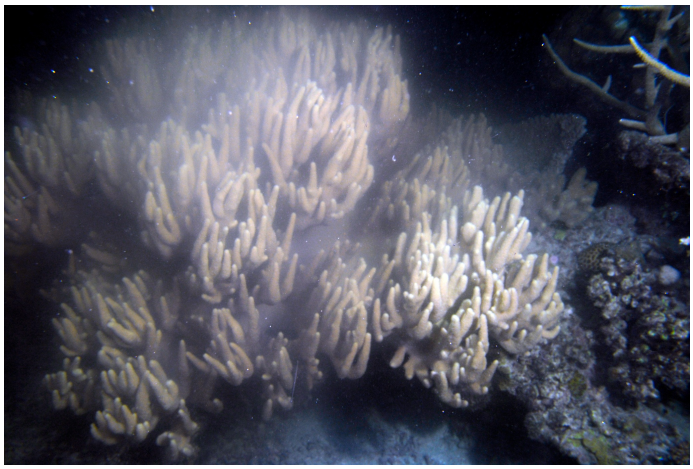
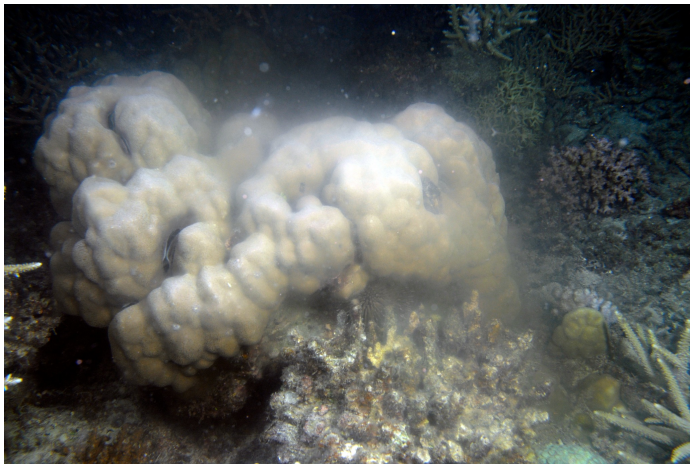
Coral spawning

PHOTO STUDY 1 • Look closely before you explain

Clouds released into the water





Pale clouds occur beside branching and rounded corals during the photographed spawning event.

Discuss: How does this cloud differ visually from the separate particles on page 2?

Ages 6–8: Describe the shapes and colours around the coral.

Ages 9–12: Compare the diffuse cloud with the separate particles on page 2.

Photographs: Troy Mayne • _TLM1555a.jpg, _TLM1591a.jpg

Coral spawning

PHOTO STUDY 2 • Look closely before you explain

Many pink bundles at night





A branching coral is surrounded by dense pink particles; another view shows pale material near coral polyps.

Discuss: What two observations would you record before explaining the life cycle?

Ages 6–8: Find the coral and the particles around it.

Ages 9–12: Explain why the visible particles are not all already small coral colonies.

Photographs: Troy Mayne • _TLM6652.JPG, Copyright Troy Mayne 2007 (473).jpg

Coral spawning

PUPIL WORKSHEET • Write, draw or discuss your answers

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Draw two details you can see in the photographs. Label them.

2. Number these stages 1–4: a larva settles; eggs and sperm are released; a young coral grows; fertilisation is followed by a swimming larva.

3. Choose one stage that these photographs do not show. What evidence would help you study it?

Coral spawning

TEACHER NOTES • Suggested answers and sources

Learning goal: Observe a spawning event and put the main stages of coral reproduction in order.

Time: 30–40 minutes. **You need:** the photo pages, the worksheet and pencils. Project the photographs or share printed copies; print only page 3 for each pupil.

Teach: Observe quietly, compare ideas in pairs, then discuss as a class. Younger pupils can point, draw or dictate. Older pupils should explain their evidence and identify uncertainties.

Photo discussion

Page 1: A cloud has diffuse edges, while bundles can appear as separate rounded particles. Spawning material may disperse in the water. Colour and shape alone do not chemically identify every part of the cloud.

Page 2: Possible observations include particle colour, location near polyps, density and the visible coral form. Then connect spawning with the researched sequence of fertilisation, larval development and settlement. The visible particles are not all already baby colonies.

Worksheet guidance

Sequence: 1 eggs and sperm are released; 2 fertilisation is followed by a swimming larva; 3 a larva settles; 4 a young coral grows. This is a simplified sequence for broadcast-spawning corals.

Corals are animals. Many release eggs and sperm into the water. After fertilisation, larvae develop; some settle on suitable surfaces and grow. Not every egg, larva or newly settled coral survives.

Check learning: Ask each pupil for one observation, one explanation and one question still to investigate.

Useful words: spawning: releasing eggs or sperm; fertilisation: joining of egg and sperm; larva: an early stage in an animal's life cycle.

Sources and photograph record

Adapted from Troy Mayne's WRG teacher manuscript, photo studies Z02, Z03. The original photographs are reproduced in full. Source links checked 1 November 2026.

Reef Authority — Coral spawning 101