



## The Flower Garden Banks • Study Guide

In this exciting underwater adventure, Jonathan explores the seamounts of the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary in the Gulf of Mexico, including Stetson Bank and the Flower Garden Banks. He encounters amazing coral reefs, barracudas, frogfish, parrotfish and witnesses a coral spawning event.

### Objectives

1. Introduces viewers to seamounts.
2. Introduces viewers to life in the Gulf of Mexico.
3. Introduces Marine Sanctuaries and how they are protected.
4. Examines how coral spawns.

### Questions for before watching the program

1. What is a marine sanctuary? Why is such a place important?
2. Where is the Gulf of Mexico? What are some ways that the Gulf of Mexico is unique?
3. What is a seamount? How is it different from an island?
4. What is a coral reef? How do they form new colonies?

### Discussion for after watching the program

1. What are some differences between Stetson Bank and the Flower Garden Banks? What is the primary reason for the differences between the two reefs?
2. Why does the dive boat use a mooring instead of an anchor?
3. What invasive fish can be found at the Flower Gardens? Why are invasive species a threat to the reef community?
4. What do parrotfish eat and how do they eat it?
5. Why does coral release their spawn all on the same night at the same time? What advantages does broadcast spawning have? (Hint...coral can't swim!)
6. What is a cleaner fish and what role does it serve to a larger fish like a barracuda?
7. What kinds of corals are most common on the Flower Garden Banks?
8. Why does the Flower Garden Banks have such dense coral cover?