

Great Barrier Reef damaged beyond repair, marine experts say

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An aerial view of the Great Barrier Reef. Image via AFP

After several reports of severe damage on the Great Barrier Reef due to the effects of climate change and bleaching, scientists fear that the world's largest coral reef system is beyond saving.

Ninety-five percent of the famed ecological wonder, as per The Telegraph, suffers from severe bleaching—which occurs when coral polyps expel algae that live inside their tissues—and is in dire need of maintenance in the coming years.

However, marine experts are now claiming that cleansing efforts to rid the Reef of bleach may be a tad too late, as the “extraordinary rapidity” of climate change only worsens it through time.

“The planet has changed in a way that science informs us is unprecedented in human history,” the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority assessed the situation, as relayed by the news outlet.

“Members agreed that, in our lifetime and on our watch, substantial areas of the Great Barrier Reef and the surrounding ecosystems are experiencing major long-term damage which may be irreversible unless action is taken now,” it added.

However bleak the future of the Reef appears to be, the agency remains hopeful that some positive changes can still take place in the future.

“There is great concern about the future of the Reef, and the communities and businesses that depend on it, but hope still remains for maintaining ecological function over the coming decades,” it said in a statement.

It added: “This needs to be coupled with increased efforts to improve the resilience of the coral and other ecosystems that form the Great Barrier Reef. The focus of efforts should be on managing the Reef to maintain the benefits that the Reef provides.”

The Great Barrier Reef, which is located at the Coral Sea off the coast of Queensland, Australia, hosts billions of tiny marine organisms and can be seen from outer space. **Khristian Ibarrola /ra**