Senior Coral Production and Aquaculture Manager

Location: Tampa Bay Coral Farm, Ruskin, Florida; Position type: Full-time, onsite; Reports to: Tampa Bay Coral Farm Director; Salary range: $75,000–$90,000, commensurate with experience

Position Summary

This role is ideal for a coral aquaculture leader who wants to build and scale land-based coral production while remaining closely connected to daily husbandry, system performance, spawning, and team development.

Reef Renewal USA (RRUSA) is seeking an experienced Senior Coral Production and Aquaculture Manager to help lead the continued growth of the Tampa Bay Coral Farm in Ruskin, Florida.

This is a senior, hands-on position for an experienced coral aquaculture professional who combines deep technical knowledge of Caribbean corals with expertise in recirculating aquaculture systems, coral husbandry, and sexual propagation. The ideal candidate will bring demonstrated experience with coral spawning, larval rearing, settlement, and post-settlement husbandry and will help expand these capabilities at the Tampa Bay Coral Farm.

The Senior Coral Production & Aquaculture Manager will also provide day-to-day leadership to staff, interns, and volunteers; ensure adherence to established protocols; maintain high standards for coral health and system performance; and help strengthen the systems, processes, and practices necessary to support increasing coral production.

This is a working manager position. The successful candidate will be equally comfortable managing and developing people, analyzing water-quality data, troubleshooting a recirculating system, working directly with corals, and leading spawning and larval-rearing activities.

As the Tampa Bay Coral Farm continues to grow, this individual will have an opportunity to help shape how RRUSA expands its coral production, spawning, applied science, and land-based aquaculture capabilities.

Primary Responsibilities

Coral Husbandry & Aquaculture Systems – Approximately 35%

- Oversee the health, husbandry, and care of Caribbean coral species maintained at the Tampa Bay Coral Farm.
- Manage and troubleshoot recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS) and associated life-support systems.
- Monitor and manage water chemistry and water quality to maintain optimal conditions for coral health and growth.
- Identify coral health issues, disease, stress, and other concerns and implement appropriate treatments and interventions.
- Oversee quarantine, biosecurity, and coral health protocols.
- Support coral propagation, grow-out, broodstock management, and production planning.
- Maintain high standards for system cleanliness, organization, maintenance, and operational readiness.
- Identify opportunities to improve system performance, coral survival, growth, efficiency, and production capacity.
- Coordinate preventive maintenance, troubleshooting, and repair of critical aquaculture equipment and systems.
- Participate in emergency response and on-call coverage for life-support systems and other critical facility needs.

Coral Spawning, Larval Rearing & Settlement – Approximately 30%

- Help lead and expand RRUSA's land-based coral spawning and sexual propagation capabilities.
- Plan and execute spawning activities for Caribbean coral species.
- Apply demonstrated expertise in coral sexual reproduction, including spawning, gamete collection and fertilization, larval rearing, settlement, and post-settlement husbandry.

- Develop, refine, document, and implement protocols to improve fertilization, larval survival, settlement, and juvenile coral survival and growth.
- Prepare systems, equipment, staffing, and schedules for spawning events.
- Train and supervise staff, interns, and volunteers participating in spawning and larval-rearing activities.
- Maintain detailed records and evaluate results to inform future spawning and production cycles.
- Work collaboratively with RRUSA staff, scientists, universities, and other partners to advance spawning, husbandry, and coral production techniques.
- Remain current on emerging research, practices, and technologies related to Caribbean coral propagation and land-based coral production.

Staff, Intern & Volunteer Leadership – Approximately 20%

- Provide day-to-day leadership and supervision for coral farm staff, interns, and volunteers as assigned.
- Establish clear expectations and ensure work is performed safely, consistently, and according to established protocols.
- Train team members in coral husbandry, aquaculture systems, water-quality monitoring, biosecurity, spawning, and other operational procedures.
- Observe performance following training and provide timely coaching, feedback, and corrective direction when necessary.
- Ensure Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are consistently followed and address deviations before they create risks to coral health or facility operations.
- Foster a collaborative, accountable, safety-conscious, and learning-oriented working environment.
- Help develop team capabilities as the Coral Farm grows and operations become increasingly complex.
- Coordinate staff, intern, and volunteer activities to support production priorities and efficient facility operations.

Data, SOPs, Production Systems & Continuous Improvement – Approximately 15%

- Ensure accurate and timely collection and maintenance of coral husbandry, water-quality, production, spawning, and system-performance data.
- Maintain accurate coral inventory, lineage/genotype, propagation, and production records.
- Utilize databases and other digital tools to monitor performance, identify trends, and support decision-making.
- Develop, implement, evaluate, and continuously improve SOPs for coral husbandry, aquaculture systems, spawning, biosecurity, and other facility operations.
- Help establish production goals, monitor progress, and identify operational risks or constraints.
- Evaluate existing processes and recommend improvements that increase reliability, efficiency, safety, coral health, and production capacity.
- Support reporting and information needs associated with research collaborations, grants, permits, and organizational priorities.

Required Qualifications

- Bachelor of Science degree in marine biology, aquaculture, biology, environmental science, or a related field.
- Minimum of five years of progressively responsible professional experience in coral aquaculture, coral husbandry, or a closely related field.
- Significant hands-on professional experience working with Caribbean coral species.
- Demonstrated expertise in Caribbean coral spawning and sexual propagation, including hands-on experience with spawning, gamete collection and fertilization, larval rearing, settlement, and post-settlement husbandry.
- Demonstrated experience operating and troubleshooting recirculating aquaculture systems and life-support systems.
- Strong knowledge of water chemistry, water-quality management, and their relationship to coral health and aquaculture system performance.

- Experience identifying and responding to coral health concerns, disease, stress, and husbandry challenges.
- Demonstrated experience supervising, training, and developing employees, interns, volunteers, or other team members.
- Ability to provide clear direction, hold team members accountable, and ensure adherence to established protocols and SOPs.
- Strong organizational, problem-solving, and decision-making skills.
- Experience collecting, managing, analyzing, and using operational or scientific data.
- Proficiency with computers, databases, spreadsheets, and other digital tools used for recordkeeping and operational management.
- Ability to work independently and exercise sound judgment in a complex, high-value biological production environment.

Preferred Qualifications

- Experience leading or helping develop a coral spawning and larval-rearing program.
- Experience scaling coral aquaculture or other biological production systems.
- Experience managing broodstock and genetically diverse coral collections.
- Experience developing or improving SOPs, biosecurity programs, quarantine procedures, and production protocols.
- Experience collaborating with universities, research institutions, government agencies, conservation organizations, or other scientific partners.
- Experience contributing to applied coral research or translating research findings into production practices.
- Experience working within a rapidly growing or evolving aquaculture, research, or conservation operation.

Work Environment & Schedule

This is a full-time, onsite position based at the Tampa Bay Coral Farm in Ruskin, Florida. This is not a hybrid or remote position, and the successful candidate must reside in the Tampa Bay area.

The position requires flexibility based on the biological and operational needs of the facility. The Senior Coral Production & Aquaculture Manager will participate in a rotating weekend schedule and may be required to respond to facility or life-support system emergencies outside normal working hours.

Coral spawning and other time-sensitive biological activities may require evening, overnight, weekend, or extended hours during specific periods of the year.

Decision-Making & Leadership Responsibility

The Senior Coral Production & Aquaculture Manager will have the authority and responsibility to protect coral health, animal welfare, staff safety, and the integrity of RRUSA's aquaculture systems.

Within established organizational and facility protocols, this position is expected to:

- Enforce established SOPs and operational standards.
- Stop or correct activities that could compromise coral health, system integrity, safety, or biosecurity.
- Provide direct performance feedback and corrective guidance to staff, interns, and volunteers.
- Make routine husbandry and operational decisions within established parameters.
- Recommend changes to protocols, systems, and production practices based on data, experience, and emerging best practices.
- Escalate significant operational, biological, personnel, or system changes to the Tampa Bay Coral Farm Director as appropriate.

The Opportunity

RRUSA is building more than a coral holding facility. The Tampa Bay Coral Farm is evolving into a significant land-based coral production, spawning, and applied science operation designed to support the future of Florida's coral reefs.

We are looking for someone who wants to help build what comes next.

The successful candidate will bring established expertise while also approaching the work with curiosity, collaboration, and a continuous-improvement mindset. They will help

RRUSA strengthen today's operations while building the people, systems, protocols, and capabilities needed for tomorrow.

For the right person, this is an opportunity to play a meaningful leadership role in expanding the scale and sophistication of coral production and helping produce corals capable of contributing to reefs in a rapidly changing world.

About Reef Renewal USA

Reef Renewal USA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to renewing coral reefs for future generations in a rapidly changing world. Through land-based coral production, offshore nurseries, innovative propagation techniques, applied science, and collaboration, RRUSA is working to increase the scale and effectiveness of coral production and outplanting.

Our work is grounded in collaboration, learning, innovation, and a commitment to building the reefs of the future.