



Local Marine Advisory Committee Meetings

August 2022

Summary of advice provided to the Reef Authority on the COTS Control Program

The following LMAC advice points are a summary of key themes identified from extensive advice points provided through the Reef-wide LMAC network.

In your community, what's the awareness of the COTS Control program's objectives and outcomes?

The majority of LMACs reported that community awareness was low. However, they suggested awareness could be increased by the following:

- providing data/stats/figures and a bit of a story to schools, community groups, fishers and tourism industry through media and social platforms.
- increasing media coverage – using social media, TV, radio.
- capitalise on the LMAC network to spread key messages.
- utilise Master Reef Guides.

In your opinion, what are the most important messages to communicate about the COTS Control program?

- Communicating the science – such as the successes of the program, the scale of the impact that COTS has on the marine environment and its cost effectiveness.
- Explaining the acronym.
- Promoting the use of Eye on the Reef App and the importance of reporting sightings and what the data is used for.
- Understanding that COTs are a native species and when in outbreak proportions, what impact they have in the Marine Park.
- Importance to minimise interaction with this animal.
- Acknowledging the various partners that work in this program.
- COTs are being culled with the environmentally healthy options of bile salts or vinegar.
- It was noted that when communicating; use pictures, the LMACs network, key influencers, local MPs, councils, schools and the tourism industry to help spread the message and make sure it is easy to understand.

How could people learn more about / get involved in the COTS Control Program? (apart from using the website)

- Have information/signage at boat ramps and tourist destination.
- Use of QR Codes.
- Provide information to tourism industry, Master Reef Guides, fishing clubs, schools and councils for them to be able to share.
- Use TV and radio and social media platforms with slogans.
- Increase use/information through Eye on the Reef App.
- Promote the Reef Knowledge Management System (online visualization tool).
- Presentations at various events and targeted workshops.
- Presentations through the Reef in Focus webinars and Reef Wide presentations.
- Train Indigenous Rangers in monitoring.

Is there anything else you would like to share about COTS and / or the COTS Control program?

- Suggest that aquariums display COTS and have interpretive signage to explain about the animal.
- Design a one-page resource with COTs information for the community to share through their networks.
- Showcase the story by providing the link between water quality, disturbances on the land and the effects it is having on this native species.
- What the average person can do to reduce the impacts of COTs outbreaks.