

Non-detriment finding for stony corals (order Scleractinia)

VKM, Bastiaan Star, Jo S. Hermansen, Berit Gehrke, Matthew Grainger,
Alexander Kopatz, Quentin Mauvisseau, Eli K. Rueness, Hugo J. de Boer

VKM Bulletin 2026:16
Non-detriment finding for stony corals (order Scleractinia)

Published: 22.06.2026

ISSN: 2704-1689
Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food and Environment (VKM)
Postboks 222 Skøyen
0213 Oslo
Norway

Phone: +47 21 62 28 00
Email: vkm@vkm.no

vkm.no

Suggested citation: VKM, Star, B., Hermansen, J. S., Gehrke, B., Grainger, M., Kopatz, A., Mauvisseau, Q., Rueness, E. K., de Boer, H. J. (2026). Non-detriment finding for stony corals (order Scleractinia). VKM Bulletin 2026:16, ISSN: 2704-1689. Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food and Environment (VKM), Oslo, Norway.

©2026 VKM / CC BY-ND 4.0

Non-detriment finding for stony corals (order Scleractinia)

Authors: Draft prepared by VKM Panel on CITES member Bastiaan Star (University of Oslo) and VKM Secretariat member Jo S. Hermansen. Reviewed and approved by VKM Panel on CITES members Berit Gehrke (University of Bergen), Matthew Grainger (Norwegian Institute for Nature Research), Alexander Kopatz (Norwegian Institute for Nature Research), Quentin Mauvisseau (University of Oslo), Eli K. Rueness (University of Oslo), and Hugo J. de Boer (University of Oslo).

Competing interests: The authors declare no competing interests in relation to this non-detriment finding (NDF).

Date: 28.05.2026

Scientific name: For scientific names of the taxa under consideration, see Table 1.

Common names: NA

Norwegian name: NA

Type of permit: CITES Appendix II export (Norwegian CITES Regulation Annex 1, list B)

Country of export: Norway (NO)

Country of import: Sweden (SE)

Purpose and source: The proposal concerns the export from Norway to Sweden of live, asexually propagated stony corals (Order Scleractinia; 17 taxa; CITES Appendix II; source code C) for commercial purposes (purpose-of-transaction code T).

For Appendix II species (Norwegian CITES Regulation Annex 1, list B), it is required to establish that export will not be detrimental to the survival of that species, in compliance with CITES Article IV. In the Norwegian CITES regulation (Lovdata, 2018), the criteria for export from Norway are described in Chapter 2, Section 5, and it is required to establish that the export does not have a harmful effect on the conservation status of the species.

VKM has adopted the definition of detriment, cf. Conf. 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) suggested by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Scientific Authority:

1. Harvest that is not sustainable.
2. Harvest that harms the status of the species in the wild.
3. Removal from the wild that results in habitat loss or destruction, or that interferes with recovery efforts for a species.

Conclusion: *Positive*

VKM concludes that the proposed export of live, asexually propagated stony coral specimens (Order Scleractinia) will be non-detrimental to the survival of the species and will not adversely affect their conservation status, in accordance with Article IV of the Convention and Chapter 2, Section 5 of the Norwegian CITES Regulation.

The conclusion is based on the following factors:

The specimens of stony corals under consideration originate from controlled asexual reproduction in a closed, captive environment. Based on the information provided by the applicant, the specimens appear to qualify as late-generation asexually produced corals bred in captivity (source code C). The original breeding stocks were sourced from the wild more than 10 years ago; the specimens under consideration have been cultivated from artificially bred parents and have had no contact with wild conspecifics.

1. Biological information

Distribution

The distribution of stony corals (order Scleractinia) spans large parts of the tropical Indian Ocean, Red Sea, western/central Pacific Ocean, Caribbean Sea and western Atlantic. The richest diversity of stony corals is in the Indo-Pacific, including the Coral Triangle (Indonesia, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, and Malaysia; Veron et al., 2015). All the species being considered for this NDF originate from the Indo-Pacific region.

Life history

Stony corals are often called “reef-building corals” and comprise marine invertebrates that build calcium-carbonate skeletons. They live in a symbiotic relationship with photosynthetic algae (zooxanthellae), which provide much of their nutrition; this symbiosis allows corals to thrive in relatively nutrient-poor tropical waters and grow into extensive reef structures that form the backbone of coral-reef ecosystems (Muscatine & Porter, 1977; Allemand et al., 2011).

Role in the ecosystem

Coral reefs support a large share of marine biodiversity. Although reefs occupy only a tiny fraction of the seafloor, they are estimated to harbor around one-quarter of all marine species at some point in their life cycles (Komyakova et al., 2013). The complex three-dimensional structure formed by the calcium-carbonate skeletons of stony corals provides shelter, hiding places, feeding grounds, breeding sites, and nursery areas for countless fish, invertebrates, and other marine organisms, including many commercially important species (Moberg & Folke, 1999).

2. Population trend

See Table 1 for information on population trends for the taxa under consideration as presented in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

Table 1. Information on CITES listing status, IUCN Red List status, and population trend for the taxa under consideration.

Scientific name	CITES Appendix	IUCN Red List status	Population trend	Year assessed	Reference	Link to assessment(s)
<i>Bernardopora (Goniopora) stutchburyi</i>	II [ORDER listing Scleractinia spp.]	LC	Decreasing	2023	Crabbe et al., 2024a	https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/133615/165975396
<i>Goniopora</i> spp.	II [ORDER listing Scleractinia spp.]	LC	Decreasing/Unknown	Multiple species assessed	NA	https://www.iucnredlist.org/search?taxonomies=122228&searchType=species
<i>Duncanopsammia axifuga</i>	II [ORDER listing Scleractinia spp.]	LC	Decreasing	2023	Johnson et al., 2024a	https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/133114/165728077
<i>Echinophyllia</i> spp.	II [ORDER listing Scleractinia spp.]	VU (<i>E. lamellosa</i>)/LC (remaining <i>E. spp.</i>)	Decreasing	Multiple species assessed	NA	https://www.iucnredlist.org/search/list?taxonomies=124483&searchType=species
<i>Fimbriaphyllia (Euphyllia) paraancora</i>	II [ORDER listing Scleractinia spp.]	LC	Decreasing	2023	Luzon et al., 2024	https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/133289/165814415
<i>Euphyllia paraglabrescens</i>	II [ORDER listing Scleractinia spp.]	LC	Decreasing	2023	Núñez Lendo et al., 2024a	https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/133228/165783157
<i>Favia</i> spp.	II [ORDER listing Scleractinia spp.]	LC	Unknown	Two species assessed	NA	https://www.iucnredlist.org/search?taxonomies=121054&searchType=species
<i>Favites pentagona</i>	II [ORDER listing Scleractinia spp.]	LC	Decreasing	2023	Huang et al., 2024	https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/133209/165772891

<i>Cyphastrea</i> spp.	II [ORDER listing Scleractinia spp.]	LC/DD	Decreasing/Unknown	Multiple species assessed	NA	https://www.iucnredlist.org/search?taxonomies=106552&searchType=species
<i>Montipora capitata</i>	II [ORDER listing Scleractinia spp.]	EN	Decreasing	2023	Núñez Lendo, 2024a	https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/133622/165979277
<i>Montipora palawanensis</i>	II [ORDER listing Scleractinia spp.]	EN	Decreasing	2023	Porter et al., 2024	https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/133285/165812738
<i>Montipora capricornis</i>	II [ORDER listing Scleractinia spp.]	EN	Decreasing	2023	Johnson et al., 2024b	https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/133422/165882264
<i>Montipora digitata</i>	II [ORDER listing Scleractinia spp.]	EN	Decreasing	2023	Núñez Lendo, 2024b	https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/133194/165764784
<i>Montipora nodosa</i>	II [ORDER listing Scleractinia spp.]	EN	Decreasing	2023	Porter et al., 2024	https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/132944/165642301
<i>Montipora setosa</i>	II [ORDER listing Scleractinia spp.]	EN	Decreasing	2023	Crabbe et al., 2024b	https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/133361/165850939
<i>Montipora</i> spp.	II [ORDER listing Scleractinia spp.]	EN/VU/NT/DD	Decreasing/Unknown	Multiple species assessed	NA	https://www.iucnredlist.org/search?taxonomies=129991&searchType=species
<i>Goniastrea palauensis</i>	II [ORDER listing Scleractinia spp.]	LC	Decreasing	2023	Bayley et al., 2024	https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/133560/165949527

3. Conservation status

See Table 1 for information on conservation status for the taxa under consideration as presented in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

4. Threats

Stony corals are increasingly threatened by global climate change, driving bleaching, disease outbreaks, stronger El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) events, storms, and ocean acidification, – alongside local stressors such as overfishing, pollution, and coastal development (Andrello et al., 2022; Crabbe et al., 2024a and references therein; Johnson et al., 2024a and references therein). Coral diseases have intensified worldwide, with major outbreaks in the Caribbean, Florida, Indo-Pacific, and beyond; notably, stony coral tissue loss disease (aka white plague disease) has been ongoing in Florida and the Caribbean since 2014 with devastating impact on affected reefs (Precht et al., 2016; Johnson et al., 2024a and references therein). In combination, the above-listed pressures place Indo-Pacific reefs at high risk of collapse (Johnson et al., 2024a and references therein). While aquarium trade collection can deplete rare species locally, its impact is considered minor compared to coral mining and dynamite fishing (Crabbe et al., 2024a and references therein; Johnson et al., 2024a and references therein).

5. Conservation and management measures:

International legislation

Order Scleractinia is listed in CITES Appendix II [Order listing] and under Annex B of the European Union Wildlife Trade Regulations (Crabbe et al., 2024a and references therein; UNEP, 2026).

National legislation

Several range states, including India, Israel, Jordan, Djibouti, Fiji, and the Philippines, have imposed bans on trading or exporting CITES II-listed species, which cover all stony corals. Other range states, like Indonesia, permit maricultured coral trade under strict quotas and regulations to maintain sustainability (Johnson et al., 2024a and references therein).

Conservation measures

See sections on International legislation and National legislation above.

6. Trade/use

Legal

Stony corals are the most heavily traded CITES-listed marine animal species globally, primarily sold live for aquariums and as dead pieces for curios. From 2010 to 2019, over 46 million coral specimens entered international trade (CEFAS, 2022).

According to CITES Wildlife TradeView (2026), 25,872,791 live specimens – by far the dominant trade term – were traded in the period 2015-2024. Fiji, Indonesia, and Australia are top exporting countries while the US and UK are top importing countries.

Illegal

The scale of illegal coral trade remains unclear due to challenges in identifying traded species (CEFAS, 2022). Substantial levels of import of illegally harvested live corals to the US have been documented (Petrossian et al., 2020; Sosnowski et al., 2020), and its role as an added stressor alongside global threats like climate change and ocean acidification raises concern (CEFAS, 2022).

References

- Allemand, D., Tambutté, E., Zoccola, D., & Tambutté, S. (2011). Coral calcification, cells to reefs. In Z. Dubinsky & N. Stambler (Eds.), *Coral reefs: An ecosystem in transition* (pp. 119–150). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0114-4_9
- Andrello, M., Darling, E. S., Wenger, A., Suárez-Castro, A. F., Gelfand, S., & Ahmadi, G. N. (2022). A global map of human pressures on tropical coral reefs. *Conservation Letters*, 15(1), e12858.
- Bayley, D., Crabbe, J., Bluemel, J., Porter, S.N., Ng, L. & Huang, D. (2024). *Coelastrea palauensis*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2024: e.T133560A165949527 <https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2024-2.RLTS.T133560A165949527.en> Accessed on 18 May 2026.
- CEFAS (Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science). (2022, October 14). *New visual guide launched to help support sustainable coral trade*. <https://www.cefass.co.uk/news-and-resources/news/new-visual-guide-launched-to-help-support-sustainable-coral-trade/>
- CITES Wildlife TradeView. (2026). UNEP-WCMC and the CITES Secretariat. Available at: [TradeView.cites.org](https://www.tradeview.org). Accessed (insert date of download 28/05/2026).
- CoP20 Com. I. Rec. 5 (Rev. 1) https://cites.org/sites/default/files/documents/E-CoP20-Com-I-Rec-05-R1_0.pdf
- CoP20 Doc. 66.2 (2025) Available at <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/documents/E-CoP20-066-02.pdf>
- CoP20-Plen-Rec-02 (2025) Available at: <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/documents/E-CoP20-Plen-Rec-02.pdf>
- Crabbe, J., Couce, E., Nuñez Lendo, C. I., Waheed, Z., & Roche, R. (2024a). *Bernardopora stutchburyi*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2024: e.T133615A165975396. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2024-2.RLTS.T133615A165975396.en>
- Crabbe, J., & Nuñez Lendo, C. I. (2024b). *Montipora setosa*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2024: e.T133361A165850939. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2024-2.RLTS.T133361A165850939.en>
- Huang, D., Porter, S. N., Crabbe, J., Ng, L., & Bluemel, J. (2024). *Favites pentagona*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2024: e.T133209A165772891. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2024-2.RLTS.T133209A165772891.en>
- Johnson, J., Luzon, K., Dellisanti, W., Cowburn, B., & Lewis, C. (2024a). *Duncanopsammia axifuga*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2024: e.T133114A165728077. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2024-2.RLTS.T133114A165728077.en>
- Johnson, J., Crabbe, J., & Nuñez Lendo, C. I. (2024b). *Montipora capricornis*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2024: e.T133422A165882264. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2024-2.RLTS.T133422A165882264.en>
- Komyakova, V., Munday, P. L., & Jones, G. P. (2013). Relative importance of coral cover, habitat complexity and diversity in determining the structure of reef fish

- communities. *PLOS ONE*, 8(12), e83178.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0083178>
- Lovdata (2018). Forskrift om innførsel, utførsel, besittelse mv. av truede arter av vill fauna og flora (CITES-forskriften) [Regulation on import, export, domestic possession etc. of endangered species of wild fauna and flora].
<https://lovdata.no/dokument/SFE/forskrift/2018-06-15-889>
- Luzon, K., Johnson, J., Cowburn, B., Dellisanti, W., Lewis, C., & de la Rosa, G. (2024). *Fimbriaphyllia paraancora*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2024*: e.T133289A165814415. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2024-2.RLTS.T133289A165814415.en>
- Moberg, F., & Folke, C. (1999). Ecological goods and services of coral reef ecosystems. *Ecological Economics*, 29(2), 215–233. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0921-8009\(99\)00009-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0921-8009(99)00009-9)
- Muscatine, L., & Porter, J. W. (1977). Reef-building corals: Mutualistic symbioses adapted to nutrient-poor environments. *BioScience*, 27(7), 454–460.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/1297526>
- Núñez Lendo, C. I. (2024a). *Montipora capitata*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2024*: e.T133622A165979277.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2024-2.RLTS.T133622A165979277.en>
- Núñez Lendo, C. I. (2024b). *Montipora digitata*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2024*: e.T133194A165764784.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2024-2.RLTS.T133194A165764784.en>
- Petrossian, G. A., Sosnowski, M. C., & Weis, J. S. (2020). Trends and patterns of imports of legal and illegal live corals into the United States. *Ocean & Coastal Management*, 196, 105305.
- Porter, S. N., Crabbe, J., & Núñez Lendo, C. I. (2024a). *Montipora palawanensis*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2024*: e.T133285A165812738.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2024-2.RLTS.T133285A165812738.en>
- Porter, S. N., Crabbe, J., & Núñez Lendo, C. I. (2024b). *Montipora nodosa*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2024*: e.T132944A165642301.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2024-2.RLTS.T132944A165642301.en>
- Precht, W. F., Gintert, B. E., Robbart, M. L., Fura, R., & Van Woesik, R. (2016). Unprecedented disease-related coral mortality in Southeastern Florida. *Scientific reports*, 6(1), 31374.
- Sosnowski, M. C., Weis, J. S., & Petrossian, G. A. (2020). Using crime script analysis to understand the illegal harvesting of live corals: Case studies from Indonesia and Fiji. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 36(3), 384–402.
- UNEP-WCMC (2026). *The Species+ website*. Nairobi, Kenya: UNEP-WCMC.
<https://www.speciesplus.net>
- Veron, J. E. N., Stafford-Smith, M., DeVantier, L., & Turak, E. (2015). Overview of distribution patterns of zooxanthellate Scleractinia. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 1, 81. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2014.00081>