



Australian Government

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

**Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility (MTRF)
Distribution and abundance of the bath sponge *Coscinoderma* in Central and Eastern Torres Strait**

Project 1.3.2 - Ecological role and potential economic value of sponges to the Torres Strait

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Summary



Image 1: Bath Sponge

There is a worldwide shortage of bath sponges, used in cleaning, painting and cosmetics

- AIMS researchers and Masig Island divers have found large numbers of the bath sponge *Coscinoderma* around Masig, and have worked out good methods of farming it
- Masig Island may soon set up a commercial bath sponge farm, employing and managed by Torres Strait Islanders
- Neighbouring islands and reefs in central and eastern Torres Strait may also have high numbers of *Coscinoderma*
- In November 2006, AIMS and Torres Strait divers surveyed reefs for bath sponges around Masig, Erub, Ugar, Poruma and Warraber
- We measured the size of each *Coscinoderma* we found
- This project is funded by the Australian Institute of Marine Science, Torres Strait Regional Authority and Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility



Image 2: Stanley Lui surveying for sponges (photo by E. Matson)

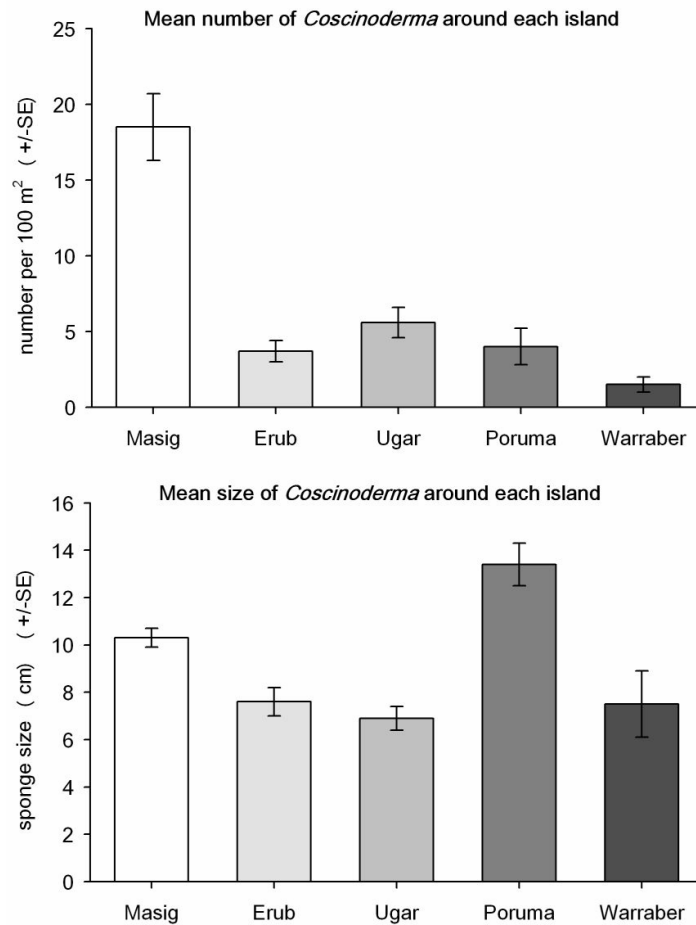


Diagram 1: Mean Size and Number's of *Coscinoderma*

- *Coscinoderma* is very common at Masig and uncommon around Erub, Ugar, Poruma and Warraber
- *Coscinoderma* is largest at Masig and Poruma



Image 3: Sponge divers from top: Tim Hyndes, John Morris, Eric Matson, Carsten Wolff, Samson Lowatta, Heidi Luter, Alan Duckworth and Stanley Lui