

PREFACE

We wish to express our heartfelt thanks to the session chairs for reviewing or having peer-reviewed each of the contributed manuscripts in these Proceedings to assure their quality for publication. The study of corals and coral reefs includes such disparate fields of molecular genetics through geology and socioeconomics, that we had to call on the session chairs as experts in the subjects of their sessions.

There seems to have been a change in the past half century from publishing in topic-related venues to a professional requirement to publish in high impact-factor journals. The ratio of contributed manuscripts in the International Coral Reef Symposia Proceedings to the total oral and poster presentations at the symposia have dropped from 98% to 2% over the past half century. The first Proceedings from Mandapam Camp contained 37 papers, but the total number of presentations was not recorded. The second symposium aboard a ship on the Great Barrier Reef had 113 contributed papers per 124 presentations (91%), the third (Miami) had 180/183 (98.4%), Manila 278/350 (79.4%), Tahiti 421/608 (69%), and Townsville 274/524 (52%). Guam had 433 papers in the Proceedings, but the number of presentations was not recorded. Panamá had 344/930 (37%), Bali 226/1401 (16%), Okinawa 252/1381 (18%), Ft. Lauderdale 300/2632 (11.4%), Cairns 178/1500 (11.9%), and Honolulu 45/2126 (2%). The pdfs of all the papers in the 12 previous Proceedings can be downloaded or read in Publications at Reefbase.org.

Other changes in Proceedings over the decades have been the shift to English and to applied science. The Mandapam Camp Proceedings had 31 papers in English, 5 in French, and one in German. The rest of the Proceedings have been in English. The first Proceedings were all pure science. Of the 113 papers in the Proceedings of the second symposium, only three were on conservation and two implied that crown-of-thorns outbreaks were influenced by human activities. In the third symposium, there were 8 papers on management out of 183 papers. Between the third and fourth symposia, the white-band disease started devastating acroporid populations in the greater Caribbean and the first coral bleaching events were observed in the field. There was a major change in the 4th International Coral Reef Symposium with a shift in focus from pure science to applied science. The organizing committee chairman Ed Gomez called attention to the need for scientists to focus attention on the disparate damages human activities are causing to coral-reef ecosystems. The theme of the fourth symposium was “The reef and man” and the invited keynote speaker Sir David Stoddart gave the plenary talk on

“Coral reefs: the coming crisis”. In the following symposia through the decades, there has been a general shift away from pure science to an increase in the proportion of papers dealing with problems to coral reefs caused by human activities and how to manage them.

Traditionally, the plenary papers were published in the Proceedings, but with modern technology, the plenary talks are now recorded and presented on line ---

<https://vimeo.com/groups/342636>

The abstracts of all the presentations (414 pages) can be found on---

<https://www.sgmeet.com/icrs2016/static/files/ICRS-2016-Abstract-Book.pdf>

The Editors