

# **UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF 'SHIPWRECK'**

## **BRINGING CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE TOGETHER**



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# **UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF 'SHIPWRECK'**

- **WHAT DOES THE TERM 'SHIPWRECK' MEAN**
  - **Has similar meaning to the word 'accident'**
  - **Construct of language that describes effects, errors, faults or mistakes that culminate in a wrecking event**
  - **Describes what we don't know or wish to understand about the event**

# UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF 'SHIPWRECK'

## ○ WHAT IS CULTURAL PRE-DISPOSITION ?

- Describes a process that has been recognised but not clearly defined
- *'Shipwrecks represent general cultural processes of which they were a part prior to wrecking. If natural and cultural processes affecting maritime activities reflect patterned regularities, sites resulting from them will be patterned and will best be interpreted in a wide sociocultural context'*

*Murphy, L.E. (ed.), 1993, Dry Tortugas National Park: submerged cultural resources assessment. Santa Fe: Submerged Cultural Resources Unit, Southwest Region National Park Service.*

- Represents a confluence of cultural and environmental evidence

# **UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF 'SHIPWRECK'**

- **CULTURAL FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SHIPWRECK**
  - **Economic factors**
    - **Foreign and domestic competition**
    - **Marine insurance and vessel classification**
    - **Vessel construction, repairs and maintenance**
    - **Equipment, crewing and provisioning**

# **UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF 'SHIPWRECK'**

- **CULTURAL FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SHIPWRECK**
  - **Technological factors**
    - **Vessel design and handling**
    - **Problems with sailing vessels**
    - **Problems with steam powered vessels**
    - **Construction materials and techniques**

# **UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF 'SHIPWRECK'**

- **CULTURAL FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SHIPWRECK**
  - **Hydrographics and navigation**
    - **Navigation instruments**
    - **Charts and sailing directions**
    - **Lighthouses and navigation aids**

# **UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF 'SHIPWRECK'**

- **CULTURAL FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SHIPWRECK**
  - **Problems with cargo or vessel employment**
    - **Improper loading of vessels**
    - **Hazardous cargoes**
    - **Risk associated with vessel employment**

# **UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF 'SHIPWRECK'**

- **CULTURAL FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SHIPWRECK**
  - **Human factors**
    - **Incompetency of masters, officers or crew**
    - **Drunkenness, fatigue and disease**
    - **Piracy and barratry**



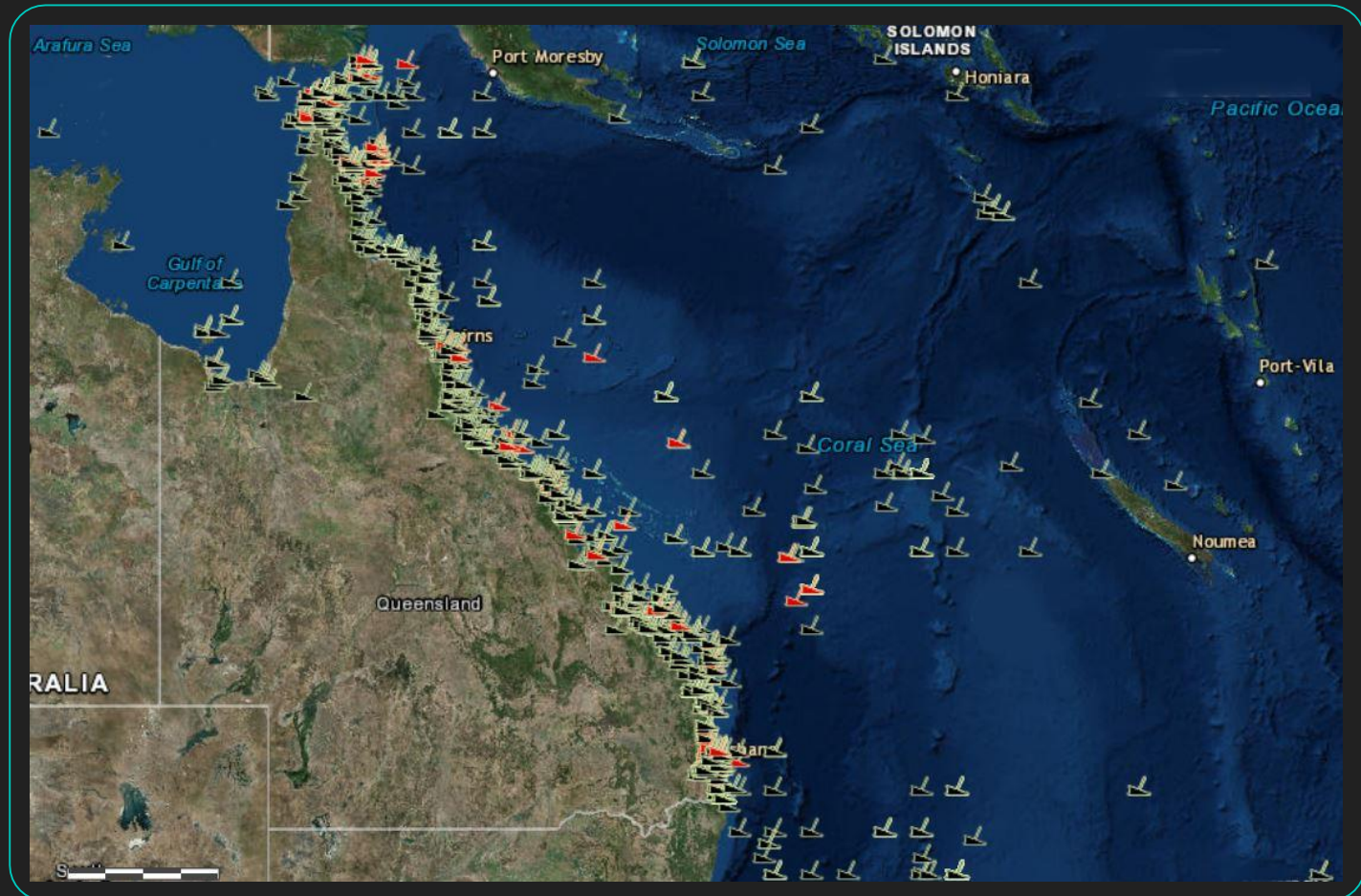
# **UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF 'SHIPWRECK'**

- **ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS**
  - **Seasonal weather patterns**
  - **Severe weather events**
  - **Regional geomorphology**
  - **Tides and currents**
  - **Geomagnetism**

# UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF 'SHIPWRECK'

## THE NORTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIAN REGION

- Coral Sea and the Great Barrier Reef
- Includes 520 shipwrecks 1791 - 1901
- Detailed wrecking event data for 167
- 67 % caused by cultural factors
- 73 % of vessels undermanned
- 68 % wrecked during night time



# UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF 'SHIPWRECK'

- **Case study: Raine Island Entrance**
  - **Surveyed in 1844 by Captain Blackwood in HMS Fly**
  - **Rejected Black Rocks Entrance**
  - **Constructed Raine Island Beacon**
  - **Ship trap that claimed 47 vessels**
  - **Majority of vessels wrecked due to cultural factors**



# UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF 'SHIPWRECK'

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING THIS PRESENTATION

QUESTIONS ?

