

Relict *Siderastrea savignyana* (Scleractinia: Siderastreidae) in the Kiunga Marine National Reserve, Kenya

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Siderastrea savignyana (Scleractinia: Siderastreidae) is the only species of genus *Siderastrea* assumed to be distributed across the entire Indo-West Pacific (Veron 2000). However, its validity as a species remains highly equivocal. In the course of efforts to establish the biogeographic distribution and phylogenetic validity of *S. savignyana*, we discovered 2 small populations in the Kiunga Marine National Reserve (KMNR; 1°49.730'S, 41°26.685'E), northern Kenya. Both populations are located on sheltered shallow patch reefs in channels leading into extensive mangrove systems, and at 0-3 m depth at mean low water. The colony size varied from < 10 cm mounds to large healthy, massive, micro-atoll colonies of up to 2 m in diameter (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. *Siderastrea savignyana* microatoll measuring 2 m in diameter in the Kiunga Marine National Reserve (KMNR), Kenya.

The former might represent a relict population on the East African coast after the closure of the Tethys Sea during the Miocene that separated the Atlantic and Indian Ocean provinces. This provides a framework for investigating their evolutionary history using molecular phylogenetic approaches. <http://zoolstud.sinica.edu.tw/Journals/46.4/427.pdf>

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Fig. 2. Close-up of *Siderastrea savignyana* corallite detail and turf algae.