



Coral bleaching

Updated: 17 February 2017

We're currently monitoring sea surface temperature, rainfall and flood plumes throughout the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

It is part of seasonal monitoring that takes place each summer and the information is released through our current conditions report.

Summer is a high-risk period for the Reef. Due to unprecedented heat stress from last summer and a warmer than average winter, corals may be more susceptible to bleaching and disease.

We're receiving increasing reports of variable levels of bleaching across the Marine Park and we're closely monitoring the situation.

Coral bleaching in 2016

In 2016 the Great Barrier Reef was affected by the worst coral bleaching on record.

Bleaching was highly variable throughout the 344,000 square kilometre area — many reefs throughout the Marine Park have abundant living coral, particularly in popular tourism locations in the central and southern regions, such as the Whitsundays and Cairns.

In September 2016 we released an interim report with results from surveys conducted between March and June 2016.

In November 2016 we released a supplementary report with preliminary findings from our surveys in October to November 2016.

Detailed findings will be available in early 2017.

An article in *The Conversation* provided further information on the assessment of the 2016 bleaching event and included a map summarising the results.

The article contained information from two rounds of Reef-wide reef health and impact surveys completed in 2016 by the GBRMPA and QPWS and further surveys by science partners.

The article's simplified map showed impacts from the 2016 bleaching were highly variable along the 2300 km long Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The "North" was worst affected by severe bleaching and subsequent loss of corals.

The "Far North (offshore)" includes outer-shelf reefs in the northernmost part of the Marine Park, and escaped the most severe bleaching and mortality, compared to elsewhere in the north.

The "Central" areas of the Marine Park had variable but low to medium loss of corals on average. The "South" had little or no loss of corals.