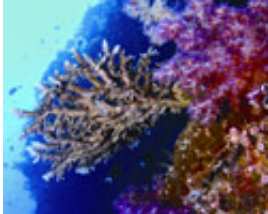


The evolutionary origins of coral sex

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University of Guam Marine Lab associate professor, Alexander Kerr, is senior author of a paper on the evolutionary origins of coral sex published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*. The paper, "Correlated evolution of sex and reproductive mode in corals" finds that ancient corals consisted of mostly separate sexes and needed to pass through an evolutionarily period in which they brooded their young before they could become spawning hermaphrodites.

"Most species of corals on tropical reefs are hermaphrodites and participate in one of nature's most amazing spectacles, an annual mass spawning in which shallow moonlit waters rapidly fill with a 'blizzard' of brightly colored eggs," said Kerr. "The [evolutionary origins](#) of coral sex turn out to be surprisingly complex. The reason for this round-about pathway from separate sex to hermaphrodite is uncertain, but is likely related to the rigors of existence on shallow, tropical reefs."

The co-authors are Dr Andrew Baird and Dr Terry Hughes, both from the Australian Research Council Centre for [Coral](#) Reef Studies, James Cook University.

More information: [rspb.royalsocietypublishing.org ...
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Provided by University of Guam

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