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## *News Release*

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### **Coral reefs threatened by warming seas, Science Festival told**

The world's coral reefs are at risk from warming climates unless greenhouse gas emissions can be curbed, experts will tell the Edinburgh International Science Festival event.

Some six million people around the world fish from coral reefs, and another 400 million indirectly depend on those reefs for their livelihoods.

Greenhouse gas emissions are causing the seas to warm and become more acidic which, if continued unchecked, is likely to affect seafood production.

Excess heat causes increased coral bleaching in tropical seas, which can damage or kill coral.

Scottish shellfish stocks could also be at risk from climate change by the turn of the century unless steps are taken to limit global warming.

Scientists expect that by the year 2100 it will become necessary to treat affected UK waters to protect shellfish production.

Such practices have been introduced in recent years along the coasts of Oregon and Washington in the US, where in 2011 acidic conditions killed three-quarters of oyster larvae.

Increased CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have warmed the atmosphere, and 90 % of this excess heat being taken up by the oceans.

If future emissions were curbed, however, scientists expect that further changes could be limited, giving life in the oceans a chance to adapt.

The event, Predicting the Effects of Climate Change, takes place at Our Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh at 7pm on Monday 3 April, featuring researchers from the Universities of Edinburgh and East Anglia and Heriot-Watt University.

Dr Fiona Murray of the University of Edinburgh's School of GeoSciences, who is participating in the event, said: "Warming climates are already damaging our oceans, but it not too late to limit future changes and protect our valuable marine resources."

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