Transect data of coral species and other substrate types collected in the field using line transects in Palau, Yap, the Federated States of Micronesia, Majuro, and Kiritimati from 2017 to 2019

Website: https://www.bco-dmo.org/dataset/737508
Data Type: Other Field Results
Version: 3
Version Date: 2021-07-14

Project
» Adjustment of western Pacific Ocean coral reefs to sea-level rise and ocean warming (Coral Reef Adjustment)

Contributors	Affiliation	Role
van Woesik, Robert	Florida Institute of Technology (FIT)	Principal Investigator, Contact
Rauch, Shannon	Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI BCO-DMO)	BCO-DMO Data Manager

Abstract
As part of the reef-composition survey of Palau (7°30' N, 134°30' E) and Yap (9°32' N, 138°7' E), 10-meter long, 2 to 5-meter depth transects were conducted. Coral species along the transect were recorded along with substrate types and other organisms present. Surveys in Palau were conducted from June 2nd to June 24th, 2017, and from June 25th to July 6th, 2017 in Yap. In Pohnpei (6.2°N, 158.2°E) and Kosrae (5.3°N, 162.9°E) FSM, six 10-meter transects were used to measure the benthic composition for every centimeter, at each site of 48 sites in 2018. Corals were recorded to species level, except massive Porites and encrusting Montipora, which were recorded in the field as growth forms. All other organisms along each transect were identified to the highest possible taxonomic resolution. In Majuro (7.0667° N, 171.2667° E) and Kiritimati (1.8721° N, 157.4278° W), a stratified random sampling approach was used to survey the reefs in2019. At both locations, the sites were stratified as either (i) outer reefs, or (ii) patch reefs in lagoons. The number of sites sampled per habitat varied according to the area of available habitat at each location. Surveys were focused between 2–5 m.

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Coverage

Spatial Extent: **N**:9.65683 **E**:-157.54984 **S**:1.7749 **W**:171.34102
Temporal Extent: 2017-06-02 - 2019-07-22

Dataset Description

These data were published in van Woesik & Cacciapaglia (2018), van Woesik & Cacciapaglia (2019), and van Woesik & Cacciapaglia (2021).

Methods & Sampling

Palau and Yap:
Corals were classified to the species level, or to the highest resolution possible, especially for massive Porites and encrusting Montipora colonies, along 10 m long transects. All other organisms were identified to the highest resolution possible, and all inorganic surfaces were recorded. Survey depth was maintained between 2 to 5 meters to examine the potential of shallow-water reef-carbonate production. The chord length of each organism, or abiotic component, were recorded along each transect. Note that the transects followed the contour of the reef. Surveys in Palau were conducted from June 2nd to June 24th, 2017, and from June 25th to July 6th, 2017 in Yap. Codes in dataset: S = Sand R = Rubble SR = Sand & Rubble CA = Coralline algae TA = Turf algae Hal = Halimeda.

Kosrae and Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM):
Twenty-four study sites were randomly selected in each of Pohnpei (6.2°N, 158.2°E) and Kosrae (5.3°N, 162.9°E) FSM using a randomly stratified sampling approach with the package *sp* in R. In Pohnpei, reefs were stratified as inner reefs, patch reefs, and outer reefs. In Kosrae, we only stratified the reefs as either inner reefs or outer reefs (because of the lack of patch reefs). Sample size of each strata was determined by calculating the geographic area of each reef type, using the area function from the R package raster, and allocating the number of sites in accordance with the area estimates. Reef surveys focused on the 2–5 meters depth contour to estimate shallow-water carbonate production.

Six, 10 m transects, using a modified line-intercept technique that followed the reef substrate, were used to measure the benthic composition for every centimeter, at each site of the 48 sites. A few meters gap was allocated between the ends of the transects to ensure no overlap of substrate between transects. Corals were recorded to species level, except massive *Porites* and encrusting *Montipora*, which were recorded in the field as growth forms. All other organisms along each transect were identified to the highest possible taxonomic resolution. Rugosity was recorded using the planar length of a second transect that spanned across the reef horizontally. Echinoids were recorded within 30 cm on either side of the 10 m tape. The urchins were recorded as *Echinometra*, *Diadema*, and 'Other', and the diameter of each echinoid test was measured to the nearest 0.5 cm. The abundance of *Acanthaster solaris* (crown-of-thorns sea star) were recorded within 5 m along each of the six 10 m transects. Herbivorous parrotfishes were videoed and identified to species and their estimated length was recorded to the nearest cm along six transects, each of which was 30 m long by 4 m wide. Care was taken to record the fish-transect videos ahead of the other transects to avoid any disturbance to the fishes.

Majuro (Republic of the Marshall Islands) and Kiritimati (Republic of Kiribati):
A stratified random sampling approach was used to survey the reefs of Majuro (7.0667° N, 171.2667° E) and Kiritimati (1.8721° N, 157.4278° W), by randomly selecting 24 study sites at each island using the package 'sp' in R. In both locations, a stratified random sampling approach was used to survey the reefs for carbonate production by randomly selecting 24 sites on each island, with the exception of Kiritimati where only 22 of the 24 sites were surveyed because of inclement weather. At both locations, the sites were stratified as either (i) outer reefs, or (ii) patch reefs in lagoons. The number of sites sampled per habitat varied according to the area of available habitat at each location. The investigators were particularly interested in determining the potential of shallow-water reef carbonate production, and therefore focused surveys between 2–5 m. Majuro was surveyed from 6/17/2019 to 7/6/2019 and Kiritimati was surveyed from 7/10/2019 to 7/22/2019.

Data Processing Description

BCO-DMO Data Manager Processing Notes:
Version 1:
- this dataset was originally submitted to BCO-DMO as separate Palau and Yap files;
- added column called location with values (Palau|Yap);
- added a conventional header with dataset name, PI name, version date;
- modified parameter names to conform with BCO-DMO naming conventions;
- species names changed to accepted name after using World Register of Marine Species taxa match tool and communicating with PI;
Version 2:
- 2020-09-08: appended data from sites in Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).
Version 3:

- 2021-07-14: appended data from Kiritimati & Majuro sites.

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Data Files

File
coral_surveys.csv (Comma Separated Values (.csv), 1.63 MB) MD5:bbd384edea3afcee8e7eab3f46276292 Primary data file for dataset ID 737508

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Related Publications

Van Woesik, R., & Cacciapaglia, C. W. (2018). Keeping up with sea-level rise: Carbonate production rates in Palau and Yap, western Pacific Ocean. PLOS ONE, 13(5), e0197077. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0197077
Results

Van Woesik, R., & Cacciapaglia, C. W. (2019). Carbonate production of Micronesian reefs suppressed by thermal anomalies and Acanthaster as sea-level rises. PLOS ONE, 14(11), e0224887. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0224887
Results

Van Woesik, R., & Cacciapaglia, C. W. (2021). Thermal stress jeopardizes carbonate production of coral reefs across the western and central Pacific Ocean. PLOS ONE, 16(4), e0249008. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0249008
Results

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Related Datasets

IsSupplementedBy

van Woesik, R. (2020) **Coral densities and extension rates from scientific literature collected in the field or in laboratories.** Biological and Chemical Oceanography Data Management Office (BCO-DMO). (Version 2) Version Date 2020-09-30 doi:10.26008/1912/bco-dmo.736007.2 [view at BCO-DMO]
Relationship Description: "Coral species Information meta-analysis" dataset contains information about the species observed.

van Woesik, R. (2021) **GPS coordinates of stratified random sampled sites where coral, parrotfish, and urchin surveys were conducted in Palau, Yap, the Federated States of Micronesia, Majuro, and Kiritimati from 2017 to 2019.** Biological and Chemical Oceanography Data Management Office (BCO-DMO). (Version 3) Version Date 2021-07-14 doi:10.26008/1912/bco-dmo.735714.3 [view at BCO-DMO]
Relationship Description: The Site list contains the latitude and longitude of each site sampled.

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Parameters

Parameter	Description	Units
Country	Country of study site	unitless
Site	Site letter; See "Site List" dataset for GPS coordinates	unitless
Transect	Replicate transect number (out of 6 transects)	unitless
Species	Species name or substrate; Along each transect, corals were recorded to species level, and other organisms were identified to the highest resolution possible	unitless
cm	Cumulative length of all organisms, and abiotic features along each transect	centimeters (cm)
rugosity	Rugosity; The difference between a straight line transect and the transect line following the curvature of the reef substrate	unitless
Diff	The distance between the length of taxa and the previous item along the transect line (this provides each taxa's chord length)	centimeters (cm)
State	State of study site	unitless
COT	crown-of-thorns seastar per 300 m^2	count per 300 m^2

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Deployments

vanWoesik_Palau_2017

Website	https://www.bco-dmo.org/deployment/744578
Platform	shoreside Palau
Start Date	2017-06-02
End Date	2017-06-24

vanWoesik_Yap_2017

Website	https://www.bco-dmo.org/deployment/744604
Platform	shoreside Yap
Start Date	2017-06-25
End Date	2017-07-06

vanWoesik_FSM_2018

Website	https://www.bco-dmo.org/deployment/823334
Platform	shoreside Micronesia
Start Date	2018-06-24

vanWoesik_Kiritibati_2019

Website	https://www.bco-dmo.org/deployment/855679
Platform	Kiritimati
Description	Kiritimati (1.8721° N, 157.4278° W)

vanWoesik_Majuro_2019

Website	https://www.bco-dmo.org/deployment/855678
Platform	shoreside_Majuro
Description	reefs of Majuro (7.0667° N, 171.2667° E)

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Project Information

Adjustment of western Pacific Ocean coral reefs to sea-level rise and ocean warming (Coral Reef Adjustment)

Coverage: Western Pacific: Palau, Yap, Pohnpei, Kosrae, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Kiribati

NSF Award Abstract:
Increases in ocean temperatures and sea-level rise are threatening coral reef ecosystems worldwide. Indeed, some island nations are no more than 1 m above modern sea level. Yet, building sea walls on tropical coasts, to keep out the ocean, as they do in the Netherlands, is a substantial economic burden on small-island nations. Healthy coral reefs, however, have the capacity to lay down sufficient calcium carbonate to grow vertically and keep up with sea-level rise, as they did in the geological past. By contrast, damaged coral reefs do not have the capacity to keep up with sea-level rise, making the coastal communities vulnerable, and inflicting a large economic burden on the coastal societies to build sea walls. In addition, and very recently, coral reefs are being subjected to high water temperatures that are causing considerable damage to corals. This study will ask some critical questions: Are coral reefs in the western Pacific Ocean keeping up with sea-level rise? Where are reefs keeping up with sea-level rise, and what is preventing reefs in some localities from keeping up? This study will also examine whether geographical differences in ocean temperatures influence the capacity of reefs to keep up with sea-level rise. Where coral reefs cannot keep up with sea-level rise, these natural storm barriers will disappear, resulting in the loss of habitable land for millions of people worldwide. The broader impacts of the study will focus on training a post-doctoral researcher, and developing and running one-week training workshops in the proposed study locations in Palau, Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, Majuro, and Kiribati. The investigators will work with local stakeholders on the various islands, focusing on connecting science to management practices to reduce local stressors to coral reefs.

Coral reefs are one of the world's most diverse and valuable marine ecosystems. Since the mid-Holocene, some 5000 years ago, coral reefs in the Pacific Ocean have been vertically constrained by sea level. Contemporary sea-level rise is releasing these constraints, providing accommodation space for vertical reef expansion. Yet recently corals have been repeatedly subjected to thermal-stress events, and we know little about whether modern coral reefs can "keep up" with projected future sea-level rise as the ocean temperatures continue to increase. This study will examine whether and where coral reefs are keeping up with sea-level rise across a temperature gradient in the Pacific Ocean, from Palau in the west to Kiribati in the east. The spatial differences in the capacity to keep up with sea level will be explored, and it is hypothesized that differential rates of coral growth and capacity to keep up with sea-level rise will be a function of regional

temperatures, local water-flow rates, and land-use. One of the major tasks of this study is to determine the contribution of the various components of each reef to potential carbonate production, across the geographical temperature gradient. The investigators will quantify the rates of carbonate production, by corals and calcareous algae, and the rates of carbonate destruction, by reef eroders, by measuring the space occupied by each benthic component at each study site. The team will then sum that information to interpret the overall capacity of the reef to produce carbonate. At each study site mobile benthic eroders will be estimated, as counts and size measurements of echinoids and herbivorous fishes. The investigators will measure the densities of the different coral species, from different habitats, and develop models that relate the coral morphologies with the potential rate of carbonate deposition. This study will assess the contribution of sea surface temperature, flow rates, and land-use practice to the capacity of reefs to keep up with sea-level rise. Two different approaches will be used to predict the relationship between carbonate production and sea-level rise. The first model will assume that the capacity of vertical reef accretion is directly related to the extension of Porites microatolls at the various island locations. The second model will take a hierarchical Bayesian approach to examine reef growth, which depends on the presence and density of calcifying organisms, and on physical, chemical, and biological erosional processes.

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Funding

Funding Source	Award
NSF Division of Ocean Sciences (NSF OCE)	OCE-1657633

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