

320 years of modern sea surface pH and SST variability in the South Pacific from coral proxy records

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Marine calcification is a key indicator of global climate change, i.e. ocean acidification (OA) and warming of sea surface temperature (SST) have led to a significant increase in anthropogenic CO₂ emissions. In the high-latitude North Atlantic and the tropical Pacific, coral-based reconstructions of SST and sea surface pH (pH_{sfc}) have been used to study climate change and its impact on marine ecosystems. However, the historical variability of SST and pH_{sfc} in the South Pacific has remained largely unknown. Here, we present a 320-year reconstruction of SST and pH_{sfc} in the South Pacific from coral proxy records. The reconstruction is based on the analysis of 10 coral cores from the French Polynesia, covering the period from 1690 to 2012 CE. The reconstruction shows a clear trend of increasing SST and decreasing pH_{sfc} over the period, consistent with the expected response to anthropogenic climate change. The reconstruction also shows significant interannual and decadal variability in both SST and pH_{sfc}, which is likely driven by natural climate variability. The reconstruction is compared to instrumental SST and pH_{sfc} records, and shows a high degree of agreement. The reconstruction is used to study the impact of anthropogenic climate change on the South Pacific marine ecosystem, and to assess the risk of coral bleaching and other climate change impacts. The reconstruction is also used to study the impact of natural climate variability on the South Pacific marine ecosystem, and to assess the risk of coral bleaching and other climate change impacts. The reconstruction is a valuable tool for understanding the history of climate change in the South Pacific, and for assessing the risk of future climate change impacts.