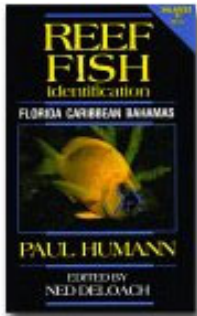


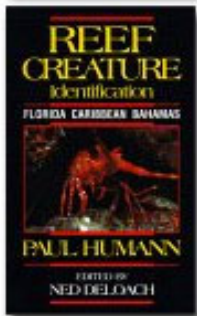
## Book Review...

**Reef Fish Identification Florida Caribbean Bahamas**  
**Reef Creature Identification Florida Caribbean Bahamas**  
**Reef Coral Identification Florida Caribbean Bahamas**  
 A Collection of Guides for Underwater Photographers by Paul Humann

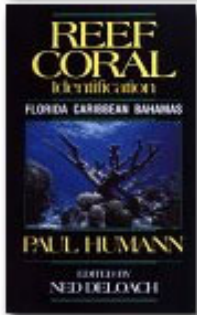
Reviewed by Barbara Henneke  
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**Reef Fish Identification Florida Caribbean Bahamas** by Paul Humann. Spiral bound, soft laminated cover, 392 pages, 500 color plates. Published by New World Publications. Cover price \$39.95



**Reef Creature Identification Florida Caribbean Bahamas** by Paul Humann. Spiral bound, soft laminated cover, 344 pages, 478 color plates. Published by New World Publications. Cover price \$37.95



**Reef Coral Identification Florida Caribbean Bahamas** by Paul Humann. Spiral bound, soft laminated cover, 252 pages, 475 color plates. Published by New World Publications. Cover price \$32.95

When entering the underwater world, you encounter a complex new environment of plants, fish, and invertebrates - many of them totally indistinguishable from plants. How do you identify or distinguish between them? It's a visual, but silent world. You can't simply turn to your dive buddy to ask. Back on the surface, you excitedly discuss what you each saw, but memories may be brief or faulty. Verbal descriptions may be insufficient. Experienced divers turn to their worn, weathered copies of Paul Humann's three volumes on reef fish, reef creatures, and coral. New divers would be wise to follow their lead. Collectively this reef set is probably the most comprehensive set of guides available.

Paul Humann's first volume **Reef Fish ID** was published in 1989 after he had been photographing fish in the Caribbean for over twenty years. How did he begin to classify over 500 species of fish to include in an easily usable guide? The *How to Use This Book* section describes twelve identifiable groups of body shapes on which he based his system. Within these twelve groups, fish are separated into families with similar physiology, distinctive visual characteristics, and colors. Each species is characterized by its Distinctive Features, Description, Abundance & Distribution, Habitat and Behavior, and Reaction to Divers. A color photograph of each fish is accompanied by a black and white illustration of its most salient features. A common name index is provided for quick reference; a scientific one for the serious minded underwater naturalist.

**Reef Creature ID** published in 1992 is the second in the series. Over thirty marine scientists worldwide collaborated with Paul Humann to produce this guide. It is organized more scientifically than the previous volume, first into ten identifiable groups or phyla based on anatomical complexity from the simple to complex, and then into typical scientific classes, subclasses, and families. This book contains more scientific descriptions, which are sufficiently informative and interesting to complement the photographs without being overwhelming. They are a welcome necessity in helping distinguish some of the complex creatures.

Ultimately creatures are organized into commonly recognized groups. These run the gamut from sponges, jellyfish, sea anemones, underwater worms, crabs, shrimp, snails, squid, octopus, lobsters, to starfish. In keeping with his previous book, Mr. Humann follows the same format. Accompanying each color photo are descriptions of Visual ID characteristics, Abundance & Distribution, Habitat & Behavior, and if applicable Reaction to Divers. Visually this is the most stunning guide. Personally, I find it the most fascinating because of the variety of creatures.

Paul Humann quickly followed in 1993 with the publication of **Reef Coral ID**, the third volume in his set. Corals, which are mistakenly viewed by many as plants, are actually marine animals, invertebrates that build coral reefs. Their importance and variety necessitated a separate book. Like the previous two books, it follows a similar format. Although it is the smallest of the three, it is an

invaluable guide to identifying and distinguishing one coral from another. Underwater plants are not neglected either. There is an appendix of marine algae.

Paul Humann's extensive undertaking in producing these guides is admirable. Imagine the skills involved in photographing such a diversity of creatures - from elusive sharks, translucent pelagic jellyfish, to minute coral-dwelling blennies. He is also responsible for identifying and photographing some species never before seen. For these reasons, he receives accolades from the American Fisheries Society, the American Society of Ichthyologists, and numerous scuba diving magazines.

The three books may be purchased separately or in a set with a cover. If you gradually build an underwater reference library, the best place to start is with **Reef Fish ID**. You'll naturally see more of them if you're a beginner. When you've learned the basics, you'll begin to notice the myriad creatures and the coral reefs they inhabit. Then it's time to add **Reef Creature ID** and **Reef Coral ID**.

Both experienced divers and underwater naturalists rely on them, too. Divers on live aboard dive boats worldwide count on them being aboard as a matter of course. Frequently you'll find divers waiting to fill out their logbooks until they've checked Paul Humann's books. This itself speaks volumes - they are considered the definitive set of underwater identification guides. All three can be purchased through the NPN [Gift Shoppe](#).

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