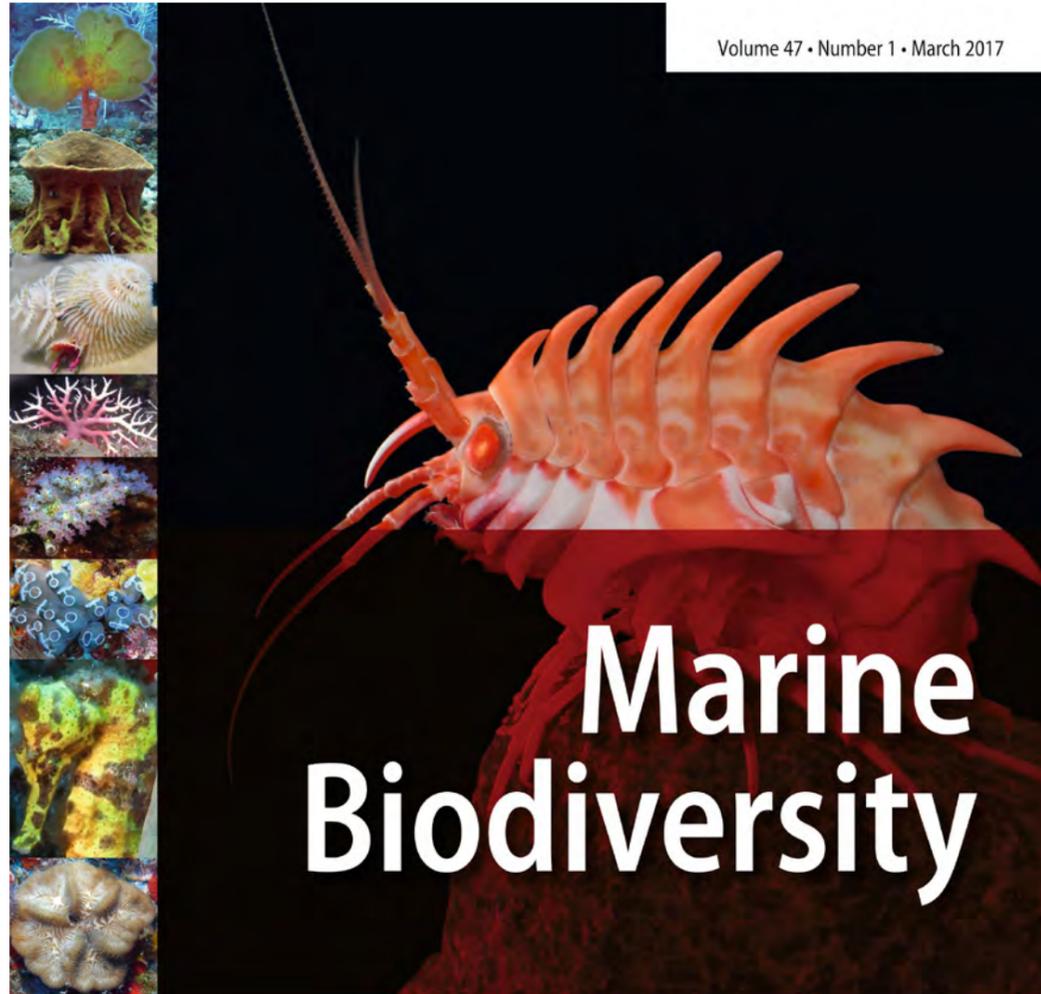


Biodiversity of Dutch Caribbean Reefs

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Cover of the special issue of Marine Biodiversity on Caribbean Coral Reefs

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The coral reefs of the Dutch Caribbean have recently received much attention in the scientific journal *Marine Biodiversity*. The first issue of 2017 contained various articles about coral reef research carried out in the Caribbean and particularly St. Eustatius and Curaçao. The new findings suggest that much remains to be discovered regarding the marine fauna and flora of Caribbean coral reefs.

The plan for this issue started to develop during preparations for the marine biodiversity expedition to St. Eustatius in 2015, which was organized by Naturalis Biodiversity Center and ANEMOON Foundation and hosted by the Caribbean Netherlands Science Institute (CNSI). The expedition resulted in various new discoveries of algae, coral, crustacean, fish, hydroid, mollusk and sponge species for the eastern Caribbean. These new findings included undescribed species and new species records for St. Eustatius, some of which were even new for the whole Atlantic.

Most marine biodiversity research executed in the Dutch Caribbean by scientists of Naturalis Biodiversity Center and other Dutch research institutes was performed on Curaçao, which was possible thanks to the hospitality offered by the research station of Caribbean Marine Biological Institute (CARMABI). This resulted in many

reports on the marine biota of Curaçao, most of which were published in the journals *Studies on the Fauna of Curaçao and other Caribbean Islands* (1940–1980), *Studies on the Flora of Curaçao and other Caribbean Islands* (1956–1968), and *Studies on the Natural History of the Caribbean Region* (1992–2000). The special issue of *Marine Biodiversity* adds to these previous studies by including new reports on corals, fishes, mollusks, and worms.

With the availability of Substation Curaçao for scientific work (since 2010), marine biodiversity studies in the deepest reef zones of Curaçao became more easy. The manned submersible *Curasub* can reach depths down to ca. 300 m. It can be transported by its mothership *RV Chapman*, which enables deep reef surveys at various localities off Curaçao and other Caribbean islands. This has already led to many new species discoveries, distribution records, and species depth records. The *Marine Biodiversity* special issue features a report on the deep reef community (70–85 m depth) discovered off the leeward coast of Curaçao.

Additional scientific reports of the 2015 expedition to St. Eustatius and recent research by Naturalis in the Dutch Caribbean have been published in other journals. All these publications can be found in the list on *page 29*.

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