

New research on deep reefs finds 195 species of coral

12 December 2018



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Queensland Museum scientists have used remotely operated vehicles and specialised diving techniques to find 195 coral species in deeper reef areas in the Great Barrier Reef region.

The research, led by Dr. Paul Muir, Research Officer and Collection Manager Corals at Museum of Tropical Queensland, is a significant increase from the 32 [species](#) of coral previously recorded.

Dr. Muir said this represented roughly half of the [coral species](#) in the region and the findings suggest an important role for deeper habitats which could play a significant role in preserving coral biodiversity and help to regenerate damaged shallow reef [areas](#).

Deeper reef areas provide some protection from coral bleaching and severe storm events that increasingly threaten reefs around the world.

Most coral lineages were also present in the deep reef, so these habitats could play a significant role in preserving coral biodiversity and potentially help regenerate damaged shallow reef areas.

The paper "High species richness and lineage diversity of [reef](#) corals in the mesophotic zone" was published in *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* on Wednesday, 12 December, 2018.

This paper comes just one day after fellow Museum of Tropical Queensland curator, Dr. Tom Bridge was named in the Top 100, an annually released list of academic papers that have received the most attention in the previous year from sources tracked by data science company Altmetric.

The paper on [coral bleaching](#) that Dr. Bridge co-authored was published in *Science* in January 2018 and was named #28 in Top 100 list.

The list is compiled based on a scientific paper's coverage in the mainstream media, shares and discussions on social networks and blogs, references in Wikipedia and public policy documents, and comments on post-publication peer-review forums.

More information: High species richness and lineage diversity of reef corals in the mesophotic zone. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*. doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2018.1987

Provided by Queensland Museum

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