

# Two degrees — the difference between life and death for corals

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** A rise of just 2°C can turn vibrant coral reefs — home to countless marine species — into a lifeless white “graveyard”.

This temperature change, which experts say stresses corals, can lead to bleaching.

“Corals have microscopic algae living in their tissues, which provide them with both their colour and most of their nutrients. It’s like having mini solar panels inside your tissue,” said Reef Check Malaysia chief executive officer Julian Hyde.

“But when the coral is stressed, the algae are expelled into the surrounding water, causing the coral to lose its colour, hence the term ‘bleached’, and also most of its nutrients,” he told the *New Straits Times*.

Hyde said corals can survive bleaching for “several weeks”,

“Warm water is a key stressor, and an increase of just 1°C to 2°C can cause coral bleaching. If corals die, several consequences could follow.”

**JULIAN HYDE**

Reef Check Malaysia chief executive

depending on the species and severity of heating.

Anything longer than that, and the corals are likely to die, leading to grave consequences for the

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