

## WRI FACT SHEET

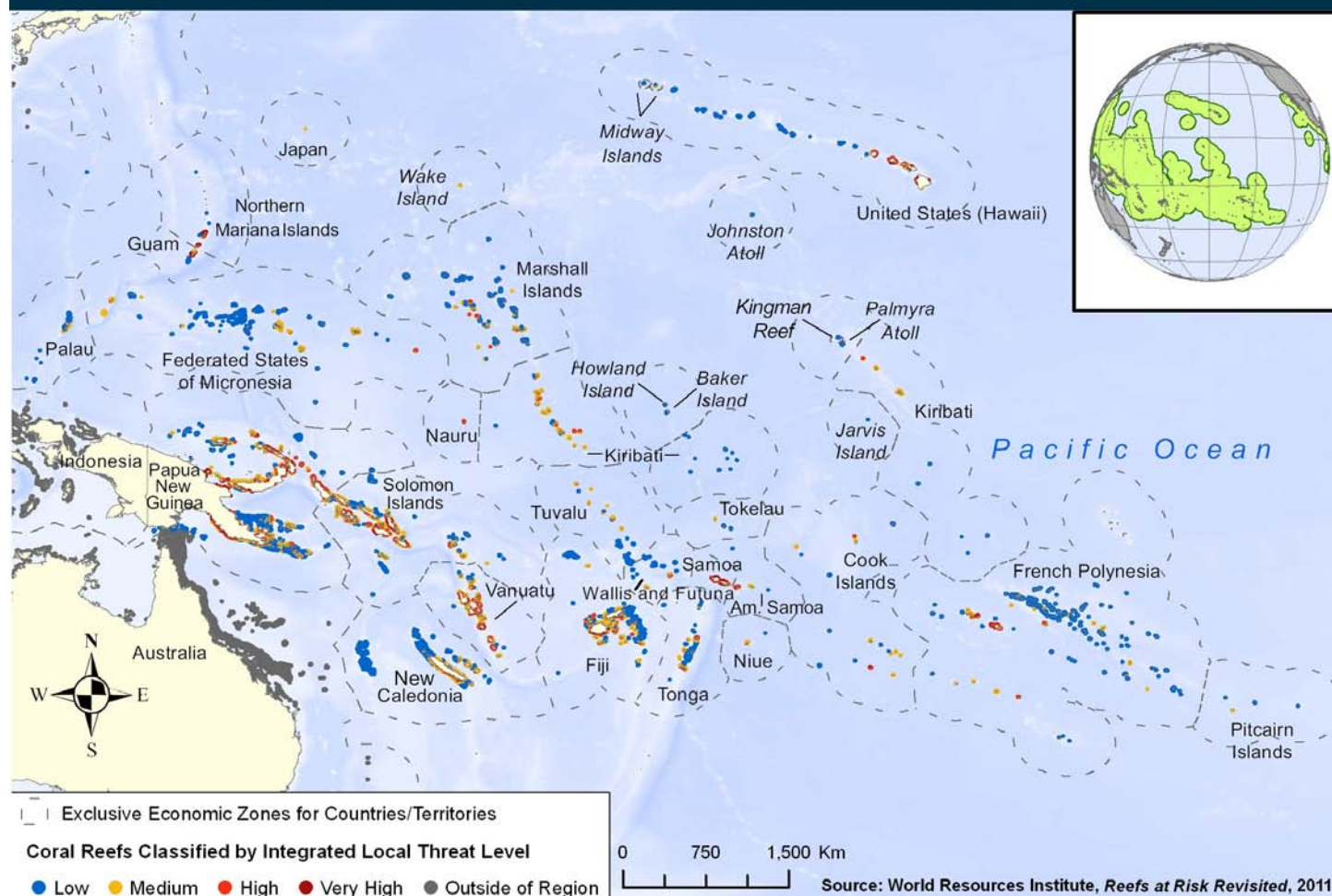
# Reefs at Risk Revisited: Pacific

The World Resources Institute (WRI) spearheaded a broad collaboration of leading conservation organizations and research institutes to conduct a global, map-based analysis of threats to the world's coral reefs called Reefs at Risk Revisited. This report provides detailed examination of human pressures on coral reefs, implications for reef condition, and projections of associated socioeconomic impacts in coastal communities.

## REGIONAL KEY POINTS

- Spanning almost half the globe, the Pacific is home more than a quarter of the world's reefs – nearly 66,000 sq km.
- About 7.5 million people live on the coast within 30 km of a coral reef in the Pacific, representing 50 percent of the total population of the region.
- After Australia, the Pacific is the least threatened region, with slightly less than 50 percent of reefs affected by local threats (coastal development, marine-based pollution and damage, overfishing and destructive fishing, or watershed-based pollution), of which only 20 percent are at high or very high threat.
- More than 920 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are located in the Pacific, and include 13 percent of the region's reefs.

## REEFS AT RISK IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC



## REGION

The Pacific Ocean spans almost half the globe, from Palau in the west to the coastline of Central America in the east, and holds more than a quarter of the world's coral reefs, nearly 66,000 sq km. Most of these reefs are found among the three major island groups of the western Pacific.

## PEOPLE

At least 7.5 million people in the Pacific islands live in coastal areas within 30 km of a coral reef, representing about 50 percent of the total population. For many, reefs are a critical mainstay in supporting local fisheries, while in some areas reefs are also supporting export fisheries and tourism. The importance of reefs is heightened by a lack of alternative livelihoods, particularly in the many very small island nations. Sea level rise poses a considerable threat in many of these same countries where most or all of the land consists of coral islands.

## STATUS

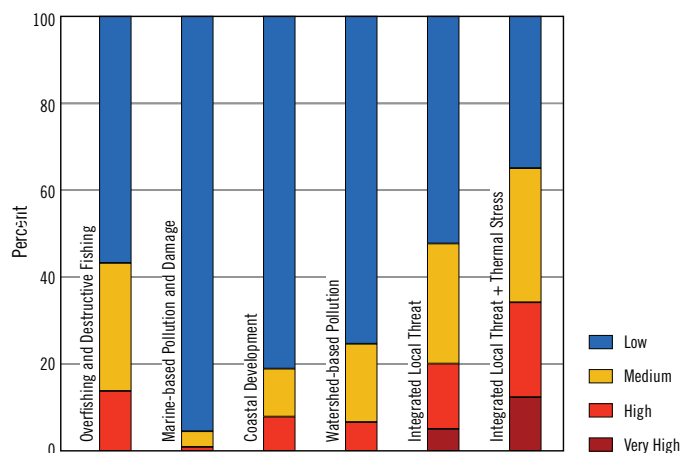
After Australia, the Pacific is the least threatened region, with slightly less than 50 percent of reefs classified as threatened, of which only 20 percent are at high or very high threat. Most of the threatened reefs in the region are associated with large islands and areas of higher population, concentrated in Melanesia, but also in Hawaii, Samoa, and the Society Islands (in French Polynesia). The inclusion of past thermal stress raises the percentage of threatened reefs to more than 65 percent. Overfishing is the largest threat, linked to densely settled areas not only around the larger islands, but also in some smaller archipelagos, including parts of Micronesia. Watershed-based pollution is limited to high islands, but is nonetheless widespread and affects a quarter of all reefs. Future climate change impacts are projected to bring the proportion of threatened reefs up to 90 percent by 2030. By 2050, almost all reefs in the Pacific are rated as threatened, with more than half rated at high, very high, or critical levels.

## REEF CONSERVATION

We identified more than 920 MPAs across the Pacific, covering about 13 percent of the region's reefs. Perhaps the most important and distinctive regional trend has been the recent rapid growth of local protection, notably through the establishment of locally managed marine areas. Such sites are established by local communities, with the support of partners such as NGOs or governments, and include areas of permanent or temporary closure, as well as more specific restrictions on fishing methods, target species, or access to the fishery.

For more, see pages 59-62 of *Reefs at Risk Revisited*

## Reefs at Risk in the Pacific



## ABOUT WRI

The World Resources Institute is a global environmental think tank that goes beyond research to put ideas into action. We work with governments, companies, and civil society to build solutions to urgent environmental challenges. For more information on our coral reefs work, visit [www.wri.org/reefs](http://www.wri.org/reefs).

## ABOUT REEFS AT RISK REVISITED

The groundbreaking report, *Reefs at Risk Revisited*, is the most detailed assessment of threats to coral reefs ever undertaken. The report was led by the World Resources Institute, along with the Nature Conservancy, the WorldFish Center, ICRAN, UNEP-WCMC, and GCRMN.

World Resources Institute  
10 G Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
[www.wri.org](http://www.wri.org)