



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA CORAL REEF WATCH



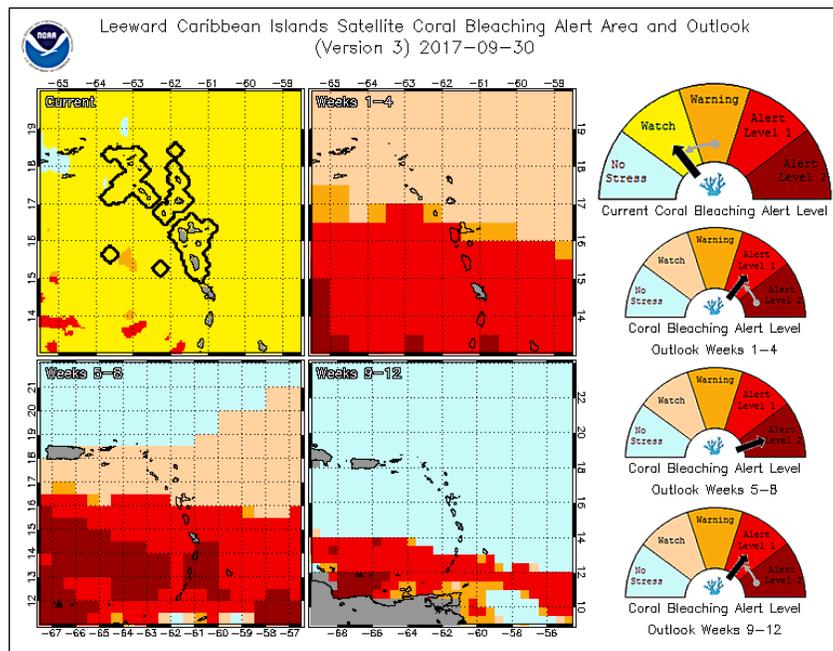
...Thermal stress accumulating on corals...

Situation and forecast

Preliminary data indicate that sea surface temperature (SST) around Antigua and Barbuda is above normal for September. This would make the 25th consecutive month of higher than normal SST for the area. The mean SST for the month is around 29.6 °C (85.3 °F). However, as of the end of the month, the temperature dropped below the **bleaching threshold** of 29.3 °C (84.7 °F). Notwithstanding, SST remain at stress level – above the max monthly mean; hence, a coral bleaching watch is in effect. The SST has warmed by around 0.4 °C (0.72 °F) since last month. The record high SST for September is 29.9 °C (85.8 °F), observed in 2005, based on NOAA's [ERSSTv4](#).

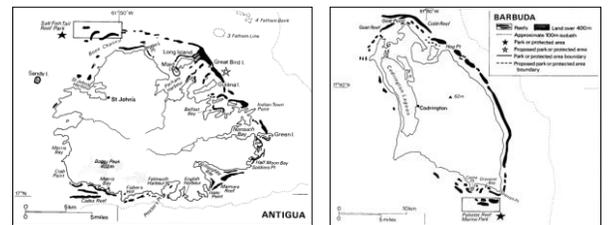
Hurricanes and their Effects on Coral Reefs

To say that this hurricane season has been very active for us is a gross understatement. Never, on record, have we had three major hurricanes pass within 120 miles of Antigua and Barbuda. Never have we had two Category 5 hurricanes pass so within 120 miles of the islands. Never have we had a Category 5 hurricane make landfall on one of our islands. We know the impact they have on land but how do they affect coral reefs? Hurricanes have both positive and negative effects on coral reefs. Positively – hurricanes can reduce the thermal stress on corals during the summer. This they do by causing cooling in a few ways. Negatively – powerful hurricanes can be very destructive. This destruction can be brought via large and battering waves generated by the high winds. [Read 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:



Thermal stress is expected to accumulate over of the period **October-January**, as a result a **warning**, will be in effect. There will be brief periods of alert level 2 stress taking place also ([see update](#)).

The rest of the region

There is a **60% chance** of **alert level 1 stress** taking place across most of the Caribbean for parts of the next four months. See [Caribbean Coral Reef Watch](#) for more.

Related resources:

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