



SEAFAN BleachWatch Program

CURRENT CONDITIONS REPORT #20240628

JUNE 28, 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 LOW.

ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

The BleachWatch Network contributed to critical monitoring of Florida's coral reef habitat during the 2023 thermal stress event. BleachWatch reports helped aid in resource management by contributing to monitoring the health status of the reef, identifying where severe bleaching was occurring, determining recovery timelines and helping to understand the patterns of thermal stress occurrence.

On April 15, 2024, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) announced that the world is currently experiencing its fourth global bleaching event:

“From February 2023 to April 2024, significant coral bleaching has been documented in both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres of each major ocean basin. However, it is important to remember that coral bleaching does not always lead to coral death. If the stress driving the bleaching diminishes, corals can recover with reefs maintaining their biodiversity and continuing to provide the ecosystem services that we rely on.”
(ICRI Press Release, 2024).

The Florida Coral Reef Resilience Program conducted follow-up monitoring of the 2023 thermal stress event throughout Florida's Coral Reef in early 2024. **Observers and local researchers saw signs of recovery from thermal stress and many corals regained their symbiotic algae, slowly recovering from last summer's bleaching event.**



Figure 1. Andrew Ibarra with NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries documented signs of coral recovery on Florida's Coral Reef over eight months (7/30/23, 8/18/23, 9/20/23 and 3/14/24). Coral colonies regained their symbiotic algae and returned to their normal coloration after the 2023 summer bleaching event.





OBSERVER NETWORK

BleachWatch has received 11 reports since Jan. 1, 2024. Geographically, there were five reports from Broward County and five reports from Miami-Dade County. One report was submitted from Monroe County and the data was sent to the [Florida Keys BleachWatch Program](#).

Of the 10 reports received for the Coral ECA since the beginning of this year, five indicated coral colonies were exhibiting signs of paling or partial bleaching. At those sites, the overall percentage of coral exhibiting signs of thermal stress was 1% to 10%. Coral bleaching was observed on brain and boulder corals.

Two reports noted observations of coral disease in Broward County. At those two sites, the overall percentage of coral exhibiting signs of disease was 1% to 10%. Tissue loss was observed on two colonies of boulder corals. 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 **July**. 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 most severe 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. A healthy SEAFAN-tagged Mountainous Star Coral in Miami-Dade County. Photo by BleachWatch Instructor Juliana Crilo.

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

Program Partners

