

THE FISHES OF MICHAELMAS CAY, NORTH QUEENSLAND.

By

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(Plate i, figs. 1-6, and Figure 1.)

Michaelmas Cay is a small islet on the Great Barrier Reef, about twenty-seven miles due north-east of Cairns, North Queensland. It was chosen as a site for sinking a bore by the Great Barrier Reef Committee of Brisbane, and the late Charles Hedley superintended the work of geological investigation there. Mr. Tom Iredale, of the Australian Museum, and myself were the guests of Mr. Hedley on the islet from 15th May to 13th June, 1926, when we were able to make extensive zoological collections.

The kindness and many courtesies of Mr. Hedley cannot now be adequately acknowledged, since he passed away in Sydney soon after the completion of his work on Michaelmas Cay.

The members of the boring party, Messrs. Eric and Donald Duffield, T. Hughes, and M. T. Bloomer, and the cook, Mr. C. Horridge, greatly assisted in the formation of collections. Mr. A. J. Moran, proprietor of the Strand Hotel, Cairns, did much to make our stay there an enjoyable one.

COLLECTING.

Since an offshore wind of a dangerous character blew nearly all the time we spent on the islet, little line-fishing was done from the catamaran placed at our disposal by Mr. Hedley. Most of the collecting was done on the coral reef, which, however, was only exposed during our stay for about three days per fortnight. Here it was noticed that some kinds of fishes were found only in certain types of coral or coral-growths. *Seriatopora hystrix* sheltered *Tetradrachmum aruanum* and *Gobiodon verticalis*. *Apogon savayensis* was only found in the Staghorn Coral, *Acropora hebes*. *Chromis lepisurus* lived in schools in large clumps of coral in the deeper water between the islet and the outer reef. The relationships of fishes to corals, and whether any commensalism exists between them, would form an interesting subject for study, and might reveal a balanced evolution between some fishes and their coral shelters.

At night, Mr. Eric Duffield and I sometimes waded and speared fish by lantern-light, or scooped them into a net as they floated.