



REEF CHECK AUSTRALIA

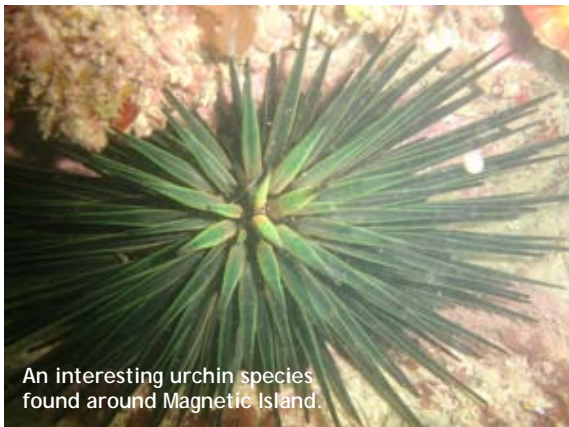
INSHORE REEF MONITORING | PROJECT FACTSHEET

MAY 2009

Co-ordinated from the Reef Check Australia (RCA) headquarters in Townsville, the Inshore Reef program around Magnetic Island is very much close to home. These important nursery grounds are highly sensitive to shore-based human impacts. RCA's Inshore Monitoring Program provides a cost-effective 'early warning system' of any changes in the health of key inshore coral reefs as well as monitoring the sustainability of popular fish stock, such as coral trout.



Magnetic Island



An interesting urchin species found around Magnetic Island.

This project was established during 2003 to increase the number of inshore sites monitored by Reef Check volunteers in the Townsville region. While inshore reefs are less often frequented by recreational divers, those off Townsville have some of the greatest biodiversity of hard coral on the Great Barrier Reef and our volunteer surveyors have often encountered some unexpected interesting species.

Inshore coral reefs such as those fringing islands are often the most visited and used by local communities for recreation so community interest in their sustained health is high. However, due to this level of use and their proximity to coastal development and agriculture (causing water quality pollution), they are perceived to be most at risk from human impacts.

Nutrient pollution from land-based activities is one of the greatest threats facing the Reef. Inshore reefs are particularly affected by poor water quality due to their close proximity to shore.



There are seven inshore sites surveyed by RCA in this program and long term data for each is available to the public through the RCA Google Earth dataset, downloadable from our website.

The current aim for this project is to expand the number of sites through Queensland including those deemed most important by community members. However, whilst the program received financial support in the past from Townsville City Council's Creek to Coral program and Envirofund, it is currently not funded. In order to sustain the project in the long term, a financial partner is required.