

# WHAT IS HAPPENING TO CORALS?

## Overview

### NUMEROUS CORALS ARE GETTING SICK AND QUICKLY DYING.

- The disease is affecting about 20 of the approximately 65 species of Caribbean corals, including the emblematic and massive brain, pillar and star corals.
- Affected corals die quickly in days or weeks, depending on their size.
- A disease outbreak began in Florida four years ago, with several other Caribbean countries reporting corals with similar symptoms.
- It has now been reported along the coast of Quintana Roo and could soon extend to the whole Mesoamerican Reef.

### CAUSES

Efforts are still under way to identify the cause of this outbreak. However, a strong contributing factor may be water quality degradation due to inland pressures such as poor waste water treatment and mangrove loss.

### THE MESOAMERICAN REEF (MAR)

The MAR spreads along more than 1000 km of coastline and provides numerous benefits to the whole region:

- Tourism attraction that generates hundreds of millions of dollars per year.
- Coastal protection against storms and hurricanes.
- Habitat for economically important species.



**4** COUNTRIES | **2,2** MILLION PEOPLE

**500** FISH SPECIES

**65** CORAL SPECIES

CORAL REEFS | MANGROVES | SEAGRASS



## WHAT TO DO?

### INTERVENTION ACTIONS

Government, universities and NGOs are monitoring the spreading of the epidemic, taking management actions and testing treatments to limit its propagation.

If you see corals with signs of disease, please:



**TAKE PICTURES**

**RECORD A GPS POINT**  
(IF POSSIBLE)



**REPORT TO THE FOLLOWING EMAILS:**

As preventive measures, we recommend:

- **DO NOT TOUCH CORALS.**
- **AVOID RESUSPENDING SEDIMENT WHILE SWIMMING.**
- **DO NOT VISIT DISEASE-FREE SITES AFTER INFECTED ONES,** do not become a spreading agent.
- **RINSE YOUR DIVING/SNORKELING gear** with 5-10% chlorine.
- **DO NOT USE SUNSCREEN.**
- **AVOID OCEAN CONTAMINATION.**

