



Mote Marine Laboratory / Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary
Coral Bleaching Early Warning Network
Current Conditions Report #20260527



Updated May 27, 2026

Summary: Based on climate predictions, current conditions, and field observations, the threat for mass coral bleaching within the FKNMS is currently **NO STRESS**.

NOAA Coral Reef Watch Current and 60% Probability Coral Bleaching Alert Outlook May 25, 2026 (experimental)

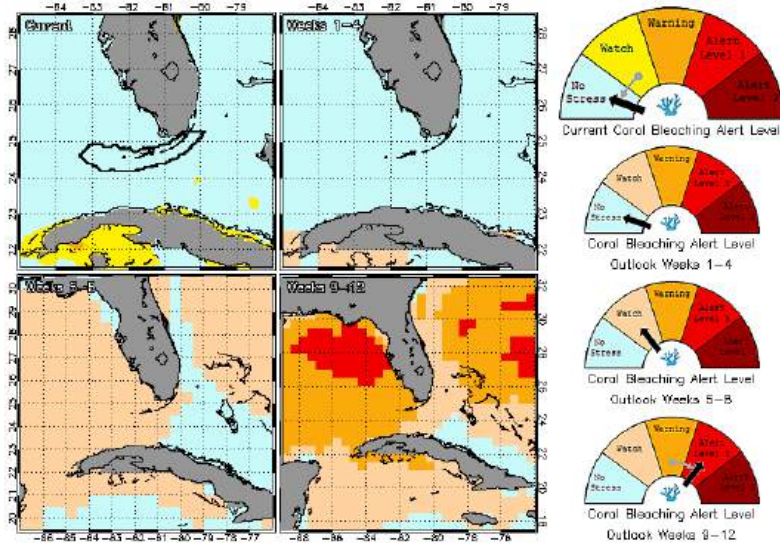


Figure 1. NOAA's 5 km Experimental Current and 60% Probability Coral Bleaching Alert Outlook Areas through August 2026. Updated May 25, 2026. http://coralreefwatch.noaa.gov/vs/gauges/florida_keys.php

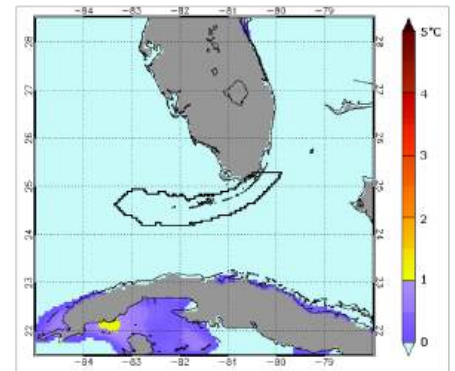


Figure 2. NOAA's Experimental 5km Coral Bleaching HotSpot Map for Florida May 25, 2026. NOAACoralReefWatchWebsite

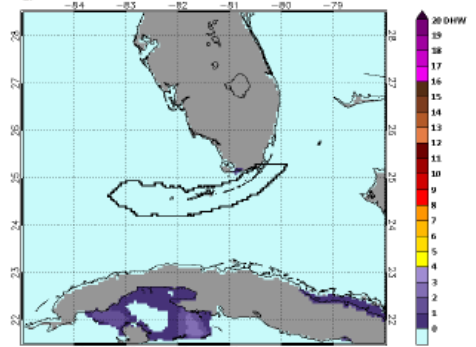


Figure 3. NOAA's Experimental 5km Degree Heating Weeks Map for Florida May 25, 2026. NOAACoralReefWatchWebsite

Weather and Sea Temperatures

According to the current NOAA Coral Reef Watch (CRW) experimental 5-kilometer (km) Satellite Current and 60% Probability Coral Bleaching Alert Area, there is currently no bleaching threat for the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. However, potential bleaching watches, warnings and alerts are possible if sea temperatures continue to increase in the next few months (Fig. 1).

Recent remote sensing analysis by NOAA's CRW program indicates that the Florida Keys region is not currently experiencing thermal stress. NOAA's experimental 5 km Coral Bleaching HotSpot Map (Fig. 2), which illustrates current sea surface temperatures compared to the maximum monthly mean, shows sea surface temperatures are do not currently pose a significant threat to coral health. Similarly, NOAA's experimental 5 km Degree Heating Weeks (DHW) map, which illustrates how much heat stress has built up over the past 12 weeks (Fig.3), indicates no accumulated temperature stress currently evident in the Florida Keys region.

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) Aqualink, which provides near real time *in-situ* wind data at Mote's Sand Key Coral Nursery, as well as Aqualink *in-situ* temperature data confirm that temperatures remain above historical maximums but have not yet breached the coral bleaching threshold of 30.5°C (Fig.4). Mote Marine Laboratory will continue to monitor the NOAA HotSpot maps, DHW maps, and Aqualink sea temperature data from FKNMS monitoring stations on a weekly basis for the remainder of the bleaching season.

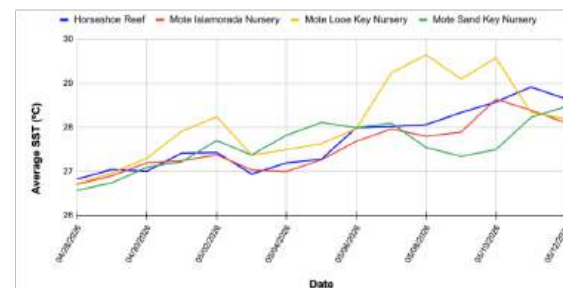


Figure 4. *in-situ* sea temperature from Aqualink monitoring stations (April 27-May 27, 2026).



Figure 5. Wind speed data from Aqualink's Sand Key Mote Coral Nursery monitoring station (April 27-May 27, 2026).



Current Coral Conditions

A total of 45 BleachWatch observer reports have been received in 2026, 12 were submitted between April 27 – May 27, 2026 (Fig. 6). In the last month, only 2 reports indicated colonies exhibiting signs of paling (Fig. 8), and 10 reports indicated no significant signs of coral bleaching at the site surveyed. At those sites where paling/bleaching was noted, the overall percentage of corals exhibiting signs of stress was 1-10%, and paling/partial bleaching observations consisted of isolated colonies of brain and flower coral species, including Smooth Flower Coral (*Eusmilia fastigiata*) (Fig 7.). Other observations included paling and bleaching of *gorgonians* and *palythoa*, and several reports of coral disease, mainly tissue loss.



Photo: Daryl Duda, Rainbow Reef

Figure 7. Paling *Eusmilia fastigiata* (EFAS), Christmas Tree Cave at French

As bleaching season begins, BleachWatch observers are encouraged to start submitting your coral reef observations after every visit to the reef, **even if NO bleaching was observed**. Frequent coral condition observations from throughout the Florida Keys are needed for the remainder of the summer season.

If you know of anyone interested in becoming an observer, the final BleachWatch final in person training will be at **John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park on June 13th from 12-1PM**. Online training is available year-round on www.mote.org/bleachwatch.

BleachWatch reports for April 27-May 27, 2026



Figure 6. Overview of BleachWatch reports from April 27-May 27, 2026.

For more information about the BleachWatch program, or to submit a bleaching observation, contact:

Email: bleachwatch@mote.org
<http://www.mote.org/bleachwatch>



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