

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 1) Thirteen radiocarbon dates of the Fantome Island fringing reef cores indicate the reef began forming about 6,000 years B.P. The reef has formed by progradation of a hard bottom reef top unit over a soft, reef slope unit.
- 2) Growth rates under present conditions are thought to be approximately 6.7 mm yr⁻¹ based on the amount of growth over the last 3,000 years.
- 3) Management of such fringing reefs will need to focus on preserving the soft reef slope deposits, as well as maintaining a favourable environment for coral growth.
- 4) The reef growth rate is higher than for most shelf reefs, confirming previous ideas of faster rates for fringing reefs. However, the rate is still far too slow to allow re-building to present form within human lifetimes if severe erosion occurs.

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