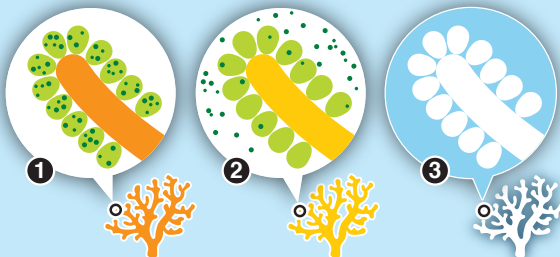


Reef suffers third mass coral bleaching

Australia's Great Barrier Reef has suffered its third mass bleaching event in just five years. Warmer sea temperatures in recent months are feared to have caused huge coral loss

GREAT BARRIER REEF: World's largest reef system covers over 2,300km. World Heritage site is recognised for its "enormous scientific and intrinsic importance"



WHAT IS BLEACHING

1 Healthy coral: Algae (*zooxanthellae*) lives in coral tissue, providing primary food and colour

2 Stressed coral: Symbiotic relationship becomes stressed due to increase in water temperature or pollution – coral polyps expel algae from tissue

3 Bleached coral: Without algae, coral turns white and loses main source of food

PREVIOUS BLEACHING (2016 and 2017)

- Most severe bleaching
- No or negligible bleaching

2019-20: Central and southern regions more badly affected than in 2016 and 2017 events



In 2019, Australia downgraded reef's five-year outlook from poor to very poor, due to impact of human-induced climate change

100km
62 miles