



**UNIT KOMUNIKASI KORPORAT JABATAN
PERIKANAN MALAYSIA
BERITA PERIKANAN HARI INI**

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'Many reefs hit by coral bleaching'

Higher sea surface temperatures affect marine park islands, says Fisheries Dept

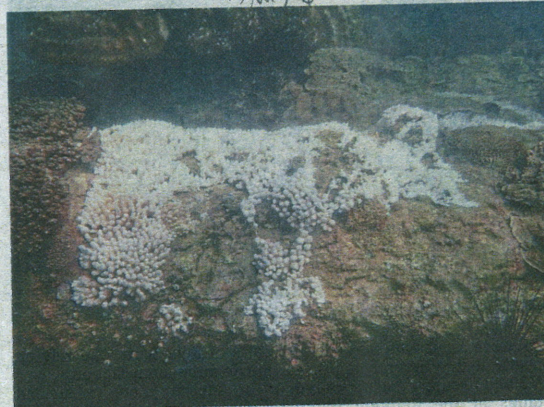
PETALING JAYA: Over half of the coral reefs in Malaysian waters have been affected by coral bleaching between April and June due to increased sea surface temperatures.

The Fisheries Department said those particularly affected are the marine park islands in four states: Pulau Payar (Kedah); Pulau Perhentian, Pulau Redang and Pulau Tenggol (Terengganu); Pulau Tioman (Pahang); and Pulau Pemanggil (Johor).

"This is due to the increased sea surface temperatures. Most affected reefs are in shallow waters less than 10m deep. These sites are being closely monitored to track changes in the bleaching situation," the department said in a statement.

Reports from dive operators, divers and surveys by NGOs such as Reef Check Malaysia confirm mass bleaching, it added.

Early this year, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration issued a "Bleaching Watch" notification for Malaysia,



Sad state: A dying coral will usually turn white and is a sign of bleaching caused by the rising ocean temperature, as seen in this file photo.

indicating above-average sea surface temperatures and potential thermal stress on coral reefs.

On April 1, the Fisheries Department issued an alert to all state

offices to monitor reef conditions and report signs of bleaching.

"To gain a comprehensive understanding of coral bleaching in Malaysian waters, the depart-

ment urges all parties to report any sightings of coral bleaching.

"The department has also collaborated with representatives from Sabah and Sarawak local researchers and NGOs to establish the Malaysia Coral Bleaching Response Committee to gather information and take action against coral bleaching," it said, while also urging all parties, especially in the tourism sector, to mitigate the effects of coral bleaching.

"Tourism operators on marine park islands are encouraged to control the number of tourists engaging in water activities to reduce pressure on the reefs.

"Tourists should avoid overcrowded areas, reduce single-use plastics, properly dispose of waste and report sightings of coral bleaching to the department or relevant authorities," it added.

If bleaching exceeds 80%, interventions like temporary access restrictions may be implemented to protect affected reefs, it said.

"The department assures all stakeholders that, as far as possi-

ble, disruption to tourism activities caused by these management interventions will be minimised.

"The goal is simply to reduce stress caused to the already weakened reefs and ensure their survival in the future," it said.

Coral reefs are vital ecosystems, providing habitats and breeding grounds for up to one-third of marine species.

According to a study conducted by the Fisheries Department, the economic value of marine parks, which are largely surrounded by coral reef ecosystems, amounts to RM8.7bil per year.

Coral bleaching is a natural response of corals to environmental stress, where corals expel the microscopic algae called zooxanthellae.

These algae provide most of the coral's food and vibrant colour; whereby without it, the coral turns white, giving it a bleached appearance.

Mass bleaching refers to the large-scale bleaching of multiple coral species over wide areas.

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Suhu laut naik, terumbu karang negara alami kelunturan teruk

PETALING JAYA: Jabatan Perikanan Malaysia (DOF) mengesahkan terumbu karang di negara ini sedang mengalami kelunturan besar-besaran.

DOF memaklumkan, tinjauan yang dijalankan dari April hingga Jun lebih 50 peratus terumbu karang, khususnya di Kepulauan Taman Laut terjejas oleh kelunturan akibat peningkatan suhu permukaan laut.

Katanya, ia melibatkan Pulau Payar (Kedah), Pulau Perhentian, Pulau Redang, Pulau Tenggol (Terengganu), Pulau Tioman (Pahang) dan Pulau Pemanggil (Johor).

"Kebanyakan terumbu yang

terjejas berada di perairan cetek kurang daripada 10 meter. Tapak ini sedang dipantau rapi oleh DOF dan pelbagai pihak untuk mengesan perubahan dalam situasi kelunturan.

"DOF juga telah bekerjasama dengan wakil dari Sabah, dan Sarawak, penyelidik tempatan dan pertubuhan bukan kerajaan (NGO) untuk menubuhkan Malaysia Coral Bleaching Response Committee (MCBRC) bagi mengumpul maklumat dan mengambil tindakan terhadap kelunturan karang.

"Jika kelunturan melebihi 80 peratus, tindakan intervensi lanjut pengurusan mungkin dilakukan ter-

masuk sekatan akses sementara untuk melindungi terumbu yang terjejas," katanya dalam satu kenyataan.

Terdahulu, sejak awal tahun ini, US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) telah mengeluarkan pemberitahuan 'Tinjauan Pelunturan' untuk Malaysia, yang menunjukkan suhu permukaan laut melebihi purata dan potensi tekanan terma pada terumbu karang.

Sebagai tindak balas, DOF mengeluarkan amaran pada 1 April lalu, kepada semua Pejabat Perikanan Negeri untuk memantau keadaan terumbu dan melaporkan tanda-tanda kelunturan karang.