

Marine Heatwave Symposium. August 2025, IMORC

Presenters: Robbins WD, Bassett T, Livingston K, Ross C, Evans R, and Holmes T

Title: Aerial bleaching surveys of Ningaloo Reef and the Kimberley

Abstract: Following concerns of heat stress related coral bleaching at Ningaloo and in the Kimberley in summer 2024/25, DBCA Marine Science, along with regional and traditional owner partners conducted aerial coral bleaching surveys at Ningaloo, Bardi Jawi Gaarra, Mayala, Lalang-gaddam, and North Kimberley marine parks. Unprecedented levels of bleaching were observed across all parks, with all reef habitats (reef flat, crest, and slope) impacted. Over 41% of Ningaloo site/habitats and almost 75% of Kimberley site/habitats showed 60% or more bleaching. For the first time we recorded severe bleaching on Kimberley reef flats, further emphasising the severity of this event.