

A Fundamental Approach to Coral Reef Monitoring and Assessment in the CNMI and American Samoa



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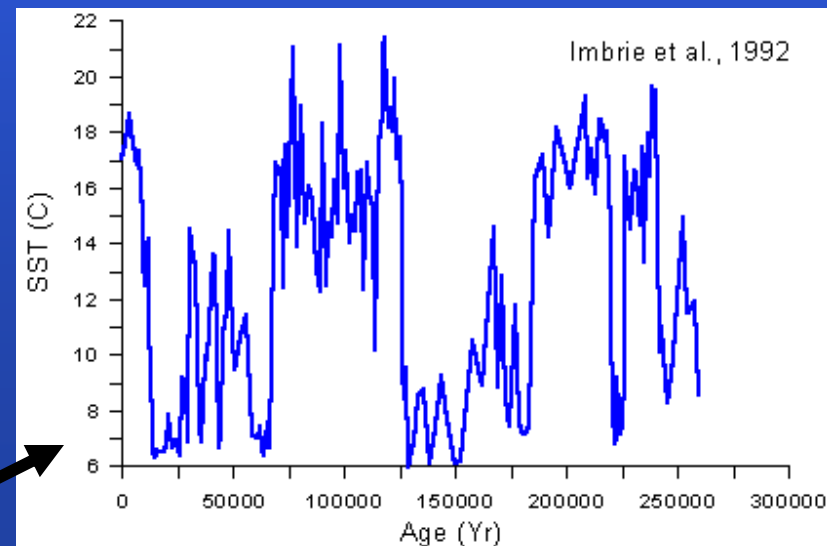
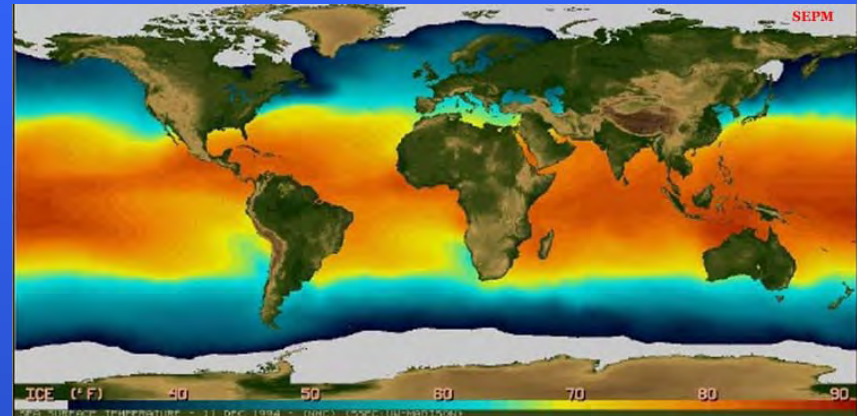
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Technology

Fundamental Approach to Monitoring and Assessment of Reefs

- **Processes Regulating Reef Development**
- Example 1 – Northern Mariana Islands, CNMI
- Example 2 – Southern Mariana Islands, CNMI
- Example 3 – American Samoa

Processes Regulating Reef Development

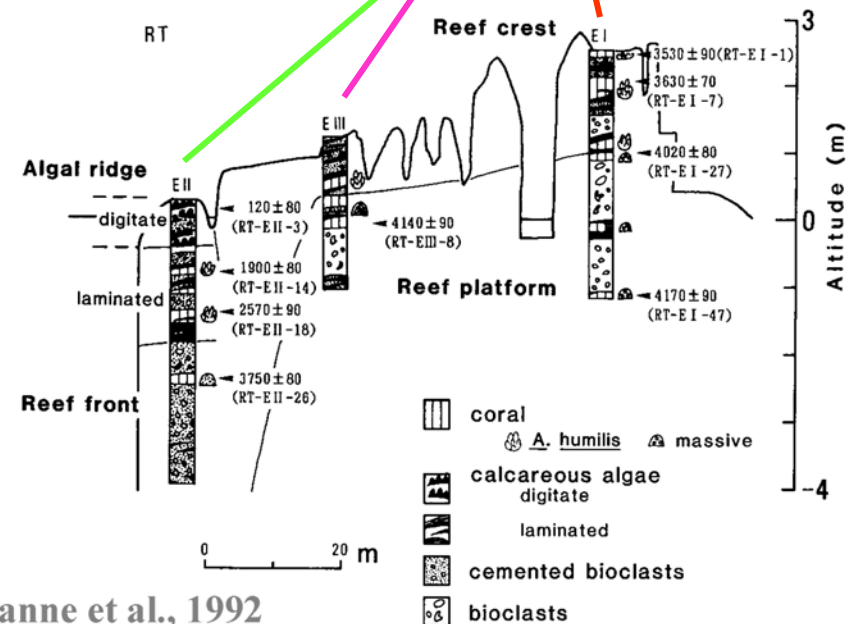
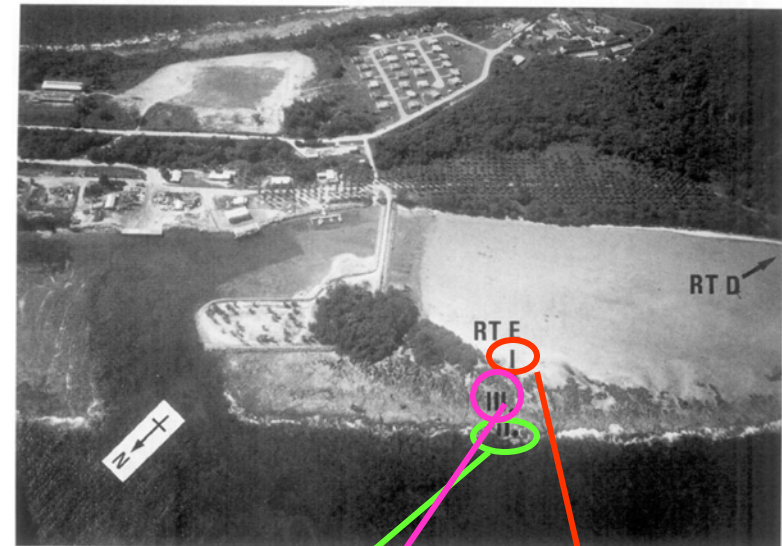
- Initially, volcanic activity created islands, substrate for reefs to grow
- Location and extent of reef growth are dictated by (Macro-scale Factors)
 - Temperature
 - Historical sea level fluctuations
 - Tectonics
 - Wave energy
- Historical Temperature and Sea Level Relationship
 - Historical growth created today's reef structure



Foram fossil cores

Processes Regulating Reef Development

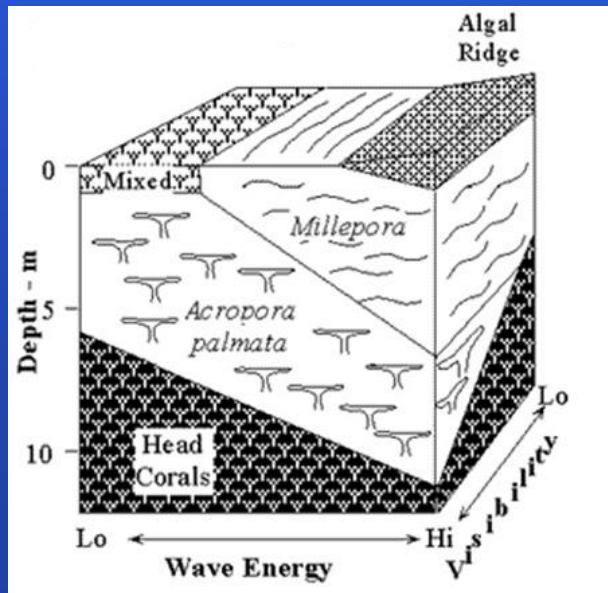
- Tectonic Activities on Rota
 - Uplifting
 - Cores identify coral reef growth in the past
 - Uplifted Holocene deposits prevent “normal” Mariana Islands reef flat communities



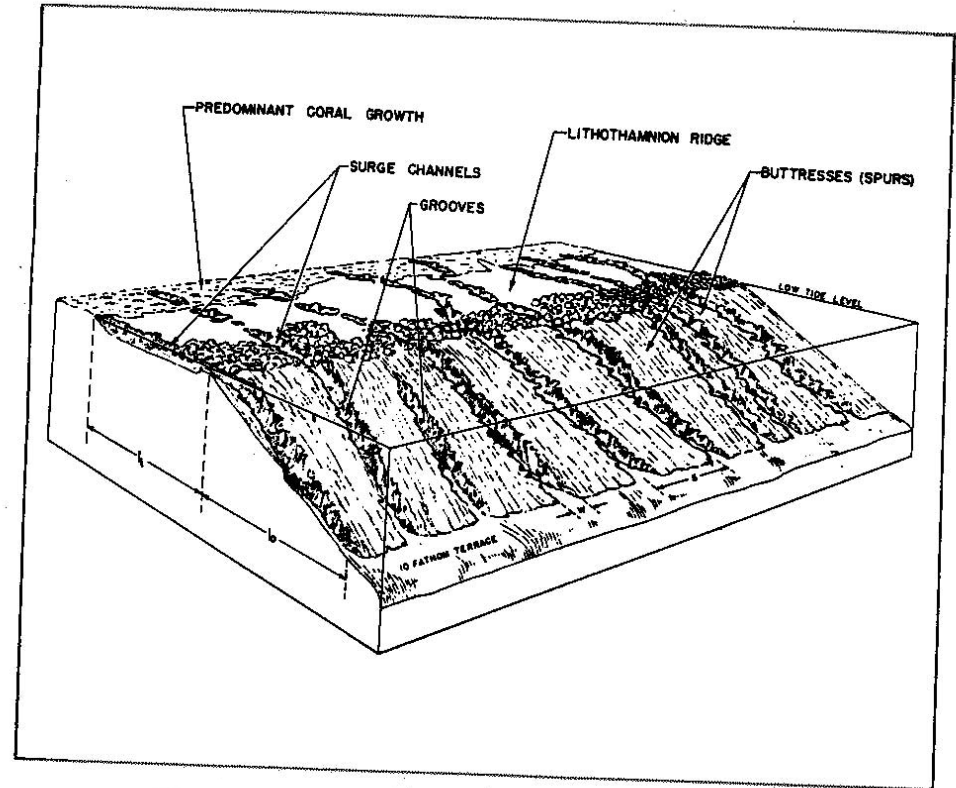
Kayanne et al., 1992

Processes Regulating Reef Development

- Wave energy
 - Determines the type of community growth
 - Wave energy acts differently along a depth gradient



Geister, 1977



Munk and Sargent, 1948

Processes Regulating Reef Development

The integrated result that we see is the

- reef geomorphology (reef structure)
- Living “organic” reef

Understanding macroecology is key for present monitoring and assessment of coral reefs

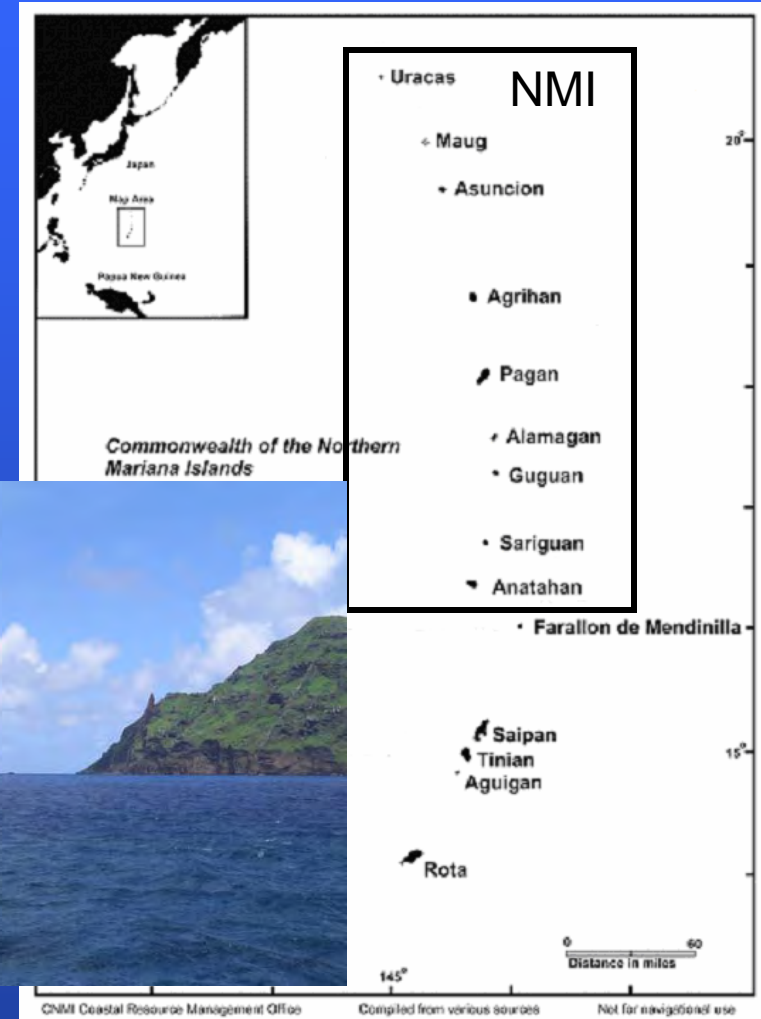


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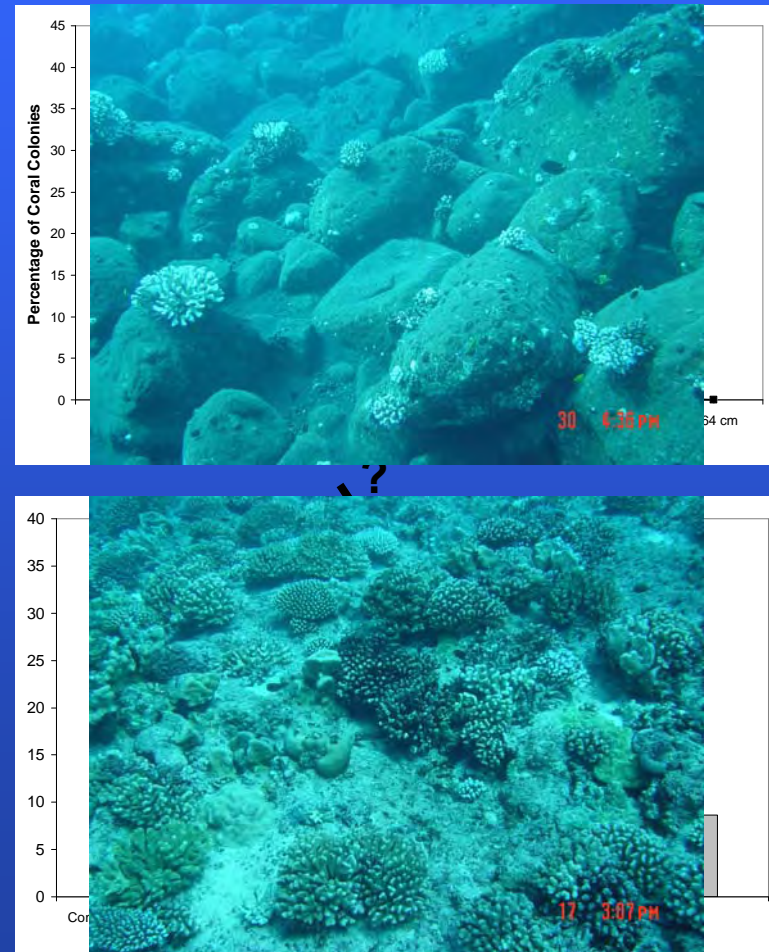
Example 1 – Northern Mariana Islands

- Situated on active Marianas Ridge
- 1 – 5 million years old
- Mostly uninhabited
- Few previous studies
- Management plans for coral reefs desired



Example 1 – Northern Mariana Islands

- Different present communities from different geological settings
- What processes are acting against these settings?
- Is it possible to classify setting before compare and contrast sites?



Example 1 – Northern Mariana Islands

- To begin to understand impacts of feral animals we first use regional characteristics
 - GUG 2, ALA 3 have living, organic reef situated mainly on limestone reef deposits, not volcanic rock
 - wave energy



Feral
Animals

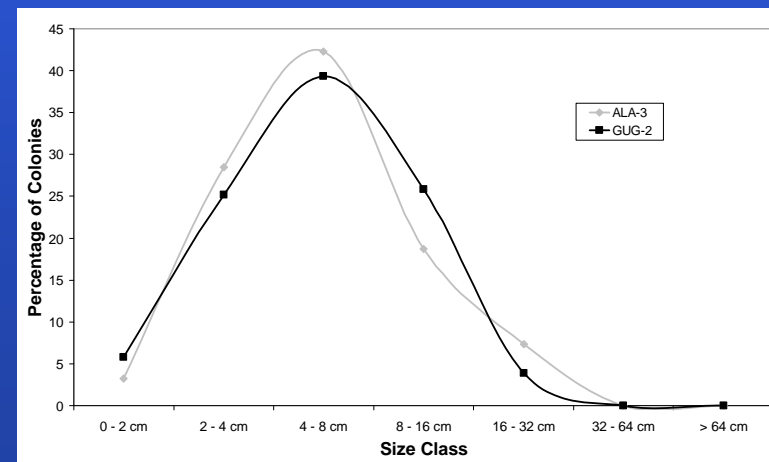
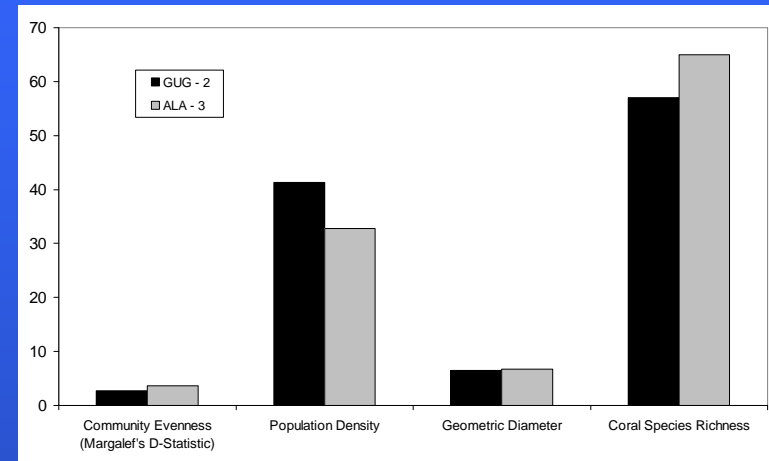


No Feral
Animals



Example 1 – Northern Mariana Islands

- Several coral community measures show little difference between sites
- What is impact of feral animals compared with natural community regulation processes at this site?

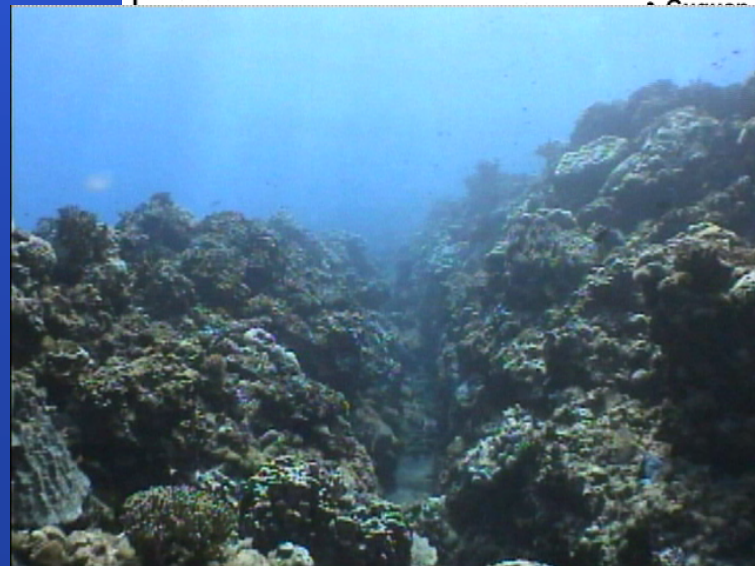


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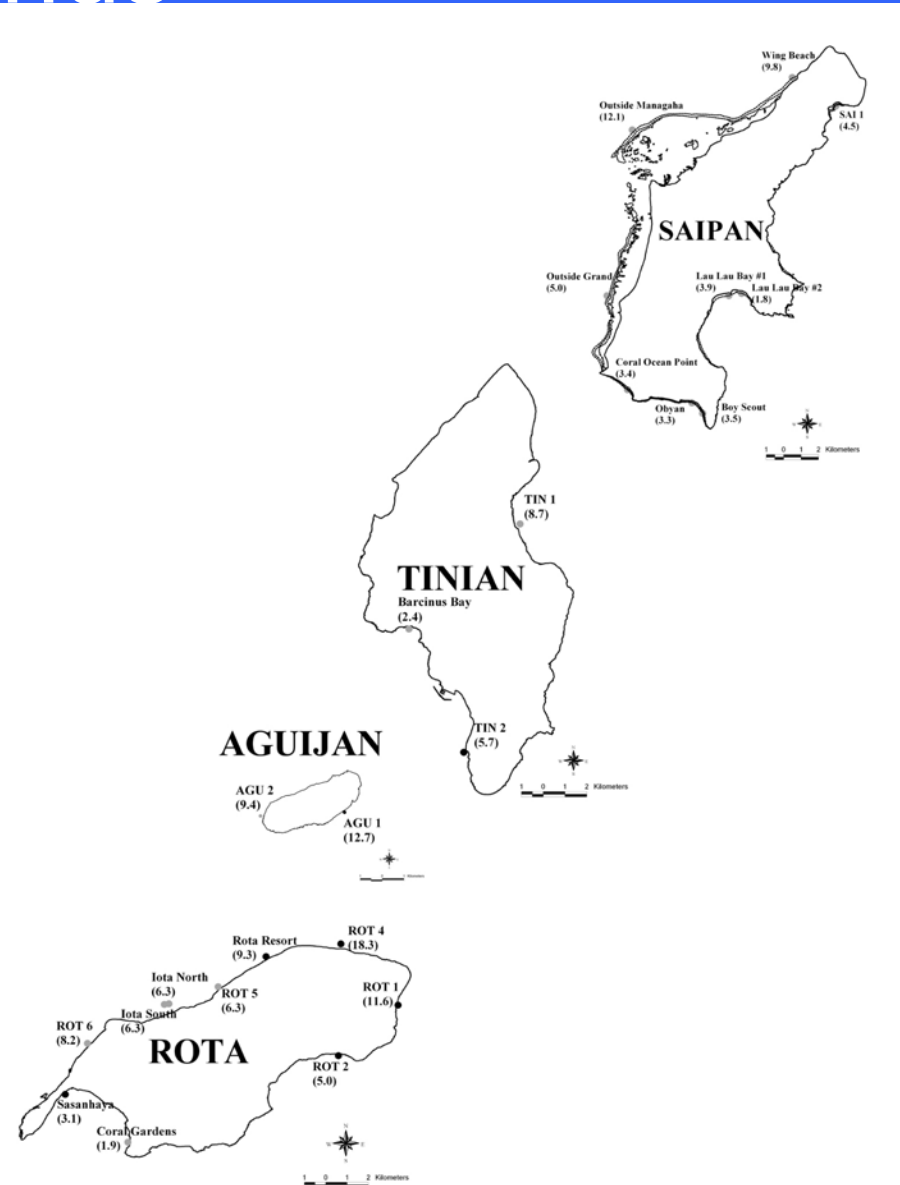
Example 2 – Southern Mariana Islands

- Increased complexity in geological settings
 - 1) Antecedent, Holocene Deposition (indicator)
 - 2) Pleistocene or earlier only (indicator)
- Wave energy consideration




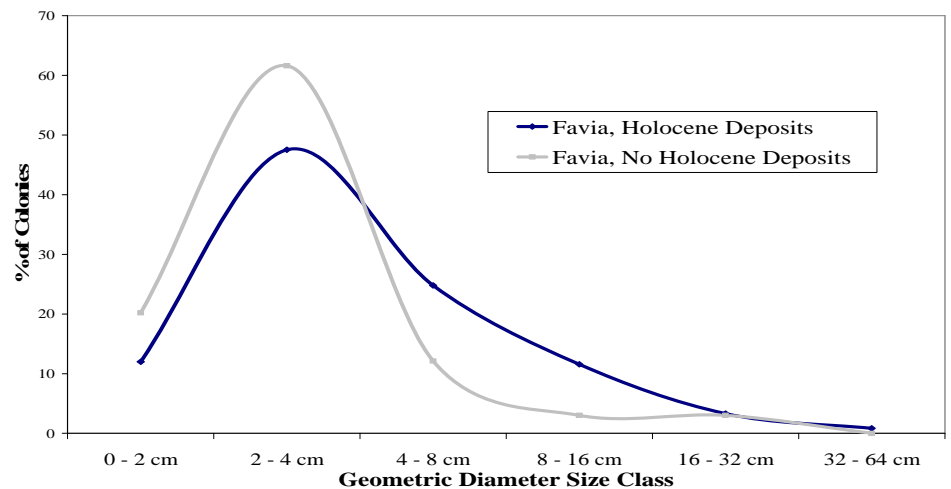
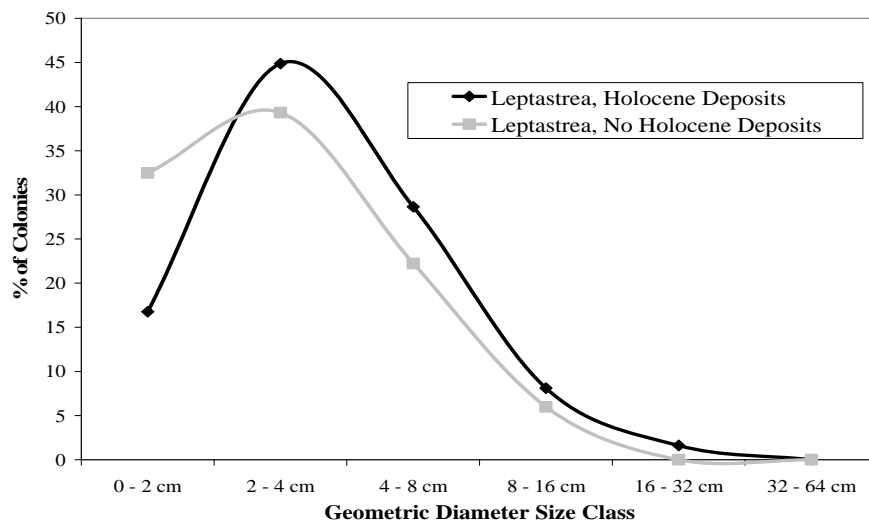
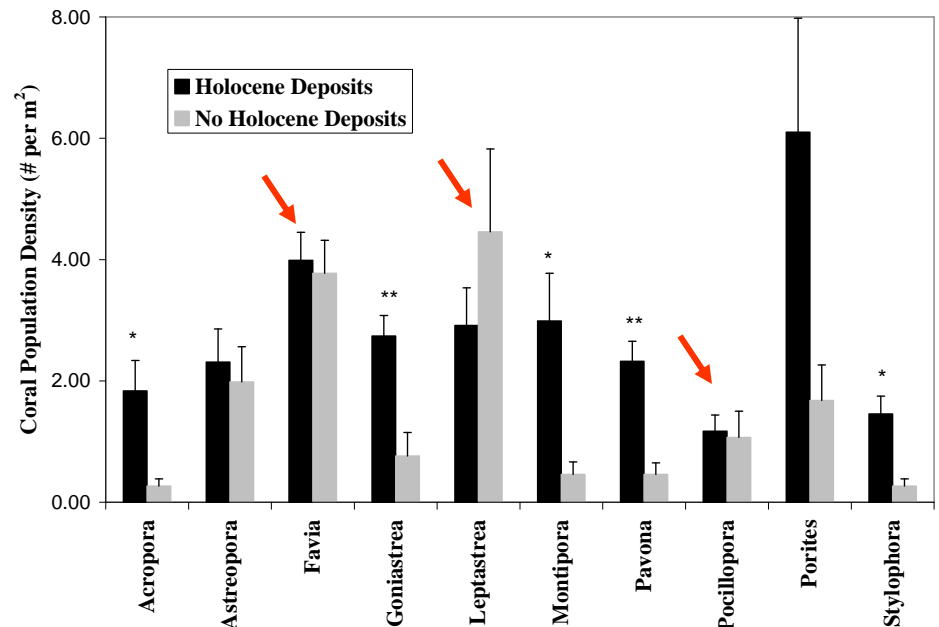
Example 2 – Southern Mariana Islands

- Holocene (recent) deposits **not** related to exposure
- Deposits = topographic complexity, result of sediment trapping
- In circular nature, topographic relief provides refuge from scouring physical environment, and continues to build



Example 2 – Southern Mariana Islands

- Living organic reef community
 - Favia, Leptastrea, Pocillopora account for >30% of measured coral
 - * = significant difference
 -  = no significant difference



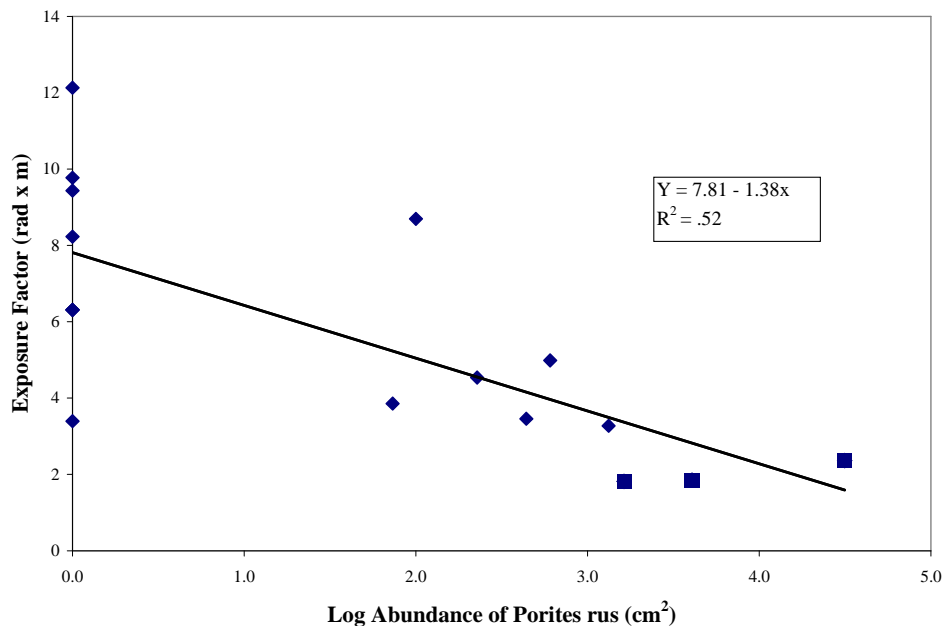
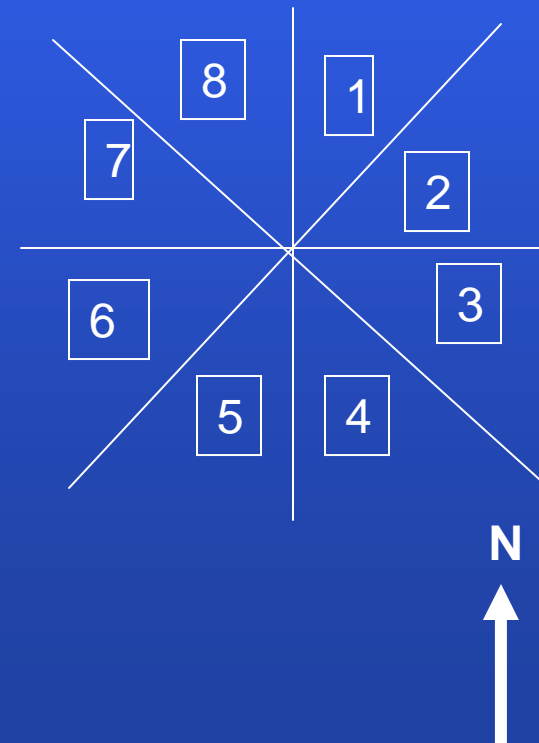
Example 2 – Southern Mariana Islands

- Wave energy considerations

- Holocene reefs
- *P. rus* dominant reefs in extremely sheltered locations with Holocene deposition

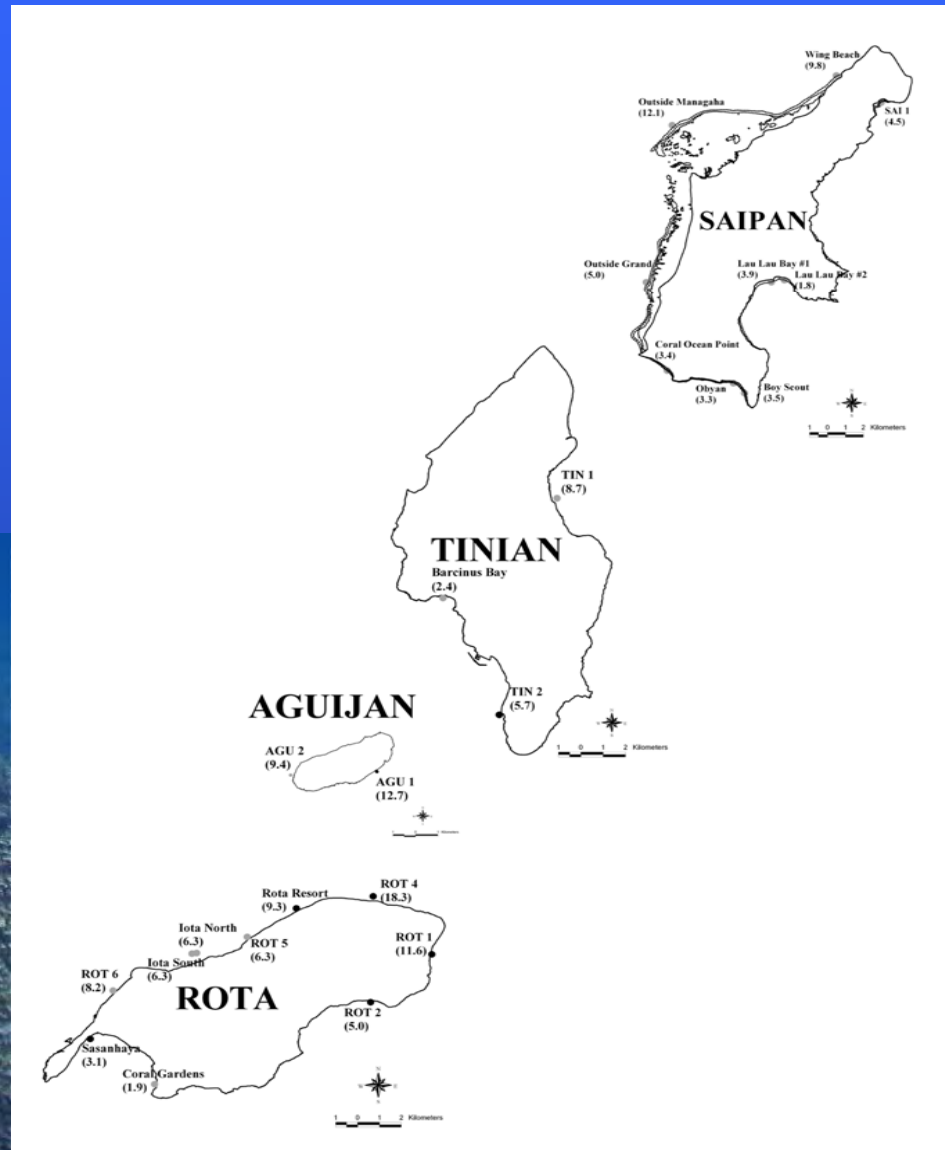
Quadrant	Exposure Direction	Exposure Degrees	Average Wave Height (m)
1	N - NE	0 - 45	1.5
2	NE - E	45 - 90	1.4
3	E - SE	90 - 135	1.2
4	SE - S	135 - 180	0.7
5	S - SW	180 - 225	0.7
6	SW - W	225 - 270	0.7
7	W - NW	270 - 315	0.7
8	NW - N	315 - 360	0.9

From NOAA buoy data



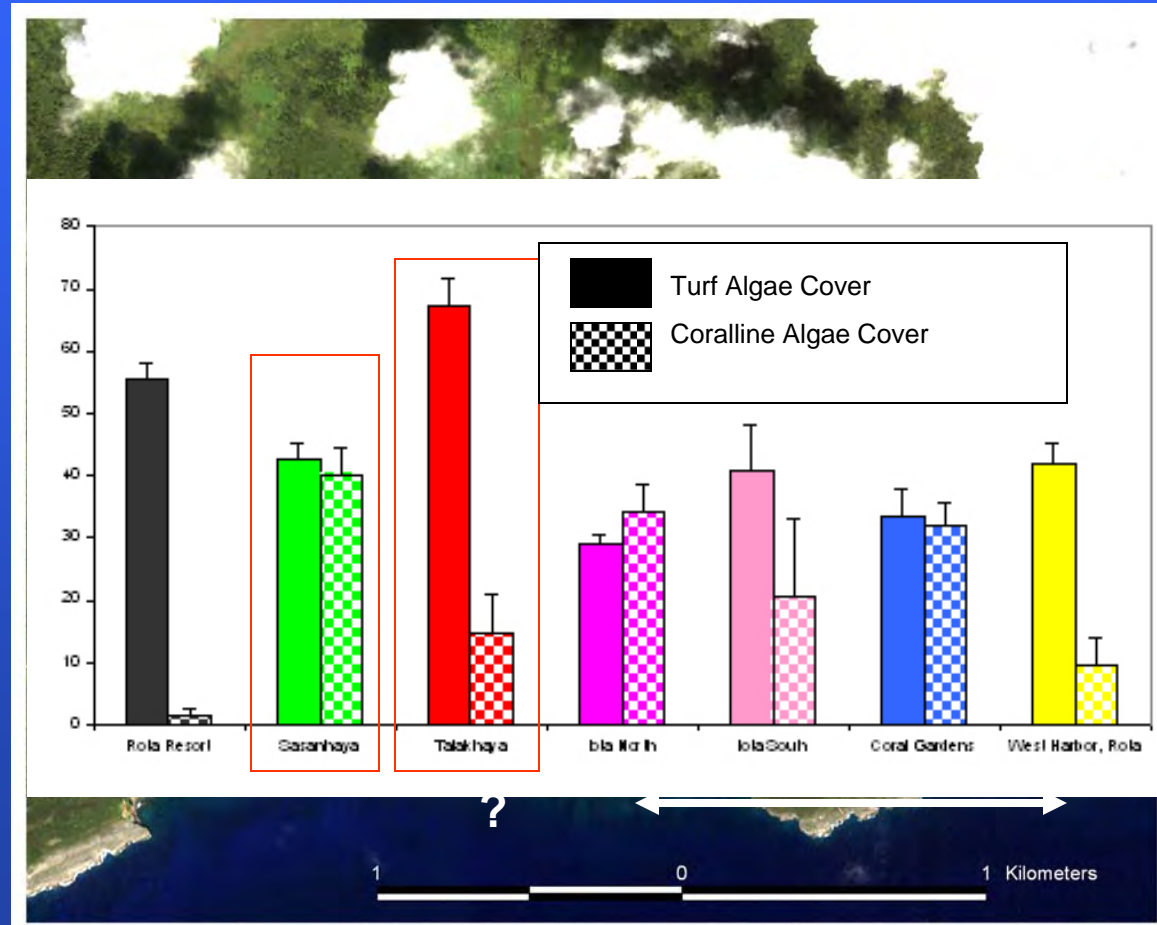
Example 2 – Southern Mariana Islands

- *Porites rus* dominance, lower species diversity in extremely sheltered regions expected = ●



Example 2 – Southern Mariana Islands

- Macroecology information required before assessments of land based disturbances and such
- Compare site in questions with regional information
- Use watershed characteristics, stream flow rates, water quality data, and others, to compliment reef community data (site specific studies)



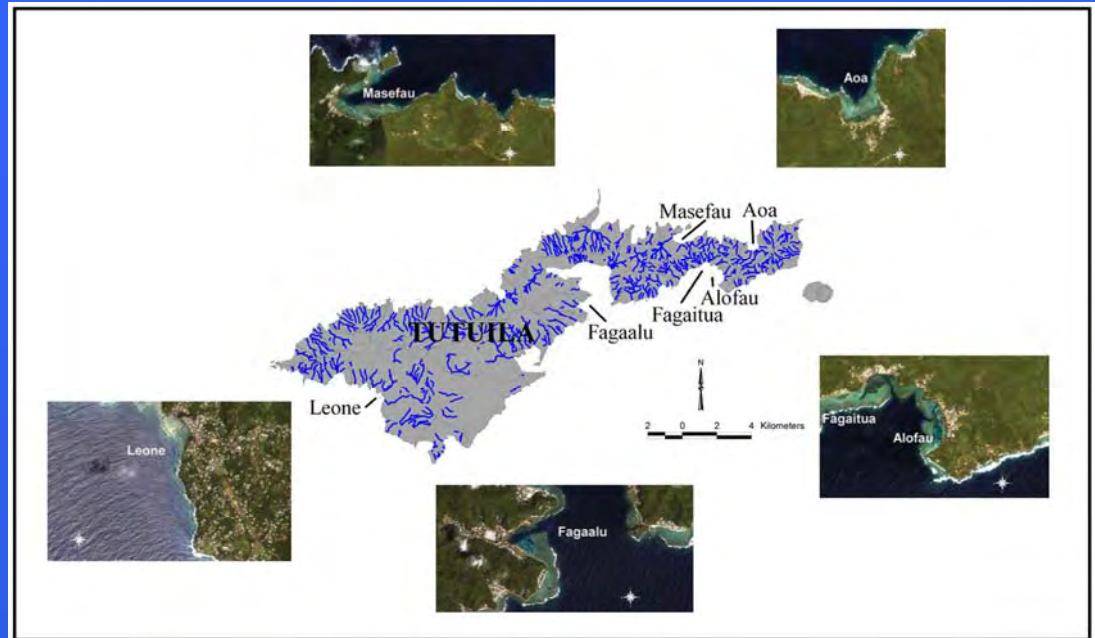
Talakhaya Watershed, Rota Island

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Example 3 – American Samoa

- Watershed based management and water quality monitoring
- Reefs used as bio-criteria indicators to water quality health (EPA guidance)
- Simultaneously, initiate long term monitoring baseline



Arrows indicate similar geomorphology

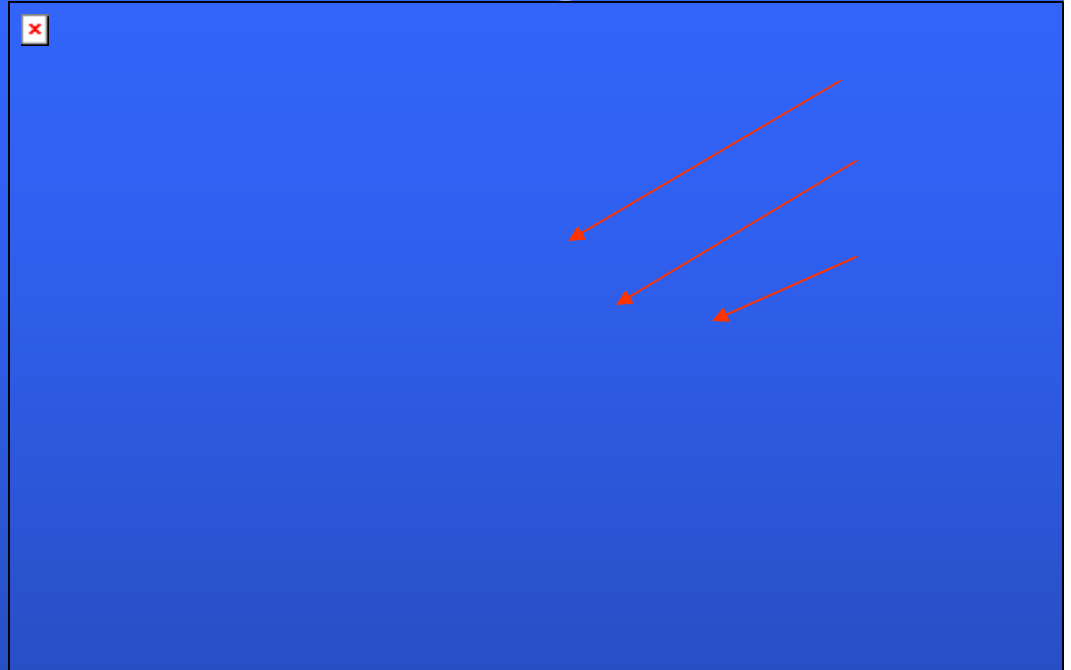
Example 3 – American Samoa

- Similar geomorphology at Aoa, Leone, and Alofau
- This setting allows for larger corals, greater coverage, due to stable abiotic environment
- NOT imply “better condition” (low community evenness)
- Stability \neq Diversity

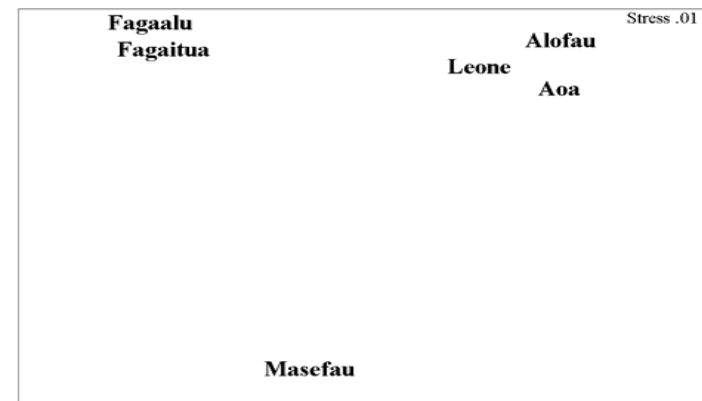


Example 3 – American Samoa

- Size Distribution of Coral Colonies



- Multivariate exploratory techniques (Multi-Dimensional Scaling), using coral relative abundances

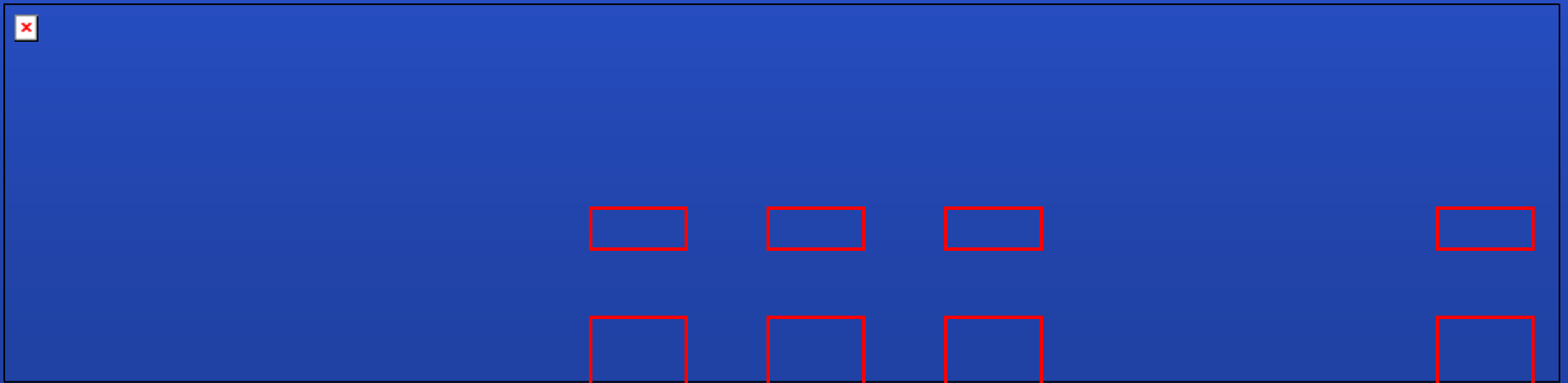


Example 3 – American Samoa

- Compare Sites with same regional characteristics
- Coral cover crude indicator for reef health assessment based upon coral community
 - Community evenness
 - Geometric diameters
 - Overall diversity

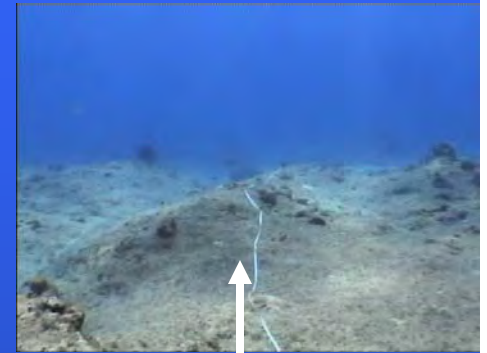
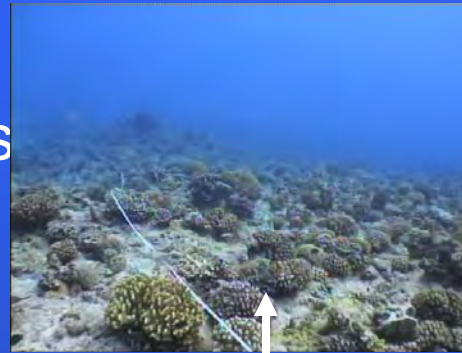


Acropora clathrata

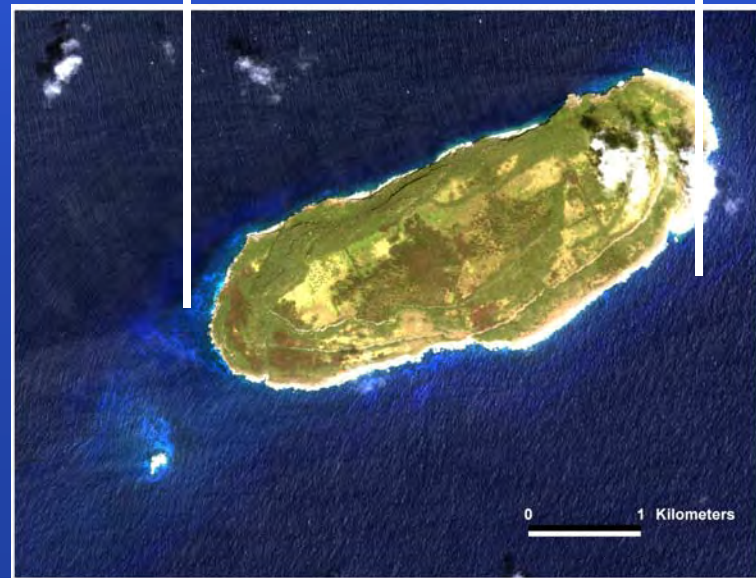


Conclusion

- Environmental settings are important for understanding living reefs
- Elucidate processes that regulate coral communities
- Gain regional understanding to provide context for local assessments



Aguijan Island, CNMI



Conclusion

- Through monitoring we greatly enhance the ability to properly manage and protect coral reefs
- Thanks to:
 - US Environmental Protection Agency
 - CNMI Division of Environmental Quality
 - CNMI Coastal Resources Management Office
 - American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency
 - CNMI Marine Monitoring Team
 - NOAA MARAMP, NOAA CREI Division