



National Environmental
Research Program

MARINE BIODIVERSITY *hub*

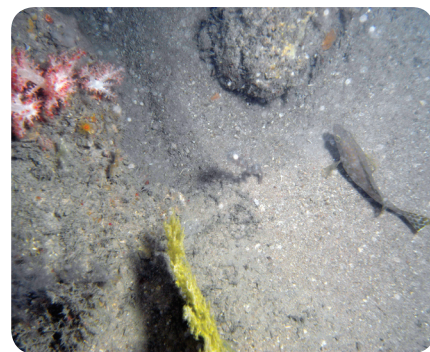
Investigating Oceanic Shoals: a proposed marine reserve

In September 2012, a three-week survey of the proposed Oceanic Shoals Commonwealth Marine Reserve off northern Australia was conducted from the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) research vessel *RV Solander*.

Oceanographic, biological and acoustic sampling was conducted using techniques including towed and baited remote cameras, ocean drifters, benthic sleds, multibeam sonar, a box corer, and sediment and water collection. The result is an unprecedented, integrated description of biological communities and their relationship with the shallow seabed and open water environments

of a poorly known region of Australian's marine jurisdiction.

This new knowledge will support NERP Marine Biodiversity Hub projects, designed in consultation with SEWPaC staff, to address ongoing information needs and support management outcomes. The breadth of data collected could not have been achieved without the collaboration of research staff from many organisations including AIMS, Geosciences Australia, University of Western Australia, and the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory.



A diversity of habitats on shoals in Australia's north. A collaborative, three week survey in 2012 yielded an unprecedented description of biological communities in the proposed Oceanic Shoals Commonwealth Marine Reserve.



Julian Caley
Australian Institute
of Marine Science
j.caley@aims.gov.au



Australian Government
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Further information:

Director NERP Marine
Biodiversity Hub

Prof Nic J Bax
T +61 3 6232 5341
E Nic.Bax@csiro.au



The NERP Marine Biodiversity Hub is supported through funding from the Australian Government's National Environmental Research Program, administered by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (DSEWPaC). Our goal is to support marine stakeholders in evidence-based decision making for marine biodiversity management. Stakeholders include DSEWPaC, the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA), the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association (APPEA) and the Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS). (February 2013)