

# Party for the Planet Package

2026-2027



## **SAFE Coral is Excited to Party with You!**

**Thank you for including coral reef and coral conservation messages, activities and awareness in your 2026 Party for the Planet activities.**

**The 2026 Celebration Package includes:**

**Package SAFE Coral Party for the Planet Activities Package\***  
**SAFE Coral Communications Package**  
**AZA - Florida Reef Tract Rescue Project Communications Package**

### **New for 2026!**

We encourage everyone to visit [Safecoral.org](https://safecoral.org) for more information on the SAFE Coral Program and its partners activities and to download [TALKING CORAL](#), the program's coral conservation messaging publication.

*\*Thankyou Blank Park Zoo*

# AZA SAFE

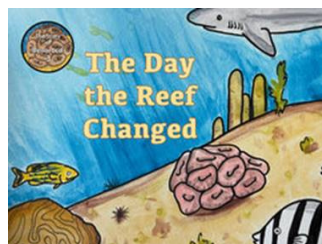
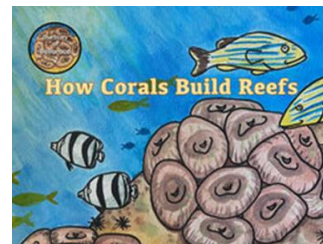
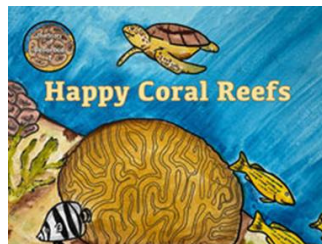
The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) is an organization dedicated to improving the lives of animals living in zoos and aquariums and aims to create a world where animals thrive because people respect and value wildlife and wild places. How they do this is by connecting the millions of visitors to zoos and aquariums to animals and their habitats and conservation programs like Saving Animals From Extinction (SAFE).

SAFE: Coral is a program working to save corals across the globe, but specifically off the coast of Florida in the southeastern United States. This activity book was created by education experts working with the program to help students in grades 3-5, regardless of where they live, connect with and learn about corals and how they're actions can have a direct impact on the health of reefs. This book can be used as an individual activity at home, as part of a larger unit about coral reefs as part of school curriculum or informal settings such as summer camp.

To learn more about the AZA SAFE Coral and the Florida Reef Tract Rescue Project,

## BELLAROCA STORIES

Learn about what corals are, the importance of the coral reef ecosystem and challenges that corals face to survive with the adventures of Bellaroca in this book series from the Florida Reef Tract Rescue Project.



**Scan here to access  
our virtual bookshelf**



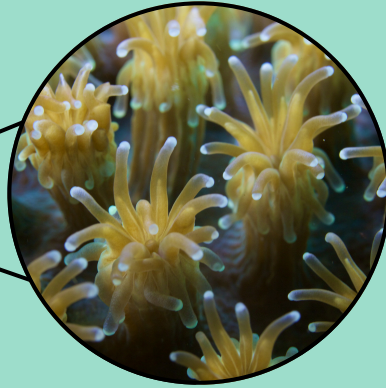
# CORAL REEF

A **coral reef** is an ecosystem that is complex and full of many different species that interact with each other and the physical environment.

Corals are marine **invertebrates** that typically form compact colonies of many identical individual **polyps**.



Coral Colony



Polyps

**Invertebrates**  
are animals  
without bones!

**Stony corals** are a type of coral characterized by their hard skeleton. They are the bedrock of the reef. Stony coral colonies are composed of hundreds of thousands of individual living polyps.



Stony Coral



## Why are coral reefs important?

Coral reefs are some of the most important and **biodiverse** - or full-of-life - ecosystems on Earth. Around 25% of all sea animals, including more than 4,000 species of fish, need coral reefs at some point in their lives.

## What do healthy coral reefs provide?

- Home to over 1 million sea animals, including fish that people catch and eat.
- Food for people who live near coral reefs, especially on small islands. Fun activities such as fishing, scuba diving, and **snorkeling**, which bring a
- lot of money to local communities. Protection for shorelines from storms, tsunamis, floods, and erosion,
- keeping people and buildings safe.

### Did you know?!

Coral belong in a group called **Cnidaria** (nye-dare-ee-a) that also includes jellyfish and sea anemones!

# REEF LABYRINTH

**Zooxanthellae** (zoo-zan-thel-ee) are tiny single-celled organisms that live inside most reef-building corals. Corals give them protection, carbon dioxide and water, while the zooxanthellae help the coral get rid of waste and provide important nutrients. Zooxanthellae are also what makes coral have their bright, colorful look.

Sometimes, when corals become stressed, they release their zooxanthellae. This is called **bleaching**, and when corals bleach, they turn white. If corals go too long without the nutrients from the zooxanthellae, they can starve and die.

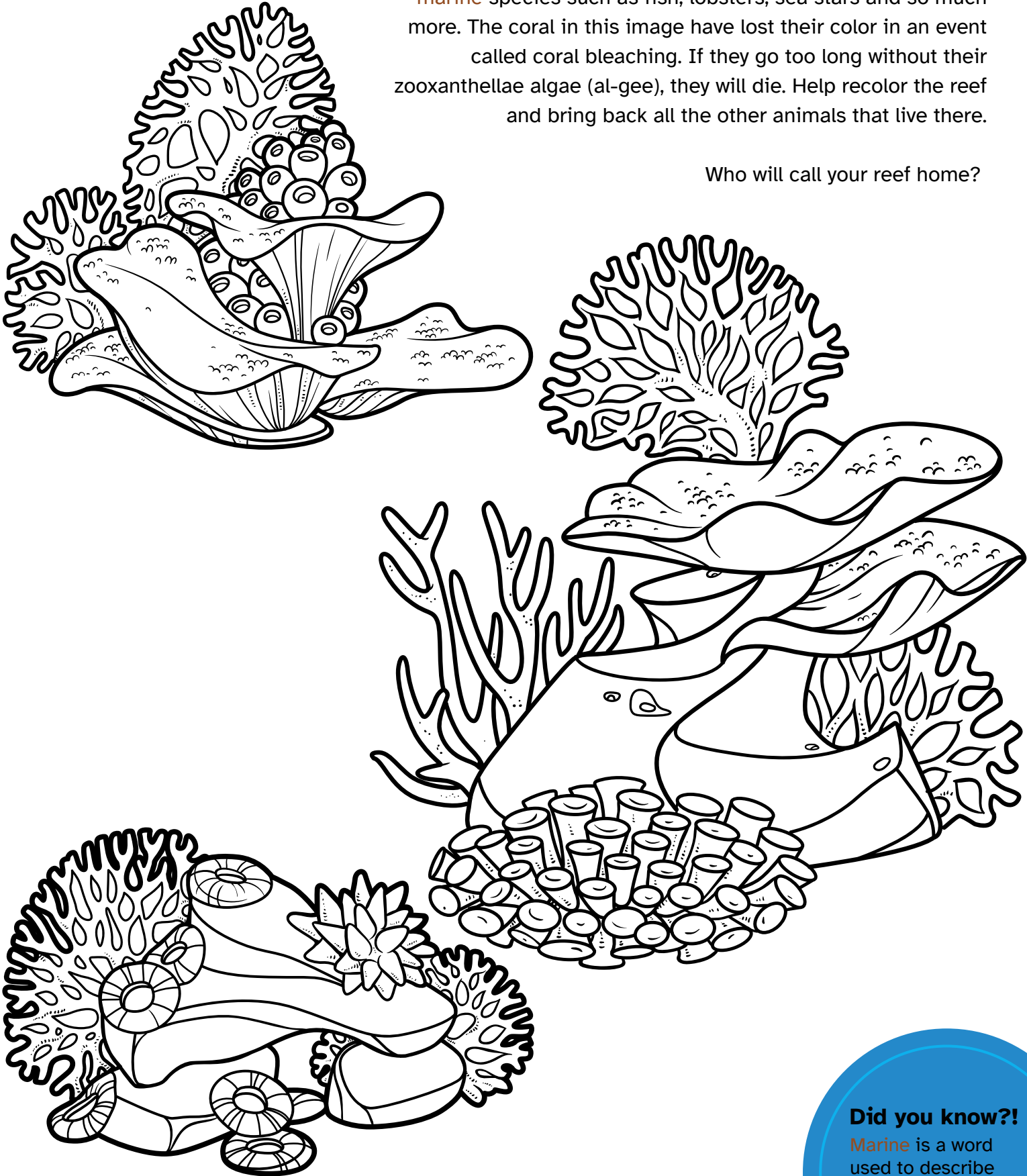
Help the zooxanthellae find the way to the coral.



# RECOLOR THE REEF

Healthy coral reefs provide habitat for hundreds of other **marine** species such as fish, lobsters, sea stars and so much more. The coral in this image have lost their color in an event called coral bleaching. If they go too long without their zooxanthellae algae (al-gee), they will die. Help recolor the reef and bring back all the other animals that live there.

Who will call your reef home?

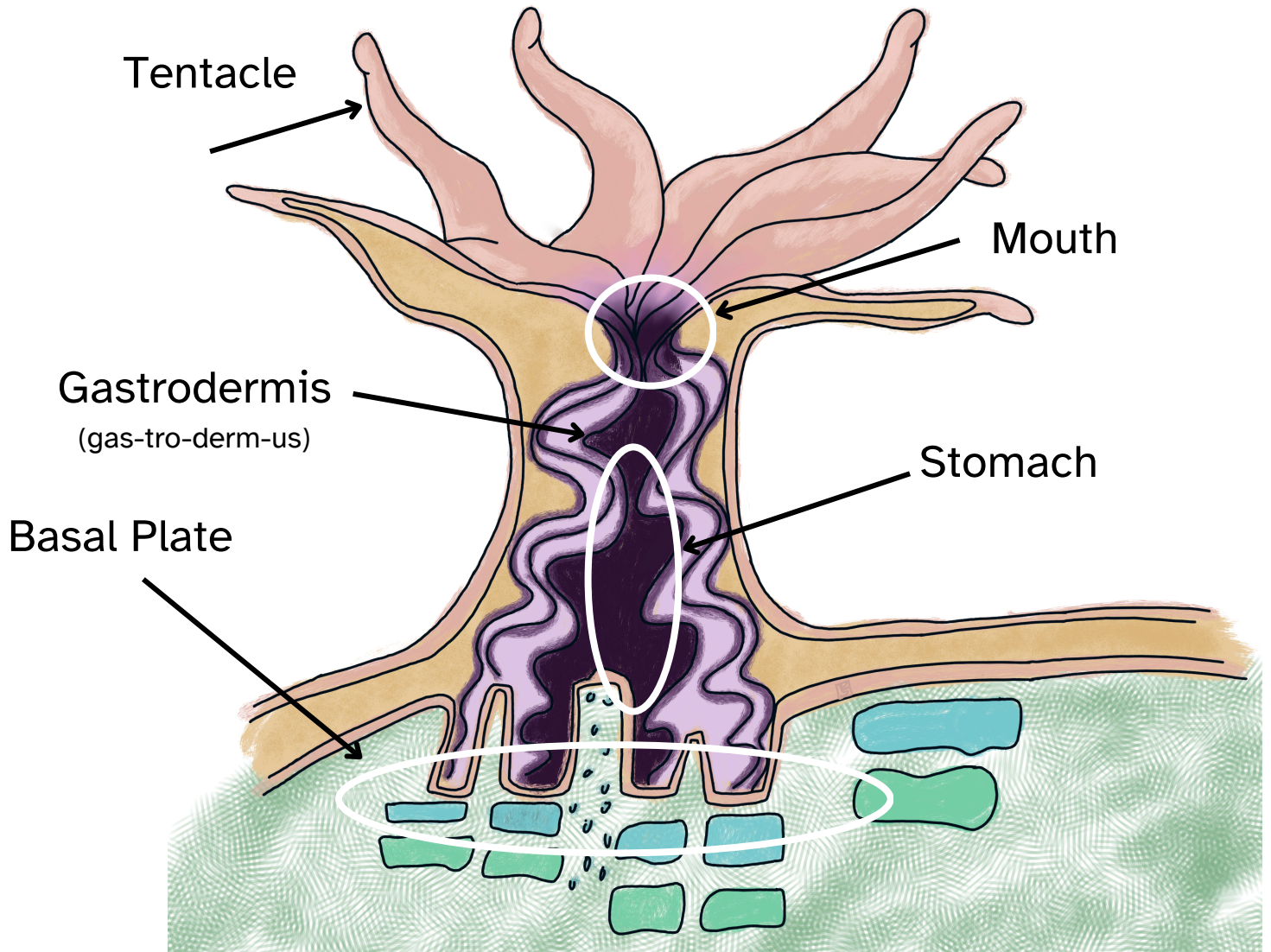


**Did you know?!**

**Marine** is a word used to describe things in the ocean.

# CORAL ANATOMY

**Anatomy** (a-nat-o-me) is the science of learning about the body parts of living organisms, such as animals and plants. Learn more about the parts of a coral polyp. Study the image below, then match the body part with its definition.



Body Part

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Definition

1. Where the food goes in and waste comes out.
2. Layer of tissue that lines the stomach where the zooxanthellae live.
3. Anchors the polyp to the ocean floor and makes calcium carbonate.
4. Where food goes after it's caught. It helps the coral break down the food and turn it into energy.
5. These surround the mouth and capture prey like plankton and fish.

# PROBLEM PLASTIC

**Plastic** pollution is a big problem for rivers, lakes, and oceans all over the world. Many people don't know how much single-use plastic their families use in just one week. Single-use plastic is plastic that we use only once and then throw away, like plastic straws or food containers. These plastics are only used for a short time before being tossed in the trash. If we keep track of how much plastic we use, we can find ways to use less.

Instructions: For one week, keep track of how much single-use plastic you use by counting below. We've listed some common types of plastic, and you can add any other items you use. At the end of the week, add up all your tallies to find your total.

Type of Item	Tally 	Total
Single-use plastic bottles		
Single-use plastic straws		
Single-se plastic storage bags		
Single-use plastic & Styrofoam take out food containers		
Plastic shopping bags		
Single-use plastic cups, dishes & utensils		

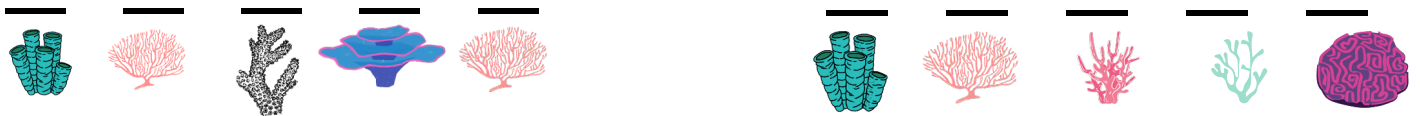
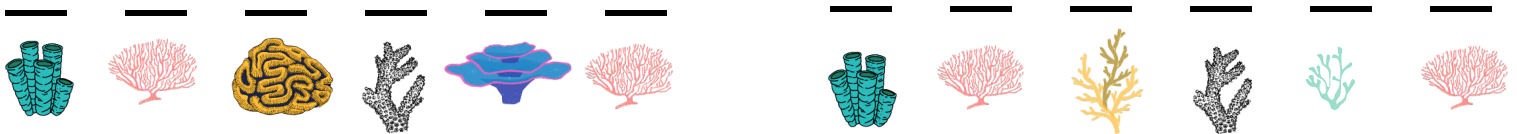
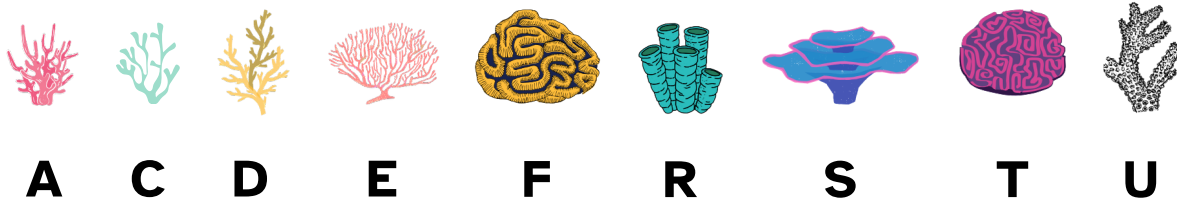
**Can't we recycle?**  
 According to the Environmental Protection Agency, less than 10% of plastic used in the US gets recycled.

# TAKE ACTION

Even if you don't live near the ocean, you are probably part of a watershed that helps water flow to the ocean.

What is a **watershed**? A watershed is a land area that moves rainfall and snowmelt into creeks, streams, and rivers, and then to places like lakes, bays, and the ocean. Watersheds can carry trash long distances to large bodies of water.

Break the code below to learn four ways you can make sure trash doesn't end up in the oceans and become what is called **marine debris**.



# TAKE ACTION

There are four easy things you can do to help fight marine debris, or trash, even if you don't live near the coast. They are called the "Four Rs"

- 1.**REFUSE** As much as possible, say "no thanks" to items that are made of or packaged in plastic, and reach for ones that are reusable!
- 2.**REDUCE** If you have to use plastic, try to cut back on the amount.
- 3.**REUSE** Get creative! Whenever you can, find ways to recycle and reuse your trash with new purposes. When things break, try to repair them before tossing them out.
- 4.**REACT** If you see debris or trash, clean it up! Remind others to practice the "Four Rs."

Source: OR&R's Marine Debris Program | (noaa.gov)

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## TAKE THE PLEDGE!

Whether it's creating a system to help our parents remember to take reusable bags to the store or taking a weekly trash walk to pick up our neighborhood, we can all do our part to help reduce plastic waste from getting into our waterways.. Brainstorm how you can follow the "Four R's" and write your pledges below.

I can refuse \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I can reduce \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I can reuse \_\_\_\_\_

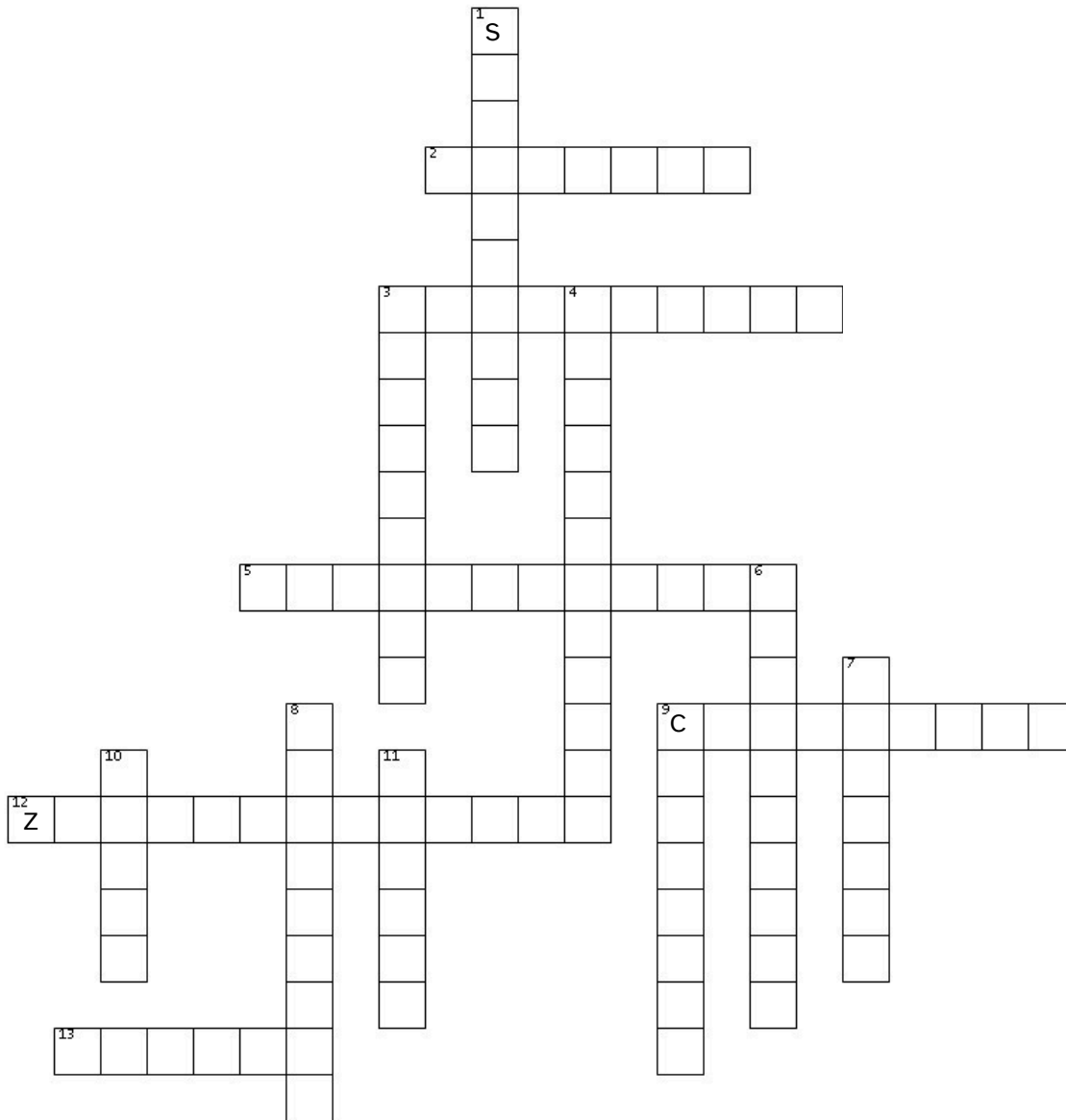
\_\_\_\_\_

I can react \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# CORAL CHALLENGE

Use the clues to fill in the crossword puzzle below. All of the answers can be found throughout this book (Hint: look for the words that **stand out** throughout the book).



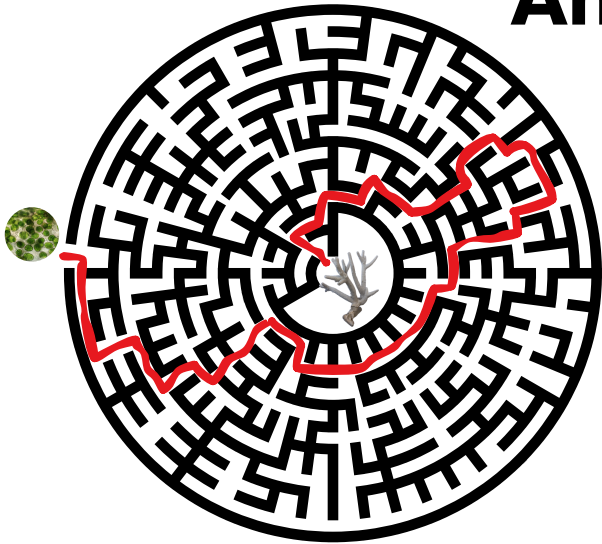
## ACROSS

2. the science of learning about body parts
3. meaning full-of-life or having a great number of animals (and plants) species present
5. trash that is found in the ocean
9. underwater ecosystem providing a home for 25% of all ocean life
12. tiny single-celled organisms that give coral their color
13. word used to describe life found in the ocean

## DOWN

1. characterized by their hard skeleton, they are the bedrock of the reef
3. when stressed coral expel their zooxanthellae and turn white
4. animals without bones
6. a common fun activity in coral reefs
7. less than 10% of this common material is recycled in the United States and is a major threat to ocean life
8. land area that channels rainfall and snowmelt to the ocean
9. the group in which coral belong that also includes jellyfish and anemone
10. many of these are what make up a coral colony.
11. one of the Four Rs - say "no thanks" to plastic as much as you can!

# Answer Key



## Coral Anatomy

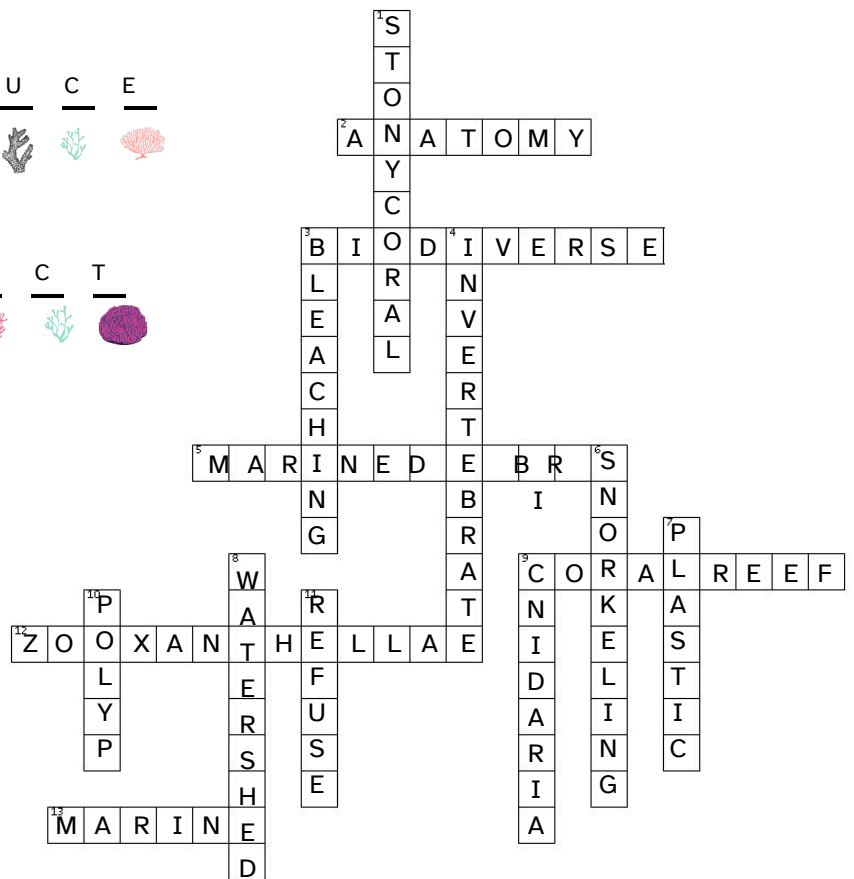
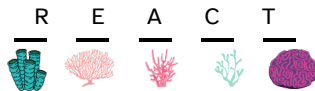
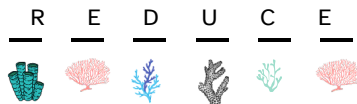
1. Mouth

2. Gastrodermis

3. Basal Plate

4. Stomach

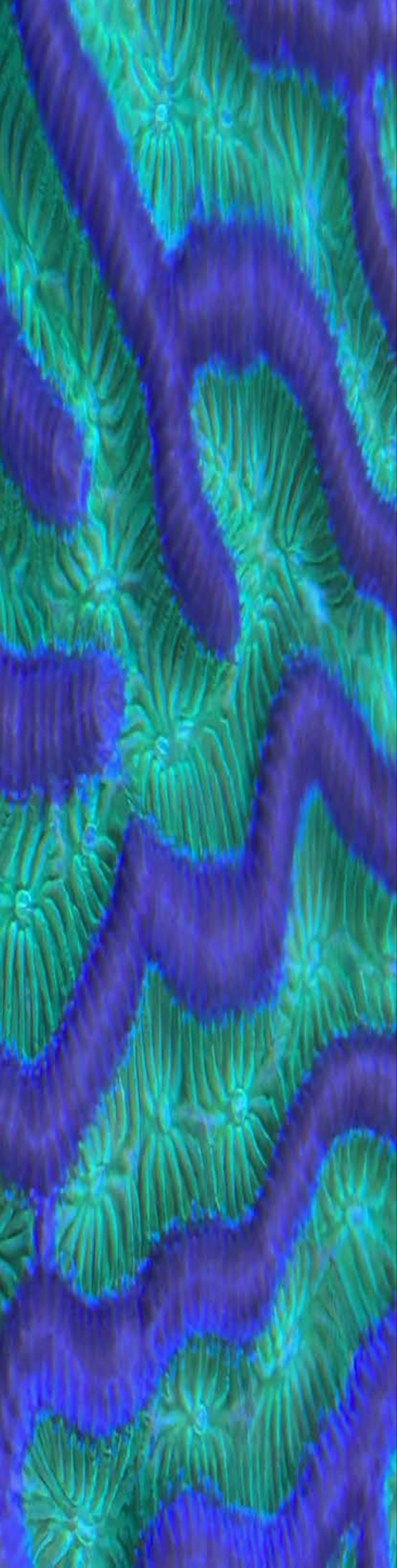
5. Tentacles



## CREDITS

This activity packet was put together using graphic design elements from CanvaPro and Discovery Education Puzzlemaker.

Information was gathered from NOAA - Nation Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Fish and Wildlife Foundation of Florida and the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.



# SAFE<sup>®</sup>

SAVING ANIMALS  
FROM EXTINCTION

CORAL

Communications,  
Education and Messaging  
Resource

2026-2027

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# Program Contacts

<u>Program Leader:</u> Bart Shepherd	<a href="mailto:bshepherd@calacademy.org">bshepherd@calacademy.org</a>
<u>Program Vice-Leader:</u> Dr Andy Stamper	<a href="mailto:andy.m.stamper@disney.com">andy.m.stamper@disney.com</a>
<u>Program Treasurer:</u> Mitch Carl	<a href="mailto:mitchc@omahazoo.com">mitchc@omahazoo.com</a>
<u>Program Secretary:</u> Ross Cunning	<a href="mailto:rcunning@sheddaquarium.org">rcunning@sheddaquarium.org</a>
<u>Program Manager:</u> Beth Firchau	<a href="mailto:bfirchau@safecoral.org">bfirchau@safecoral.org</a>
<u>CEM Lead:</u> Jessica Schellhorn	<a href="mailto:jeschellhorn@blankparkzoo.net">jeschellhorn@blankparkzoo.net</a>



## What is the SAFE Coral program?

**The SAFE Coral program is a centrally coordinated network** of aquariums and zoos, government agencies, NGOs and academic institutions and their partners working on a variety of efforts that support the conservation of western Atlantic and Caribbean coral species.

**The long-term vision** of the AZA SAFE Coral program is a world where coral reefs are abundant, healthy, genetically-diverse, and thriving network of interconnected marine ecosystems benefitting human communities.

**To make that vision a reality**, the SAFE Coral program leverages partner, contributor, and collaborator resources and expertise to make significant conservation impact.

# 2025 SAFE Coral Mission and Vision

## AZA SAFE Coral Mission

To Inspire and Mobilize the AZA to Save Coral from Extinction

## AZA SAFE Coral Vision

A world where coral reefs are an abundant, healthy, and genetically-diverse component of a thriving network of interconnected marine ecosystems benefitting human communities.

## 2024-2028 SAFE Coral Program Plan

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1W9Rtg6-UezHkRNtUr9l8VGa55-xpUVwk/view?usp=sharing>



Staghorn coral (*Acropora cervicornis*)  
Image: NOAA Fisheries

# 2025 SAFE Coral Key Message Pointss

- **Coral reefs protect communities and economies.**

Healthy reefs reduce storm surge, flooding, and coastal damage while supporting fisheries and tourism that feed millions and sustain jobs. Their decline increases risks to cities, livelihoods, and food systems.

**Why it matters to everyone:** Stronger coastal protection stabilizes economies, supply chains, and disaster costs, while reef loss can raise prices and reduce access to seafood and travel benefits nationwide.



Image: NOAA Satellites

- **Coral conservation is climate action, and everyone has a role.**

Corals are highly sensitive to warming and pollution, making their protection directly tied to climate action. Everyday choices, like cleaning up pet waste, reducing water consumption, and purchasing items from local vendors, help ease stress on reefs.

**Why it matters to everyone:** Individual and collective actions can significantly improve reef health, while climate solutions benefit both oceans and communities everywhere.

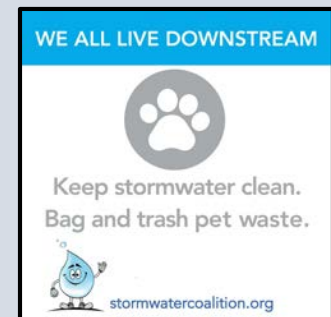


Image: Stormwatercoalition.org

- **Science and collective action are driving solutions.**

Zoos, aquariums, and researchers are advancing coral science, rescue, breeding, and restoration, supported by public awareness and behavior change.

**Why it matters to everyone:** You don't need to live near the ocean to make a difference. Supporting conservation efforts and making informed choices helps scale global impact.

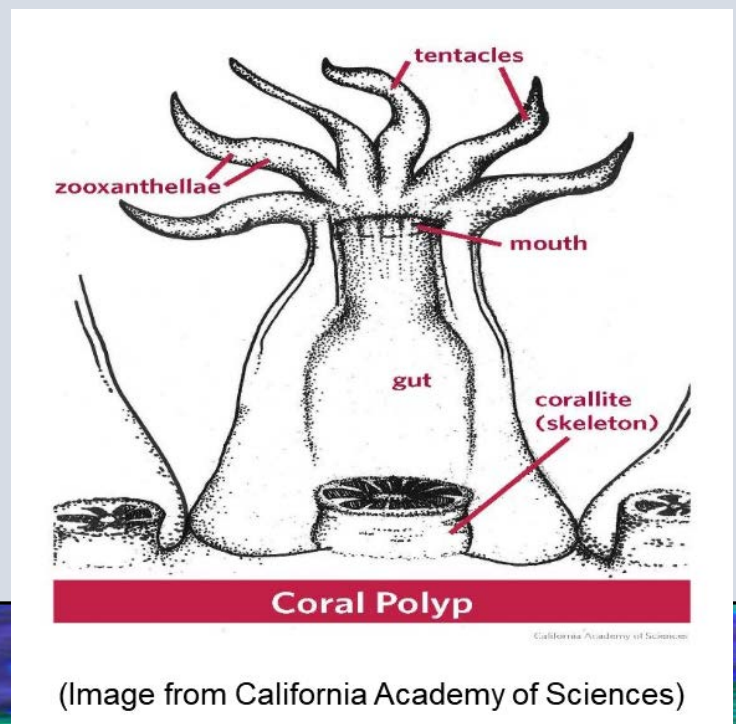


Image: Moody Gardens

# What is a Coral?

## What is Coral?

- **Invertebrate animals.** Invertebrates are animals with no internal skeleton.
- **Sessile (non-moving) relatives of jellyfish and sea anemones.** They belong to the phylum *Cnidaria*.
- The yellow and brown colors of coral come from their **symbionts**, also referred to as *zooxanthellae* (pronounced *zoo-zan-THEL-lee*), that are algae living within coral tissue.
- Symbionts provide corals with nutrition from **photosynthesis**, and help corals absorb calcium carbonate from seawater to form their hard skeletons. The corals give off carbon dioxide, which symbionts need to produce their own food.
- The symbiont - coral relationship is an example of an **endo-symbiotic relationship**. Each species, the coral and the algae, provides something to the other.
- Corals can be **hard or soft bodied**. Each species has its own shape and size that can be influenced by its environment.
- A coral is actually a **living community of separate small** connect together to
- Millions of coral polyps making up colonies create **coral reefs**.



(Image from California Academy of Sciences)

# How to Stay Informed

## Communication Resources

### The SAFE Coral Website

[SAFE Coral.org](http://www.safecoral.org) [www.safecoral.org](http://www.safecoral.org)

The website for the SAFE Coral program. It is the main communication hub for program partners and collaborators, project updates, ongoing efforts and ReeFORUM, the SAFE Coral blog.

- [Communications Packages](https://www.safecoral.org/communications-packages) <https://www.safecoral.org/communications-packages>
- [Our Program Partners and Contributors](https://www.safecoral.org/who-we-are) <https://www.safecoral.org/who-we-are>
- [Program Partner Projects](https://www.safecoral.org/program-partner-projects) <https://www.safecoral.org/program-partner-projects>
- [Florida Reef Tract Rescue Project \(FRTRP\)](https://www.safecoral.org/florida-reef-tract-rescue-project) <https://www.safecoral.org/florida-reef-tract-rescue-project>
- [AZA FRTRP Webpage \(AZA\)](https://www.aza.org/coral-reef-rescue) <https://www.aza.org/coral-reef-rescue>
- [Coral Aquarist Program](https://www.safecoral.org/coral-aquarist-program) <https://www.safecoral.org/coral-aquarist-program>
- [Maintenance Animal Propagation Working Group](https://www.safecoral.org/maintenance-animal-propagation-group) <https://www.safecoral.org/maintenance-animal-propagation-group>

## Blog

[ReeFORUM](https://www.safecoral.org/news) <https://www.safecoral.org/news>

## Follow us on:

- Facebook [SAFE Coral](#)

## AZA SAFE Coral Open Forum

- [How to Join the AZA Open Network](#)
- Connect for the most recent articles, updates and news.
- Start a discussion with your colleagues engaging in coral work.

# Education Resources

## Education Resource Library

COMING SOON

<https://www.safecoral.org/curriculum-and-learning-resources-library>

The SAFE Coral program will host an online library of educational materials and information for educators.

## Youth/Camp Game

[Animal Or Not](#)

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UL4Zo1z\\_6UKsJwllgJXTzJ2101e1Avxk/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UL4Zo1z_6UKsJwllgJXTzJ2101e1Avxk/view?usp=drive_link)

Animals come in many different shapes, sizes, colors, textures, and more! “Animal or Not” is a game designed to teach audiences that not all animals have 2 eyes, legs or even bones. This game helps audiences develop empathy for less charismatic creatures by learning that “animals are unique, just as I am unique.”

We’ve designed this game with good, better and best playing methods depending on the resources available at your facility. This game works for all ages but is particularly geared towards younger audiences.

## Teens/Adults Floor Engagement

[Corals By The Numbers](#)

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Jo9HWlBwp9vFDS5sC2a0g\\_WYliMe\\_vBnzxD7XsHV70/copy](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Jo9HWlBwp9vFDS5sC2a0g_WYliMe_vBnzxD7XsHV70/copy)

There are many numbers thrown around about the threats to and benefits of corals. This activity brings some of these numbers together in an interactive game geared towards older audiences. This activity provides audiences with fun facts to raise awareness to the importance of coral reefs and the Florida Reef Tract Rescue Project.

## Bellaroca Children’s Digital Book Series

[Bellaroca Children’s Digital Book Series](#)

<https://www.uniteforliteracy.com/azaftrtp/coral?LangId=0&shr=1>

Through the adventures of the series main character, Bellaroca (Pretty Rock), the books explore what corals are, the importance of coral reef ecosystems to our oceans, and survival challenges coral reefs are facing. They celebrate the work being done to ensure coral reefs survive for generations to come.

## SCORE Coral Heroes Comic Series

[Comic Link](#)

<https://www.score.org/en/our-work/coral-heroes>

This accessible resource comes in a variety of languages and formats. Engage with learners with these comic book stories to learn more about the many services that coral and coral reefs provide to ocean ecosystems.



# AZA-Florida Reef Tract Rescue Project

[www.aza.org/coral-reef-rescue](http://www.aza.org/coral-reef-rescue)

*For additional information or to connect with the AZA-FRTRP directly, please contact the AZA-FRTRP Coordinator, Beth Firchau, [bfirchau@aza.org](mailto:bfirchau@aza.org)*

## Who We Are:

The [Association of Zoos and Aquariums' Florida Reef Tract Rescue Project](#) (AZA-FRTRP) is a member driven coral conservation network turning the tide on an environmental crisis causing critical habitat loss along the Florida Reef Tract (FRT) – North America’s largest bank reef.

With leadership from four Florida organizations, Disney Conservation, Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium, Sea World, and The Florida Aquarium, select facilities are working with federal and state agencies to save stony coral tissue loss disease susceptible corals species along the FRT. Since March of 2019, and to date, nearly 2000 corals have been placed in 21 facilities managed by AZA-accredited institutions in 14 states. Land-based facilities, called nurseries, are housing and aquarium biologists are caring for corals removed from the FRT while researchers try to better understand the disease, its impact on the reef, and how future outbreaks can be managed. The AZA’s current holding institutions **(as of 6-6-25)** include:

Adventure Aquarium	NJ
Blank Park Zoo	IA
Butterfly Pavilion	CO
Columbus Zoo and Aquarium	OH
Denver Zoo	CO
Florida Coral Rescue Center*	FL
Georgia Aquarium	GA
Jenkinson's Aquarium	NJ
Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium	FL
Nashville Zoo	TN
National Aquarium	MD
National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium	IA
North Carolina Aquariums – Pine Knoll Shores	NC
Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo	NE
Riverbanks Zoo & Garden	SC
SEA LIFE at LEGOLAND California Resort	CA
SEA LIFE Michigan Aquarium	MI
SEA LIFE Orlando	FL
SEA LIFE San Antonio	TX
Sea World Rescue Center	FL
The Florida Aquarium	FL



**AZA-FRTRP FRIENDS**  
The AZA-FRTRP has a strong support network that includes over 30 SAFE (Saving Animals from Extinction) [Coral Program](#) Partners . These collaborators contribute to working groups and provide financial and in-kind support to the rescue effort.



*\*A joint coral conservation collaboration made possible by SeaWorld Orlando, Disney Conservation, and the Fish & Wildlife Foundation of Florida.*

Participation in the AZA- FRTRP is voluntary and the project is part the [AZA SAFE Coral Program](#).

In November 2025, the project began its seventh year continuing management of corals rescued from the FRT and beginning propagation and rearing of offspring from those corals to rebuild the reef.

### How You Can Help the Florida Reef Tract Rescue Project:

The Florida Reef Tract Rescue Project is a network of facilities and supporters caring for nearly 2000 rescued Florida corals at the request of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). Currently, funding to maintain holding space, build new space as corals grow in care, to train coral managers, and to provide resources to maintain the corals over time is critical to the project's success.

It's important to note:

- Since 2019, AZA member facilities have provided more than \$18 million US in resources and in kind services, to the rescue and long-term care of Florida corals. That is over 80% of the total investment in rescue to date.
- The care and support of a single Florida coral is estimated to cost approximately \$350US per year.
- An aquarium system suitable to house 32 Florida rescue corals can cost between \$7,000- \$10,000 US.



### HOW TO HELP:

- 1) The AZA-FRTRP is grateful for financial support. Support can be directed to:

*AZA SAFE Coral Program / Florida Reef Tract Rescue Project  
c/o Anne John  
Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium  
3701 S 10th Street  
Omaha, NE 68107*

Many AZA facilities count on admission ticket sales and memberships to fund conservation projects like the AZA-FRTRP. You can help these valuable conservation projects by visiting your local AZA accredited zoo or aquarium or becoming a member to show your support.

### AZA-FRTRP Project Key Messaging Themes:

- Corals and coral reefs are critical components of healthy oceans.
- The Florida Reef Tract (FRT) is in our backyard and is in the midst of an environmental crisis.
- The AZA-FRTRP is an effort of hope and empowerment:  
    "We are helping Nature respond to crisis and RECOVER".
- In an unprecedented event, AZA professionals and resources have been sought in a nationwide effort to support State and Federal agencies to manage and respond to a coral rescue. Many of the coral species being removed from the FRT have never been placed in human care before. Some are listed as Endangered Species Act species. Coral biologists are

learning a great deal about these corals during the rescue operation that will help better manage the FRT in the future.

### Resources and Additional Information:

[Association of Zoos and Aquariums' Florida Reef Tract Rescue Project](#) (*project web page*)

[AZA Coral Aquarist Program](#)

[AZA Network - AZA-FRTRP Communities](#) - Join the AZA-FRTRP open community on the AZA Network to receive the latest information on the Project and to network with others working to save the Florida Reef Tract. You do not have to be an AZA member or employed at an AZA facility to join the AZA Network- Just register! If you need assistance navigating the registration process, please contact the AZA-FRTRP Coordinator – [bfirchau@aza.org](mailto:bfirchau@aza.org)

[AZA CONNECT magazine 2019](#)

[AZA CONNECT magazine 2020](#)

[AZA CONNECT magazine 2021](#)

[AZA SAFE: Saving Animals From Extinction](#)

[AZA SAFE Corals Conservation Plan 2024-2028](#)

[AZA SAFE Corals Communications Package](#)

### Image Library:

An image library is available upon request. Contact Beth Firchau [bfirchau@aza.org](mailto:bfirchau@aza.org)

*Additional media resources are available for AZA-FRTRP members and those interested in sharing the story of the project. Please contact the project coordinator for details [bfirchau@aza.org](mailto:bfirchau@aza.org).*

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **What is the Florida Reef Tract (FRT)?**

The FRT, also called Florida's Coral Reef, extends 360 miles from Port St. Lucie, Florida to Dry Tortugas National Park west of the Key West. The biodiverse area is a critical habitat for many marine animals and approximately 45 species of hard corals—seven of which are listed under the Endangered Species Act. It is the largest bank reef in the continental United States.

#### **What is the difference between a bank reef and a barrier reef?**

The Florida Reef Tract is a BANK REEF.

A bank reef and a barrier reef are two types reef formations. Unlike the barrier reef, a bank reef is closer to shore, is characterized by ocean ward spur and groove formations, and lack a landward shallow lagoon, characteristic of barrier reefs.

#### **Why are corals along the Florida Reef Tract dying?**

An unidentified pathogen causing stony coral tissue loss disease is rapidly progressing through the

Florida Reef Tract causing critical habitat loss.

**When was the disease first observed?** The disease was first observed in 2014 off the coast of Miami-Dade County.

**Is the disease spreading?** Yes, recent reports indicate the disease has reached the Dry Tortugas National Park and has now spread throughout the Caribbean.

**How many species of coral could be impacted?** More than 20 species of corals are susceptible to stony coral tissue loss disease (SCTLD), five of which are included on the Endangered Species List. Different species have varying rates of infection and mortality. Scientific monitoring has indicated that since 2014, some Florida coral species have sustained up to 90% reduction in abundance because of stony coral tissue loss disease. Mortality rate among affected corals is 66-100%.

**Can the disease be prevented?** There currently is no method of prevention. Advancements in understanding the disease and its processes are being made but more work is needed.

#### **Why is rescue necessary?**

Scientific monitoring indicated that since 2014, over half of the reef building corals found on the FRT have sustained up to 90% reduction in abundance because of stony coral tissue loss disease (SCTLD). As of spring 2021, the disease has progressed to the Dry Tortugas National Park in the southern-most reaches of the reef.

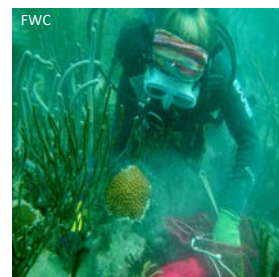
State resource managers felt that without some sort of safe keeping of disease susceptible coral species, the loss of these corals along the Florida Reef Tract would be eminent.

#### **What are the goals of the rescue?**

The goal of the rescue is two-fold: 1) to prevent localized extinction along the FRT for the most vulnerable species, and 2) to maintain as much genetic diversity as possible for over 20 priority species in preparation for restoration and possible future habitat disturbances.

#### **From where are the Florida corals rescued?**

Corals have been collected (rescued) by scientists from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission from reefs along the extent of the reef tract. Most corals are collected in water less than 60feet deep and within 10-20 miles off shore.



#### **How did the rescue work?**

Coral from the FRT have been hand removed from pre-selected reef sites by research teams from the State of Florida. The corals were transported by ship to temporary holding facilities in southeast Florida to be stabilized and acclimated to human care. From there, corals were shipped by air or over land in coolers filled with water to institutions all across the country.

#### **Now that the corals are rescued, what is next?**

The rescue was the first step towards restoration of the FRT. The next step already in action is the genetic identification of the rescued corals and developing a propagation plan to ensure optimum genetic diversity. Corals will be sexually

propagated and offspring produced will be reared in human care to a size and age that will allow for their successful reintroduction to the reef ecosystem.



**Why are coral reefs in general important?** Coral reefs protect coastal areas by buffering wave energy especially during storms and hurricanes. Additionally, coral reefs are critical components of productive oceans. They are home to a quarter of all marine species yet cover less than one tenth of the world's oceans. Their health and vulnerability to disease is impacted by warming ocean temperatures, point source and non-point source pollution, misuse of reef resources, etc.

**What can we do to help coral reefs in general?** Whether you live in a coastal community or inland, everyone can make choices that ensure the health of coral reefs by working to ensure the health of our waterways: lakes, rivers and oceans.

1. Decrease the use of single-use plastics
2. Clean up after your pets and dispose of waste responsibly
3. Encourage water conservation measures in your neighborhood

### **Additional Collaborative Communications Resources**

These resources are provided by AZA-FRTRP partners and share the wider story of the disease, the collaborative response and future plans.

#### **The Rs of Coral Rescue**

Presented: Reef Futures 2021

Jennifer Moore (NOAA) and Lisa Gregg (FWC) co-authors

8 minute video

[The Rs of Coral Rescue](#)

#### **Florida Department of Environmental Protection – communications products and websites**

[Communications Resources Library](#)

[FDEP Florida's Coral Reefs](#)

[FDEP Stoney Coral Tissue Loss Disease Response](#)

#### **Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission**

[FWC Coral Rescue Dashboard](#)

[FWC Coral Rescue](#)

[AZA Coral Rescue](#) (FWC)

#### **NOAA Coral Program / National Marine Sanctuaries**

[CORIS Coral Reef Information System](#)

[Florida's Coral Reef Disease Outbreak](#)

## **Coral Reefs and Socioeconomic Impacts**

[Socioeconomic Trends in South Florida Infographic \(2014-2019\)](#)

[All NCRMP South Florida infographics](#)

## **The NOAA Iconic Reefs Initiative**

[Mission Iconic Reefs](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions: Mission Iconic Reefs](#)

## **Status of Caribbean Reefs**

[AGRRA - Caribbean Disease Dashboard](#)

## **NOAA CORIS Gulf of Mexico Coral Reef Report Card**

[Report Card Library](#)