

U.S. Coral Reef Task Force



*Working to preserve and protect
coral reef ecosystems*

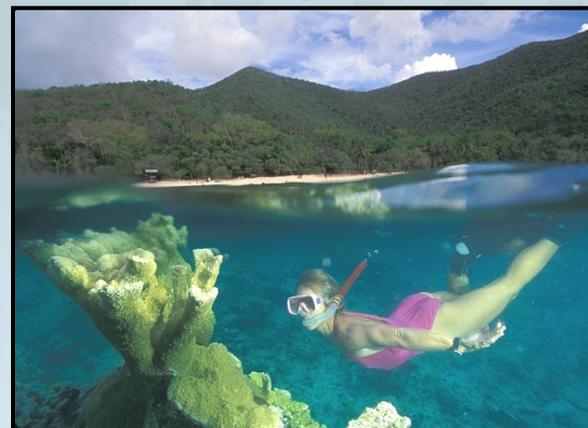
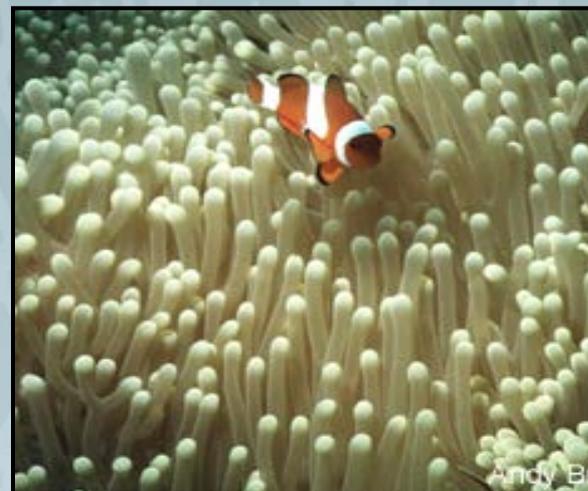
Value of Coral Reef Ecosystems

Coral reefs cover only 1/10 of 1% of the ocean floor, but provide habitat for over 25% of all marine species



Value of Coral Reef Ecosystems

- \$6-10 billion U.S. tourism industry
- 50% of federally managed fisheries rely on reef ecosystems
- 500 million people in 60 countries rely on reefs for food, income, and protection



Coral Reefs are in Danger



- It is estimated that 70 percent of the worlds coral reefs are threatened, and 20 percent of those are damaged beyond repair
- Human overexploitation, global climate change, pollution, vessel groundings

The US Coral Reef Task Force

Established: by Presidential Executive Order 13089, June 1998

Purpose: To lead, coordinate, and strengthen U.S. actions to conserve coral reef ecosystems both domestically and internationally.

U.S. CRTF History

1997

- UN International Year of the Reef
- Puerto Rico and USVI added to All Islands Strategy
- Discussions on establishment of US Coral Reef Task Force initiated - draft Executive Order reviewed

1998

- International Year of the Ocean
- US Coral Reef Task Force Established by Executive Order 13089

2000

- Coral Reef Conservation Act passed

USCRTF Members

12 Federal Agencies, 2 States, 5 Territories & Commonwealths, & 3 Freely Associated States:



U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Structure

Int'l Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)

USCRTF MEMBERS
12 Federal Agencies
7 States, Territories,
Commonwealths
3 Freely Associated States

All Islands
Coral Reef
Committee
(AIC)

Steering Committee
(Office of the Secretariat (NOAA & DOI))

Working Groups

Working Groups Include: Education & Outreach, Injury Response and Mitigation, Watersheds, Climate Change, and Ocean Acidification

Steering Committee

- Comprised of a lead staff level Point of Contact for each USCRTF member
- Co-chaired by NOAA and DOI
- Serves as the primary USCRTF work force
- Oversees implementation of USCRTF duties
- Operates through bi-annual meetings, monthly conference calls, and list serve

How We Work

USCRTF serves as a forum to:

- Foster Partnership
- Strengthen Coordination
- Increase Financial and Technical Resources
- Promote Efficiency
- Improve Effectiveness
- Report on Accomplishments and Outcomes

How We Work

- U.S. CRTF Charter: operations
- No specific authorities or funding
- Agency coral programs connected to and partially informed by, but separate from USCRTF

Where We Work



National Action Plan

to Conserve Coral Reefs (2000)
Prioritized 13 National Goals

Understand Coral Reef Ecosystems:

- **Goal 1:** Map all U.S. coral reefs
- **Goal 2:** Assess, monitor and forecast reef health
- **Goal 3:** Conduct strategic research
- **Goal 4:** Understand social and economic factors

Reduce Impacts of Human Activities:

- **Goal 5:** Improve use of MPAs
- **Goal 6:** Reduce impacts of fishing
- **Goal 7:** Reduce impacts of coastal uses
- **Goal 8:** Reduce impacts of pollution
- **Goal 9:** Restore damaged reefs
- **Goal 10:** Improve outreach and education
- **Goal 11:** Reduce threats to int'l reefs
- **Goal 12:** Reduce impacts from int'l trade
- **Goal 13:** Improve coordination and accountability

Local Action Strategies

Five Priority Threat Areas Were Identified for Local Action:

- Land Based Sources of Pollution
- Overfishing
- Recreational Overuse
- Public Awareness
- Disease, Bleaching, and Climate Change



A Living Reef Gives
Our Islands Life

Overpopulation (American Samoa)

Maritime Industry and Coastal

Invasive Species (Hawaii)

Construction Impacts (Florida)

Kappaphycus striatum



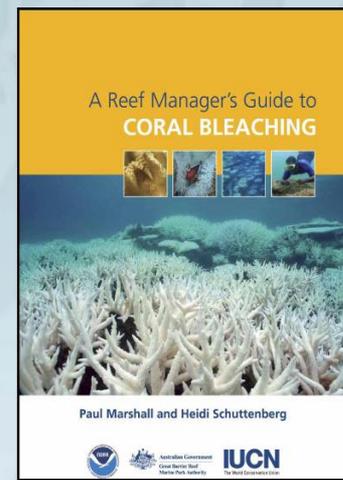
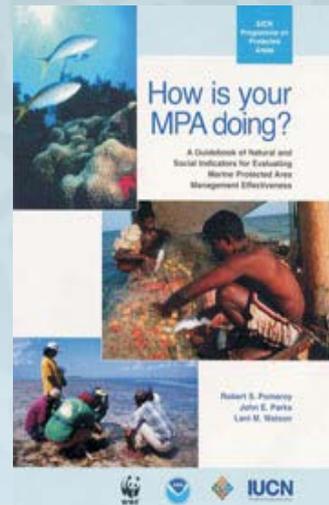
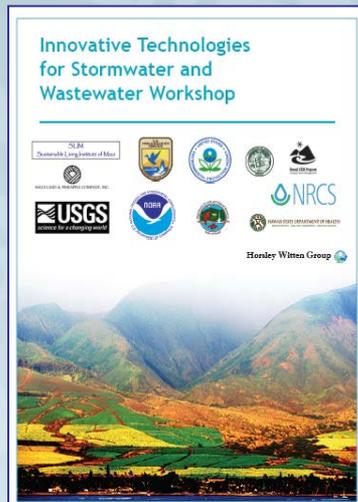
Accomplishments

- Mapped 6,340 square kilometers of U.S. shallow water coral reef ecosystems;
- Report on monitoring activities and reef health in the *State of U.S. Coral Reef Ecosystems* (3 reports: 2002, 2005, & 2008);
- Created Coral Disease and Health Consortium to research the causes of and solutions to disease and other threats;
- Developed A Reef Manager's Guide to Coral Bleaching;
- Assessed jurisdiction efforts to protect coral reef ecosystems through the use of marine protected areas; and
- Completed coral reef economic valuation studies in each jurisdiction.

Accomplishments

The USCRTF provides resources, tools, and training:

- Federal Agency Grant Opportunities
- Enforcement Training – Fisheries Laws and Capacity
- Education Capacity Building
- Innovative Technologies for Stormwater & Wastewater
- Climate Change and Coral Bleaching Response



Accomplishments

Resolutions for Action

- Resolution 25.1: USCRTF Engagement in the National Ocean Policy and Framework for FY11-14 Priority Action
- Resolution 28.2: Climate Change - State/territory specific coral bleaching response plans and/or resilience/adaptation strategies, as well as efforts toward developing *Adapting to Climate Change: A Guide for Reef Managers*; Corals & Climate Adaptation Planning (CCAP) Project
- Resolution 28.1: Watershed Partnership Initiative

Key Priorities



- Regional management needs and local action strategies
- Injury and Mitigation
- Climate change
- Ocean Acidification
- Land-based sources of pollution
- Education and outreach

Kona Resolution

It is clear that the USCRTF, with partners, must significantly increase our collective effort to address the factors over which we can exercise control. The USCRTF must take immediate action to respond to these threats and, in turn, seek to sustain our coral reef ecosystems and the communities that depend upon them.

...Precious time for coral reef ecosystems can be secured through increased protection from land and marine pollution, unsustainable fishing, development, and other stressors, all of which we know can damage coral health.

The time to act is now.

Statement was endorsed at the 20th
USCRTF meeting, August 2008

For More Information

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