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Do invasive corals alter coral reef processes? An empirical approach evaluating reef fish trophic interactions

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1 **Do invasive corals alter coral reef processes? An empirical approach**
2 **evaluating reef fish trophic interactions**

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15 **ABSTRACT**

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17 Understanding how invasive species affect key ecological interactions and ecosystem
18 processes is imperative for the management of invasions. We evaluated the effects of
19 invasive corals (*Tubastraea* spp.) on fish trophic interactions in an Atlantic coral reef.
20 Remote underwater video cameras were used to examine fish foraging activity (bite
21 rates and food preferences) on invasive cover levels. Using a model selection approach,
22 we found that fish feeding rates declined with increased invasive cover. For Roving
23 Herbivores (RH) and Sessile Invertivores (SI), an abrupt reduction of fish feeding rates
24 corresponded with higher invasive cover, while feeding rates of Territorial Herbivores
25 (TH) and Mobile Invertivores (MI) decreased linearly with cover increase. Additionally,
26 some fish trophic groups, such as RH, SI and Omnivores (OM), had lower densities in

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