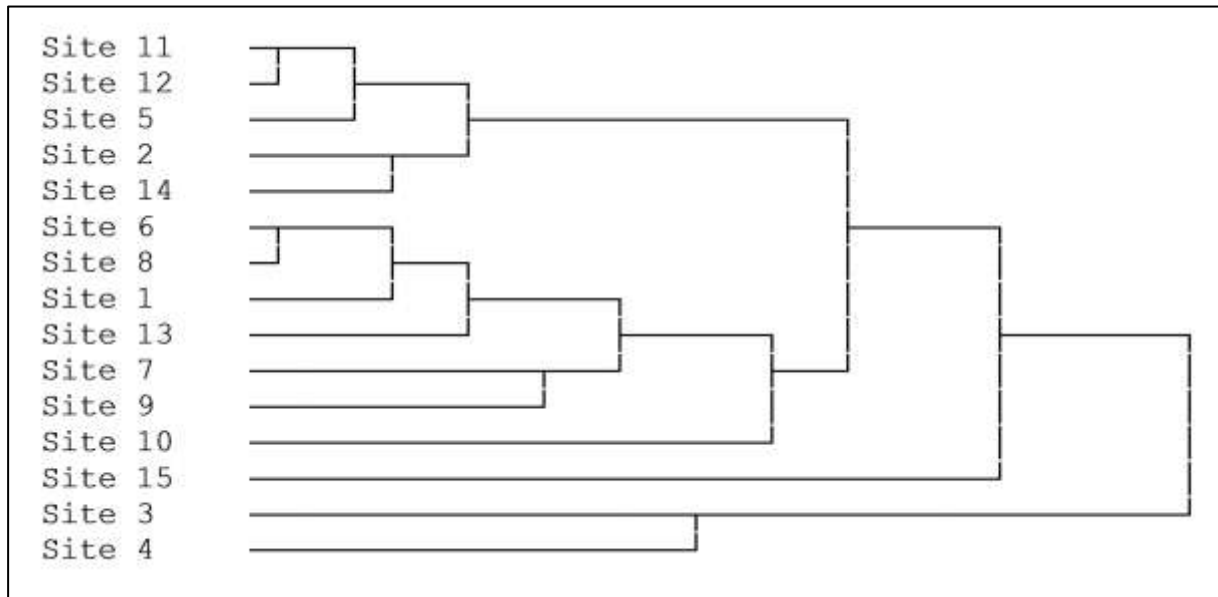


**TABLE S1.** Location and characteristic environmental conditions of each study site. Please refer to 'Study Sites' section of article for explanations of how parameters were measured.

Site	Coordinates (centre of site)		Maximum Depth	Exposure	Water Clarity
1	012°11.75 S	049°14.67 E	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
2	012°11.32 S	049°14.44 E	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
3	012°09.22 S	049°14.29 E	Shallow	Sheltered	Turbid
4	012°09.38 S	049°15.37 E	Shallow	Sheltered	Turbid
5	012°10.50 S	049°15.82 E	Shallow	Moderate	Moderate
6	012°10.89 S	049°16.28 E	Shallow	Sheltered	Moderate
7	012°11.06 S	049°16.78 E	Shallow	Moderate	Moderate
8	012°11.76 S	049°17.67 E	Moderate	Sheltered	Clear
9	012°12.50 S	049°17.97 E	Moderate	Exposed	Moderate
10	012°12.14 S	049°18.24 E	Deep	Exposed	Clear
11	012°10.26 S	049°14.34 E	Shallow	Moderate	Moderate
12	012°10.57 S	049°14.23 E	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
13	012°11.06 S	049°15.71 E	Shallow	Sheltered	Moderate
14	012°11.20 S	049°15.97 E	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
15	012°12.71 S	049°18.75 E	Deep	Exposed	Clear

**TABLE S2.** Sampling effort of study sites during 2008 field survey. LIT: Line Intercept Transect methodology, REA: Rapid Ecological Assessment methodology.

Site	LIT (pairs of transects)	REA (belt transects)
1	16	1
2	12	1
3	6	1
4	12	4
5	15	3
6	15	3
7	9	2
8	2	1
9	6	1
10	11	2
11	5	1
12	7	1
13	11	2
14	9	3
15	6	2



**FIGURE S1.** Dendrogram using average linkage (within groups) cluster method and Pearson correlation measure, indicating similarity of sites in terms of Alcyonacea community composition, i.e. median Relative Abundance (RA) of each Alcyonacea genus and mean Generic Richness (GR).