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Language and literature

Mr. Kruger

From coral reefs to coral graveyards. How global warming has kill 50% of our beloved coral reefs!



This photo was taken on Kahului Point on Maui, and the photos were taken three months apart.

Visser, Nick. "Healthy, Dying, Dead: This Is What It Looks Like When A Reef Is Bleached."

The Huffington Post, TheHuffingtonPost.com, 4 Dec. 2015,

www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/healthy-dying-dead-this-is-wha2-it-looks-like-when-a-reef-is-bleached_us_5660df23e4b08e945feed91a.

Did you know that in the last 30 years 50% of the world's coral has bleached and died? Did you know that 25% of all marine life relies on coral? Did you know that we rely on coral and don't even know it? Aloha, I am a 7th grader, and I live in Hawaii on the island of Oahu where I get to experience coral bleaching whenever I enter the ocean.

What is happening to the coral when this dreaded phenomenon called coral bleaching occurs?

What causes coral bleaching is a 2-degree Celsius increase in the temperature in the water. While 2 degrees might feel like nothing to us, it has a massive impact on coral and causes it to stress.

When the coral gets stressed it notices that something is wrong and similar to us we try to get it out of our system. So the coral gets rid of all of these little micro plants that live inside of its tissue, micro plants are also what gives coral its vibrant colors.

Coral uses micro plants to photosynthesis and gains nutrients so essentially the coral starts to starve without them. That is why we call it coral bleaching because all that is left when the micro plants leave the coral is the transparent tissue. So, what you are seeing is coral skeletons.

Technically when once the coral is bleached it is still alive, but it can no longer grow so it will most likely die. An indication that the coral has died is when algae grow on it you will know that algae has grown on the coral because it will have a fuzzy texture.



This photo was taken in American Samoa and they are all eight months apart.

Visser, Nick. "Healthy, Dying, Dead: This Is What It Looks Like When A Reef Is Bleached."

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But, why should we care about coral bleaching? Well, not having coral reefs is a bigger problem than you may think because $\frac{1}{4}$ of our all marine life relies on it especially fish because they live and hide from larger predators in it. Without the coral, we have no fish which is a significant food source for many animals and humans.

Plenty of cultures revolve around being by the ocean and going fishing every day. Tons of people rely on fish to eat food at all and don't forget about all of the animals that eat fish that

will start to starve if the fish population decreases. Not having coral equals not having fish which equal a clasp in our food chain!

Losing our coral reefs does not only mean a loss of colorful, unique corals, but we will also lose the tourism that the coral attracts. Many sightseeing companies will start to lose money and customers when all that is left is a coral graveyard.

Lastly, coral reefs act as a wall that keeps our islands safe from big swells and hurricanes, and it is much stronger than anything that we could ever build because it is always reproducing. If our coral reefs are gone, it will be a huge safety hazard and will cause tons of flooding throughout our islands.

Hawai'i has set many goals/laws for a cleaner future, one of these laws is that we will use 100% clean transportation by 2045. This law has had an essential impact on companies that use fossil fuels because now they know that they cannot use fossil fuels forever. This forced them to rethink their original plans to invest in large oil and coal companies because they know that by the time they get their money back which may take 20 years everyone will be using renewable energy and they will not get paid back. Even if this goal is not accomplished by 2045, it is already having a positive impact on companies that can make a difference if they switch to clean energy.

Another way that you can help coral bleaching is by funding projects that are transplanting coral

which means that they are growing coral in aquariums and replanting them into the ocean.

Scientists are also working to create super corals which means that they are breeding corals that can adapt to higher temperature water with corals that cannot help so that more corals can adapt to climate change.

If we don't make a change scientist predict that in the next 30 years all of the worlds coral will be dead, but there is still hope if we work together we can change our unsustainable lifestyles and stop global warming. Hawaii has created laws that move us to work towards 100% clean energy by 2045, right now we are using 75% fossil fuels, we are making progress but, still have a ways to go. Jacqueline Shapo a coral specialist who works with NOAA says that "something that everybody can do is reduce their carbon footprint" this means putting less carbon dioxide into our atmosphere every day.

Trying to walking or biking whenever you can, and also participating in simple tasks such as turning off your lights when you leave a room and not running the AC as often can reduce your carbon footprint by a lot. You can also invest your money into cleaner energy sources for transportation and power in your homes. Some options are using electric cars or having solar panels to power your house. Lastly just not buying unnecessary items that will only just be trashed after a few days. So can we stop global warming and the side effect of coral bleaching? Yes, and it all starts with your cooperation!

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