



## Tidal Flats and Channels Bahamas

The islands of the Bahamas are situated on large depositional platforms—the Great and Little Bahama Banks—composed mainly of carbonate sediments ringed by reefs. The islands are the only parts of the platform currently exposed above sea level. The sediments were formed mostly from the skeletal remains of organisms settling to the sea floor; over geologic time, these sediments consolidated to form carbonate sedimentary rocks such as limestone.

This November 2010 photograph from the International Space Station provides a view of tidal flats and underwater channels along the eastern margin of the Great Bahama Bank. The continuously exposed parts of the islands are brown, a result of soil formation and vegetation growth. To the north and west, we can see through shallow water to the off-white tidal flats composed of carbonate sediments. The tidal flow of seawater is concentrated through gaps in the seafloor, leading to the formation of relatively deep channels that cut into the sediments.