

Coral Disease and Health Consortium

Coral Disease & Health: The Issue

Diseases and diminishing health condition among corals have dramatically increased in frequency and distribution over the last decade, leading to unprecedented decreases in live coral and altering the function and productivity of coral reef ecosystems. Responding to this threat requires improved scientific understanding and tools to:

- 1) detect and assess trends in coral diseases at the necessary scales for scientific investigation and policy development;
- 2) determine the causes and consequences of increasing disease frequency and distribution; and
- 3) evaluate possible management responses designed to mitigate the spread and affects of disease on coral reef ecosystems and their users.



CDHC: Who Are We?

The Coral Disease and Health Consortium (CDHC) was created in 2002, in response to the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force's (USCRTF) National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs. Our goal is to provide coastal and ocean managers with scientific understanding and tools to help protect healthy coral reef ecosystems and restore degraded ones. The CDHC is a network of field and laboratory scientists, coral reef managers, and agency representatives devoted to understanding coral health and disease. It is extensive, highly collaborative, and completely voluntary. Currently over 50 partners, including federal agencies, EPA, DOI, NOAA along with academia, non-profit and industry, contribute their time and expertise to the CDHC, while organizational infrastructure is supported by the Congressionally funded Coral Conservation Program.

The commitment to share information, ideas, and common goals led to the development of a national research plan (Coral Disease and Health: A National Research Plan) that has inspired many to seek funding and devote new resources to the study and amelioration of coral disease.

CDHC: The Vision

Our vision is 'to understand and address the effects of natural and anthropogenic stressors on corals in order to contribute to the preservation and protection of coral reef ecosystems'. To realize this vision the CDHC serves to:

- unify the coral health and disease research community
- implement research priorities identified in the National Research Plan
- update and maintain the National Research Plan
- develop tools and methodologies for diagnosis and assessment
- provide an expert knowledge system for use in diagnosis and epizootiology provide education and outreach tools to equip a new generation of coral researchers

-Personal communication from Dr. Cheryl Woodley, Chair of the U.S. CDHC.

