

## **Coral Reef Conservation Act**

**Agency:** National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**Citation:** [16 U.S.C. §§ 6401 et seq.](#)

**Enacted as:** the “Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000”, on December 23, 2000 as Title II of P.L. 106-562

### **Summary:**

The [Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 \(CRCA\)](#) created the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) [Coral Reef Conservation Program \(CRCP\)](#) and established a number of mandates for NOAA aimed at the preservation, sustainability, and restoration of coral reef ecosystems. The CRCA requires the Secretary of Commerce, through the CRCP, to develop a [National Coral Reef Action Strategy \(NAS\)](#) and to fund state and local projects that advance that strategy to the extent funding is available. The statute contains criteria for awarding grants, as well as time-lines for reviewing applications, soliciting input from Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act fishery management councils and affected National Marine Sanctuaries, conducting peer reviews, and responding to applicants.

The CRCA provides authority for NOAA to implement a national program to conserve coral reef ecosystems. Through the [Coral Reef Conservation Program \(CRCP\)](#), NOAA conducts activities such as mapping, monitoring, assessment, research, and restoration that benefit coral reef ecosystems; enhancing public awareness of such ecosystems; assisting states to remove abandoned vessels and marine debris from reefs; and conducting cooperative management of coral reef ecosystems.

The CRCA also authorizes NOAA to enter into cooperative agreements with non-governmental organizations for certain purposes. If NOAA enters into such an agreement, the statute mandates continuing review. The CRCA also allows NOAA, in the event of a coral reef disaster or emergency, to provide emergency grant money to state and local governments to support specific listed activities.

Reauthorization of the CRCA has been pending in Congress since 2004, although NOAA’s authority under the statute continues.

**Source:** [16 U.S.C. §§ 6401 et seq.](#) and <http://coralreef.noaa.gov/aboutcrpc/strategy/reauthorization/>

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