

# Considering honours in Marine Science in 2019?

## Details

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An exciting opportunity exists for an honours project in marine community ecology in 2019. The project will be investigating changes in marine communities over time after the establishment of artificial reefs. More project details are provided below.

The scientific study component of the project will be coordinated from the coastal city of Albany, at UWA's only regional campus, where affordable accommodation near the university is available for students. The honours project will be supervised primarily by Ben Ford (UWA Albany). For more information, please contact Ben - [benjamin.ford@uwa.edu.au](mailto:benjamin.ford@uwa.edu.au)

## The Project

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The Bunbury Artificial Reef was deployed in April 2013 and consists of six clusters of five modules in a designated 4ha area. Each module is 3m<sup>3</sup> and weighs 10t. The purpose of the reef was to increase fish habitat, particularly for species such as Pink Snapper, Samson Fish and Silver Trevally.

New smaller modules are soon to be deployed at the Bunbury Artificial Reef site and at the Busselton Jetty to enhance existing habitat and increase the footprint of existing structures. The abundance and diversity of marine life is expected to be increased through the creation of additional shelter, food sources and colonising surfaces as well as varying hydrological features such as current, temperature and shading.

At least two types of reef module will be deployed, new modules will also be placed in differing spatial arrangements within the existing Bunbury Artificial Reef modules. Some new modules will be 'seeded' with soft corals, and at the Busselton Jetty some will be placed under the jetty. Fish abundances will be collected through baited remote underwater video systems (bruv), and permanent quadrats will be established on the new modules to record the algal and sessile (attached to substrate) invertebrate communities.

The primary objectives of this study include:

- a) The influence of module type and spatial configuration on fish and sessile communities,
- b) The effectiveness of seeding modules with soft corals to augment sessile community establishment, and
- c) Changes in the fish and sessile communities due to shading (under jetty).