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Guam is the southernmost island in the Mariana Archipelago and the largest island in Micronesia. Guam is one of the original members of the U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee (AIC).

Coral Reefs

Guam is home to 5,000 species of marine organisms, many of which rely on healthy coral reefs. In Guam's nearshore waters (0-3 nmi), the combined area of coral reef and lagoon is approximately 69 km² – nearly 13,000 American football fields! Coral reefs are important to the economic, cultural, political, and social viability of Guam. A 2007 study estimated Guam's coral reef resources to be worth \$127 million/year.



Coral reef in Guam. Credit: D. Burdick.



Crown of thorns. Credit: D. Burdick.

Threats

Guam's coral reefs are under stress and being degraded from both natural and human impacts. There are numerous threats to Guam's coral reefs every day including, sedimentation and crown of thorns outbreaks. These threats (and resulting impacts) will be compounded by threats posed by global climate change.

Agencies

In 1997, the Government of Guam established the Coral Reef Initiative (CRI) to address threats to the reefs. The Department of Chamorro Affairs (point of contact), the Bureau of Statistics and Plans, Guam Coastal Management Program, Department of Agriculture, Division of Aquatics and Wildlife Resources, and Guam Environmental Protection Agency lead most of the efforts of the CRI.



Coral reef close-up. Credit: D. Burdick.

Guam
allislandscommittee.org/aboutaic/jurisdictions/guam/

Visit <http://allislandscommittee.org/aboutaic/jurisdictions/guam/> or
<http://guamcoralreefinitiative.blogspot.com/>

For more information:

Actions

Guam Coral Reef Initiative Coordinating Committee has led a participatory process to develop Local Action Strategies to address six main threats to coral reefs in Guam: land-based sources of pollution, over-fishing, lack of public awareness, recreational misuse/overuse, global climate change and reef resilience, and Department of Defense expansion.

Below are listed a few example activities under each LAS.

Land-based Sources of Pollution

- Re-vegetated upland, barren areas of targeted watersheds (e.g. Piti and Asan watersheds) with native forest species to reduce erosion and sedimentation.
- Codified best management practices to reduce storm-water runoff to regulate future development projects.



Fishery Management

- Increased conservation officers, conducted training, and providing technical assistance.
- Distributed user-friendly pamphlets on fishing regulations and the value of Guam's marine preserves.



Public Outreach and Awareness

- Marine science curriculum developed in collaboration with the Guam Department of Education.
- RARE Pride Campaign to stop the illegal burning of southern watersheds.

Recreational Use

- Studied the effects of Motorized Personal Watercraft in Hagatña Bay.
- Feasibility study for instituting a user fee for recreational activities.



Coral Bleaching and Global Climate Change

- Implemented Guam's draft response plan to address 2013 coral bleaching events. Worked with community to document spatial extent and species affected.

Department of Defense Expansion and Related Impacts

- Provided recommendations on a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for military build-up in Guam. Primary recommendations included preservation of cultural resources and minimization of impacts on environment, natural resources, and native species.

U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF) Member
Eddie Baza Calvo, Governor, Guam

USCRTF and AIC Point of Contact
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