

Interactive comment on “Multi-scale interactions between local hydrography, seabed topography, and community assembly on cold-water coral reefs” by L.-A. Henry et al.

Anonymous Referee #2

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The authors present an analysis of multiple factors that drive community assembly at the cold-water coral reefs of the Mingulay Reef Complex (MRC). The MRC has been well-studied over the past several years, and this paper complements existing work within the area and improves our overall understanding of the complex dynamics that drive the assembly of cold-water coral communities. I found the paper to be very well-written and the analysis to be novel and informative. I recommend that the paper be published, but I do have a few suggestions for the authors to improve the paper.

My primary critique is the authors’ “Conclusions” section, which does little to summarize the important findings of the paper. I think inserting a paragraph between the first

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and second existing paragraphs highlighting or streamlining the authors' findings would be appropriate and helpful to the reader.

I would also suggest that the authors include a species list either as a table (my preference) or as supplementary information.

I am not an expert in the statistical methods and modeling employed, so I am unable to comment here. However, I think the authors' explained their methods well.

Specific suggestions:

Pg 17888 lines 10-17 should be placed at end of the Introduction, not stuck in the middle

Fig 2 would be more effective if there was some way to tie it back to Table 1 (perhaps numbering the stations in Fig 2?). This would allow the reader to easily connect Figs 2 and 3 to the site locations without having to look back at the lat/lon.

Fig 5 scale bars are difficult to see; could be placed in same location on each panel on black background

There are some minor grammatical and spelling errors throughout the paper that should be checked and corrected

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