



Florida Reef Tract Coral Disease Outbreak

The Florida Reef Tract is currently experiencing one of the most widespread and lethal coral disease outbreaks on record worldwide.

Key factors of the outbreak include:

- **Large geographic range.** Over half of the Florida Reef Tract has been affected – over 96,000 acres.
- **Duration of the outbreak.** Disease has continued to spread for over three years without interruption.
- **Number of coral species affected.** 20+ of approximately 45 species of Florida's reef-building corals have been affected.
- **Significantly high prevalence.** Within certain species, disease is seen in 66-100 out of every 100 colonies surveyed.
- **High rates of disease transmission and mortality.** Once a coral begins to lose living tissue, observations show that the colony will die within weeks to months.



In FY 17 & FY 18, the Florida Legislature and Governor Scott allocated \$1 Million to support Florida's coral reefs, including disease response activities.

Priority coral disease response activities include:

- **Coral disease investigation training** on coral disease identification, ecology, and investigation techniques.
- **Coral disease surveys and fixed site monitoring** to document the spatial extent, mortality rates, and species-specific impacts.
- **Strategic sampling and laboratory analysis** to identify the presence of pathogens potentially responsible for the disease outbreak.
- **Data management and epidemiological analysis** to analyze relevant datasets and determine what factors may influence disease progression.
- **Sampling plan and disease intervention workshops** to determine priority data needs and potential management options to mitigate disease impacts.
- **Intervention experiments and field trials** to assess the effectiveness of treatment techniques and prevent the further spread of disease.



For More Information Visit:

www.floridadep.gov/fco/coral/content/florida-reef-tract-coral-disease-outbreak



Coral Disease Outbreak on the Florida Reef Tract 2014-2018

The loss of coral colonies across the Florida Reef Tract is unprecedented.

Key factors are high rates of disease transmission and mortality combined with the number of impacted species.

Funding to date is being used to assess the scale and severity of the outbreak and identify any potential primary and/or secondary causes.

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The alarming rate of continued spread of disease requires immediate field trials of intervention techniques to identify the most effective treatments for saving the remaining coral colonies across the entire Florida Reef Tract.

