Coral reefs occupy just 1 percent of the Earth’s surface, but they host more than 25 percent of all marine species and support the lives and livelihoods of nearly one billion people through food, cultural practices and income from fishing and tourism. Because healthy reefs can absorb up to 97 percent of wave energy, they also serve as living breakwaters, protecting tens of thousands of kilometers of coastline and infrastructure from flooding and erosion.

Despite the many benefits they provide for people and nature, coral reefs face an uncertain future. Human impacts—such as pollution and destructive fishing practices—are weakening coral health, while climate change has already killed thousands of square kilometers of reef. As ocean temperatures continue to rise, coral reef extinction within our lifetimes has become a distinct possibility.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

But there is hope. Scientists know that some coral reefs are better able to survive climate impacts and can provide benefits to other reefs. These newly discovered resilient “Super Reefs” can survive in a warming ocean, either because they have adapted to higher temperatures or because they live in areas that are sheltered from the heat. As long as they are protected from human threats, Super Reefs can spawn new generations of resilient corals.

Ensuring the future of coral reefs starts with identifying Super Reefs and then protecting them from threats, such as overfishing and destructive fishing techniques, pollution, and coastal development. We know that resilient corals and coral reefs are important to protect in marine protected areas (MPAs) and through restoration projects, but until now the ability to identify and protect resilient coral reefs has been lacking. For the first time, global experts in coral reef research, conservation, and restoration are uniting to identify and safeguard resilient reefs and bring these approaches to coral reef nations, conservation groups, and coastal communities around the world.
OUR TEAM
Our Super Reefs team brings together experts in ocean science, conservation and management from Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Stanford University and The Nature Conservancy to support governments and communities at this critical moment in the history of coral reefs. Our mission is to identify, protect, and grow a global network of Super Reefs to secure the future of coral reefs and the marine life and human communities that they support.

JOIN US
Coral reefs are not doomed, but we must do more than just hope. The discovery and protection of Super Reefs—and the new technologies that allow us to detect them—offer a lifeline for coral reefs that was not available even five years ago. We need to act now to protect these extraordinary ecosystems before the coral crisis hits a point of no return. With your support, we can help ensure that coral reefs not only survive today’s threats but thrive for generations to come.

LEARN MORE AT
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