

LIVING FORAMINIFERIDA OF THE WEST FLOWER GARDEN BANK

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ABSTRACT

The West Flower Garden Bank is a calcareous prominence located on the outer edge of the Texas-Louisiana continental shelf, rising to within 20 meters of the sea surface. An actively growing fauna of West Indian scleractinian corals caps the top 30 meters of the bank, and represents the northernmost known flourishing coral reef in the Gulf of Mexico.

The bank supports a foraminiferal fauna related to that occurring on the West Indian and Florida-Bahamian reefs. Within the sediments most species and individuals occur attached to coarse sedimentary particles, rather than as free tests. The largest populations occur attached to large scleractinian colonies in the upper part of the bank, and to algal nodules that occur at a depth of 46-82 meters.

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