



# CTA-223-Why Share your Observations?

Be Part of the New Approach

The World Federation for Coral Reef Conservation  
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## Why and how to share what you see.....



### Why share research data?

Sharing information stimulates science and wellbeing. When researchers or end users choose to make their data publicly available, they are allowing their work to contribute *far* beyond their original intended purpose.

### See how you can start sharing!!

1. Browse to WFCRC's Dashboard to see the map and its submissions (*the survey form can also be accessed in here*): [WFCRC Dashboard](#)
2. Browse to the survey form to get started with submitting your own submission: [WFCRC Survey123](#)

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The benefits of data sharing are immense. When researchers make their data public, they increase transparency and trust, they enable others to reproduce and validate their findings, and ultimately, contribute to the pace of scientific discovery by allowing others to reuse and build on top of their data.

The ability to see citizen scientists or any observation on a map, in almost real time adds to the real and relevant experience and value of end users of the [Collaborative Beach and Coral Reef Registry](#).

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Addresses many current and long reaching issues that improve and monitor the life cycles of some ocean residents.

Any initiative, event, research, photo etc., is viewable by all, if a location component is present, like a latitude/longitude location. The more information the observer can share, the more real value is obtained and shared. The ability to see other relative observations in relation to each other, adds an additional layer of value for each location.

There are *many* reasons to share your observations with other residents and organizations who are as concerned about our marine environments as you are. First and foremost, might be the knowledge that you as an observer and concerned citizen, shared a situation that may benefit other residents and researchers in real time. For instance:

1. While on the beach, you might see dangerous areas or items that may harm someone. For instance, broken glass or a dead animal that may be harmful to children or dogs that are enjoying the beach. Polluted beach areas with water quality issues should also be reported. So, as a stake holder, this is a convenient way to report safety issues.
2. As a diver, you may witness coral bleaching in an area you are interested in. This would be the opportunity for you to share your observations with organizations like NFWF, NOAA, National Marine Sanctuary, Monroe County, city and county planners and an [ocean of scientists](#) (see Current Solution), with what you have seen in everyday life and not in a canned research study. You may see or know of a leaking or non-function septic system and would like the governing body to know about it. Most wastewater from the urban cities in Southern Florida seeps into the coastal water from septic system and cesspool effluent (Downs, 2005).
3. Some people are calling for a new approach to coral reef conservation. And the development of the digital twin of the environment we want to save, is certainly the approach we need now rather than later.
4. As new coral growth activities happen, to see where these activities are on a map will help keep the concerned public abreast of recent developments like the work that [Ocean Rescue Alliance](#) is doing and the [Plant a million corals](#).

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5. As marine managers, scientists, expressed an interest in seeing the benefit in having as much open-source data available as possible for those groups or individuals to be able to achieve their goals. Having citizen science as a function on the Registry, provides those groups/individuals data in a single location and at a unique level (i.e. individual dive logs, individual beach reports, etc.). The data repository provided by the Registry is not like any other alert avenues out there!
6. As an educator, the Registry is a helpful way to show children and adults the value of citizen science. Further, it allows them to see their worth in society to make a change for the better from their own backyard!
7. Research purposes, how the ecosystem affects the environment. Not just from a marine biology perspective but also how it affects all of us.
8. Also, all these illegal dumping, or unsafe practices from these chemical or other companies.
9. Specific Florida reasons. There are a total of 36.3 miles of beaches that line the Florida Keys and attract both tourists and marine life. Unfortunately, 10.2 miles of this, or 28% of the beaches that line the Keys are deemed critically eroded. So far, with the effort of the state of Florida, 1.4 miles of the beaches have been restored and maintained leaving 8.8mi left in critical state. The two regions that have been hit the hardest are the Middle Keys and the Lower Keys. The Middle Keys region spans from Tavernier Creek to Pigeon Key and currently has 3.5 miles of critically eroded beaches along its shoreline. The hardest hit of all the sub-regions in the Keys, is the span from Pigeon Key to Key West, Florida. This region alone has 6.7 miles of critically eroded beaches (Bureau, 2008). Your observations of these specific areas in need of attention will help provide feedback to coastal planners how best to proceed with coastal planning, or not.

The identification and monitoring of these critically eroded beaches in the Keys (10.2 mi), and the well-publicized decline of coral reefs in the Keys along with the science of coral reefs, forms the data framework for **The Collaborative Beach and Coral Registry**.



In this instance our organization (WFCRC) along with The John Pennenkamp Coral Reef State Park mounted an effort to jump divers into The South Creek area, in Key Largo, Florida to clean up the mangroves in the creek (in blue).



The contents of the cleanup are available to see our [M4O video for The March for the Oceans event](#).

These are just a few of the currently observed benefits of sharing what you see and know, with other likeminded people. As we gather more data *over time* many other benefits and patterns will develop increasing the functionality of the **Registry**.

The heavy lifting of creating the portal in an open architecture, GIS environment *Phase I* -Completed. *Phase II*- is now ready to absorb your observations into a worldwide geo-portal, with special interest given to our Florida, Keys Model. For any location, all observations will be associated with your name and contact information. It could be that an organization might be looking for someone with your experience in your area. Your name will be associated with the data you share into perpetuity.

*"Through partnerships and science-based monitoring, comprehensive data collection will be used to draft impactful solutions and disseminate accurate data to the Nature Coast community on both the natural communities and human related activities impacting the NCA. By working with a wide variety of influencers such as Universities, subject matter experts, area stakeholders and the public, minimizing impacts to the resources while promoting sustainable use is a primary focus of this plan." (Florida Department of Environmental Protection Tallahassee, FL 32399 www.floridacoasts.org)*



“To Begin your journey in sharing what you see and what you know, **join** The World Federation for Coral Reef Conservation, and let us know something about you.

Once you join you will receive **“the share link”** to begin, and for the first 25, end users organizations you will receive a free plasticized version of the this chart to use while diving to identify bleaching coral and how to share data with the WFCRC Registry. See us at [www.wfcrc.org](http://www.wfcrc.org) and start sharing what you see……

*Support your local coral reef conservation organization.*

Thank You  
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