

## RED ALERT: NEW CORAL DISEASE EPIDEMIC SPREADING

All reef monitoring teams should be on the lookout for two new coral diseases that have been ravaging Florida for several years, and now appears to have spread to Jamaica after its severe bleaching event last fall. The outbreak is now the longest and largest infectious disease outbreak for any coral. The primary disease is an unusually virulent form of white plague that's been active in Florida since it first appeared off Virginia Key shortly after dredging the Port in 2014; the second is a new disease (or an old disease presenting new signs) that was first seen in 2016 and so far has only attacked *Siderastrea siderea* and *S. radians*. (See slides; *Siderastrea* white blotch looks very different from white plague.) Both seem capable of killing corals within weeks or months (see photos below and in links). The new white plague affects over twenty coral species, including the main reef builders (except the acroporids). **It has now spread throughout Florida and is suspected in Jamaica.** (see Fragments of Hope Facebook post May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018).

If you or your team members see any evidence of these diseases in your transects, or anywhere on the reef, please make notes and take photos! Include information about: How many corals are infected: (few some many) Which coral species are affected? What is the depth interval?

Please send information to your HRI Coordinator; and cc [mcfield@healthyreefs.org](mailto:mcfield@healthyreefs.org) and [jlang@riposi.net](mailto:jlang@riposi.net)

Thank you - lets' hope this epidemic doesn't spread any further this summer. But like lionfish, this will almost certainly spread. Let's be prepared. Containment strategies are being developed.

Resource documents about the Florida epidemic:

<http://myfwc.com/media/4058001/grecian-rocks-2016-disease-outbreak.pdf>

[https://floridadep.gov/sites/default/files/FWRI\\_Diseases\\_Final%20Report\\_revised\\_new%20logo.pdf](https://floridadep.gov/sites/default/files/FWRI_Diseases_Final%20Report_revised_new%20logo.pdf)

<https://floridadep.gov/sites/default/files/Coral-Disease-Outbreak-FAQ.pdf>

<https://floridadep.gov/fco/coral/content/florida-reef-tract-coral-disease-outbreak>

News Articles

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/environment/article209447494.html>

<http://www.techtimes.com/articles/227868/20180515/a-mysterious-new-disease-is-destroying-floridas-360-mile-long-coral-reef.html>

