

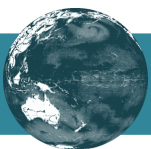
Snowflake coral

Carijoa riisei (Duchassaing & Michelotti, 1860)

KEY FEATURES



- Cylindrical branches 2 to 4 mm long can have multiple polyps, colonies can grow up to 25 cm high
- Octocoral forming erect, branching colonies with flexible stems
- When extended, polyps have eight white feather-like tentacles, the whole resembling a snowflake
- Stems or branches are dirty white, polyps translucent white
- Settles and grows on other stationary organisms such as stony corals and shellfish
- Exhibits high fecundity, producing hundreds of eggs per axial polyp, appears to reproduce continually in Hawai'i
- Male, female, and hermaphrodite colonies capable of single-parent reproduction
- Spreads via vegetative growth using horizontal runners or stolons which are used to rapidly colonise adjacent territory in all directions



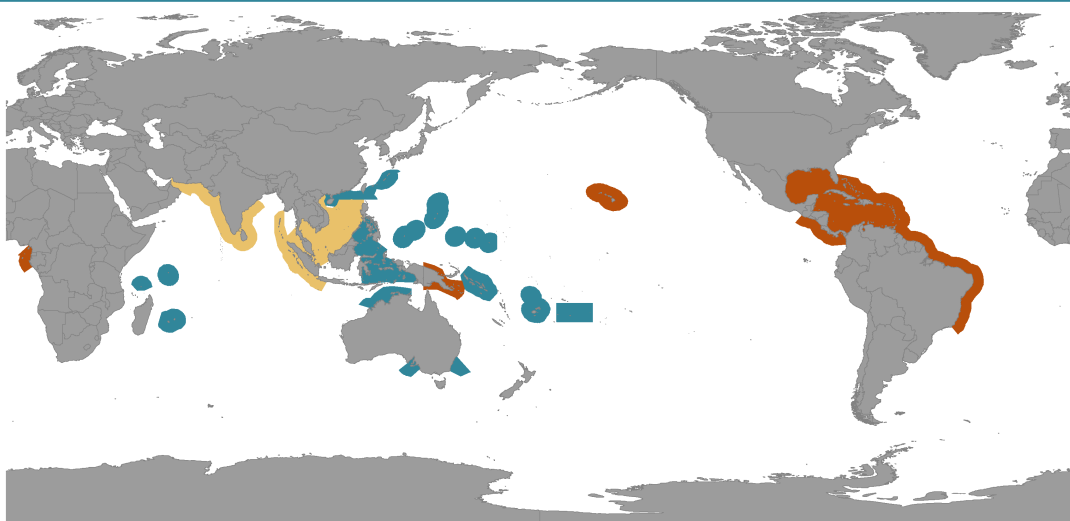
PATHWAY

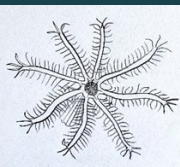


ballast water



biofouling





Snowflake coral

Carijoa riisei (Duchassaing & Michelotti, 1860)

REPUBLIC OF THE
MARSHALL ISLANDS

IMPACTS



Environmental
impacts

Capable of explosive growth which enables it to smother competitors. Prefers shade and is known to smother black coral beds or gorgonian corals in Hawai'i and in Colombia. Two small nudibranchs are known to prey on this species; *Phyllodesmium poindimiei* (Risbec, 1928) is an obligate predator that starves in the absence of its only known prey



Human health
impacts

None known



Social & cultural
impacts

None known



Economic
impacts

Deep water surveys in 2001, of the Maui Black Coral Bed, discovered this species overgrowing and killing over 60% of the black corals between 80 and 105 m depth. It now threatens Hawai'i's \$30 million precious coral industry

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

DISTRIBUTION

May be present in the Republic of the Marshall Islands

Native range

Native to the Indo-West Pacific but its original native distribution is not known due to taxonomic uncertainty

Non-indigenous range

Main Hawai'ian Islands, India, Galapagos, Columbia, Western Atlantic from Florida to Brazil

CREDITS AND REFERENCES (click reference for more information)

Images

Top: S Khan [CC BY-SA 4.0](#), bottom: from [Hawaii Invasive Species Council](#)

References

[Concepcion et al. \(2010\)](#), [Quintanilla et al. \(2017\)](#), [Sanchez and Ballesteros \(2014\)](#)