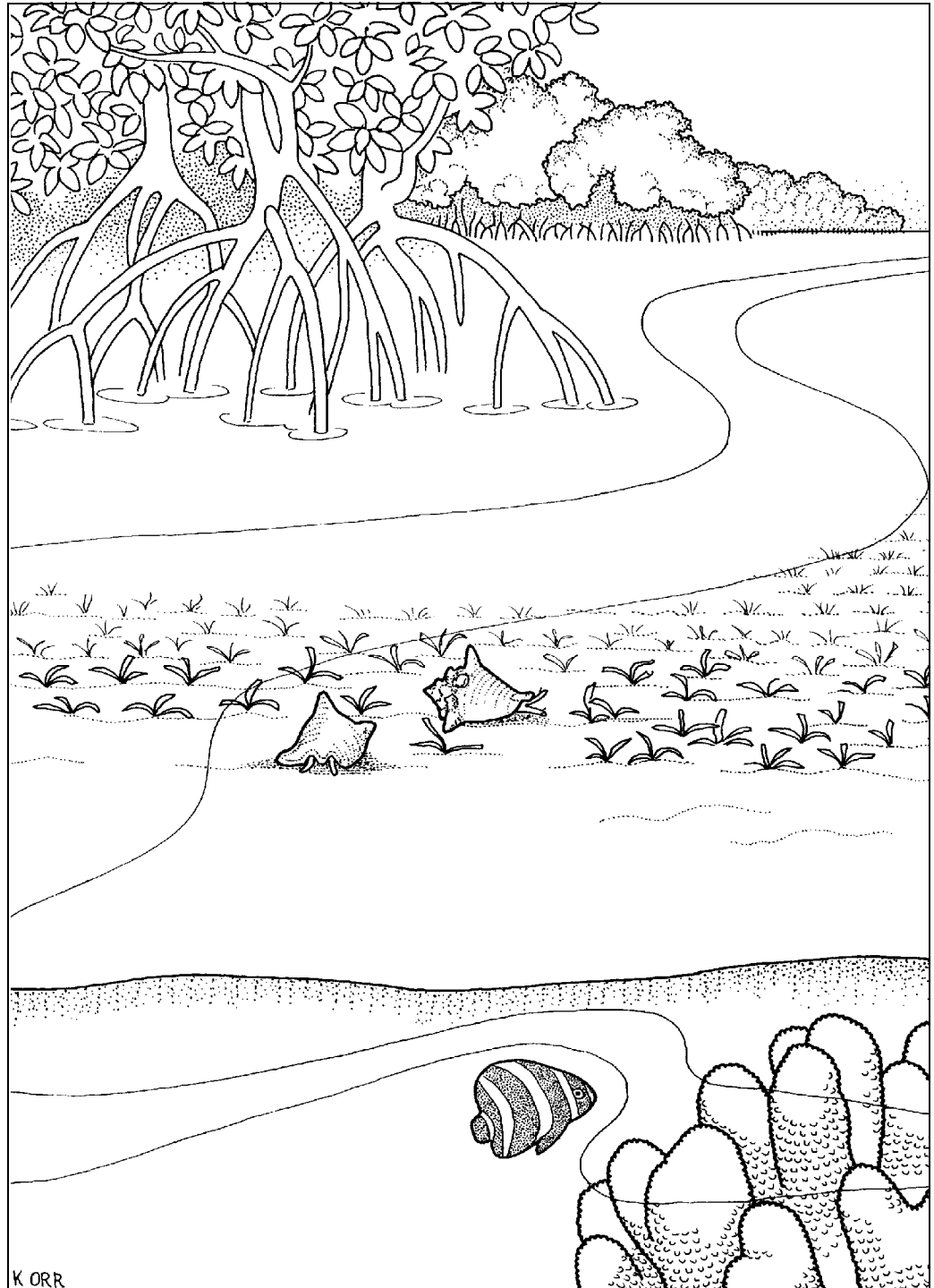


Source: The Coral Reef Coloring Book by Katherine Orr. © 1988 Katherine Orr. Stemmer House Publishers, Inc., Owings Mill, Maryland. Used with permission.

20. REEFS DEPEND ON THEIR SURROUNDINGS

Coral reef systems cannot exist by themselves. They depend upon warmth and light from the sun. They need a constant supply of fresh, clear sea-water from the surrounding ocean. Some reefs need the help of nearby mangrove forests. The mangrove roots keep seawater clear by trapping soil found in muddy rain and river waters. Many reef animals depend on the mangroves and seagrass beds for food and as nurseries for their young.

Because the coral reef depends on its surroundings, changes in the nearby environment will also affect the reef. Because the reef is a living system, damage to one part will hurt the rest. This means coral reefs can be damaged easily. And since corals grow so slowly, the damage is not easily repaired.



Correlation to National Standards from McREL (<http://www.mcrel.org>) :

Life Sciences

6. Understands relationships among organisms and their physical environment

Geography

8. Understands the characteristics of ecosystems on Earth's surface