

MORPHOMETRY AND GENETICS OF MILLEPORA COLLECTED AT SAN SALVADOR ISLAND, BAHAMAS

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Although two species of the fire coral *Millepora* are recognized in the tropical western Atlantic, colonies of this hydrozoan exhibit extensive variation in their morphologies. The purpose of this study is to determine whether selected colony morphotypes are matched by genetic isolation. Colonies of the two described species of *Millepora* found in the Bahamas, *M. alcicornis* and *M. complanata*, representing a variety of growth forms were collected from several sites at varying depths along the coast of San Salvador Island, Bahamas. Morphological analysis, which is currently ongoing, followed that described in the taxonomic literature. Measurements included colony form, density and diameters of gastropores and dactylopores, presence or absence of ampullae, and surface texture. DNA fingerprint analysis of the specimens was carried out using RAPD. Preliminary results suggest two different DNA signatures, however, some of the samples collected exhibit DNA fingerprints representative of both of these signatures. The genetic data require larger sample sizes and await comparative results to ongoing morphological analysis.

North-Central Section (36th) and Southeastern Section (51st), GSA Joint Annual Meeting (April 3–5, 2002)

Session No. 33--Booth# 54

Undergraduate Research (Posters)

Heritage Hall: East

1:00 PM-5:00 PM, Thursday, April 4, 2002