

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Crown-of-thorns starfish were collected on John Brewer Reef, 70km north-east of Townsville, Queensland. The individual examined was a 19-armed specimen of 35cm diameter.

The flesh was dissolved in 'Woolworths' brand household liquid bleach - active ingredient sodium hypochloride (available chlorine 4% w/v). Skeletal elements were rinsed in tap water and oven dried. Individual elements were then gold plated and examined and photographed on a scanning electron microscope. An electron microprobe analysis of ossicles was carried out to determine mole % MgCO_3 .