



## Pôster – Ecologia e Conservação

### Floating alien coral: a journey through the oceans

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Ocean plastic pollution is a global concern. Plastic ingestion by animals and their capability to absorb chemicals are increasing scientific and non-scientific community attention. Recently, plastic debris was reported in the deep sea, indicating that anthropogenic effects are probably reaching even the most unexplored places on Earth. One plastic derivate highly consumed, and commonly found in the ocean is polystyrene foam (Styrofoam). Besides the pollution problem itself, Styrofoam can become a substrate for some sessile organisms and due to its buoyancy properties, becomes a dispersion vector for them. Once the organism is attached to the floating substrate, it can drift through the wind-driven currents. Here, we report the first record of *Tubastraea coccinea* floating attached to Styrofoam in São Sebastião, Brazil. Commonly known as sun corals, *T. coccinea* is an invasive azooxanthellate scleractinian. The first record of the species in Brazil occurred in the 1980s, on oil and gas platforms in the Campos Basin, Rio de Janeiro state. Nowadays, *T. coccinea* can be found on approximately 3500km through the Brazilian coastline, on natural and artificial substrates. Due to the lack of natural predators, rapid reproduction and extensive defense mechanisms, the sun coral has been spreading rapidly on the Brazilian coast, affecting marine biodiversity and modifying ecosystem functions. Many efforts are being made to control, and even try to reverse the situation of sun coral in Brazil. Now, we have a new sun coral propagation manner to worry about.

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