

CORAL REEF

ALLEN CORAL ATLAS GEOMORPHIC CLASSES

FORE REEF

The seaward-facing (opening up into open sea or ocean, facing away from land or lagoons) and sloping part of the reef.



REEF SLOPE

Reef Slope is a submerged, sloping area extending seaward from the Reef Crest (or Flat) towards the shelf break. Windward facing, or any direction if no dominant prevailing wind or current exists.



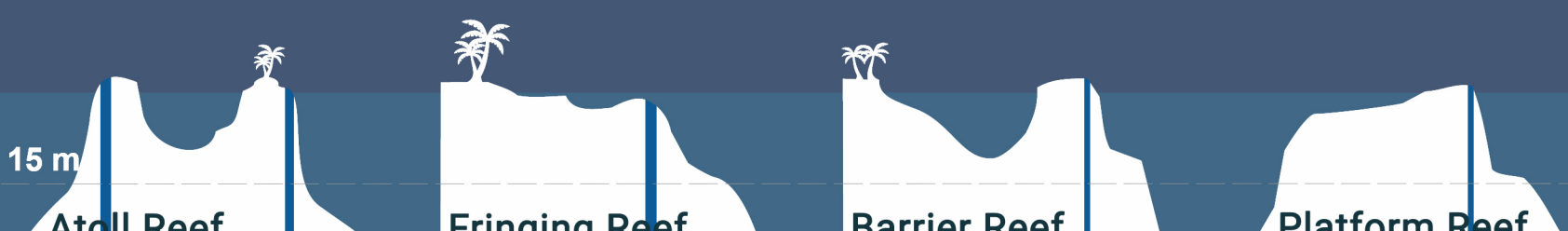
SHELTERED SLOPE

Sheltered Reef Slope is any submerged, sloping area extending into Deep Water but protected from strong directional prevailing wind or current, either by land or by opposing reef structures.



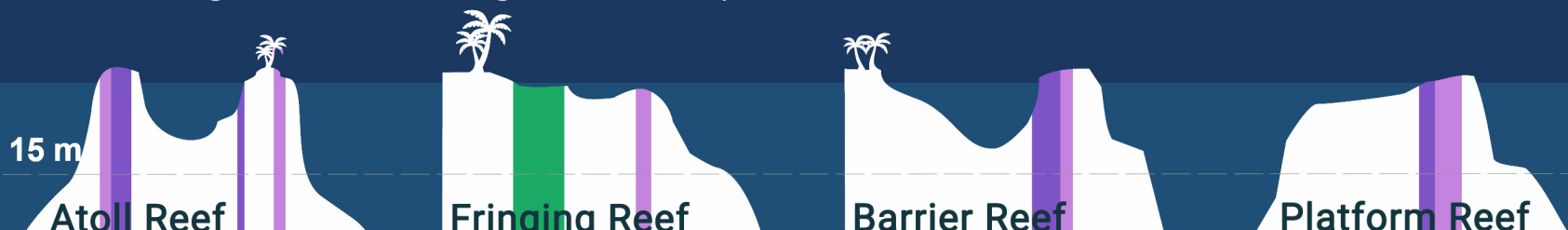
REEF CREST

Reef Crest is a zone marking the boundary between the Reef Flat and the Reef Slope, generally shallow and characterized by the highest wave energy absorbance.



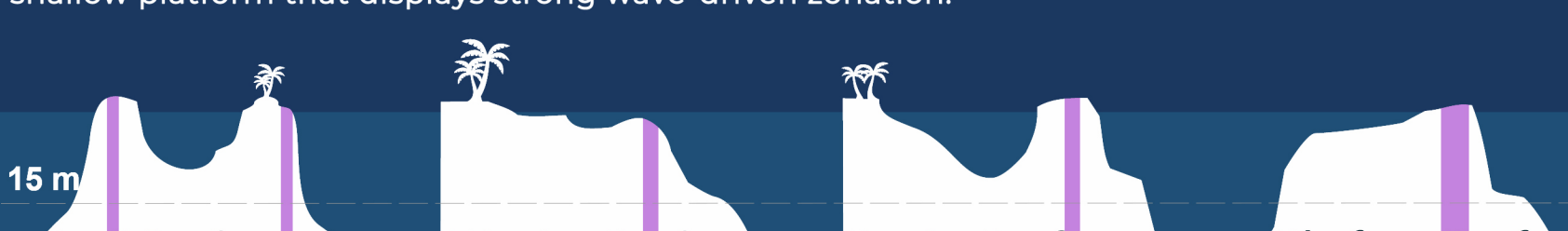
REEF FLAT

The level (horizontal) and shallow (generally <3 m deep) carbonate platform extending inwards from the Reef Crest with a gentle downward gradient in slope.



OUTER REEF FLAT

Adjacent to the seaward edge of the reef, Outer Reef Flat is a level (near horizontal), broad and shallow platform that displays strong wave-driven zonation.



INNER REEF FLAT

Inner Reef Flat is a low energy, sediment-dominated, horizontal to gently sloping platform behind the Outer Reef Flat.



TERRESTRIAL REEF FLAT

Terrestrial Reef Flat is a broad, flat, shallow to semi-exposed area fringing reef found directly attached to land at one side, and subject to freshwater runoff, nutrients and sediment.



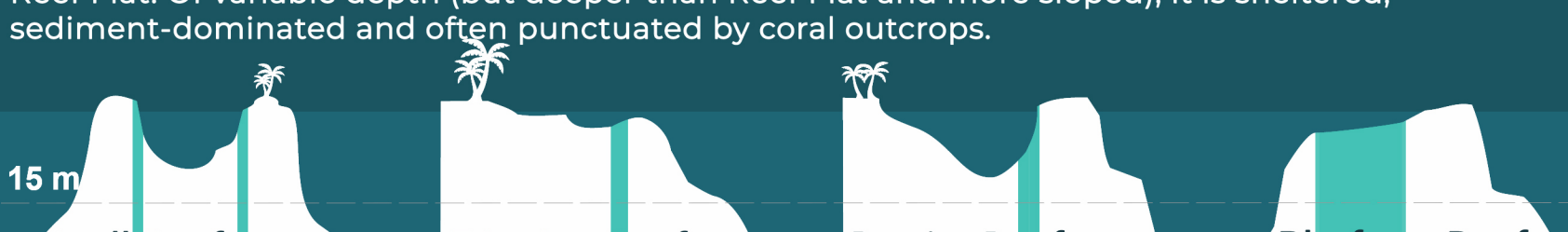
BACK REEF

Any reef feature found sheltered or commonly landward of the Reef Flat. It is a largely depositional environment, receiving debris swept landwards from the Reef Crest and Reef Flat.



BACK REEF SLOPE

Back Reef Slope is a complex, interior - often gently sloping - reef zone occurring behind the Reef Flat. Of variable depth (but deeper than Reef Flat and more sloped), it is sheltered, sediment-dominated and often punctuated by coral outcrops.



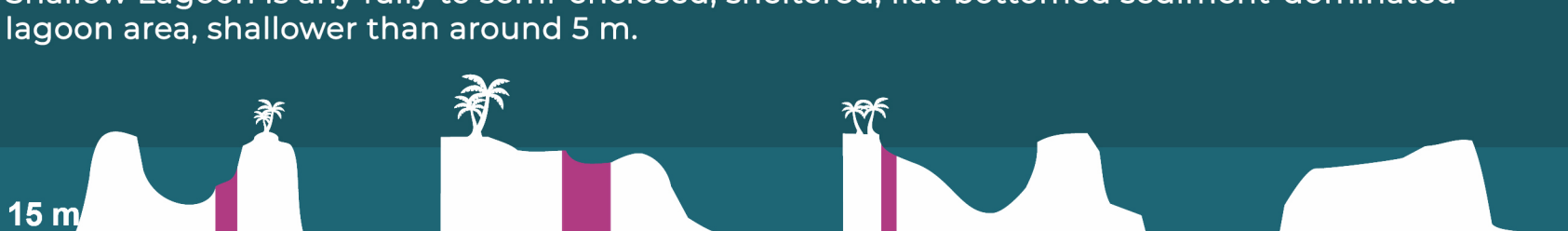
DEEP LAGOON

Deep Lagoon is any sheltered broad body of water, fully to semi-enclosed by reef, with a variable depth (but deeper than approximately 5 m and shallower than surrounding ocean) and a soft bottom dominated by reef-derived sediment.



SHALLOW LAGOON

Shallow Lagoon is any fully to semi-enclosed, sheltered, flat-bottomed sediment-dominated lagoon area, shallower than around 5 m.



PATCH REEF

Patch Reef is any small, detached to semi-detached lagoonal coral outcrop arising from sandy bottomed area.



PLATEAU

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Plateau is any deeper submerged (deeper than approximately 5 m), hard-bottomed, horizontal to gently sloping (angle shallower than about 10°), seaward facing reef platform.



SMALL REEF

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Small Reef refers to any detached (stand-alone) reef, surrounded by Deep Water and too small (generally less than approximately 1 sq km) to show a central depression and/or other clear geomorphic zonation (e.g. crest, flat, backreef) besides a Reef Slope.

