



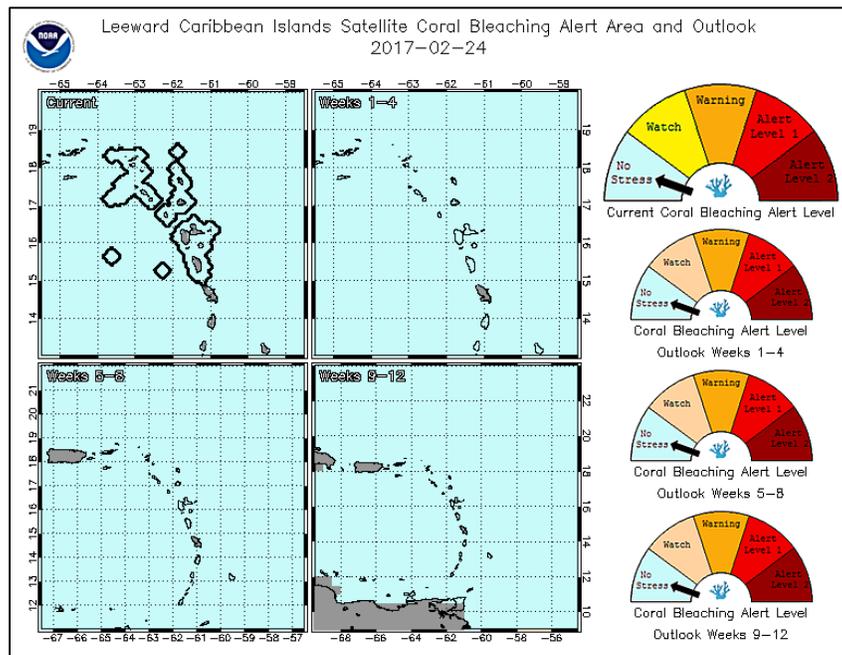
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA CORAL REEF WATCH



...Nil thermal stress on corals...

Situation and forecast

Preliminary data indicate that sea surface temperature (SST) around Antigua and Barbuda is above normal for February. This would make the 18th consecutive month of high than normal SST for the area. The mean SST is around **26.8 °C (80.2 °F)**. Nevertheless, this is well below the **bleaching threshold of 29.6 °C (85.3 °F)**, which is expected for this time of year. This means that the thermal stress on corals remains at nil. The SST is about 0.8 °C (1.4 °F) higher than usual for February. The sea surface has cooled by around 0.3 °C (0.5 °F) since last month. The record high SST for February is 27.1 °C (80.8 °F), observed in 2010, based on NOAA's ERSTsv4.



No thermal stress is anticipated over through **June** (see above) and certainly not before late summer 2017 (see update).

The rest of the region

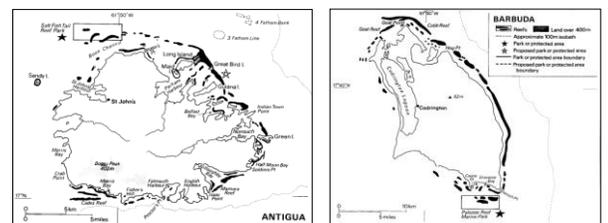
The thermal stress levels across the Caribbean, as of **February 25, 2017**, like Antigua and Barbuda, is at nil. No thermal stress is anticipated before Summer: **March to June 2017** (See also Caribbean Coral Reef Watch).

Parrotfish and coral reef

Much has been said about the benefits of parrotfish to coral reefs. A recent paper in Nature has again confirmed the benefits, based on the study of sediment cores taken from the Caribbean Sea. The paper by Cramer, K. L. et al., titled *Prehistorical and historical declines in Caribbean coral reef accretion rates driven by loss of parrotfish*, produced 3,000 years of data on reef growth rate and herbivore abundance, dominated by parrotfish. Cramer's research group not only found a strong correlation between coral reef growth rate and parrotfish abundance but also that the parrotfish was the cause of coral reef accretion – confirming the creature's benefits to the reefs, [click for more](#).

Why should we care?

Coral reefs are especially important given their immeasurable contribution to tourism, fisheries, leisure and disaster risk reduction. Click on the maps below to see the location of our coral reefs:



Related resources:

- [Recent 30-day SST anomaly animation](#)
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[NOAA Coral Reef Watch methodology](#)

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