**EMBARGOED UNTIL JULY 15 AT 2 P.M. EST**

**Thirty Years of Unique Data Reveal What’s Really Killing Coral Reefs**

Florida Atlantic University’s Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute

**Video Caption/Video Credit:**

* Underwater video at Looe Key in the lower Florida Keys shows the degradation of these once pristine corals reefs over the course of more than 30 years from 1988 to 2019. (Video credit: Brian Lapointe, Ph.D., Florida Atlantic University’s Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute)

**Photo Captions/Photo Credits:**

* **ALK Keys elkhorn (before):** a snorkeler swims above healthy Elkhorn corals off Key Largo in the Florida Keys in the early 1980s. Named for its antler-like shape for its colonies, the Elkhorn coral is one of the most important corals in the Caribbean. Current populations are struggling to recover from coral disease and bleaching. Elkhorn coral once dominated coral reefs in the Florida Keys. Today, less than 5 percent of these corals remain in the Florida Keys. (Photo credit: Larry Lipsky)
* **ALK Elkhorn die-off (after):** diseased Elkhorn coral in Looe Key in the lower Florida Keys pictured in 2016. (Photo credit: Brian Lapointe, Ph.D., Florida Atlantic University’s Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute)
* **BEL w Bleached Coral:** Brian Lapointe, Ph.D., senior author and a research professor at FAU’s Harbor Branch, swims above bleached coral reefs in Looe Key in September 2015. (Photo credit: Marie Tarnowski)
* **LK Dying Brain Coral:** a dying brain coral in Looe Key in the lower Florida Keys pictured in March 2016. Found in the Caribbean, brain coral can grow up to six feet tall and live for up to 900 years. (Photo credit: Brian Lapointe, Ph.D., Florida Atlantic University’s Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute)
* **ALK SW High Res:** an aerial view of Looe Key reef in the lower Florida Keys pictured in 2006. (Photo credit: Brian Lapointe, Ph.D., Florida Atlantic University’s Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute)
* **LK Ch 5 Bay Green Water**: an aerial view of algal blooms from Florida Bay flowing through tidal channels off the Florida Keys taken in 1992/1993 (no photo credit)
* **LK Bleached Coral 1987:** as can be seen by this bleached coral in Looe Key in the lower Florida Keys in 1987, these coral reefs were dying off long before they were impacted by rising water temperatures. (Photo credit: Brian Lapointe, Ph.D., Florida Atlantic University’s Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute)
* **LK Black Band Disease:** a coral in Looe Key in the lower Florida Keys in March 2016 shows that it has been affected by black band disease, a coral disease characterized by black bands caused by complete tissue degradation due to microbial pathogens. (Photo credit: Brian Lapointe, Ph.D., Florida Atlantic University’s Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute)