Mote Marine Laboratory / Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

Coral Bleaching Early Warning Network

Current Conditions Report #20260825

Updated August 25, 2026

Summary: Based on climate predictions, current conditions, and field observations, the threat for mass coral bleaching within the FKNMS is currently **ALERT LEVEL 4**.

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

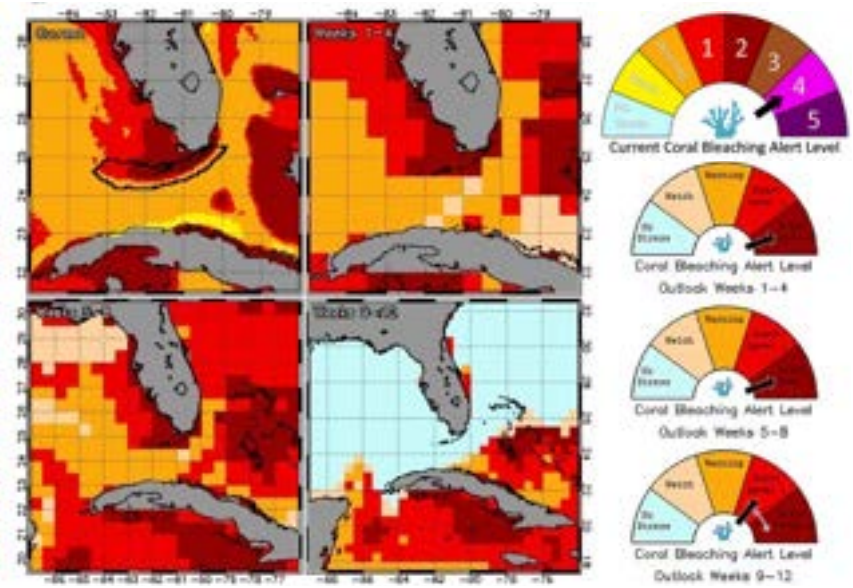

Figure 1. NOAA's 5 km Experimental Current and 60% Probability Coral Bleaching Alert Outlook Areas through November 2026. Updated August 25, 2026.

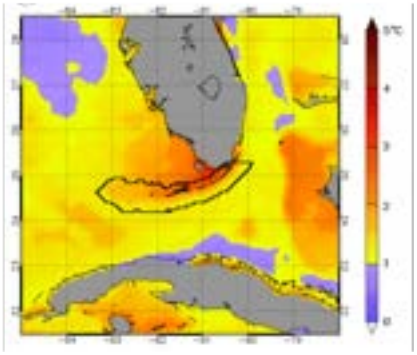

Figure 2. NOAA's Experimental 5km Coral Bleaching HotSpot Map for Florida, August 23, 2026. NOAA Coral Reef Watch Website

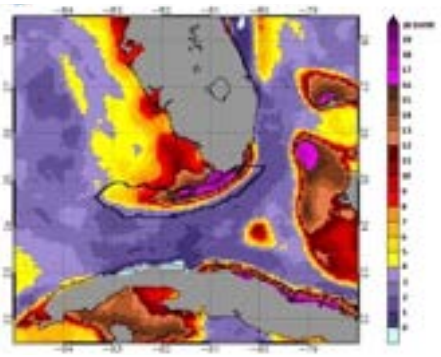

Figure 3. NOAA's Experimental 5km Degree Heating Weeks Map for Florida, August 23, 2026. NOAA Coral Reef Watch Website

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 4**", which means there is a reef-wide risk of bleaching with mortality of heat sensitive corals (Fig. 1).

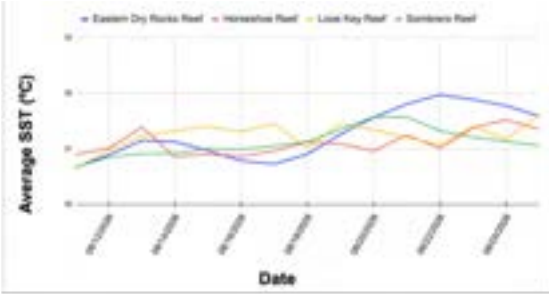

Figure 4. *in-situ* sea temperature from Aqualink monitoring stations (August 11-25, 2026).

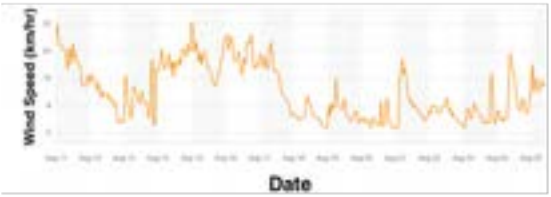

Figure 5. Wind speed data from Aqualink's Eastern Dry Rocks monitoring station (August 11-25, 2026).

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 still 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 continued 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 Eastern Dry Rocks, as well as Aqualink in-situ temperature data confirm that temperatures remain above historical maximums, with all areas remaining above 30°C and most above 31ºC (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.

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Current Coral Conditions

A total of 27 BleachWatch observer reports have been received since August 11, 2026, 23 of which reported some level of bleaching and 4 which reported no bleaching observed (Fig. 6). At sites with bleaching reported, the overall percentage of corals exhibiting signs of stress was averaging 31-50%, with two reports indicating 76-100% of the live coral cover exhibiting bleaching. Paling/partial bleaching observations were reported for all coral categories, including Great Star Coral *(Montastraea cavernosa)* (Fig. 7) and Grooved Brain Coral (*Diplora labryinthiformis*) (Fig 8). Other observations included paling and bleaching of *gorgonians, fire coral,* and *palythoa,* and 11 reports of tissue loss disease reported on mound/bouldering species and branching species.

Figure 8. Paling *Diploria labryinthiformis* (DLAB), Rocky Top Reef

Figure 7. Pale *Montastraea cavernosa* (MCAV), French Reef

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 August 11-25, 2026

Figure 6. Overview of BleachWatch reports from August 11-25, 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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