

The EarthTrends Information Guide for Coral Reefs



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Often called the rainforests of the marine world, coral reefs are among the most biologically diverse ecosystems on the planet. Reefs provide surrounding communities with food, medicine, storm protection, and income from tourism. However, coral reefs are particularly vulnerable to human activities such as coastal development, sedimentation, pollution, and destructive fishing practices.

Nearly sixty percent of the world's coral reefs are currently threatened as a result of human activities. The continued warming of the planet due to increasing greenhouse gas emissions creates additional stresses; rising sea surface temperatures are pushing many reef systems beyond their tolerance threshold, causing corals to "bleach," and high atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide are increasing ocean acidity, degrading the health of the calcium carbonate skeletons of coral and effectively threatening entire ecosystems. Although corals can be resilient animals, the cumulative impact of these threats dramatically increases the likelihood of mass coral mortality events.

Find the following **Coral Reefs Information** and much more on **EarthTrends**.

SEARCHABLE DATABASE

[http://earthtrends.wri.org/searchable_db/index.php?theme=1]

Fisheries: Population within 100 km of coast

Species: Scleractinia coral genera, number

[http://earthtrends.wri.org/searchable_db/index.php?theme=7]

Trade in Wildlife: Global net trade in live coral

MAPS

[http://earthtrends.wri.org/maps_spatial/index.php?theme=1]

Coral Bleaching Events and Sea Surface Temperature Anomaly Hot Spots, 1997 - 1998

Natural Coastal Features

FEATURE ARTICLES

[<http://earthtrends.wri.org/features/index.php?theme=7>]

Coral Reefs: Assessing the Threat

Reefs at Risk in the Caribbean

LINKS

World Resources Institute - Reefs at Risk [<http://www.reefsatrisk.wri.org>]

International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) [<http://www.icriforum.org>]

International Coral Reef Network (ICRAN) [<http://www.icran.org>]

Reef Watch [<http://www.reefwatch.asn.au>]