

For Immediate Release  
Shelby Isaacson  
(941) 302-4997

## Post-Irma status of Mote Marine Laboratory in the Keys

Hurricane Irma moved directly over Mote Marine Laboratory's Elizabeth Moore International Center for Coral Reef Research & Restoration (IC2R3) on our Summerland Key campus on Sunday, Sept. 10, 2017. Our hearts go out to our staff and other Keys residents who experienced significant hardships and losses due to the storm. This important community and its recovery are in our thoughts each day.

As the southernmost marine laboratory in the continental U.S., Mote's IC2R3 is a unique "collaboratorium" for coral reef research and restoration, providing vessel, dive, field and lab support for visiting scientists and educators.

The 19,000-square-foot IC2R3 was made possible entirely through the philanthropic support of generous community members, and was constructed to Gold LEED standards and to withstand category 5 hurricanes.

Mote scientists were extremely fortunate and are grateful that IC2R3 was built to remain structurally intact and operational through such a dangerous storm. As the storm passed, our backup systems for electricity were fully functional and our coral gene-bank, and seed stock for restoring the coral reef tract, remained safe inside with running seawater systems, aeration and other critical life support. The entire building, including its dorms, eight labs, two classrooms and offices, is secure with minimal or no impact.

However, there was a significant storm surge on Summerland Key, which when combined with winds significantly impacted our exterior infrastructure, including outside coral raceway systems. Mote's three resident research vessels appear to have weathered the storm well.

Mote staff at IC2R3 have already begun repairs of the external raceways, and IC2R3 continues to maintain operations with running seawater with back-up generators. Second only to the safety of our staff, our highest priority is to maintain life support for our Florida Keys coral gene-bank and coral seed stock for our state-sponsored initiative to restore 25,000 corals in the next 12 months. The road to recovery for full "normal" research operations at IC2R3 will likely be on the order of months. However, the recovery of personal property and quality of life of our staff and neighbors in the Monroe County community will likely take years.

By the time Irma reached Mote's City Island campus in Sarasota and our Mote Aquaculture Research Park inland east of I-75, the storm had significantly weakened. However, many of our staff and other residents of the southwest Florida region experienced significant impacts to their homes, from which they are still recovering, and many areas remain without electricity.

Impacts to both of Mote's Sarasota campuses were minimal, and we returned to operations of our research enterprise on Tuesday, Sept. 12, with our Mote Aquarium open to the public on Wednesday, Sept. 13.

Mote has insurance to cover a small portion of costs related to hurricane damage at IC2R3 in the Keys, but the repairs required will most certainly significantly exceed this coverage. To donate for Mote's recovery efforts in Summerland Key — and keep this facility in excellent shape to serve the needs of the local to international scientific community — please contact Erin Kabinoff, Chief Development Officer, at ekabinoff@mote.org or (941) 388-4441 ext. 309 or visit [mote.org/donate](http://mote.org/donate).

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### BOCA GRANDE OUTREACH OFFICE

PO Box 870  
Boca Grande, FL 33921  
(941) 855-9251

### ELIZABETH MOORE INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR CORAL REEF RESEARCH & RESTORATION

24244 Overseas Highway  
Summerland Key, FL 33042  
(305) 745-3554

### MOTE AQUACULTURE RESEARCH PARK

874 W.R. Mote Way  
Sarasota, FL 34240  
(941) 388-4541

### MOTE LIVING REEF EXHIBIT AT THE NOAA ECO-DISCOVERY CENTER

35 East Quay Road  
Key West, FL 33040  
(305) 296-2325

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