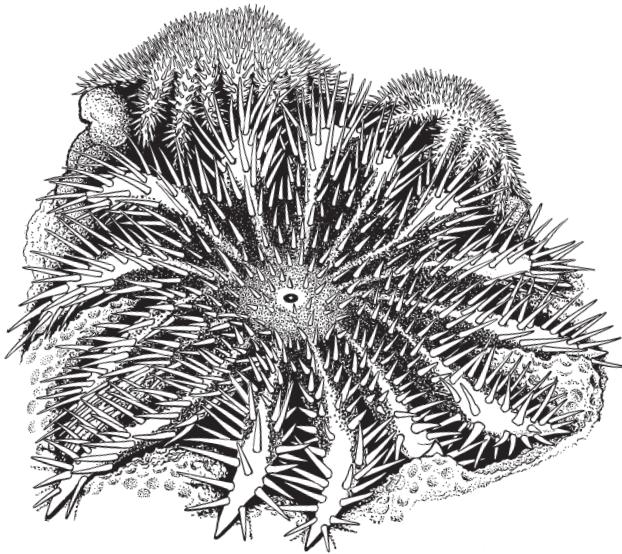


Biodiversity

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The Crown-of-thorns Starfish, *Acanthaster planci*, is an unusually large starfish and can grow to more than 1 m in diameter. It has up to 21 arms, with the entire upper surface of its body covered in long venomous spines. The starfish can move up to 20m in an hour. During a severe outbreak, there can be many Crown-of-thorns Starfish per square metre, even piling on top of each other. They can eat so much that they can kill most of the living coral in that part of the reef, reducing hard coral cover from the usual 25 - 40% of the reef surface to less than 1% (also see story on page 8). -Illustrated by Roelof Idema.

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Policy of Respect

To engender and foster respect for all living species, this journal capitalizes the common names of all formally named species.