



CTA-224-Do we have to say “goodbye” to coral reefs? Request for Support

The World Federation for Coral Reef Conservation
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By Vic Ferguson-WFCRC

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SEBRING, Florida- *Worldwide Reef Decline has been with us since 1977 and shows no signs of reversal. What ever the reason, we have made no progress in stopping reef decline, it is still with us. It’s like a cancer that we can’t cure within the necessary time frame for coral reefs. The life cycle of reefs does not match the time frame for doing business. In South Florida, a 2016 survey of large corals from Key Biscayne to Fort Lauderdale found that about 66% of the corals were dead or reduced to less than half of their live tissue.*^[81]

As you watch this thought provoking video and realize that what happens in one ocean can and will happen in others and we need to take notice. It is important that we

see the effects of the “canary in the coal mine” as it plays out in our own backyard and do what we can, now! With our best effort to alter climate change, success has been minimal at best and shows little sign of reversal. If we are not able to keep coral reefs from disappearing, we should capture them for all to see in the future. Put them all in a “tree museum or a coral museum”, or a Registry for National Treasures.

According to Brian Skoloff of The Christian Science Monitor, "If the reefs vanished, experts say, hunger, poverty and political instability could ensue."^[87] Since countless sea life depend on the reefs for shelter and protection from predators, the extinction of the reefs would ultimately create a domino effect that would trickle down to the many human societies that depend on those fish for food and livelihood. There has been a 44% decline over the last 20 years in the Florida Keys, and up to 80% in the Caribbean alone.^[88]

By Damien Cave

March 25, 2022

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SYDNEY, Australia — A wide stretch of the Great Barrier Reef has been hit by a sixth mass bleaching event, the marine park's authority said on Friday, an alarming milestone for the coral wonder that points to the continued threat of climate change and greenhouse gas emissions.

Government scientists who used helicopters and small planes to survey 750 separate reefs across hundreds of miles last week found severe bleaching among 60 percent of the corals.

[Bleaching events](#) have now occurred in four of the past seven years, with 2022 offering a disturbing first — a mass bleaching in a year of La Niña, when more rain and cooler temperatures were supposed to provide a moment of respite for sensitive corals to recover.

“We’re seeing that coral reefs can’t cope with the current rate of warming and the frequency of climate change,” said Dr. Neal Cantin, a coral biologist who led one of the teams observing the state of the reef. “We need to slow down that warming rate as fast as possible.”

Coral bleaching is often called a climate change warning system, a canary in the coal mine of a struggling earth. It indicates that corals are under intense stress from the waters around them, [which have been growing steadily warmer](#). Last year, scientists recorded the hottest year on record for the world’s oceans — [for the sixth year in a row](#).

First, the stress shows up on coral reefs in bright, almost neon colors as coral, which is an animal, expels the algae that lives inside it and provides the coral with food. The corals go on to turn white as bone but can still recover if temperatures cool for a long enough period.

Scientists report that [has become increasingly rare](#). Between 2009 and 2019, a sweeping [study](#) from last year found, 14 percent of the world’s coral reefs were lost. Along the 1,500 miles of the Great Barrier Reef — a stunning ecosystem that can be seen from space — there are still large, healthy sections of coral, with sharks, turtles, rays and fish the color of crayons.

But all along the natural wonder, there are also signs of damage. The blocks of underwater graveyards, with gray fields of brittle, dead coral covered in wisps of ugly algae, have been growing with each mass bleaching since the first one occurred in 1998.

So, while we may not have to say “goodbye to coral reefs” we do have a responsibility to make the effort to alter the outcome. Some are saying we need a new approach... save what we can now.

Support your local coral reef conservation organization.

Thank You

Vic Ferguson

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