

7th Status of the World's Coral Reefs report

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Environment

Why in News?

7th Status of the World's Coral Reefs report was released recently.

- **Released by** - Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN)
- It found that coral bleaching events are becoming more frequent, reducing the time available for reefs to recover.

Key Findings

- Global hard coral cover declined by 9.5% compared with the 1980-2009 reference period.
- Major disturbances occurred every 4-6 years after 2010, compared with roughly once a decade earlier.
- 2024 - 87% of reefs experienced unprecedented heat stress.
- >40% experienced heat stress associated with risk of coral mortality.
- 4th global mass bleaching event: began in 2023, reached unprecedented heat stress in 2024 and likely ended in 2025.

Coral Bleaching

- Coral bleaching occurs when corals lose their symbiotic zooxanthellae due to environmental stress, particularly elevated sea-surface temperatures.
- Bleached corals are not necessarily immediately dead, but prolonged stress can cause mortality.

Degree Heating Weeks (DHW)

- DHW measures accumulated heat stress experienced by corals.
 - $\geq 4^{\circ}\text{C}$ -weeks: associated with significant bleaching.
 - $\geq 8^{\circ}\text{C}$ -weeks: can cause widespread bleaching and mortality.
- **Major Driver** - Marine heatwaves have become the strongest driver of coral-cover decline globally.
- Their frequency and severity are being amplified by human-caused climate change.
- Local pressures further worsen reef degradation.



Reference

[Down To Earth| 7th Status of the World's Coral Reefs report](#)