

## APPENDIX II: Guiding principles for determining priority coral colonies (section from Florida's Coral Intervention Action Plan)

### Ecological:

- **Structure builder:** Some susceptible species contribute substantially to reef-building and the associated ecosystem services that provides (*Orbicella* spp., *Montastraea cavernosa*, *Colpophyllia natans*). These species may be prioritized over others that are not primary structure builders.
- **Size:** Larger colonies are likely to have greater reproductive capacity and provide more habitat. Corals larger than 2 meters may be prioritized for these features.
- **Relative size:** Colonies that are large for their species are likely to be older and thus more resilient to long-term environmental conditions. They also likely contribute more substantially to reproduction within their species. Corals in the top 5% of size for their species may be prioritized.
- **Localized reproductive capacity:** A coral surrounded (in the same general reef area) by other live colonies of the same species may have greater reproductive capacity because fertilization rates are likely to be greater.

### Regulatory:

- **Iconic coral:** Corals identified by stakeholders as important for historical, educational, or economic reasons. This could include colonies popular at dive sites.
- **Within an MPA:** Corals within zones of extra protection may be living under better environmental conditions.
- **Within a recreational area (within FKNMS – on a reef with mooring balls):** Corals near mooring balls likely have more visitors who utilize the resource. This could provide additional awareness of treatment action and potentially greater involvement through citizen engagement.
- **An ESA-listed species.**

### Treatability:

- **Portion of colony unaffected:** Treatment is likely to be more effective if the majority of the coral survives as a result. A recommended guideline is if greater than 75% of colony is still alive.
- **Number of active SCTLD lesions:** Each lesion requires initial treatment as well as follow-up. A greater number of lesions may also signify poorer overall health of a colony and thus a higher chance of new lesions developing. Colonies with fewer than 5 lesions are more treatable than those with more.
- **Monitoring efficiency:** Colonies in proximity to other treated corals, sites, or other ongoing projects will ease subsequent monitoring and re-treatment events.
- **Suitability for treatment:** Certain colonies may be disqualified for treatment for external reasons. For example, certain treatments (e.g. removal) may not be practicable if the coral is attached to a cultural resource. Individual sites and projects should consider these additional factors.