

# We need coral reefs

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Could you imagine finding out that you had leukemia? You would be devastated and not know what to do. You hope with all of your might that chemotherapy will work to cure you. Without coral reefs, chemotherapy wouldn't be an option for you.

Coral reefs provide many resources for humans- one of them being a drug taken from sea sponges that live on coral reefs(" The Nature Conservancy. Protecting Nature. Preserving Life.""). It is important to know what is harming coral reefs so that we can protect them. Coral reefs are one of the most diverse ecosystems in the world.

Around 25% of the world's fish species live here(" Biodiversity"). This just shows how much oceans and fish species would suffer without coral reefs. All the fish would either die off or be forced to relocate if we lost them. "

Biodiversity is an essential component of maintaining healthy coral reefs. Healthy reef ecosystems with high biodiversity (a full complement of species and communities) are more likely to survive mass bleaching and other global stresses than less diverse systems"(" Biodiversity"). Biodiversity is important in reefs because if something were to happen they would have a better chance of surviving and thriving.

This is good for us because so many organisms rely on them. Coral reefs serve as a place for fishing, tourism, and provide resources for humans. Organisms need biodiversity in reefs because they all have symbiotic relationships with each other; if a certain organism were to die off or leave, it would affect many other organisms in the reef. Coral bleaching causes a

huge negative impact on coral reefs. According to The Nature Conservancy, coral bleaching happens when waters heat up.

There is an algae in coral called zooxanthellae. This algae and coral have a relationship where they both benefit from having each other around. The algae gives color, structure, and food to the coral, and the coral provides shelter and protection. When waters heat up, the coral gets rid of zooxanthellae. Because the algae is gone, the coral turns white. This is how we get the term “ coral bleaching.

” If the algae returns soon enough to the coral, the coral will continue to survive. However, the coral will become weak and die if the algae does not return. Disease and ocean acidification can also cause coral bleaching.

Ocean salinity, pH levels, sunlight, and many more things need to be in a precise range for coral to thrive, for coral is very sensitive to the environment they live in. One of the main things causing a rise in temperatures, that in time causes coral bleaching, is global warming.

Global warming causes increased direct sunlight on coral. Global warming melts glaciers and ice sheets which leaves more water to be heated up when it is exposed to sunlight. “ Lots of living things (including humans) under serious stress may be more susceptible to problems with their health, and corals are no exception. Coral reefs—they’re just like us!” (“ The Nature Conservancy. Protecting Nature.

Preserving Life.”) By decreasing our carbon footprint we can help to save reefs from coral bleaching. To decrease your carbon footprint, you could plant a tree, take public transportation, carpool, or ride your bike instead of <https://assignbuster.com/we-need-coral-reefs/>

drive. From this information we can see how drastically coral is affected by coral bleaching. We need to try our best to prevent and stop it. Lionfish pose a significant threat to coral reef ecosystems in the Caribbean.

Since 2001 the lionfish invasion has continued to grow. The cause is unknown; however, what is known is that the reason the population is growing so fast is because lionfish have almost no natural predators. Why is this? It has to do with that fact that lionfish have long, sharp, poisonous spines protruding from their body. If they feel threatened they will sting other organisms. Lionfish are taking over and are now an invasive species. Another reason the lionfish population is growing so fast is because they reproduce very fast.

A female lionfish can lay up to two million eggs a year. Why is it so bad that lionfish are invading coral reefs? Because they eat other fish in the coral reefs- specifically, the fish that feed on algae. This causes increased algae levels which then disables organisms to perform photosynthesis. If organisms can't do photosynthesis the whole food chain will be affected. Organisms that rely on producers for food and resources won't get what they need, therefore everything is affected. ("Lionfish Invasion Threatens Coral Reefs in the Atlantic and Caribbean.

") When we think about this lionfish problem, we realize that this isn't a problem that is going to go away on its own- we need to do something about it. Governments are making an effort to stop the lionfish using multiple methods. The methods sound hopeful: encouraging human consumption of lionfish, monitoring population levels, and capturing large numbers of lionfish

and a time. From this information we can see what is affecting coral reefs in negative ways and how to protect them. There are so many threats that can all be prevented or at least helped.

Many people rely on coral reefs in ways they don't even know. Losing coral reefs would make our world a very different place. Works Cited “

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