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Buck Island National Monument News Release

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Testing coral disease treatments across multiple species at Buck Island Reef National Monument

CHRISTIANSTED – The National Park Service (NPS) in collaboration with Mote Marine Laboratory is starting a multi-year research project to mitigate coral disease at Buck Island Reef National Monument (BIRNM). The objective of this field and laboratory-based project will be to test and implement various strategies for reducing the spread and severity of coral disease. This work is being conducted in response to the multitude of coral diseases that continue to devastate coral reefs throughout the Caribbean including the National Parks of Florida and the US Virgin Islands.



Mote Marine Laboratory researchers will be working from NPS Buck Island Reef Resource Management boats from **January 27th through February 6th 2020**. They will be boating, diving, and utilizing research equipment within the hard bottom reef areas throughout Buck Island Reef National Monument.

Coral disease is the primary cause of coral loss at NPS Caribbean coral reef park units, and spread of disease is on the rise. Actions to reduce disease activity are needed to preserve key reef-building corals and coral diversity, which is foundational to the entire system. This two-year field and laboratory research project will create and implement actions to stop the advance of multiple diseases that have been killing corals within the National Parks of Florida and the Virgin Islands. The objectives of this multi-partner project include: 1. evaluate the effectiveness of selected, promising coral disease treatment techniques in the laboratory and in the field, and 2. test the efficacy and practicality of the techniques to reduce disease prevalence long term. This information will provide an option for park staff and partners to implement treatment when signs of coral disease are in their infancy.

If you would like additional information about this study, please contact: Clayton Pollock, NPS Biologist
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Learn about the NPS Mission at Buck Island Reef NM at www.nps.gov/BUIS
Watch our Buck Island Reef NM movie the [Caribbean Gem](#) on YouTube

