

Dampier Archipelago Bleaching and Mortality: Community Observations and Early Insights from the 2024/25 Marine Heatwave

Coral communities in the Dampier Archipelago have previously exhibited high, yet spatially variable, tolerance to successive heat stress events, including back-to-back bleaching events in 2021/22 and 2022/23 (>13 DHW). In 2024/25, heat stress reached an unprecedented 29.4 DHW, triggering widespread bleaching. Community members played a critical role in documenting the severity and extent of bleaching during the peak of heat stress, with their observations helping to guide the prioritisation of post-bleaching surveys. This talk presents a summary of public reports alongside preliminary findings from those surveys, offering an early glimpse into how the Archipelago's reefs fared under record-breaking conditions.