

Coral Reef Ecology Webquest

Introduction

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature monitors the status of global ecosystems and lists coral reefs as critically endangered. Over 50% of reefs have been lost in the last 30 years and many leading coral reef scientists predict that without significant conservation efforts coral reef ecosystems could be extinct as soon as 2050.

This assignment will help you to understand more about corals and what scientists need to consider when trying to conserve them.

Assignment

Use the following resource, <https://floridakeys.noaa.gov/corals/welcome.html?s=explore>, to explore the topics below. Please take notes and be prepared to discuss with a partner and report to the whole class.

Topics

1. Explain at least three ways people benefit from coral reef ecosystems.
2. Describe where coral reefs are found and the abiotic factors necessary for their survival.
3. How do corals eat?
4. Explain how coral bleaching and ocean acidification affect coral reefs.
5. Explain the life cycle of coral (including how they can reproduce) and how reefs are made. Make sure to explain the relationship between coral polyps and zooxanthellae.