

SAFE[®]

SAVING ANIMALS
FROM EXTINCTION

CORAL

Communications,
Education and Messaging
Resource

2026-2027

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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.

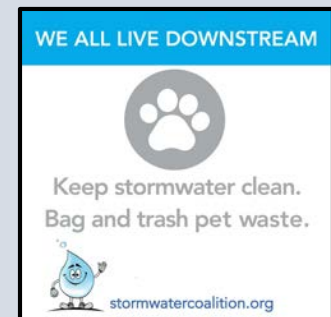


Image: Stormwatercoalition.org

- **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.

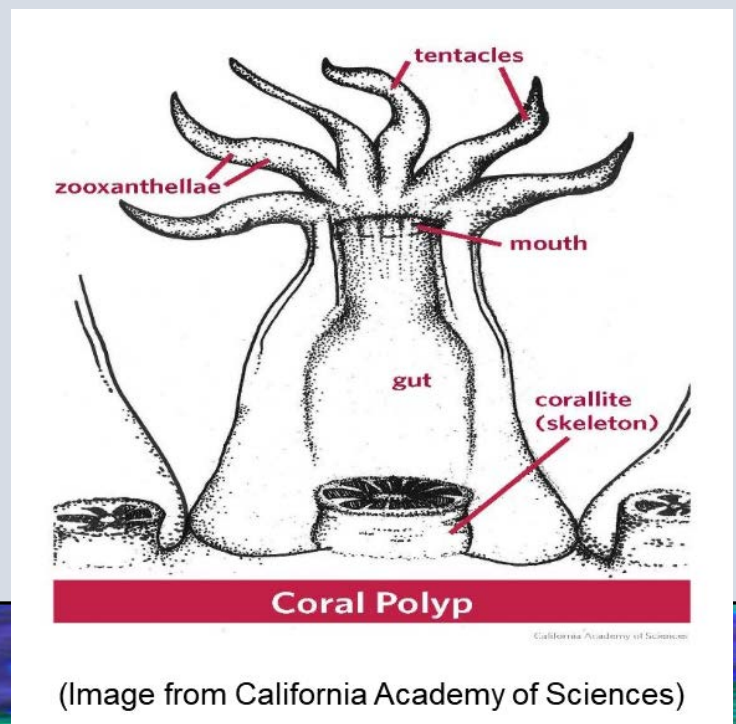


Image: Moody Gardens

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**.



How to Stay Informed

Communication Resources

The SAFE Coral Website

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

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

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.