

U.S. CORAL REEF TASK FORCE

Coming Together to Save our Coral Reefs



Coral reefs are among the most diverse and biologically complex ecosystems on earth.

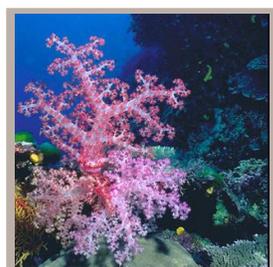
These rainforests of the sea provide economic and environmental services to millions of people as areas of natural beauty and recreation, sources of food, jobs, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and shoreline protection.

Now under threat from multiple stresses that are overwhelming their natural resilience, coral reefs are deteriorating worldwide at alarming rates. An estimated 27% of the world's reefs have already been lost, and 58% are threatened by bleaching, disease, and a variety of human activities including shoreline development, polluted runoff from agricultural and land-use practices, ship groundings, over-harvesting, destructive fishing, and global climate change, http://coral.noaa.gov/gcrmn/Status_2000.pdf



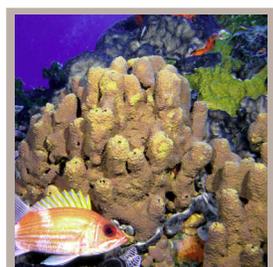
The U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (CRTF) was established in June 11, 1998 to lead the U.S. response to this growing global crisis.

The CRTF includes 11 federal agencies responsible for aspects of coral reef conservation, plus our state and territorial partners. Through the policies set forth in the Executive Order, the federal government was directed to strengthen its stewardship of the nation's reef ecosystems and coral reefs around the world.



The Coral Reef Task Force identified two fundamental themes for immediate and sustained national action:

- Understand coral reef ecosystems and the natural and anthropogenic processes that determine their health and viability;
- Quickly reduce the adverse impacts of human activities on coral reefs and associated ecosystems.



In March of 2000, the CRTF unveiled the National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs, the first U.S. plan to comprehensively address the most pressing threats to coral reefs.

The Action Plan is designed to be the nation's roadmap to more effectively understanding coral reef ecosystems and reducing the adverse impacts of human activities. The Plan responds to the urgency of the current situation, drawing on the expertise and commitment of hundreds of public and private stakeholders.

**Members of the
U.S. Coral Reef
Task Force**

DOC/NOAA

Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration

DOD

Department of Defense

DOI

Department of the Interior

DOJ

Department of Justice

DOS

Department of State

DOT

Department of
Transportation

EPA

Environmental Protection
Agency

NASA

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

NSF

National Science
Foundation

USAID

Agency for International
Development

USDA

Department of Agriculture

State of Florida

State of Hawaii

**Territory of
American Samoa**

Territory of Guam

**Territory of the
U.S. Virgin Islands**

**Commonwealth of
Puerto Rico**

**Commonwealth of
the Northern
Mariana Islands**

Republic of Palau

**Federated States
of Micronesia**

**Republic of the
Marshall Islands**

**Through its members & partners, the CRTF is
working to address the following needs:**

Mapping

CRTF members are undertaking a major effort to develop comprehensive and consistent coral reef ecosystem maps for U.S. reefs. Goal is to map all shallow U.S. reefs by 2007. Most U.S. coral reefs have never been adequately mapped.

Assessments, Inventories, and Monitoring

The National Action Plan calls for building an integrated nationwide coral reef monitoring system to profile and track the health of U.S. coral reefs. Over time, a coordinated coral reef monitoring system will allow for regular assessments of reef health.

Strategic Research

Additional research is needed to improve our knowledge of the processes that regulate the health of coral reef ecosystems, and what can be done to protect and restore coral reefs.

Marine Protected Areas

The National Action Plan identified Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) as a key ecosystem management tool in the protection of coral reef ecosystems and the sustainable use of their resources. The goal is to protect 20% of U.S. coral reefs as marine reserves by 2010.

Managing Coastal Impacts

The National Action Plan calls for a number of measures by states, territories, and federal agencies to better manage activities on land and water that affect coral reef resources, including habitat destruction, sediment runoff, and other pollution.

Sustainable Fishing

Improve management to reduce overfishing and damaging fishing practices to ensure the commercial, recreational and subsistence benefits of fishing on reefs.

Restoration

Restoring damaged coral reefs is a very difficult, long-term activity that is still not well understood. Our ability to restore damaged reefs will continue to improve with experience and new science.

Outreach and Education

Outreach and education efforts are critical to all coral activities implemented by the CRTF. The Task Force strives to increase public understanding of the value of coral reefs, the threats to their survival, and what can be done to protect them.

International

The United States has interests in protecting international coral reefs. Healthy marine ecosystems are critical to U.S. diplomatic and development strategies to: promote economic and food security, establish social stability, improve human health, and conserve biodiversity in many countries.

Partnerships

Conserving U.S. and international coral reefs requires both concerted efforts and sustained collaboration by many partners. The CRTF would like to thank the many public and private entities, including scientists, coastal resource managers, non-governmental organizations, businesses and volunteers, who participate in efforts to help preserve coral reef ecosystems world-wide.



For information on the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force and how to get involved, please visit the web site at:
<http://coralreef.gov/>