



Counting fish like MCP divers

Background reading for teachers

This reading explains the real data used in the lesson.

MCP's fish counts

These numbers come from MCP's own fish survey records. Between January 2022 and September 2026, survey divers completed 2,923 fish surveys (aborted or incomplete surveys are not included) and counted 2,080,674 fish. Damselfish made up 63% of all fish counted, followed by fusiliers, wrasses, anthias and butterflyfish.

Why damselfish dominate

Damselfish are small, abundant, stay close to the reef and are easy to see, so they make up a large share of visual counts on most Indo-Pacific reefs. Large, wary or hidden fish are much harder to count.

Sources

1. Marine Conservation Philippines. Fish survey records, 2022 to 2026.

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