

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Environment portfolio

Question No: 169
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Agency
Programme: Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA)
Topic: Crown-of-Thorns Starfish - Infestations
Hansard Page: N/A
Question Date: 04 November 2015
Question Type: Written

Senator McLucas asked:

1. Where are the worst infestations of Crown of Thorns starfish currently?

Answer:

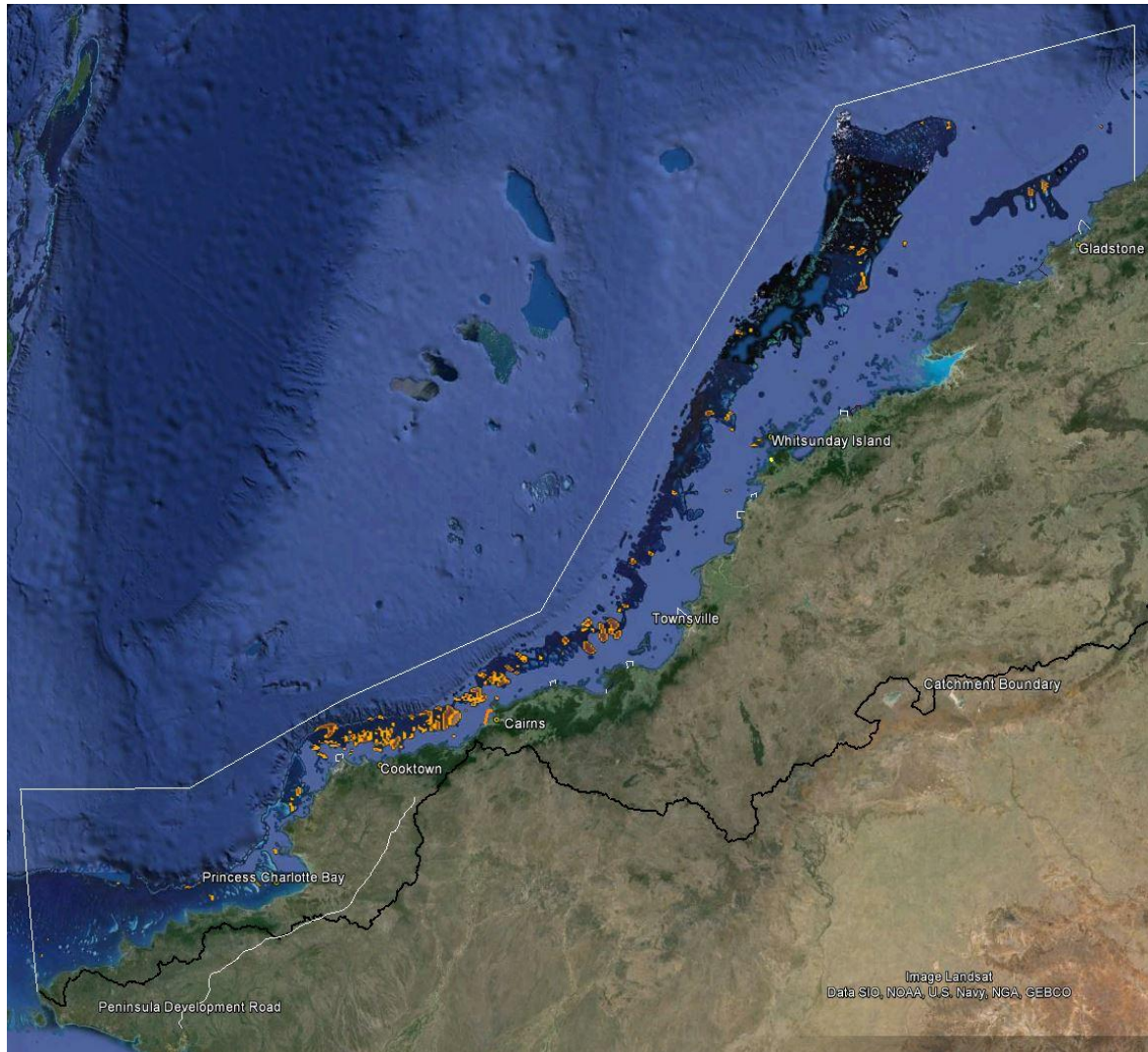
1. Regular, detailed surveys by the Joint Field Management and crown-of-thorns starfish control programmes have determined that crown-of-thorns starfish are at outbreak levels on multiple reefs between Cooktown and Innisfail (Attachment A).

Less frequent, Reef-wide surveys from the Field Management Program, Eye on the Reef network and Australian Institute of Marine Science indicate that adult starfish (at outbreak proportions) are affecting some reefs as far north as Lockhart River and as far south as off-shore from Townsville (Attachment B), and a separate outbreak of starfish is affecting some reefs in the Swains.

Capacity is currently limited to assess the outbreak status of reefs to the north and south of the current infestation.

Attachment A

Overview of spatial extent of the current crown-of-thorns starfish outbreak between Cooktown and Cairns. The shaded and coloured dots on the reef perimeters indicate locations where starfish were observed during surveys between July 2014 and November 2015. The concentration of observations between Cooktown and Cairns highlights the intensity of surveillance by Field Management staff to support the crown-of-thorns starfish control programme.



Attachment B

Overview of spatial extent of the current crown-of-thorns starfish outbreak in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The yellow shaded polygons indicate reefs where crown-of-thorns starfish were observed during surveys between July 2014 and November 2015. Ongoing broad-scale crown-of-thorns surveillance capacity is provided by the Joint Field Management Program.

