



<b>Title</b>	<b>The Third International Conference on the Marine Biology of the South China Sea</b>
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<b>Citation</b>	<b>The Third International Conference on the Marine Biology of the South China Sea, v. 23, p. 366</b>
<b>Issued Date</b>	<b>1996</b>
<b>URL</b>	<b><a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10722/47067">http://hdl.handle.net/10722/47067</a></b>
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USA (price US\$35.00). A report on the plenary sessions and other aspects of the conference is scheduled for publication in the autumn issue of the TCS Bulletin, TCS's official publication.

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## The Third International Conference on the Marine Biology of the South China Sea

*Held at the University of Hong Kong, during 28 October–1 November 1996*

The purpose of the conference was to bring together scientists undertaking research on the South China Sea from the countries and territories forming its rim, with a view to better understanding this poorly known sea. There are many conflicting territorial claims with regard to the physical and biological resources of the South China Sea and the conference was an attempt to bring regional and other interested scientists together to discuss such issues.

The conference was attended by 126 delegates from fifteen countries and territories with the majority from Hong Kong (50%), China (20%) and the Philippines (10%), and some fifty local day-delegates.

The conference comprised three symposia as follows: Symposium I Taxonomy and Biological Diversity of the South China Sea; Symposium II Biology and Ecology of the South China Sea; and Symposium III Coastal Zone Management and Conservation of the Biological Resources of the South China Sea.

The three conference symposia were held consecutively and were each in the form of keynote lectures, lectures and poster presentations. Symposium I comprised two keynote lectures, namely by Prof. C.K. Tseng (Institute of Oceanology, Qingdao, China), on South China Sea *Sargassum* and Prof. Vo Si Tuan (Institute of Oceanography, Nha Trang, Vietnam) on the hermatypic corals of Vietnam, and 17 other lectures and six posters. Symposium II comprised two keynote lectures, by Dr J.D. Taylor (The Natural History Museum, London, UK) on new ways of looking at biodiversity, and Prof. S. Sudara (Department of Marine Science, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand) on South China Sea zooplankton, and 24 lectures and 17 posters. Symposium III comprised three keynote lectures, namely by Prof. E.D. Gomez (Marine Science Institute, University of the Philippines, Quezon City, Philippines) on coastal zone management and conservation in the South China Sea, Prof. L.M. Chou and Dr B.P.L. Goh (School of Biological Sciences, National University of Singapore) on balancing development and conservation with regard to Singapore's coral reefs, and Prof. S. Maynard (School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Hawaii) on marine biology education for the coming century, 24 lectures, including an invited talk by Ms W.S.M. Tang, Mr J. Bradford and Prof. B.

Morton (The Swire Institute of Marine Science, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong) on a GIS (Global Information System) system for the study of Hong Kong's marine ecology, and six posters. Symposium III attracted the most interest, particularly by the additional 50 local day-delegates and the press, because of a growing interest in, and concern for, the locally deteriorating marine environment, and recent Government actions and plans with regard to coastal zone conservation and management in Hong Kong.

Papers submitted to the conference are being refereed and those accepted for publication will be contained within a proceedings that will be published by Hong Kong University Press.

Previous conferences in 1990 (Hong Kong) and 1993 (Guangzhou, China) have been held at three year intervals. It was agreed unanimously at this conference that the fourth should be convened in the Philippines in 1998, after only a two year interval. At that time too, the conference will come under the institutional banner of the Technical Working Group on Marine Scientific Research of the Committee for Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea. Scientists interested in participating in the fourth conference should contact the convenor, Prof. E.D. Gomez, Marine Science Institute, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City 1101, Philippines.

BRIAN MORTON

*Conference Convenor*

*The Swire Institute of Marine Science*

*The University of Hong Kong*

*Cape d'Aguilar, Shek O*

*Hong Kong*

## Effects of Trawling on Marine Ecosystems

*A Workshop held at the Darling Marine Centre, Walpole, Maine, USA, during 28–30 June 1996*

Aims of the workshop were to discuss the ecological effects of fishing on non-target benthic communities and its implications for marine biodiversity, and to review these effects based on current knowledge and to prioritize areas for research.

Previously, fisheries scientists have been mainly concerned with the direct effects of fisheries on the target species. More recently, attention has focused on the possible ecological effects of discarding, by-catch and the effects of physical disturbance of benthic communities by mobile fishing gears, particularly trawls and dredges. A recent expansion in research effort has been marked by a flurry of review papers (de Groot 1984; Messieh *et al.* 1991; Jones 1992; Anon. 1995; Dayton *et al.* 1995). The workshop was attended by representatives from the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Europe.

Dr Elliot Norse (Marine Conservation Biology Institute, WA, USA) opened the meeting with a general overview of environmental concerns in the marine environment followed by presentations on the effects of disturbance on epifaunal (Dr Peter Auster, University of Connecticut, CT, USA) and soft-sediment communities (Dr Simon Thrush, National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research,