

## Florida Coral Cover Video – Transcript

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Using Florida census data from the early 1830s onward, this visualization shows a dramatic increase in population for the majority of Florida's coastal counties. This increase in population brings with it an increase in human population pressures. More people bring more waste, more pollution, and more direct human interaction with coral reefs. The close proximity of Florida's corals to the coast means that many of the corals in Florida are even more susceptible to these kinds of population pressures than corals elsewhere. Being so close to human population pressures, Florida's corals are exposed to nitrogen runoff from fertilizer, excess sand and silt from beach development projects or harbor dredging, and even nutrients from improperly handled human waste - all of which have negative impacts on coral reefs.

Watching this video it is important to note that the coral cover percentage at monitoring stations close to high population counties decreases at the highest rates. The overall mean decrease in coral cover among all monitoring sites in this study was 45%. Because of this drastic decrease in coral cover across the Florida Reef Tract NOAA and other groups have recently implemented major coral restoration and outplanting projects to bolster coral populations. Although the last 25 years have seen a large decrease in coral cover at these monitoring sites, there is hope that increased public awareness, improved infrastructure, and a new scientific focus on radical interventions may change the downward trend in coral cover.