



Background:

Up to 75% of the world's coral reefs are threatened due to continued pressure from both local and global stressors. As data on the conservation status on marine species are updated, the number of these species occurring in coral reefs habitats has increased dramatically. In order to make these data easily accessible to Military personnel, the previous version of the Coral Reef Initiative Database has been updated, expanded and reorganized. The database of scientific information presented here will greatly benefit resource managers in successfully managing and assessing coral reefs and species of special conservation status associated with coral reefs. This database will serve as an aid in the identification of sensitive coral reef species and their critical habitats in addition to providing the latest information on threats and assessment techniques. The successful assessment and characterization of reef ecosystems will benefit Department of Defense (DoD) environmental planners and operators.



A healthy Pacific reef

Objective:

The goal of this Legacy-funded project is to develop tools for consistent management and conservation of DoD protected marine species and associated benthic/marine habitat (coral reef ecosystems). The final product is an updated version of the Coral Reef

Initiative Database.

Summary of Approach:

A database in an easily searchable "website" format was produced to provide information on coral reef ecosystems for resource managers. The goal was to provide, in one location, general scientific background on all aspects of coral reefs, their inhabitants and conservation issues. Links are provided to outside resources as well as pdfs of relevant documents.

Benefit:

DoD benefits from increased marine resource awareness through improved consistency in applying policy and resource protection measures while reducing resource management costs. As a member of the Coral Reef Task Force and to comply with the Coral Reef Conservation Act, mapping and inventory information must be gathered on the military's coral reef resources. Moreover, DoD Instruction 4715.03, Natural Resources Conservation Program, directs DoD to inventory biologically or geographically significant or sensitive natural resources. These resource protection measures also support DoD compliance with the Sikes Act, Clean Water Act, Coastal Zone Management Act, Magnusson Stevens Act, Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act, EO 13158 Marine Protected Areas, EO 13089 Coral Reef Protection, EO 12114 Invasive Species as well as environmental planning requirements under NEPA.

Accomplishments:

During this update, over 450 new reference articles were added to the database. Regional information pages were added for the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans and the Caribbean Sea. Pages specific to North Carolina, Columbia, Panama, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Thailand were added. All sub-sections regarding Marine Conservation Topics were updated including the additions of Marine Protected Areas and Natural Disasters. A collection of scientific literature on the general topic of coral reef fishes was also added.

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