

Satellite praised for coral bleaching info

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Australian researchers in Canberra have found Envisat's medium resolution imaging spectrometer can detect coral bleaching to about 33 feet deep.

That means the European Space Agency's Envisat, the largest Earth observation satellite, could potentially monitor affected coral reefs worldwide.

Coral bleaching occurs when algae living in living coral polyps are expelled. The whitening coral may die, producing negative affects on the reef ecosystem.

"An increase in frequency of coral bleaching may be one of the first tangible environmental effects of global warming," said Arnold Dekker of Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization. "The concern is that coral reefs might pass a critical bleaching threshold beyond which they are unable to regenerate."

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