

# Understanding Our Environment Coral Reefs

(NAPSA)—Rising ocean temperatures caused by global warming pollution threaten to wipe out many of the world's coral reefs, including popular reefs in U.S. waters, say leading coral reef scientists.



They project that a majority of the world's coral reefs could be lost if average temperatures increase more than about 3.5 degrees, a conservative estimate of what is expected in the coming decades if we fail to curb global warming pollution.

“Many of the most popular reefs for diving are nearing a point of no return,” said Patty Glick of the National Wildlife Federation.

The Florida Keys experienced extensive coral bleaching in 1997 and 1998, which scientists attribute to a half-degree rise in ocean temperature.

Coral reefs are important nurseries for millions of commercially valuable fish.

In Congress, Senators John McCain, a Republican, and Joe Lieberman, a Democrat, have teamed up to push the Climate Stewardship Act, a plan to reduce global warming pollution.