

The Need for Faunistic Information on Pacific Coral Reefs: Introductory Remarks

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In conjunction with the International Symposium on Indo-Pacific Tropical Reef Biology, a series of reports were planned to be presented which summarized the status of knowledge of certain Indo-Pacific animals. The prime objective of the Colloquium was to begin a dialogue on how to better compile information on coral reefs. The information was to be presented by specialists familiar with individual animal groups. Unfortunately, because of financial restrictions, not all those originally scheduled to present papers were able to attend. However, eleven papers were presented and eight are published herein. At least one additional is to be published elsewhere. Two which were presented have been collated here as one.

It was generally considered that some animal groups—echinoderms, mollusks, and certain crustaceans—are very well known and that the literature is filled with records which extend only distributional information. Some individual taxa are nearly monographed, such as the shallow-water echinoderms which are covered by Clark and Rowe (see Clark article herein). Only six of some forty-two coral reef associated decapod crustacean families have been covered on a broad basis (see Haig article herein). Remaining groups—sponges, polychaet annelids, microcrustaceans, and ascidians—are poorly known and only isolated information exists. The meiobenthos are virtually unknown throughout the Pacific.

Presentation of status information varied quite widely. Some authors presented strict reviews of known literature. Other authors pointed out problem areas, and some suggested avenues to future research.

All authors, generally, considered that there was a need for continued studies. Most felt that many of these studies should be quantitative as well as qualitative.

An *ad hoc* meeting of the specialists attending considered that the publication of a newsletter might help the communication among researchers. Also a list of specialists might be compiled in conjunction with the Association of Systematic Collections. It was also considered that a compilation of a directory of research facilities would assist in informing researchers of what others are doing and what facilities, staff, equipment, libraries, and environments might be available and their locations.

The Colloquium pointed out a definite need for further communication among specialists and nonspecialists. It further demonstrated that there are, indeed, great gaps in the knowledge of some animals, and, as a matter of fact, most.