

<http://www.livescience.com/54499-great-barrier-reef-devastated-by-coral-bleaching.html>

# Great Barrier Reef Devastated by Coral Bleaching

by Brian Kahn, Climate Central | April 21, 2016 03:03pm ET



Coral bleaching can be seen on Lizard Island on the Great Barrier Reef in Australia. Credit: Dorothea Bender-Champ for ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies

We knew coral bleaching was a serious issue in the Great Barrier Reef, but the scope of just how widespread it was has been unclear — until now.

Extensive aerial surveys and dives have revealed that 93 percent of the world's largest reef has been devastated by coral bleaching. The culprit has been [record-warm water](#) driven by El Niño and [climate change](#) that has cooked the life out of corals.

The unprecedented destruction brought leading reef scientist Terry Hughes, who runs the ARC Center of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies, to tears.

## Proof Jesus Is God?

See Why People Believe Jesus Is God And What Jesus Actually Said.



"We've never seen anything like this scale of bleaching before. In the northern Great Barrier Reef, it's like 10 cyclones have come ashore all at once," Hughes said in a press release.

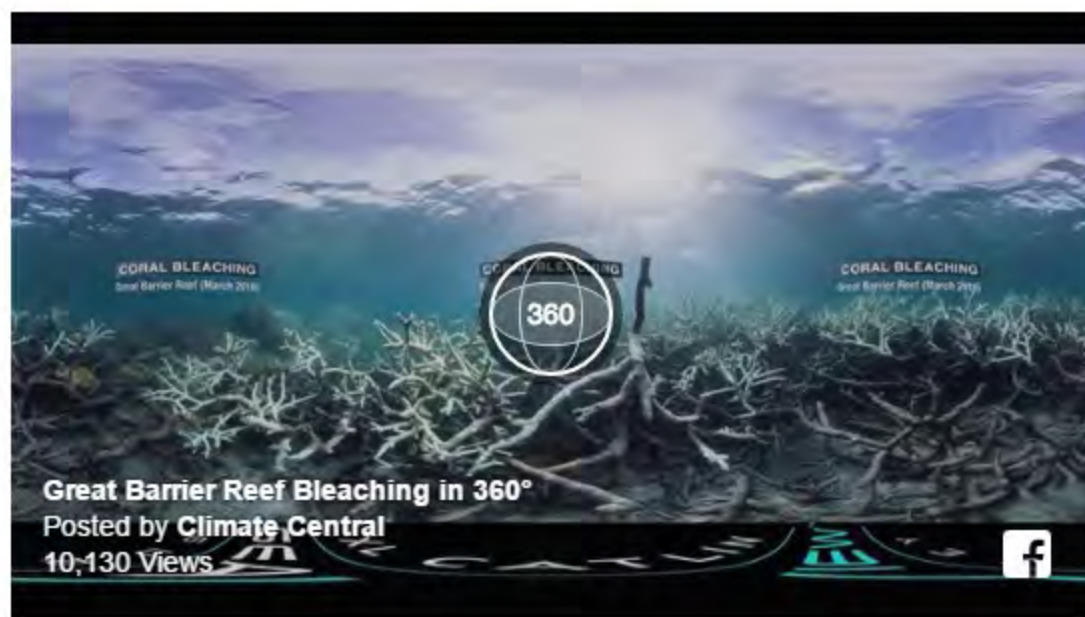
The Center conducted aerial surveys and dives at 911 sites spanning the full 1,430-mile length of the reef. They show the hardest hit areas are in the northern part of the reefs, which have also endured some of the hottest water temperatures for prolonged periods.

### Fishing Bans Can Protect Great Barrier Reef Corals

**RELATED** [There's a Hopeful Message Hidden in These Dead Reefs](#) [Longest Global Coral Bleaching On Record Isn't Over Yet](#)

More than 80 percent of reefs surveyed there showed signs of severe bleaching. The southern end of the reef fared better, but overall the bleaching represents a massive blow to biodiversity at the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Great Barrier Reef also faces pressure from [ocean acidification](#) and [fishing impacts](#), ramping up concerns over how to protect one of the most unique ecosystems on the planet.



Beyond its beauty, the Great Barrier Reef also has a huge economic benefit on the Australian economy. It generates \$4.45 billion in tourism revenue annually and supports nearly 70,000 jobs, according to the [Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority](#).

The damage caused by this round of bleaching will be felt for decades, but it's not the only reef around the globe to feel the heat of climate change. 2015 marked the third global coral bleaching event ever recorded. This one been the [longest of the three](#) as hot ocean temperatures fueled by El Niño and climate change have caused reefs to suffer across every ocean basin.

While every basin has been hit, some reefs and coral species have survived through the event. That has scientists [trying to quickly understand](#) why the survivors made it through. That knowledge could be crucial to ensure reefs continue to survive as oceans temperatures continue their inexorable rise and [water becomes more acidic](#) due to climate change.

"We can't afford to sit by and watch climate change drive all the world's coral reefs to extinctions by the end of the century," [Julia Baum](#), a reef researcher at the University of Victoria, said.

### You May Also Like:

[Studies Show Link Between Red Meat and Climate Change](#) [Warming Means Nicer U.S. Weather, But It Won't Last](#) [Flirting with the 1.5°C Threshold](#) [March Continues Streak of Exceptional Global Warmth](#)
*Originally published on [Climate Central](#).*

### Editor's Recommendations

- [Great Barrier Reef Coral Bleaching is 'Worst in its History'](#)
- [Chilling Photos Show Coral Bleaching Across the Globe](#)
- [Photos: Underwater Google Street View Reveals Stunning Corals](#)

## Reef Safe Clean up Crews

Designed to tackle all commonly encountered nuisance algae.



### More from LiveScience


[5 Surprising Sleep Discoveries](#)

[The Deadliest Day of the Week](#)

[Why Do Cats Stretch So Much?](#)

[What Happens When Women Get Their Periods in Space](#)

0 Comments

 Sort by [Newest](#)


Add a comment...

Facebook Comments Plugin

PENN STATE | ONLINE

Online degrees in Energy and Sustainability

LEARN MORE

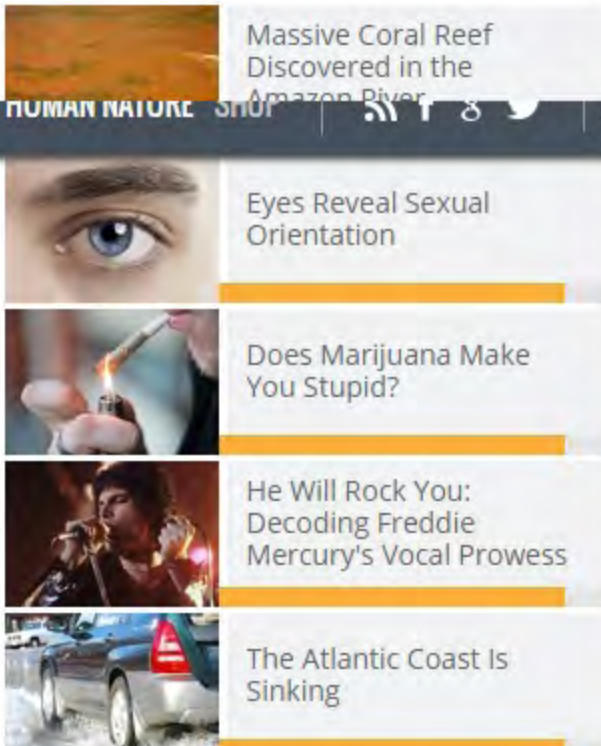
Science Newsletter: Subscribe

enter email here... submit

Follow Us



### Most Popular



PENN STATE | ONLINE

Online degrees in Energy and Sustainability

LEARN MORE

### SPACE

[Hunt Continues for Gravitational Waves from Black Hole Megamergers](#)
[New Horizons Encore? Pluto Probe's Team Proposes Extension](#)
[British Astronaut Tim Peake Sets Off-World Record Running Marathon in Space](#)

### livescience

[Drug Overdose Deaths Increased 70-Fold in These US Counties](#)
[Woman's Paranoia Had an Unusual Cause](#)
[Why Some 'Unhealthy' Eating Behaviors Might Not Be That Bad](#)

### LAPTOP

[Chromebooks May Soon Get "Over a Million" Android Apps](#)
[Panasonic New Rugged Toughpads are Master Scanners](#)
[Microsoft's Edge May Track Your Private Browsing](#)

### NEWSrama

[BLACK MASK Reveals 2016 Slate](#)
[10 MORE AVENGERS We Want to See Assemble On The Big Screen](#)
[WIZARD WORLD CEO/President Resigns](#)

### BUSINESSNEWS DAILY

[Do Your Employees Secretly Dislike You? What to Do About It](#)
[5 Signs You Need New Tech \(and How to Pick the Right Tools\)](#)
[Dropbox Teams with Microsoft to Help You Be More Productive](#)

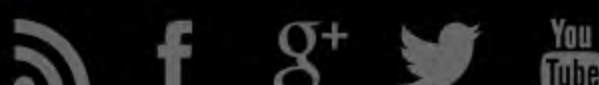
### COMPANY

[Company Info](#)
[About the Site](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[Advertise with Us](#)
[Using our Content](#)
[Licensing & Reprints](#)
[Copyright Policy](#)
[Terms of Use and Sale](#)
[Privacy Policy](#)
[Sitemap](#)

### NETWORK

[TopTenREVIEWS](#)
[Tom's Guide](#)
[LAPTOP](#)
[Tom's Hardware](#)
[AnandTech](#)
[BusinessNewsDaily](#)
[Tom's IT Pro](#)
[SPACE.com](#)
[LiveScience](#)

### FOLLOW US



### SUBSCRIBE

 [SUBMIT](#)
**Purch**

Copyright © 2016 All Rights Reserved.