



Florida Keys BleachWatch Program

Current Conditions Report #20060601



Updated May 30, 2006

Summary: Based on climate predictions, current conditions, and field observations, the threat for mass coral bleaching within the FKNMS is currently **LOW**.

Weather and Sea Temperatures

Weather and sea surface temperature (SST) predictions for the 2006 season by NOAA's Climate Prediction Center indicate that while SST's for the southern Caribbean are anticipated to be above average over the next month, it is likely that SST's in the Florida Keys will remain normal to below average for this time of year over the next few weeks.(Figure 1).

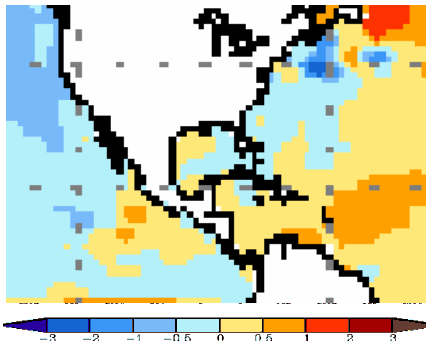


Figure 1. NOAA's Climate Prediction Center's sea surface temperature forecast for June, 2006

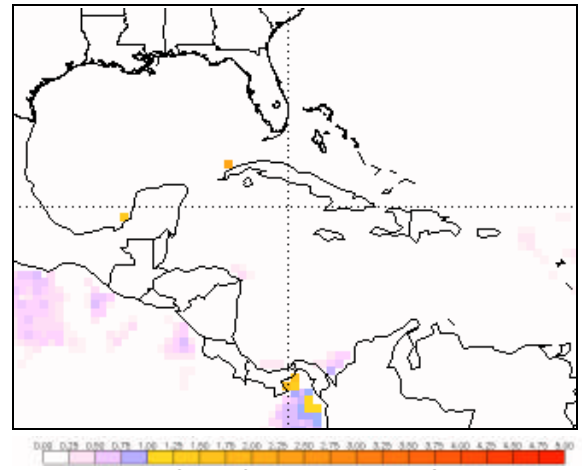


Figure 2. NOAA's Coral Bleaching HotSpot Map for May 29, 2006.

Current remote sensing analysis by NOAA's Coral Reef Watch program shows that despite rapidly increasing sea surface temperatures in the southern Caribbean and the lack of tradewinds over the past few weeks in that region, current conditions in the Florida Keys do not indicate similar signs of building thermal stress. NOAA's recent Coral Bleaching HotSpot Map (Figure 2), current SST's compared to the historically expected SST's for the region, shows no current elevated temperature anomalies for the Florida Keys. Similarly, NOAA's latest Degree Heating Weeks (DHW) map, which indicates the accumulation of elevated temperature in an area based on the previous 12 weeks (Figure 3), shows no accumulating temperature stress in the Florida Keys region. Sea temperature readings at NOAA's *in-situ* monitoring stations do show a temperature increase throughout the Florida Keys (Figure 4), but are still currently well below 30°C (86°F). As a result of these rapidly increasing water temperatures, Mote Marine Laboratory will continue to monitor the NOAA HotSpot maps, DHW maps, and *in-situ* sea temperature data from NOAA monitoring stations on a daily basis for the remainder of the bleaching season. *In-situ* sea temperature data is still not available for the Dry Tortugas and Sand Key region as a result of hurricane damage in 2005.

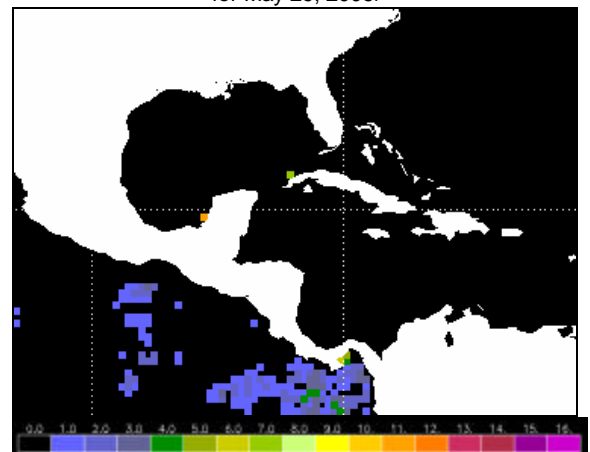


Figure3. NOAA's Degree Heating Weeks Map for May 29, 2006.

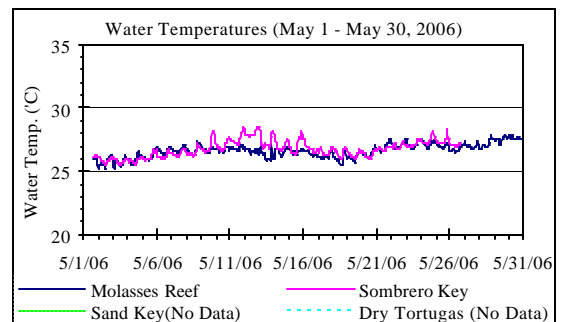


Figure 4. Summary of *in-situ* sea temperature data from NOAA/FIO monitoring stations from May 1- May 30, 2006.



Mote Marine Laboratory / Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

Florida Keys BleachWatch Program

Current Conditions Report #20060601



Conditions of Corals

To date, there are 4 training sessions planned for new observers to the BleachWatch Program for the beginning of June, 2006 as follows:

Key Largo Library

Mile Marker 101.4
Tradewinds Shopping Center (Oceanside)
Tuesday, June 6th, 2006
6:30 p.m.

Marathon Library

3251 Overseas Highway (Oceanside)
Wednesday, June 7th, 2006
6:30 p.m.

Key West Library

700 Fleming Street
Wednesday, June 14th, 2006
6:30 p.m.

Additional training sessions will be scheduled to accommodate other interested groups or organizations. For information on joining the BleachWatch program, or to organize a training session for your group or organization, please contact the number below.

Frequent coral condition observations from throughout the Florida Keys are needed for the remainder of the summer season. Please be sure to submit your observations after every visit to the reef, even if no bleaching was observed. To submit an observation on coral condition, or for more information on the Florida Keys BleachWatch program, please go to <http://www.mote.org/Keys/bleaching.phtml>, or contact:

Cory Walter
Mote Marine Laboratory
(305) 745-2729 x301
cwalter@mote.org
<http://www.mote.org/Keys/bleaching.phtml>