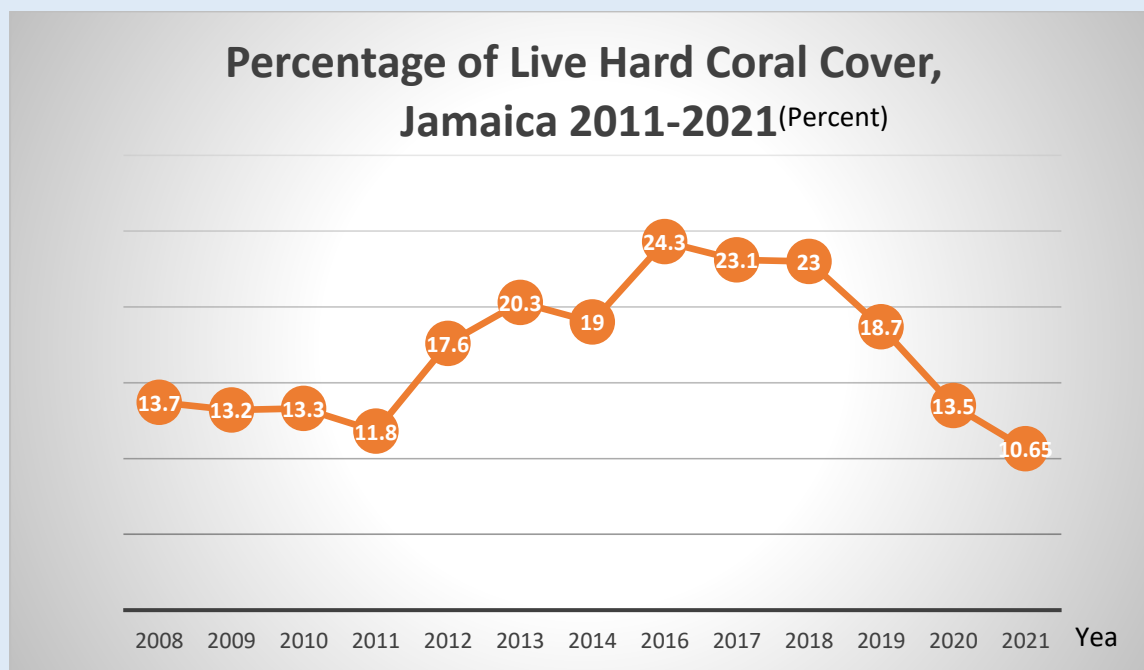


## Percentage of Live Hard Coral Cover Jamaica 2011 - 2021

**Definition:** Coral cover is a measure of the proportion of reef surface that is covered by live stony coral instead of sponges, algae, or other organisms<sup>1</sup>. So the *live hard coral cover* is the stony reef-building corals that are the main contributors to a coral reef's three-dimensional framework. This sturdy building serves as a vital habitat for a variety of marine plant and animal species.

The percentage of hard coral cover around the island of Jamaica over a 14 year period is depicted in the figure below. It was realised that there was an overall rising tendency from 2008 to 2016. The trend was not a steady one, but rather had intermittent peaks and troughs. It was also observed that the minimum growth rate of the corals recorded was 11.8 percent in 2011 and the highest recorded value was 24.3 percent and this was recorded in 2016.

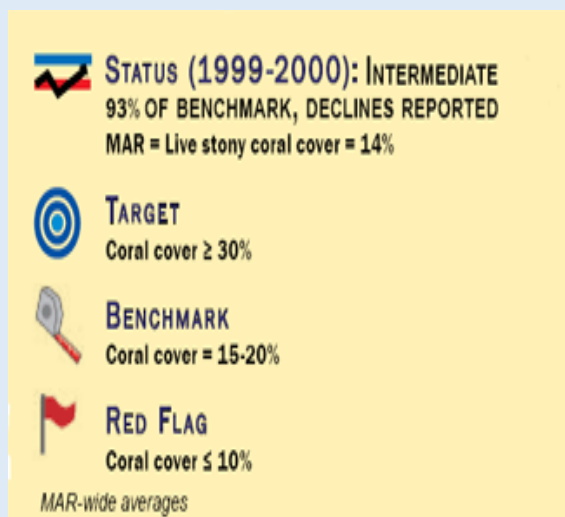
Figure 1



<sup>1</sup> Source: Healthy Reefs - <https://www.healthyreefs.org/cms/healthy-reef-indicators/coral-cover/>  
 Data Source: JamData Mobile App  
 Data4Development - <https://data4development.gov.jm/>  
 JamStats Unit, March 2023

From 2016 onwards, the trend has been downward with the lowest value of 10.65 percent observed in 2011. It should be noted that this is a new low, since it fell below the 2011 figure of 11.8 percent.

The coral cover is a good measure as it relates to the health of the reef. A good sign of benchmark reef recovery is based on the Mesoamerican Reef (MAR) wide range average of 15 – 20% live coral cover. The target is to have live coral cover of  $\geq 30$  percent; however, it should be noted that values  $\leq 10$  percent is considered very serious (red flag) So in the case of Jamaica in 2021 we have reached that point 10.65 % and therefore immediate and corrective actions must be taken to preserve a balanced ecosystem<sup>2</sup>.



<sup>2</sup> A balanced ecosystem signifies a habitat which is sustainable. It consists of animals, plants, microorganisms and more which depend on each other and their surroundings. These ecosystems exhibit resourceful energy and material cycling

Data Source: JamData Mobile App

Data4Development - <https://data4development.gov.jm/>

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