

Lesson 2: Coral Reef Threats

Grades: 3-5

Activity: Food Web Chain Reactions

Lesson Objectives

- Understand how a marine food web works
- Describe specific threats to a coral reef food web, specifically in Florida
- Model a coral reef food web and how it is affected by threats

Food Webs and Food Chains

A food web consists of all of the food chains in an ecosystem.

A food chain is a group of organisms linked together in the order of the food they eat. The food chain begins with producers, then moves to consumers, to predators, then decomposers.

Coral Reef Food Web

What do you think would happen if one of these species was taken away from the web?



What are some things that are harmful to a coral reef or the organisms that live there?

- **Physical damage**, like boat anchors and people kicking or standing on while snorkeling or SCUBA diving
- **Pollution** that originates on land and flows into the ocean and out to the reef
- **Overfishing**
- Effects from **Climate Change** such as
 - Coral bleaching
 - Ocean acidification and temperatures that make it tough for corals to grow

Let's look at some coral reef threats!



<https://coralreef.noaa.gov/interactivereef/interactivereef.html>

Food Web Chain Reaction

Activity!



How can we help our coral reefs?



- Be mindful of how we operate **boats** and where we **anchor**.
- When we are enjoying **snorkeling** on a coral reef, don't touch, step on or break the corals. Look with your eyes not your hands!
- Reduce our use of **plastic**, and dispose of it correctly when we do use it.
- Purchase **fish** that is sustainably sourced.
- Reduce our use of **fertilizers** and pesticides that can become polluted runoff.
- **Write letters** to the government officials encouraging their support of Florida's Coral Reef and measures to protect it.