

Fluorescent protein basis for bluish coral

August 27 2005

University of Oregon scientists say a cyan colored -- greenish-blue -- fluorescent protein is the basis of the bluish coral reefs.

"Molecular and cellular biologists are familiar with the popular green fluorescent protein, first isolated from a jellyfish, which is used by researchers to label internal structures in living cells," said Jim Remington, of the university's Institute of Molecular Biology.

"However, it is less well known that the dramatic coloration of coral reef formations is largely due to four closely related classes of proteins: cyan, green, yellow and red fluorescent proteins. In addition, a fifth class of protein is not fluorescent, but conveys a deep purple coloration to the tentacles of sea anemones and similar animals."

The findings are published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

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Citation: Fluorescent protein basis for bluish coral (2005, August 27) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2005-08-fluorescent-protein-basis-bluish-coral.html>

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