

Down in arms: Marine climate stress inhibits growth and calcification of regenerating (Echinodermata:) arms

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Anthropogenic CO₂ is significantly changing the pCO₂, temperature, and carbonate chemistry of seawater. Recent projections suggest that, within the next century, ocean pCO₂ will increase by approximately 600–700 μatm (ocean acidification) and ocean temperatures will increase by 2.3–3.0 °C (ocean warming).¹ The combined effect of these variables is termed marine climate stress. Particular concern revolves around the capacity of marine climate stress to inhibit the ability of m

opposing hypotheses for the way in which marine climate stress will influence echinoderm calcification, metabolic efficiency, and reproduction offer an additive or synergistic effect.^{3,4}

In this study, were exposed to ocean water of either ambient, high temperature, high pCO₂, or high temperature and high pCO₂ for 30 days, and the regeneration length of the amputated arm

factors resulted in smaller regenerated arms compared to ambient conditions (Figure 1). Sea stars regenerating under high pCO₂ exhibited a lower proportion of calcified mass, which could be the result of a more energetically demanding calcification process associated with marine climate stress (Figure 2). These results indicate that calcification is sensitive to increasing pCO₂, and that climate change will have an overall net negative effect on sea star arm regeneration. Such effects could translate into lower predation rates by a key consumer in the temperate rocky intertidal of North America.

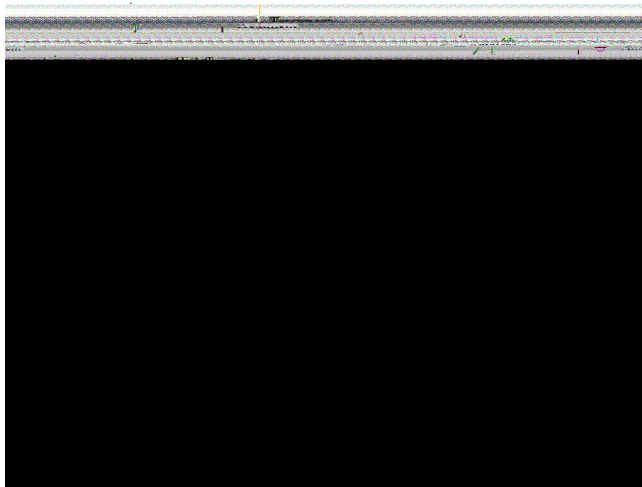


Figure 1. Mean regenerated arm length (cm) for sea stars regenerating under ambient, high temperature, high pCO₂, and high temperature and high pCO₂ conditions. Error bars represent standard deviation.

Figure 2. Mean proportion of calcified mass for sea stars regenerating under ambient, high temperature, high pCO₂, and high temperature and high pCO₂ conditions. Error bars represent standard deviation.

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References

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