

Coral Reef Fish, Fiji

The world of wildlife most people know is that which exists on land and what a brilliant world it is, what with flowers, butterflies, birds and mammals, to mention a few, but it is matched if not exceeded by what Jacques Cousteau called *The Silent World*, his great book published in 1953. The world beneath the sea is another world altogether from that on land. This is especially true of coral reefs and none more so than those around the 300 odd islands of Fiji where around a thousand fish species live amongst several hundred types of coral and sponges. There, huge flat-topped coral heads called 'bommies' rise from the deep to within a few feet of the surface, which along with the protected waters inside barrier reefs make Fiji one of the world's best places to don snorkel, mask and flippers, and, like eagles flying over the forest canopy, glide over the coral, fly in a psychedelic world, and look down to the trees of green *and* blue *and* red *and* every other colour and marvel at the unbelievable numbers and variety of fish and invertebrates, in a diversity of form and an explosion of brilliant colours and crazy patterns almost impossible to comprehend.