

Changes in benthic community structure of coral reefs at the Kenyan coast

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As fisheries pressure maintains to build up, it is necessary to monitor the impact this has on biodiversity, especially in key environments like coral reefs. Coral reefs, crucial for sustaining fishermen and the vulnerable coastal communities they are part of face threats from overfishing and climate change. This project assesses benthic biodiversity changes due to artisanal fisheries pressure focussing on sites along the East African coast, like Watamu and Mombasa in Kenya. Utilising video transects, current benthic biodiversity is analysed so that it can be compared with historic data previously collected. The changes in biodiversity through time can be mapped and then used to implement into policies to conduct more efficient management plans for small-scale fisheries. By implementing scientific data, the aim of this project is to empower governmental bodies to foster the development of laws for sustainable fisheries management. The research objective is to contribute to reduce the effect of overfishing and enhancing small-scale fisheries sustainability along the East African coast, helping to achieve both local and global goals for a secure future.

Keywords

Kenya; Coral reefs; Small-scale fisheries; Benthic community