

# BleachWatch Virgin Islands September Newsletter

**Current coral bleaching alert level: **WARNING**** as of Sept 30, 2019

NOAA's Coral Reef Watch 5-kilometer Coral Bleaching Alert Area indicates that the US Virgin Islands (USVI) and surrounding area is currently experiencing increasing levels of thermal stress and bleaching is possible with the current conditions (Figure 1).

### USVI bleaching conditions summary:

The water around the Virgin Islands has been heating up in the last few weeks, passing the "bleaching threshold" temperature for over a week. This increases our coral bleaching alert level from "watch" to "warning" indicating that bleaching is possible at this time. If we remain above the bleaching threshold for 4 weeks, bleaching is likely to occur, and after 8 weeks, mortality is likely to occur. Since it is later in the season, we are hopeful that the waters will cool enough to prevent a major bleaching event but now is the time to monitor sites for paling and bleaching corals.

### Things to remember:

- Bleached coral is not dead coral— just weakened coral, if the water cools down in time, the corals can recover
- You can help by alleviating other coral impacts during this stressful time by not touching, standing or anchoring on coral and preventing any pollutants from getting to our reefs (like chemical sunscreens, trash, etc).
- Report what you see (or don't see)— it's useful to know when sites are healthy too— so take a swim at your favorite dive site and tell us what you find!

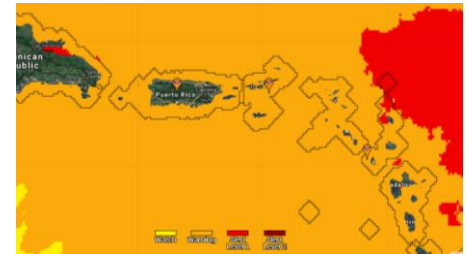
Virgin Islands  
(2019-09-21)



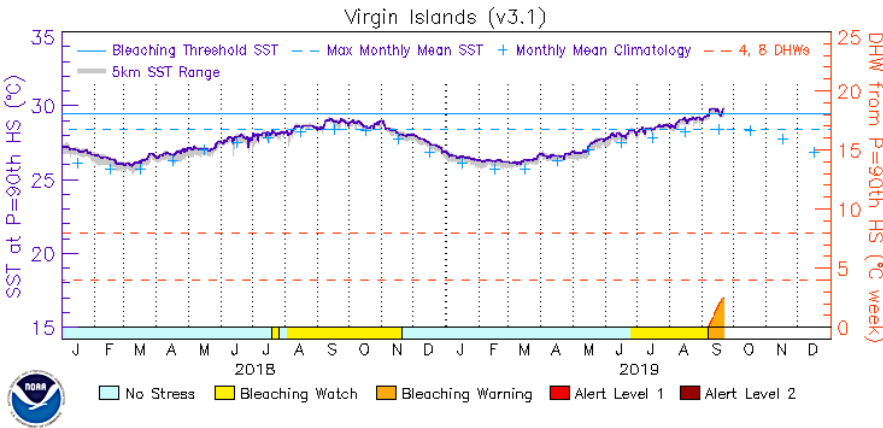
Current Coral Bleaching Alert Level

[Alert Gauges & Outlook](#) | [Time Series Graphs & Data](#)

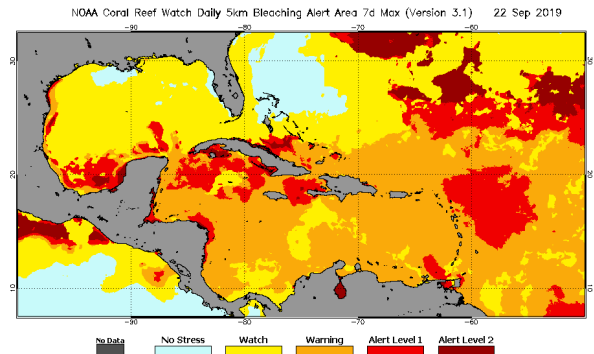
Data values derived from 90th percentile HotSpot  
**SST = 29.900**     **Anomaly = 1.398**  
**HotSpot = 0.000**     **DHW = 2.497**



**Figure 1** NOAA's Coral Reef Watch local bleaching alert status as of Sept 23, 2019  
<https://coralreefwatch.noaa.gov/vs/map.php>



**Figure 2** NOAA's Coral Reef Watch regional virtual stations data as of Sept 23, 2019  
<https://coralreefwatch.noaa.gov/vs/data.php>



**Figure 3** NOAA's Coral Reef Watch Caribbean-wide bleaching alert status as of Sept 22, 2019  
<https://coralreefwatch.noaa.gov/product/5km/>

### Volunteer report summary:

Most of our volunteer reports have been suspicious looking corals or diseased corals. There have been reports of some scattered bleaching and paling throughout the territory, especially on brain corals and boulder corals. Please reach out with your observations and especially your photos! There is a link to the right for submitting disease observations and you can always use the BleachWatch VI app or website as well. All of these reporting methods get shared among our reef managers.

### Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease UPDATES:

- Still no confirmed SCTLTD in STX or STJ
- Submit surveys to [The Hunt for Coral Disease](#)
- [New map showing spatial extent of disease](#)
- [Video about SCTLTD in STT](#)

The BleachWatch VI App is here!

Download Our New Mobile App Today!

Features:  
Quick Report  
Pin Map  
Submit Photos



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