Elkhorn and staghorn corals are listed as threatened species under the U.S. Endangered Species Act

Under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, it is **ILLEGAL** to:

- **TAKE** (harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct) elkhorn or staghorn corals
- **IMPORT** elkhorn or staghorn corals (dead or alive) into the United States
- **EXPORT** elkhorn or staghorn corals (dead or alive) out of the United States
- **POSSESS, SELL, DELIVER, CARRY, TRANSPORT, OR SHIP** illegally taken elkhorn or staghorn corals
- **DELIVER, RECEIVE, CARRY, TRANSPORT, OR SHIP** elkhorn or staghorn corals commercially
- **SELL** or **OFFER FOR SALE** elkhorn or staghorn corals

The maximum fine for violating the U.S. Endangered Species Act is $25,000 and 6 months in jail.

Photo Credits: Michael Barnette, NOAA (top left); Walt Jaap (top right)

For questions or to report a violation, please call:
NOAA Fisheries Service
Office for Law Enforcement
1-800-853-1964

In Puerto Rico or the U.S. Virgin Islands, please call:
NOAA Fisheries Service
Office for Law Enforcement
787-749-4405 in San Juan
787-890-0715 in Aguadilla

For additional information, please call:
NOAA Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office
Protected Resources Division
727-824-5312

Photo Credits: Michael Barnette, NOAA (cover photo)

This document complies with Section 12 of the Small Entity Compliance Guide of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996

BE CORAL CONSCIOUS

Watch out for THREATENED Elkhorn Coral *(Acropora palmata)* and Staghorn Coral *(Acropora cervicornis)*

THREATENED CORALS LIVE NEARBY

Elkhorn coral generally grows in water 3 to 15 feet deep on the seaward face of the reef. Colonies are flattened to near round with frond-like branches. Branches typically radiate outward from a central trunk.

IN THE U.S., ELKHORN & STAGHORN CORALS ARE FOUND IN FLORIDA, PUERTO RICO, AND THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Staghorn coral typically grows in fore- and back-reef areas with water depths of 15 to 45 feet. Colonies are antler-like with cylindrical, straight, or slightly curved branches.

Photo Credits: Michael Barnette, NOAA (top); Walt Jaap (lower left and right)

PROTECT THREATENED CORALS

WHEN YOU GO BOATING

- **AVOID** anchoring on or near coral.
- **SWIM DOWN** your anchor, when possible, and anchor in sand.
- **USE** mooring buoys, when available.

WHEN YOU SNORKEL & DIVE, OR GO TO THE BEACH

- **DO NOT** stand on or touch corals.
- **MAINTAIN** proper buoyancy.
- **SECURE** all equipment to avoid contact with corals.
- **WATCH** your fins!
- **DO NOT COLLECT** coral (dead or alive) as souvenirs.*

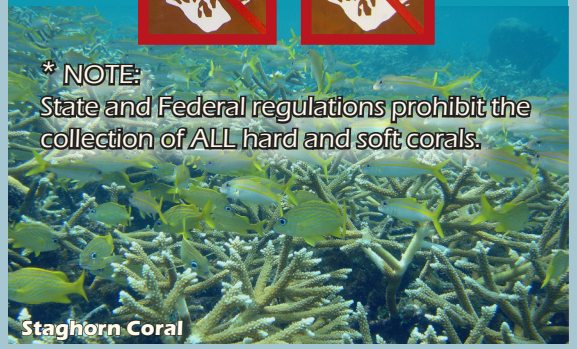

Photo Credits: Caroline Rogers, USGS

WHAT TO DO IF YOU INJURE A CORAL

- **STOP** whatever activity caused the damage.
- **DO NOT** keep any coral in your possession. Leave any injured coral in place where you found it.
- **INFORM** NOAA Fisheries Service. Restoration may be possible.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU RUN AGROUND

- **TURN OFF** your engine.
- **DO NOT** try to power off the reef.
- **RAISE** your lower unit or outdrive, and allow your boat to drift free.
- **RADIO** the Coast Guard, Marine Patrol, or VHF Channel 16 for assistance.

Photo Credits: Caroline Rogers, USGS (top and bottom)