



Florida

CORAL REEF LOCAL ACTION STRATEGIES



Spanning over 300 nautical miles from the Dry Tortugas to Stuart, the Florida reef tract is the third longest reef system in the world, and one of the greatest natural resources in Florida and the United States. These beautiful coral reefs, lying just off the beaches of the most urbanized coastal region in the state, are an extraordinary biological, geological and economic resource. Supporting a rich and diverse assemblage of more than 6000 species, Florida's reefs are a marvelous source of recreation, education, scientific research, and public inspiration. Roughly one third of Florida's 18 million residents live within this region, which attracts over 38 million visitors a year. A study of natural and artificial reefs in southeast Florida and the Florida Keys showed that fishing, diving and boating-related expenditures generate \$6.3 billion in sales and income and sustain more than 71,000 jobs annually.

Led by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Coral Reef Conservation Program, and actively engaging over sixty regional agencies, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and stakeholder organizations, Florida's Local Action Strategy, named the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative, identifies the key threats to the health of southeast Florida's reefs and implements priority actions needed to reduce those threats.

Public Outreach and Awareness

- Creating and distributing outreach materials including brochures, portable exhibits, websites and signage at boat ramps
- Developing and distributing English and Spanish language public service announcements in print, audio and video formats
- Providing coral reef education kits and teacher training workshops for educators

Fishing, Diving and Other Uses

- Using aerial surveys to determine vessel usage patterns on southeast Florida's coral reefs, and in-water surveys to investigate links between vessel anchoring and reef injuries
- Working with stakeholders to identify concerns and explore options for developing a management plan for the northern third of the Florida reef tract

Land-Based Sources of Pollution and Water Quality

- Mapping the extent of the coral reef tract and characterizing benthic habitats
- Conducting coral reef condition evaluation and monitoring
- Researching the sources and flux of pollution transported to reef communities and the links between pollution and coral reef health

Maritime Industry and Coastal Construction Impacts

- Identifying innovative technologies and establishing best management practices to avoid and minimize impacts to coral reefs associated with coastal construction
- Developing regional standard operating procedures for rapid response to, and restoration of, coral reef injuries

For more information, please visit:

www.allislandscorals.org

www.southeastfloridareefs.net