

# 4 Coral Species Recorded For First Time In Indian Waters

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**In news**– Scientists have recorded four species of azooxanthellate corals for the first time from Indian waters.

## About new coral species-

- **These new corals were found from the waters of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.**
- **All the four groups of corals are from the same family Flabellidae.**
- **Truncatoflabellum crassum, T. incrustatum, T. aculeatum, and T. irregulare** were previously found from Japan to the Philippines and Australian waters while only T. crassum was reported within the range of Indo-West Pacific distribution including the Gulf of Aden and the Persian Gulf.
- **Azooxanthellate corals are a group of corals that do not contain zooxanthellae and derive nourishment not from the sun but from capturing different forms of plankton.**
- These groups of corals are **deep-sea representatives**, with the majority of species reporting from between 200 m to 1000 m. Their occurrences are also reported from shallow coastal waters.
- **Zooxanthellate corals, meanwhile, are restricted to shallow waters.**
- **Azooxanthellate corals are a group of hard corals** and the four new records are not only solitary but have a highly **compressed skeletal structure.**
- **There are about 570 species of hard corals found in India and almost 90% of them are found in the waters surrounding Andaman and Nicobar Islands.**

- The pristine and oldest ecosystem of corals share less than 1% of the earth's surface but they provide a home to nearly 25% of marine life.

### **Significance-**

The most studies of hard corals in India have been concentrated on reef-building corals while much is not known about non-reef-building corals. These new records enhance our knowledge about non-reef-building, solitary corals.