have experienced multiple mass bleaching events and face an uncertain future. Ganase (2024) is a timely publication that stimulates interest in these beloved coastal ecosystems and hopefully inspires action! Kudos to the main author and the contributing authors (Farahnaz Solomon, Edward Albada, Hannah Lochan, Nikia Gooding, Michelle Cazabon-Mannette) on this excellent resource!

La Daana Kada Kanhai

Lecturer in Marine Biology/Ecology
Faculty of Science and Technology,
UWI, St. Augustine, T&T.
ladaana.kanhai@uwi.edu