



SEAFAN BleachWatch Program

CURRENT CONDITIONS REPORT #20240731

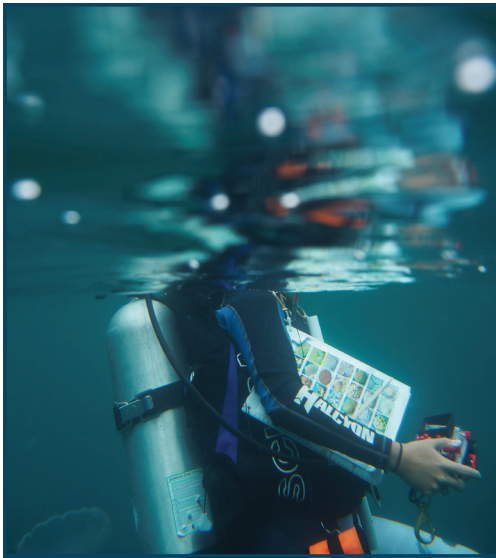
JULY 31, 2024



Summary: Based on climate predictions, current conditions and field observations, the ongoing threat for thermal stress that causes coral bleaching in the Kristin Jacobs Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area (Coral ECA), from Miami-Dade to Martin Counties, is MODERATE.

ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

“Florida’s Disturbance Response Monitoring (DRM) program is a collaborative effort among local, state, and federal environmental managers, scientists, conservation organizations, and coral restoration practitioners. The primary goal of the DRM program is to provide an annual status of bleaching along the reef tract. The data collected from monitoring Florida’s Coral Reef (FCR) helps to identify resilient areas of the reef, promote appropriate management



or conservation strategies for reef areas based on resilience, and aid management in research and restoration decisions. The DRM program offers the opportunity for partners from across the jurisdiction of FCR to work together under a unified effort. This collaboration across agencies, universities and organizations is becoming more important as the threats to the reef continue to grow.” (Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, 2024).

DEP’s Coral Reef Conservation Program continues to participate in the DRM Program and plans to monitor within the Coral ECA this year from Aug. 1 to Oct. 31. For insights into past data and more information about the 2023 thermal stress event, the [2023 DRM Summer Report](#) is now available.

Figure 1. DEP Coral Reef Conservation Staff surfacing from a DRM monitoring dive in Miami-Dade County.





OBSERVER NETWORK

BleachWatch has received 28 reports since May 1, 2024. Geographically, there were four reports from Palm Beach County, nine reports from Broward County and nine reports from Miami-Dade County.

Of the 28 reports received, 22 indicated coral colonies were exhibiting signs of paling, partial or full bleaching. At those sites, the overall percentage of coral exhibiting signs of thermal stress was 1% to 10%. Coral bleaching was observed on brain, branching and boulder coral colonies.

Coral disease continues to be observed along Florida's Coral Reef. Eight reports noted observations of coral disease. Geographically, there was one report from Palm Beach County, three reports from Broward County and four reports from Miami-Dade County. At those sites where disease was observed, the overall percentage of coral exhibiting signs of disease was 1% to 10%. Tissue loss was observed on leaf/plate/sheet, branching, boulder and brain coral colonies. There was one report of a growth anomaly on a boulder coral in Miami-Dade County.

The next Current Conditions Report will be issued in **August**. Given the increasing temperatures, SEAFAN encourages the BleachWatch network to [submit reports](#) on coral bleaching and disease after every dive on the reef. This includes reports of "No Bleaching" and "No Disease." **Frequent observer reports will be critical for determining where coral bleaching is taking place this warm season.**

For information about NOAA satellite heat stress products, please visit [NOAA Coral Reef Watch](#) or email CoralReefWatch@NOAA.gov. For information about [SEAFAN BleachWatch](#), please email Coral@FloridaDEP.gov.



Figure 2. BleachWatch Observer, Massima Ponce, with the University of Miami's Rescue a Reef Lab, identified a diseased soft coral in Miami-Dade County.

Offer your feedback on the BleachWatch Program through our [survey](#).

[Learn more about the current conditions on coral reefs in the Florida Keys.](#)

Program Partners

