

Coral Bleaching

By Alfredo Marcellino

The process of coral bleaching is quick, but it has long-lasting effects. Coral reefs create half of the oxygen on the earth and absorb almost one-third of the carbon dioxide created by fossil fuels. From 2016–2017, the Great Barrier Reef, the biggest coral reef in the world, located in Australia, received multiple bleaching events. This resulted in 29% of the coral to die in 2016, and another 20% to die in 2017. This damage was mostly in the Northern part of the reef because the water is warmest there. If we don't act now we will lose 100% of it and the rest of the coral in the world as well.

Coral bleaching is the result of coral reefs beginning to die due to ocean warming. The change in temperature puts stress under the coral, resulting in them losing their color. Coral reefs are really important parts of underwater ecosystems, a place where tons of species of fish live. Even just the slightest change in temperature can kill dozens of coral reefs. From 2014–2017 75% of coral reefs experienced heat stress, enough to trigger bleaching. Unfortunately, 30% ended in the death of coral.

Some people say that global warming is “fake” or isn't actually happening. For example, Donald Trump said: “It's freezing in New York – where the hell is global warming?” He also said: “The weather has been so cold for so long that the global warming hoaxsters were forced to change the name to climate change to keep the \$ flow.” Climate change, however, has been proven countless times by scientists all over the world. It is hard to take action when your country's president doesn't believe in one of your country's most pressing issues. By not acting on climate change, Donald Trump is hurting us by allowing this to damage us as a country, and a planet.

The only way to protect our valuable natural resources like coral reefs is to stop climate change. We must all change our lifestyle and not wait for someone else to act. For example, use public transportation instead of driving because more fossil fuels are emitted from cars, polluting it and adding to climate change. Useless plastic. Plastic ends up in the ocean, which affects the animal's habitat and health and the ocean's health. A good way to change the water bottle habit is to always have a reusable bottle and refill it so you don't have to buy plastic water bottles. Coral reefs are not only a stunning natural habitat they are also critical to our entire ecosystem. We really need to get how interconnected all ecosystems are and act to save them all.

Word count: 442

(Sources on the back)

Sources:

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