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Overview of the Mesophotic Coral Community along the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia, South China Sea



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Venue: Auditorium, 1st Floor,
Interdisciplinary Research Building
跨領域科技研究大樓1樓演講廳

Host: Dr. Ming-Jay Ho 何旻杰研究助技師

~Attendee must wear mask~

~與會者請配戴口罩~



Abstract

Malaysia is part of the Coral Triangle region with high Scleractinian coral diversity. A total of 572 hard coral species have been reported in Malaysia with Acroporidae (27%), Merulidae (21%) and Fungidae (10%) being the top three families. Coral reefs around Peninsular Malaysia can be found in shallow water above 30m which had contributed to the scientific literature on coral and coral reefs in this area. On the other hand, information about corals in deeper (>30m) areas is very limited. Here I presented the mesophotic reefs survey conducted around Peninsular Malaysia in 2021 - 2022. Surveys were conducted via SCUBA diving in mesophotic reefs (30 to 50 metre depth) around Peninsular Malaysia (East and West coasts). Coral Video Transect and photo quadrat methods were carried out to record the benthic cover and diversity. A total of six mesophotic reefs were identified along the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia. Generally, the diversity of mesophotic reefs surveyed was lower compared to shallow reefs with hard corals of mostly plate and encrusting forms. Common hard coral genera found at mesophotic reefs include *Favites*, *Cyphastrea*, *Pachyseris*, *Turbinaria*, *Pavona*, and *Podobacia*. Coral genus found at the mesophotic sites were also found at nearby shallow reefs. The relationship of reefs across different depths needs to be further explored to elucidate the potential of mesophotic reefs as refugia from climate change impacts.