



Mote Marine Laboratory / Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

Coral Bleaching Early Warning Network

Current Conditions Report #20260728



Updated July 28, 2026

Summary: Based on climate predictions, current conditions, and field observations, the threat for mass coral bleaching within the FKNMS is currently **ALERT LEVEL 2**.

NOAA Coral Reef Watch Current and 60% Probability Coral Bleaching Alert Outlook July 26, 2026 (experimental)

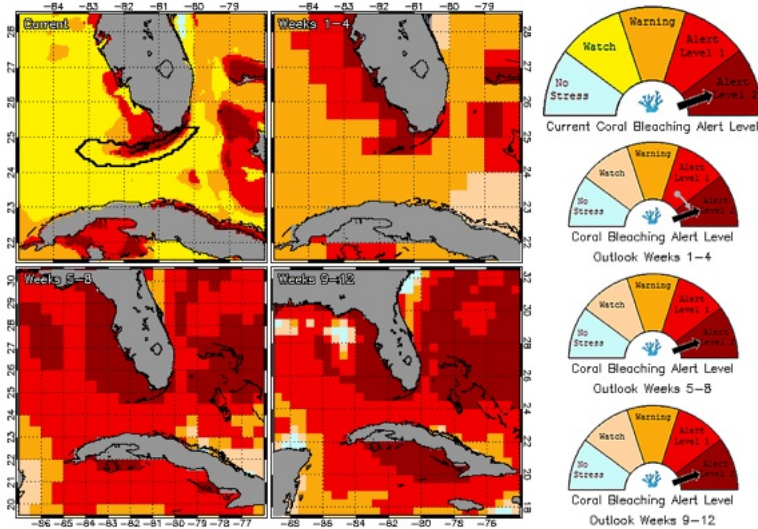


Figure 1. NOAA's 5 km Experimental Current and 60% Probability Coral Bleaching Alert Outlook Areas through October 2026. Updated July 26, 2026. http://coralreefwatch.noaa.gov/vs/gauges/florida_keys.php

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, most areas of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary are under a "Bleaching Alert Level 2", which means there is a reef-wide risk of bleaching with mortality of heat sensitive corals (Fig. 1).

Recent remote sensing analysis by NOAA's CRW program indicates that all areas of the Florida Keys region are currently experiencing thermal stress. NOAA's new experimental 5 km Coral Bleaching HotSpot Map (Fig.2), which illustrates current sea surface temperatures compared to the average temperature for the warmest month, shows sea surface temperatures are currently elevated above normal in the Florida Keys. Similarly, NOAA's experimental 5 km Degree Heating Weeks (DHW) map (Fig.3), which illustrates how much heat stress has built up over the past 12 weeks, indicates accumulating temperature stress 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, with all areas remaining above 30°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.

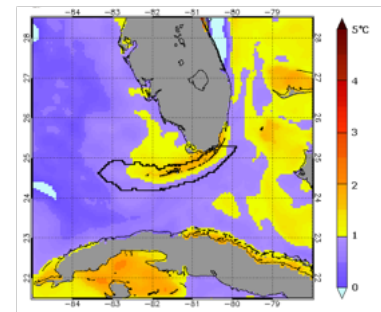


Figure 2. NOAA's Experimental 5km Coral Bleaching HotSpot Map for Florida July 26, 2026. [NOAA Coral Reef Watch Website](http://coralreefwatch.noaa.gov)

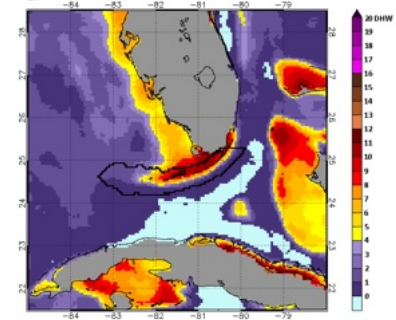


Figure 3. NOAA's Experimental 5km Degree Heating Weeks Map for Florida July 26, 2026. [NOAA Coral Reef Watch Website](http://coralreefwatch.noaa.gov)

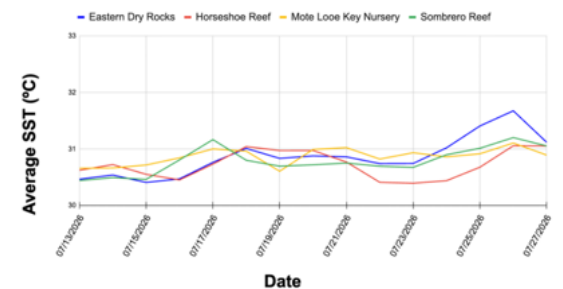


Figure 4. in-situ sea temperature from Aqualink monitoring stations (July 13 – July 28, 2026).

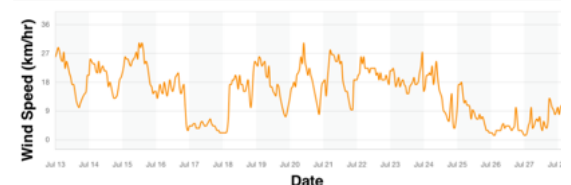


Figure 5. Wind speed data from Aqualink's Sand Key Mote Coral Nursery monitoring station (July 13 – July 28, 2026).



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Current Coral Conditions

A total of 11 BleachWatch observer reports have been received since July 13, 2026, eight of which reported some level of bleaching and three which reported no bleaching observed (Fig. 6). At sites with bleaching reported, the overall percentage of corals exhibiting signs of stress was averaging 11-30%, with one report indicating 50-75% of the live coral cover being pale. Paling/partial bleaching observations consisted of colonies of star/bouldering/encrusting species, brain and flower coral species, including Smooth Flower Coral (*Eusmilia fastigiata*) (Fig 7.). Other observations included paling and bleaching of *gorgonians*, *fire coral*, and *palythoa*, and three reports of disease, two unknown and one reporting some form of tissue loss.



Figure 7. Partially bleached *Eusmilia fastigiata* (EFAS), Davis Deep

As we continue through this bleaching season, BleachWatch observers are encouraged to continue 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, an online training is available year-round on www.mote.org/bleachwatch.

BleachWatch reports for July 13 - July 28, 2026



Figure 6. Overview of BleachWatch reports from July 13 – July 28, 2026.

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

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



Funding Provided By:

