REPORT CORAL BLEACHING!

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HEALTHY CORAL

BLEACHED CORAL

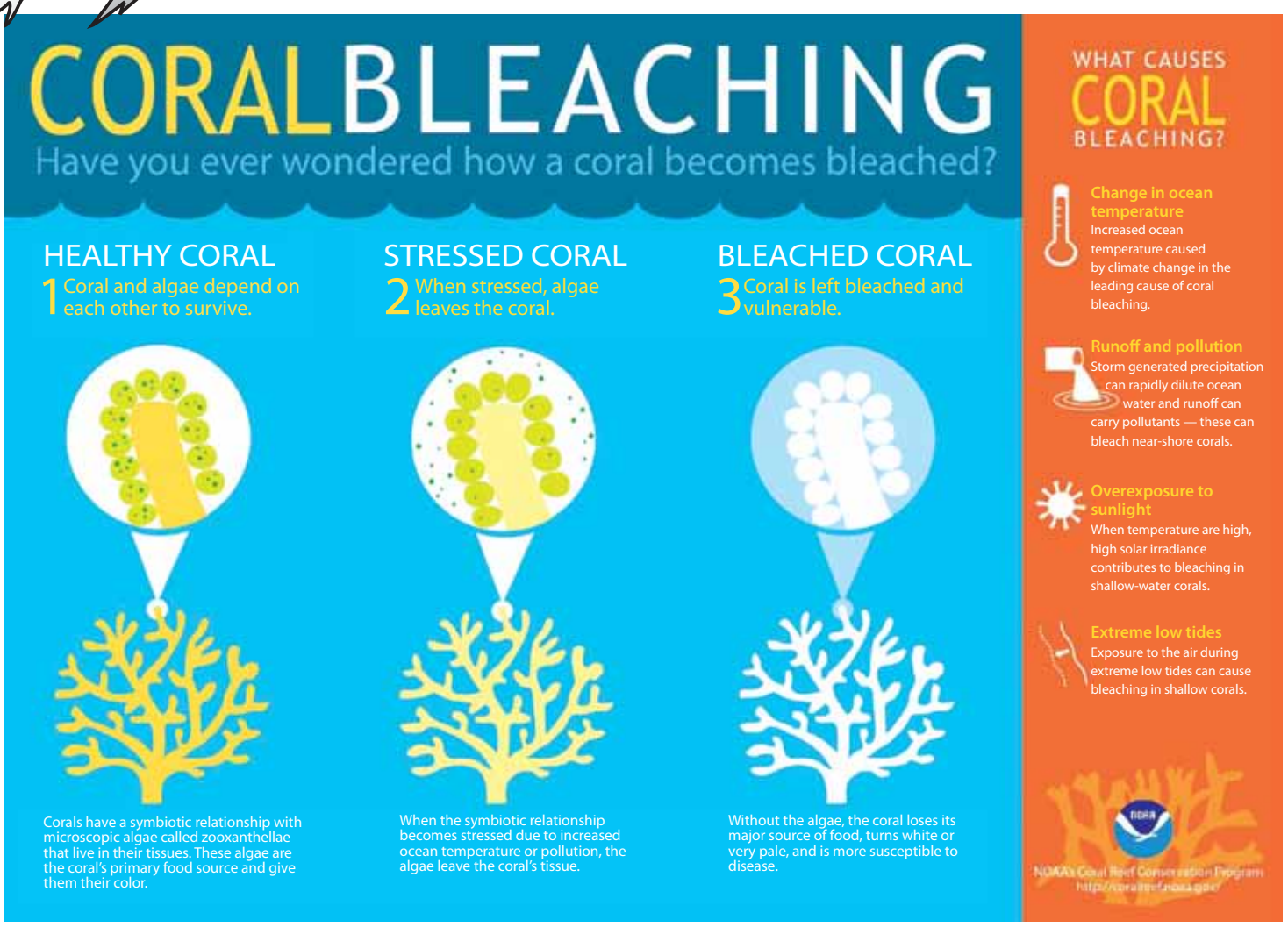
DEAD STAGHORN CORAL OVERGROWN BY ALGAE

Staghorn corals in the Saipan Lagoon have taken a big hit over the last two years due to unprecedented coral bleaching and die off. What *is* coral bleaching, you ask? Well, corals get their beautiful colors from microscopic algae that live within their tissues. It is this symbiotic relationship that makes coral reefs possible; the algae photosynthesize and provide some of the resulting energy and nutrients to the coral animal. The corals, in turn, use this energy to grow and deposit their skeletons, which form the foundation of coral reefs and provide habitat for many other animals. When corals get stressed, this symbiotic relationship breaks down and the algae are expelled from the coral tissue. Because the tissue of the coral animal is transparent (just like their cousins, the jellyfish!), what you see once the algae are gone is the bright white skeleton underneath. Although corals can recover from bleaching, death will occur if the stress does not subside soon.

WORD OF THE DAY

SYMBIOTIC – a biological term for when two organisms live and work together in a way that benefits both of them.

Let's keep our eyes open for coral bleaching with hotter temperatures during summer. This NOAA National Ocean Service infographic walks you through what happens when a coral bleaches.



Summer is here and often brings prolonged periods of abnormally high seawater temperatures are the major cause of large-scale coral bleaching worldwide. Unfortunately, these events are expected to increase in frequency and severity with global climate change. It is important that resource managers understand the patterns and extent of these events so that we can develop effective conservation and management strategies. As summer swings into full gear, you can help the BECQ marine monitoring team with these efforts by reporting any instances of coral bleaching. We need as many eyes on the reef as we can get! **If you see coral bleaching please report it to BECQ at 664-8513**. Also, keep an eye open for training and volunteer opportunities with BECQ and other local conservation and management agencies to help monitor and collect data on coral reef health.

Information provided by NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program.