

Dan Clark – Cry of the Water
Comments to Coral Reef Task Force
February 23, 2017



I have been diving South Florida reefs for over 40 years and been attending the Task Force meeting for over 15 years. I have never seen a disease outbreak as bad as we are currently seeing.

For the past 2 years I have been able to go out and do 2 dives, pretty much anywhere on the reef tract and record at least a hundred recently dead or dying corals. You can tell the newly dead corals because it only takes a week or two for the algae to grow over the dead skeletons.



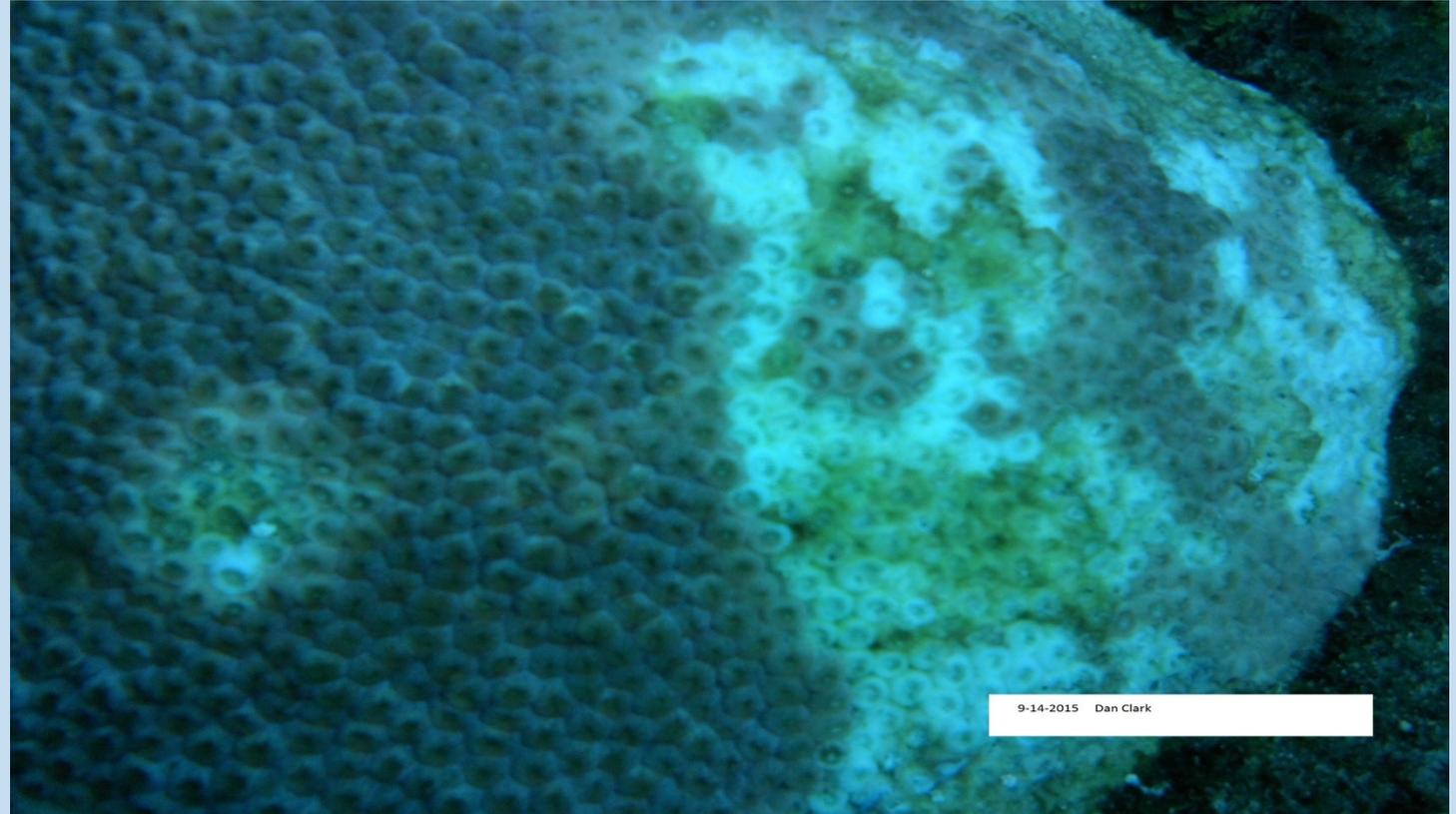
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In 2002 the Coral Reef Task Force formed the Coral Disease & Health Consortium to address the disease issue.

Unfortunately the consortium has not been properly funded after all these years. The need for that funding is greater now than it has ever been.



9-14-2015 Dan Clark

Groups are making millions of dollars raising corals in nurseries and transplanting them. Some of that money should be spent on the disease work or all this effort may just be wasted.

I raised this issue at a recent Our Florida Reefs meeting, I was told by a NOAA employee that the disease work would be considered research and therefore we were not allowed to make it one of our Recommended Management Actions. This meeting took place during the middle of the current disease outbreak.

We need to find the cause and how the diseases are spreading. Perhaps then we could control this outbreak or at least not spread the disease through the out planting of these nursery corals. It seems the people making the money on mitigation and nurseries want to avoid this issue as much as possible. It is time we take a common scenes approach to coral reef management



This issue is best summed up by a scientist at one of our SECRI meeting when he said if there was a pandemic in Miami tomorrow, and everyone died, you couldn't just go lay babies in the street and say we fixed that problem

The Reef Resilience Program was designed to show that reefs are resilient. Unfortunately because of its design it has failed to capture many of the disease episodes and toxic algae bloom. Only after this last disease outbreak, that has lasted over 2 years, has the RRP been able to capture a portion of the impacts. However, they were unable to tell us the amount of coral lost. We were told that it was never designed to do that. We need a new monitoring program structured in such a way to capture the true decline of our corals.

Perhaps if we could show the politicians, stakeholders and public at large how quickly we are losing this multi-billion dollar resource we could secure the funding to better deal with the problem.

This is better summed up by another scientist at our meeting who slipped me a quote by Ronald Reagan that read “To sit back hoping that someday, some way, someone will make things right is to go on feeding the crocodile, hoping he will eat you last - but eat you he will”

The next problem I want to talk about is much smaller than the others, however it is a poster child for how broken reef management is in Southeast Florida. It involves the Tortuga Music Festival, a three day event on Ft. Lauderdale Beach. Coverage of the event shows hundreds of boats anchored on the reef over a long 3 day weekend. I raised this issue at a meeting a week or two before last year's event, I asked SECRI, FWC and other agencies to enforce the coral reef protection act and stop the anchoring damage.



Again boats anchored on the reef. These photos showed you how it went. If after all the millions of dollars that has been spent on SEFCRI and all the thousands of hours spent on these management actions we can't deal with something as simple as anchor damage that we know when and where it is going to happen, what hope do we have to deal with the much larger issues.



Stony Corals Living on Southeast Florida Reefs

THREATENED CORALS



Elkhorn coral
Acropora palmata



Pillar coral
Dendrogyra cylindrus



Staghorn coral
Acropora cervicornis

COMMON CORALS



Great star coral
Montastraea cavernosa



Mustard hill coral
Porites astreoides



Smooth star coral
Solenastrea bournoni



Grooved brain coral
Diploria labyrinthiformis



Maze coral
Meandrina meandrites



Elliptical star coral
Dichocoenia stokesii



Boulder brain coral
Colpophyllia natans



Massive starlet coral
Siderastrea siderea



Finger coral
Porites porites



Mountainous star coral
Montastraea faveolata



Smooth flower coral
Eusmilia fastigiata



Spiny flower coral
Mussa angulosa





Coral Reef Conservation Program

Stony Corals Living on Southeast Florida Reefs

THREATENED CORALS



Elkhorn coral
Acropora palmata



White coral
Acropora cylindrica



Staghorn coral
Acropora cervicornis

COMMON CORALS



Great star coral
Montastraea cavernosa



Mushroom hill coral
Porolithothamnion



Smooth star coral
Solenastrea bournoni



Grooved brain coral
Diploria labyrinthiformis



Maze coral
Meandrina meandrina



Elliptical star coral
Dichocoenia stokesii



Boulder brain coral



Massive starlet coral
Solenastrea



Finger coral
Solenastrea



I ♥ corals
and corals ♥
#FloridasCoralProgram!



Title 1

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11:02 PM
4/26/2016



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Cry of the Water**

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