

Why should we  
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## Why Should We Conserve Our Coral Reefs Before Its Too Late? The

International Union for Conservation of Nature's latest report warns that half of the coral reefs could disappear by 2045. Coral reefs are diverse ecosystems that support different kinds of fish species and other organisms under the sea. They are home to as many as 150, 000 species in any given coral reef (Harris 1060). They are located in warm, shallow, and tropical marine waters where there is enough sunlight available for the coral reefs to thrive. It is very hard to estimate how much of the ocean floor is covered in corals because of the various places that they are located. The water temperature is also a very big influence on the growth and survival of coral reefs. For a coral to survive, the temperature needs to be around 74-78 °F and no lower then °F. When the temperature gets too cold or too high, the coral starts dying immediately. The destruction of these coral reefs has become a dominant problem in the last ten or so years, resulting from various causes. As the number of coral reefs is rapidly declining and destruction is heading toward an all time high, while the rate of destruction is heading toward an all time high. We need to take action to conserve our coral reefs before it is too late. The destruction of coral reefs is being caused by both natural and manmade causes. The number one natural reason for the destruction of coral reefs is global warming. In an article for the Natural Wildlife Federation, author Joe Pupree explains the immediate effect of global warming and puts it into perspective saying, " While for most terrestrial creatures, the worst effects of global warming are decades away, for coral reefs the future is already here. " The obvious major spikes in the oceans temperature are evident in many tropical regions today, showing pressing evidence that this is an increasing issue. The warmer water temperatures

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have also assisted in creating a new issue among the coral reefs known as coral bleaching. Coral bleaching is the second biggest problem within coral reefs. When coral bleaching occurs, the coral basically gets rid of the algae that are living inside of them, which is what gives the corals their vibrant various colors. Corals draw in oxygen from algae in exchange for nutrients and carbon dioxide, so when corals expel their algae it is because they are experiencing a time of stress. When this happens the coral lose their color and turn white or become transparent. In 1998, for example, extreme water temperatures triggered a rare massive bleaching that left few corals untouched (Dupree). After this disaster, it was estimated that about 16% of the world's corals had died in less than that one year. Regrettably, natural causes aren't the only thing destroying our coral reefs, humans are also adding to the damage. Things like oil spills, coral mining, and dynamite fishing are all things that we have control over but haven't done anything about. Even tourism can be physically damaging to the coral reef's structure. The list of factors contributing to the destruction of coral reefs goes on and on. Throughout the world there are some well-known coral reefs that have been affected by the destruction. Ten years ago when reefs mysteriously started dying off the coast of Key West scientists began to investigate. The way they conducted the research to find out why these coral reefs were dying, was that they cornered off parts of the reef with metal stakes and sent divers with cameras frequently so they could monitor corals and signs of pests and disease. A decade later, the metal stakes were still in place at Easter Dry Rocks Reef, but the corals themselves were gone (Dupree).

Another reef that is being affected is Australia's Great Barrier Reef. Charlie Veron, a coral expert and a longtime chief scientist for the Australian <https://assignbuster.com/why-should-we-conserve-our-coral-reefs-before-its-too-late/>

institute of Marine Sciences says that " A history of the Great Barrier Reef is a catalog of disasters caused by planetary chaos. But they are disaster from which the reef has always recovered" (Qtd. In Dupree). As for today's reoccurring disasters the prospect for coral reef recovery is uncertain. With the destruction of coral reefs becoming such an escalating problem, there have been several efforts to save them. The issue of global warming affecting the coral reefs is the top priority for the National Wildlife Federation. They claim to be " backing congressional legislation to reduce greenhouse gases, publishing reports on warming's impact on wildlife and collaborating with state affiliates on the grassroots efforts" (Dupree). Management plans have been put into place that strictly enforces the limitations and controls on marine exploitation. This management plan has, however, significantly improved the health of some of the reefs they have tested this method on. There are also organizations such as " Reef Check" that encourages people to get out into their community and volunteer and make a difference. The goal of " Reef Check" is to educate the public and governments about the value of coral reefs and the crisis facing them. The coral reefs that are dying every day not only affect our oceans, but they have a direct and indirect effect on our country. The people who depend on seafood for economic survival are finally beginning to realize that these coral reefs that they never cared to try to protect is going to have consequences. Fishermen will soon not be able to make a living in the commercial fishing industry and the economy will suffer from that. The nonexistence of coral reefs will also take a toll on the tourism industry. Things like reef tours, snorkeling, diving, and fishing, will all be affected. As said in the article Coral Crisis, " Globally, coral reefs are estimated to contribute more than 30\$ billion a year in direct net

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benefits to human economics. " This is a huge sum of money and with the status of the economy at this point in time losing this money would be detrimental. Scientists as of lately have extracted over 1, 200 potentially useful components from Cancer. If these components prove to be the answer to the curing of these terminal disease and there are no corals left, that could lead to some problems. Coral reefs are being destructed more and more every day. Whether it is by global warming making the temperature of the water unlivable, or by the stress placed on the corals until it causes them to become completely bleached throughout. It could also be caused by any human activities that harm the original nature of the coral reefs. The most prominent of the reefs being affected are the reefs in the Keys and in the Great Barrier Reef in Australia. Efforts to save the reefs have started to begin but these efforts are no where near the magnitude that is needed if we want coral reefs to be around in the years to come. The effects of these coral reefs ceasing to exist will become apparent soon enough, but by that time we start the conservation of these beautiful underwater ecosystems it will not help. As marine, biologist Chris Langdon from the University of Miami explains to us short and to the point that " if we wipe them out, we're not going to have them around for a very long time" (Dupree). Word Count: 1240