

PRE
INDO-PACIFIC FISH CONFERENCE
WORKSHOP

NOVEMBER 20-25, 1993
Maumere, Flores Island, Indonesia

PROGRAM
AND
ABSTRACTS

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ARE THE CORAL REEFS OF WEST SUMATRA ENDANGERED BY POLLUTION
AND FISHING WITH EXPLOSIVES ?

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Along the northern and southern coast of Padang, West Sumatra, 30 scuba dives were performed in order to make a gross assessment of the condition of the coral reefs in an area covering about 800 km². Coral communities, degree of coverage and destruction, fish communities, algal overgrow and visual signs of sedimentation were recorded manually and by photographs and videos.

Preliminary results show a high sedimentation rate everywhere and various levels of destruction. About 30% of all reefs are seriously affected including a few which are virtually dead. About 50% show less damage or are recovering, but still have large areas of dead corals. Only about 20% of the reefs show little or almost no damage and are quickly recovering. So far no pristine reefs were detected. The characteristic marks of blast fishing are present at many locations. Significant differences were found between fringing reefs, inner reefs and outer reef drop offs. Reef slope seems to be a crucial factor, as steep reefs show less sedimentation and are difficult to access for fishermen.

It is recommended to the provincial government to provide funds to continue this survey in more detail and to react immediately and completely protect Pieh Island with the aim to establish a marine reserve.