



## Southeast Florida Reef Review

September 2020

*Keeping you up-to-date on DEP's [Coral Reef Conservation Program](#) and [Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative](#)!*

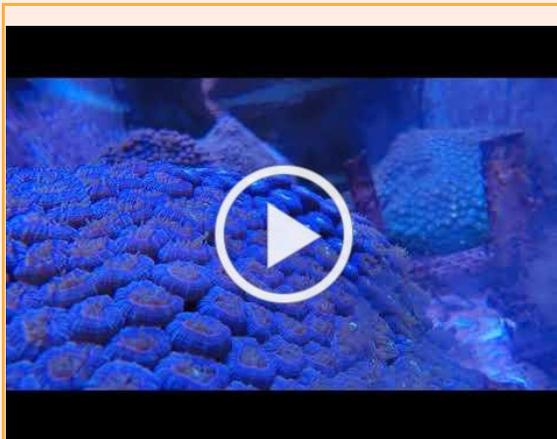
### Coral Babies!

Corals only reproduce once a year during carefully selected summer nights. The conditions need to be just right for the sexually mature colonies to release their eggs and sperm, or gametes, into the water column. When different coral species release their gametes at the same time, it is called **mass spawning**. Synchronized spawning efforts among different species increases the chances that the eggs will be successfully fertilized. The Coral Reef Conservation Program is happy to share the summer 2020 spawning successes of our partners!

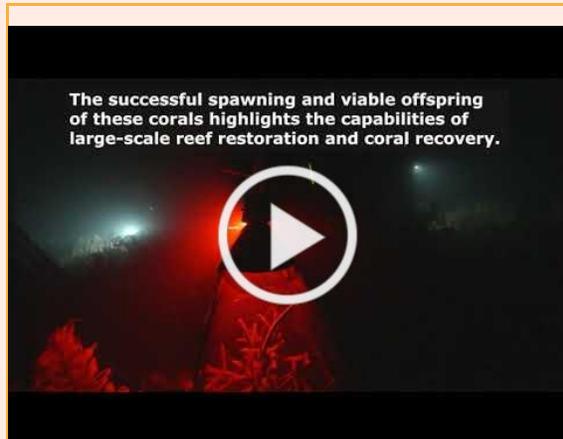


Read Blogs by Coral Spawning Scientists at [FloridasCoralReef.org](http://FloridasCoralReef.org)

You can also check out Coral Restoration Foundation's [elkhorn](#) and [staghorn](#) spawning blogs!



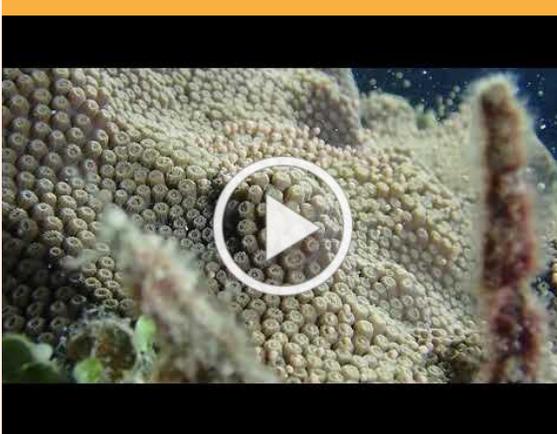
Scientists at the Nova



Scientists at the University of

Southeastern University [Marine Larval Ecology and Recruitment Lab](#) successfully induced colonies of great star coral (*Montastrea cavernosa*), a major reef-building species in Florida, to reproduce in captivity for the first time ever. Friends of Our Florida Reefs helped fund the larval system where the larvae were reared.

Miami Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science observed threatened staghorn corals (*Acropora cervicornis*) spawning at the [100 Yards of Hope](#) restoration site. Successful spawning of outplanted corals is an exciting sign for future restoration efforts!



[Mote](#) coral scientists observed restored colonies of mountainous star coral (*Orbicella faveolata*) spawning on a reef near Cook Island. This is the first time that restored massive corals have been documented to spawn on Florida's Coral Reef.



Threatened Atlantic pillar coral (*Dendrogyra cylindrus*) successfully spawned for the second year in a row at [The Florida Aquarium Center for Conservation's Induced Coral Spawning Lab](#).

*Photo courtesy of The Florida Aquarium.*

## Friends of Our Florida Reefs Update

### Florida's Coral Reef Exhibit and Newly Elected Board Positions

[Friends of Our Florida Reefs](#) is pleased to announce a new partnership with the [Marine Environmental Education Center](#) (MEEC) at the Carpenter House, a popular public facility jointly managed by Nova Southeastern University and Broward County, in Hollywood, Florida. In addition to museum-quality displays and touchable items, MEEC has live-animal exhibits including their world-famous resident: Captain the Green Sea Turtle, who unfortunately can't be released back into the wild due to injuries. Friends of Our Florida Reefs (FOFR) is committing to help MEEC fund a new custom 300+ gallon Florida's Coral Reef tank next to Captain's large pool, including an educational display highlighting the wonders of this underwater national treasure and the DEP Coral Reef Conservation Program's dedicated work. In the next couple of months, FOFR is hoping to match \$5,000 kindly donated by a board director to kickstart this vital education project, and every dollar really helps! If you'd like to help FOFR with the MEEC Match Challenge with a tax-deductible donation of any amount, please visit [www.floridareef.org](http://www.floridareef.org).



In August, Friends of Our Florida Reefs elected two new board positions: Kirk Dotson was elected Secretary and Baret Barry was elected Vice President. Baret has been a Board Director since April 2016 and is currently an environmental consultant and the owner of H2Overboard. Kirk has been a Board Director since January 2019 and is a retired aerospace engineer.



## New Southeast Florida Action Network PSA



**SEAFAN** is our citizen science reporting and response system designed to improve the protection and management of southeast Florida's offshore coral reefs. There is no special training needed and no further participation is required; just report what, when and where the marine incident was observed via [www.SEAFAN.net](http://www.SEAFAN.net)

Read the August 2020 BleachWatch Current Conditions Report

## Coral Reef Traveling Teacher Trunk Resources

Due to COVID-19 we will not ship our traveling teacher trunks this fall, but all lesson plans that are currently in the trunk can be found [here](#). We spent the summer working with teachers on creating **new lesson plans for grades K-12!** We are excited to have specifically tailored high school lesson plans and look forward to sharing this new trunk content with you.

If you are interested in having a Coral Reef Conservation Program staff member connect virtually with your class, email us at [Coral@FloridaDEP.gov](mailto:Coral@FloridaDEP.gov).

## Miami-Dade County Assesses Anchor Damage to the Reef

In August, Miami-Dade County Department of Environmental Resource Management assisted DEP's Reef Injury Prevention and Response Program by performing an in-water injury assessment at a recent anchor incident site on the reef. Thirteen dislodged corals at the incident site were cached by Miami-Dade County DERM and later recovered by a University of Miami lab. These corals are recovering in their nursery and will later be reattached back on the offshore reef.



Under Florida's Coral Reef Protection Act, it is illegal to anchor on or otherwise damage coral reefs in state waters. This underwater assessment helps DEP assess civil penalties and damages relating to a coral reef injury event and then pursue a responsible party. Funds collected through the Coral Reef Protection Act are deposited into a trust fund and designated for coral reef use, such as incident response, injury site restoration and related departmental costs. Special thanks to Miami-Dade and all the Resource Trustees for their continued efforts assisting the [Reef Injury Prevention and Response Program](#) with Coral Reef Protection Act incidents.

*Photo courtesy of Miami-Dade County DERM.*

## Florida's Coral Reef: Leading the way in Global Coral Conservation



Watch the virtual ICAST panel **Florida's Coral Reef: Leading the way in Global Coral Conservation** featuring leaders from DEP, FWC, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and FORCE BLUE.

[Sign up for the Florida Coral Crew](#)

