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Bleached fire coral and christmas tree worm on top (Flower Gardens Bank bleaching 2010). Credit: NOAA, FGBNMS.

I try occasionally to report good news on this site, to counteract the tendency of most environmental lawyers to suffer periodic depression. But this week I can't find anything but bad news in the marine context. Pour yourself a glass of wine, click, and cry:

- The World Resources Institute has published a new report, Reefs at Risk Revisited, updating a 1998 study on threats to coral reefs. The key conclusion: more than 60% of the world's coral reefs "are under immediate and direct threat" from local causes, mostly overfishing, and that level rises to 75% when those local threats are combined with thermal stress from global warming.
- Echoing several studies of climate-driven behavioral changes in terrestrial species, scientists at UC San Diego's Scripps Institution of Oceanography find that many fish are spawning earlier. The implications for marine ecosystems are not yet clear, but on the terrestrial side researchers think these sorts of changes are contributing to the unraveling of natural communities. (Hat tip: Aquafornia.)
- And in the Gulf of Mexico, there has been an unusual surge in deaths of baby bottlenose dolphins. Researchers don't know yet whether oil from last year's Deepwater Horizon disaster or chemicals used to disperse that oil are contributing factors. **UPDATE:** Five more dead baby dolphins were found in the eastern Gulf on Friday. The Washington Post has this good explanation of why it's so difficult to determine the cause or causes of death in this and other cases of mass marine mammal strandings.