

Winter 2012

# Winter 2012

NSU Oceanographic Center

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# Currents



A NEWSLETTER FROM NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY'S OCEANOGRAPHIC CENTER

## OC Receives Donation of Seized Corals from Customs and Border Protection

On June 30, 2011, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) arrived at the Oceanographic Center (OC) in two 18-wheel trucks and donated 29 pallets of seized Pacific coral. **Richard Dodge**, Ph.D., OC dean, welcomed the donation. "The stony coral skeleton specimens will be useful for research, education, outreach, and display to provide information for understanding about economically important and biologically and ecologically valuable corals and coral reefs," said Dodge.

The history of the corals began back in July 2010. That month, CBP officers, in cooperation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife officers, selected two containers of coral arriving to the Port of Tampa from the Solomon Islands. An examination of the contents revealed the shipment violated both the Endangered Species Act, which protects federally listed endangered and threatened species, and the Lacey Act, which prohibits the trade of fish and wildlife that has been illegally taken, transported, or sold.

The shipments also violated the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora that ensures that international trade in wild plant or animal specimens does not threaten their survival. Cindy Mercado from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service stated the commercial value of the corals was between \$500,000 and \$1 million.

"This donation by CBP and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will help us produce valuable scientific knowledge and educational outreach to protect corals, which are vital to the ocean's ecosystems," Dodge said. NSU is currently constructing the Center of Excellence for Coral Reef Ecosystems Science Research Facility at its Oceanographic Center campus in Dania Beach, Florida. This new research and education facility will advance coral reef science.



*Corals from the shipment*

*Mark Rogers unloading the first pallet of corals*



*(continued on page 2)*



## OC Receives Donation of Seized Corals

(continued from page 1)

In discussing the seized corals, Gary McClelland, port director for the Tampa area, said, "Our officers are committed to the CBP mission of securing the nation's borders and enforcing the laws of our partner agencies, such as the Fish and Wildlife Service, that protect our environment. The hard work and dedication of the officers and the professional relationships we have with those in our community have resulted in this positive outcome."

Dodge added, "Customs and Border Protection and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are to be commended for a proactive stance to enforce environmental regulations needed to help conserve coral reefs."

Currently, the coral specimens are being unpacked and sorted by size, specimen quality, and species. The specimens will be used for research, education, and outreach. 🐠



Egbert Grant and M.S. student Cameron Baxley secure the corals.



OC students and faculty and staff members after a hard day of working with the donated coral

(more pictures on page 11)

## OC Hosts Octocoral Workshop

From November 4–6, the OC hosted a workshop for an identification guide in support of the online guide to South Florida shallow-water octocorals. The workshop was funded as part of an ongoing NOAA/SAFMC project: synthesis of information on octocoral biology, ecology, and fisheries in the South Atlantic in support of effective management.

Developed as a result of the discussion with **Charles Messing**, Ph.D., professor at the OC, and Andrew David, NOAA Fisheries, about the difficulty of identifying many South Florida octocorals, this workshop brought together leading authorities in the taxonomy of western tropical Atlantic octocorals.

These experts examined previously collected specimens, preparations, and photographs, providing the most accurate identifications and characterizations available of South Florida marine sponge species. The outcome of this workshop will be practical identification tools for shallow-water marine octocorals of southern Florida, from the Indian River Lagoon through the Florida Keys and the Dry Tortugas.



Charles Messing, Ph.D., OC professor, led the octocoral workshop.

This free, online identification guide will include illustrated keys, descriptions of whole organisms, their diagnostic components (e.g., sclerites), available habitat, and biological data. It will be suitable for use by environmental managers, advanced students, teachers, and professional scientists. 🐠

## OC's National Coral Reef Institute (NCRI) Hosts U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Representatives

The U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF) held its annual jurisdictional meeting in Fort Lauderdale from October 17–21. The USCRTF was established in 1998 by presidential executive order to lead U.S. efforts to preserve and protect coral reef ecosystems. The USCRTF includes leaders of 12 federal agencies, 7 U.S. states, territories, commonwealths, and 3 freely associated states. The USCRTF helps build partnerships, strategies, and support for on-the-ground action to conserve coral reefs.

The OC also played an important part in the USCRTF meeting, including presentations by **Richard Dodge**, Ph.D.; faculty members **Bernhard Riegl**, Ph.D., and **Dave Gilliam**, Ph.D.; research scientist, **Brian Walker**, Ph.D.; and NCRI coordinator **Wendy Wood-Derr**.

Representing the state of Florida on the task force was NSU OC alumna **Joanna Walczak** (M.S. '08), who currently serves as assistant manager for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Coral Reef Conservation Program.

On October 20, NCRI hosted members of the USCRTF and meeting attendees for a reception at the OC. Honored guests included Togiola Tulafono, governor of American Samoa; Herschel T. Vinyard, Jr., secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection; USCRTF co-chairs Andy Winer, director of external affairs, U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and Eileen Sobeck, deputy assistant secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior; and John Christensen, director of NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program. 🐟



*Left to right: Richard Dodge, Ph.D., OC dean; Togiola Tulafono, governor of American Samoa; Eileen Sobeck, deputy assistant secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior; Andy Winer, NOAA director of external affairs; Herschel T. Vinyard, Jr., secretary of Florida Department of Environmental Protection; and John Christensen, director, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program, at the USCRTF reception at the OC*

## OC and Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation Premiere Documentary at Museum of Art

On October 19, the OC, in conjunction with the Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation, presented the Fort Lauderdale premiere of ***This is Your Ocean: Sharks*** at the Museum of Art | Fort Lauderdale, Nova Southeastern University. Benefiting the Guy Harvey Research Institute (GHRI) at the OC, this documentary reveals up close the misconceptions and myths surrounding these misunderstood predators of the sea and promotes global shark conservation. Millions of sharks are killed each year in the illegal shark-fin trade to satisfy the global appetite for shark-fin soup.

"The ban on commercial shark fishing and exportation of shark by-products is a huge step in the conservation of sharks worldwide," said Guy Harvey, Ph.D., the Cayman Island-based marine artist and conservationist. "Healthy oceans are essential for life on our planet. It is our collective responsibility to conserve the marine environment and maintain the biodiversity of our oceans."



*Left to right: Irvin M. Lippman, director of the Museum of Art | Fort Lauderdale; Richard Dodge, Ph.D., OC dean; Guy Harvey, GHRI director; and Mahmood Shivji, Ph.D., OC professor*

***This is Your Ocean: Sharks*** is a prologue to the Museum of Art | Fort Lauderdale's exhibition SHARK!, a multimedia spectacular beginning on May 13, 2012, that will focus on sharks as illustrated by marine artists Guy Harvey, John Singleton Copley, and Damien Hirst, as well as many other artists. 🐟



## NCRI Researchers and OC Students Continue Survey of Remote Reef Systems in the Bahamas

NCRI researchers and OC faculty members **Bernhard Riegl**, Ph.D., and **Sam Purkis**, Ph.D., with Ph.D. candidate **Jeremy Kerr** and M.S. student **Alexandra Dempsey** returned to the Bahamas to continue their survey of the remote reefs. Thanks to the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation, these four continued the Global Reef Expedition by visiting three remote locales in the Bahamian archipelago in August 2011: Great Inagua, Little Inagua, and Hogsty Reef. Due to their remoteness and limited protection from waves and storms, these locations are difficult to survey in detail without strong logistical support. Fortunately, the resources afforded through the Global Reef Expedition enabled researchers to spend three weeks surveying these islands.



*Sam Purkis, Ph.D., associate professor at the OC (second from left), and Jeremy Kerr, Ph.D. candidate (far right), join other members of the expedition for an over flight of the archipelago.*



*M.S. student Alexandra Dempsey performing a transect*

Together, team members assessed the demographics and health of corals, fish, and benthic community composition. They also gathered samples of coral diseases for further study, performed experiments to quantify macroalgal growth rates and the extent of herbivory, and surveyed the wider landscape. Riegl and Dempsey assessed the health of the corals and cover of benthic organisms along transects while scuba diving. Purkis and Kerr conducted exhaustive ground-truth survey for the creation of high-resolution benthic habitat maps from satellite imagery.

The resulting data and map products will be provided to the Bahamian government to support its effort to meet the Caribbean Challenge. The Caribbean Challenge is a commitment by several Caribbean nations to enact, by 2020, permanent and sustainable conservation actions, such as establishing protected areas, for at least 20 percent of the participating countries' marine and coastal habitats to protect marine biodiversity and sustain human livelihoods. 🐟

## Sea Turtle Project Releases 2011 Nesting Data

The Broward County Sea Turtle Conservation program recorded 2,392 nests in 2011.

Loggerhead turtles deposited 2,126 clutches, which was down slightly from last year, but still continued a general upward trend that began in 2008. Green sea turtles made 261 nests, which was the third-highest number since the project's inception. Despite large fluctuations, green turtles show a significant upward nesting trend.

Endangered leatherback turtles made only five nests in the county. Leatherback nesting has

fluctuated over the years, but they have not failed to nest in the county since 1982.

The NSU Oceanographic Center operates the Broward County Florida Sea Turtle Conservation Program in partnership with Broward County government. The program provides for the conservation of endangered and threatened sea turtle species within Broward County. **Curtis Burney**, Ph.D., associate professor at the OC, is the principal investigator of the program.

Sea turtle nesting season in Broward County begins in early March with leatherback sea

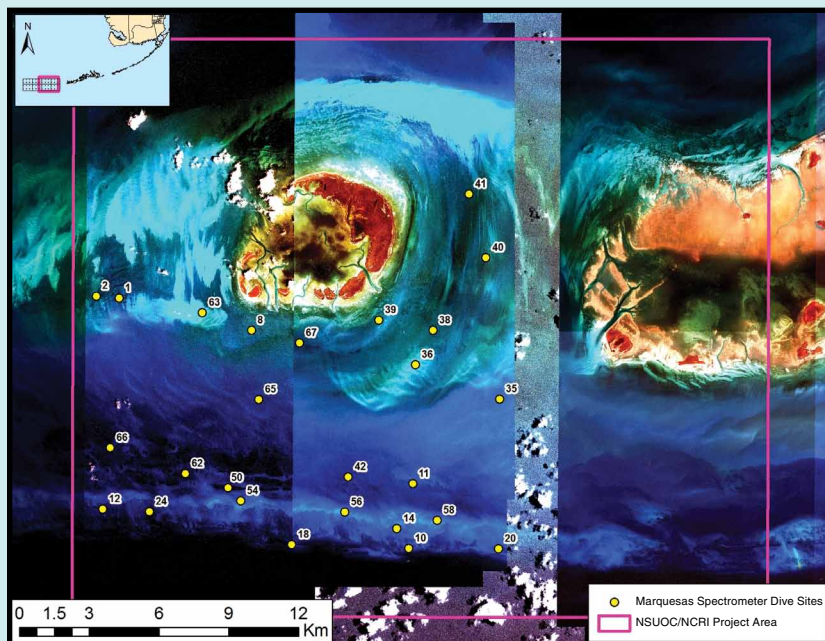


*OC alumna Lisa Morse measures a sea turtle nest.*



## OC Researchers and Students Survey Part of Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

In September, NCRI research scientist **Brian Walker**, Ph.D., and OC Ph.D. candidates **Gwilym Rowlands** and **Kirk Kilfoyle** visited the Marquesas area in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary to measure the reflectivity of the dominant benthic organisms and conduct benthic cover and rugosity assessments. Walker recently received an NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program grant to acquire in situ spectral data between Key West, Florida, and the Marquesas Islands. This was in conjunction with a LIDAR survey of the area. The team stayed on a 61-foot Hatteras, named the *Outpost* of Outpost Expeditions, which was moored in Boca Grande channel.



Results of the Florida Keys survey

The group visited 25 sites during the five-day excursion. This research is being conducted in conjunction with an NOAA Office of Coast Survey (OCS) bathymetric LIDAR survey. The bathymetric LIDAR data will be used to update NOAA nautical charts of the area. The research conducted by the OC/NCRI group will be used to characterize and transform the LIDAR bathymetry and backscatter data into a habitat map of a portion of the Marquesas area of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. 🐟

Ph.D. candidates Gwilym Rowlands and Kirk Kilfoyle prepare for another long day of diving.



turtles, then loggerhead turtles in April, and green turtles in May and June. Leatherback turtles, being less predictable, may nest as early as February or March. Nesting continues through September, with the peak season typically being the end of June and the beginning of July. 🐢

## OC Professor Coauthors Book

**Charles Messing**, Ph.D., OC professor, has coauthored a book with senior author Hans Hess. The book, entitled *Treatise on Invertebrate Paleontology, Part T, Echinodermata 2 Revised, Crinoidea 3*, is the latest issue in the long-running, multivolume treatise. Published by the University of Kansas Paleontological Institute, Lawrence, Kansas, it represents a complete compilation of the classification of the hundreds of genera, families, and orders of crinoids (sea lilies and feather stars) that have existed since the beginning of the Mesozoic era. 🐟

## Associate Dean's Corner

Richard Spieler, Ph.D.

As this year has progressed, the OC has made some positive changes. We are in the process of creating new scholarships, hiring new faculty members, and introducing a faculty seminar series. We have also added a new person to our administration and have implemented a peer mentor program.

### Scholarships

In the last year, we have seen an increase in scholarships to help offset the cost of student tuition.

- The Fishing Tournament Scholarship currently provides funding for a Ph.D. student. The fund is growing, and we will soon be adding additional students.
- The Batchelor's Scholarship, funded by the Batchelor Foundation, currently funds two M.S. students.
- Title V funding from the U.S. Department of Education will provide funding for two Hispanic students.
- Other scholarships for M.S. students will be initiated in 2012.

Scholarships are based on the student's high scholastic standing and work ethic. The awardees serve as role models for other students.

### New Faculty Members

Although there are no new faculty members to introduce yet, we are well into the search for two new faculty members. Currently, we have approximately 50 highly qualified candidates. The two selected will be members of the Joint Science Program with undergraduate teaching duties at the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences and graduate teaching and research responsibilities at the OC. We hope to fill these positions in the next few months.

### New Staff Member

**Joshua Appelt** has joined the OC as coordinator of administration and assessment. Prior to joining the OC team, Appelt worked in the Office of Human Resources as a benefits specialist helping NSU employees navigate the complexities of health care, absences, and retirement benefits. In his new role, he will assist in the daily administration of HR-related functions, liaising with the Office of Human Resources, and organizing and assessing the data stream generated by the students and faculty and staff members at the OC.

### Peer Mentoring

**Jazmin Zea** has our new Peer Mentorship Program up and running. The purpose of this program is to help new oceanographic students with their transition into graduate school and the OC culture. The mentors, all volunteers, meet at least once a month with students to provide guidance, knowledge, and share experiences. This interaction establishes a supportive environment for new students and increases the OC sense of community. Already, we have seen an expanded orientation week, rather than a single day, and several socials. Beyond question, the Peer Mentorship Program is already a big success, and Zea and her colleagues deserve great credit. We can look forward to much more from this accomplished group.

### Faculty Seminar Series

**Jose Lopez**, Ph.D., associate professor, has established the OC Faculty Seminar Series. Faculty scientists will present the results of recent research from their labs so that students and faculty and staff members can be kept up to date with ongoing research at the OC. A different faculty member will present a scientific presentation every month. This promises to be a popular series. These seminars will take place on the third Friday of every month. They are currently scheduled through summer 2012.

As we enter 2012, we look forward to the addition of our new building, the remodeled boat basin, and our continued mission to create academic excellence. 🐡

## OC Professor Reports Discovery of New Species

**Jose Lopez**, Ph.D., OC associate professor, has recently coauthored a paper in the *International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology* that reports the discovery and thorough characterization of a new species of marine *Vibrio*. First derived from a Caribbean sponge, this research was in collaboration with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which has taken an interest in sponges as possible reservoirs for pathogenic bacteria such as *Vibrio*. 🐡

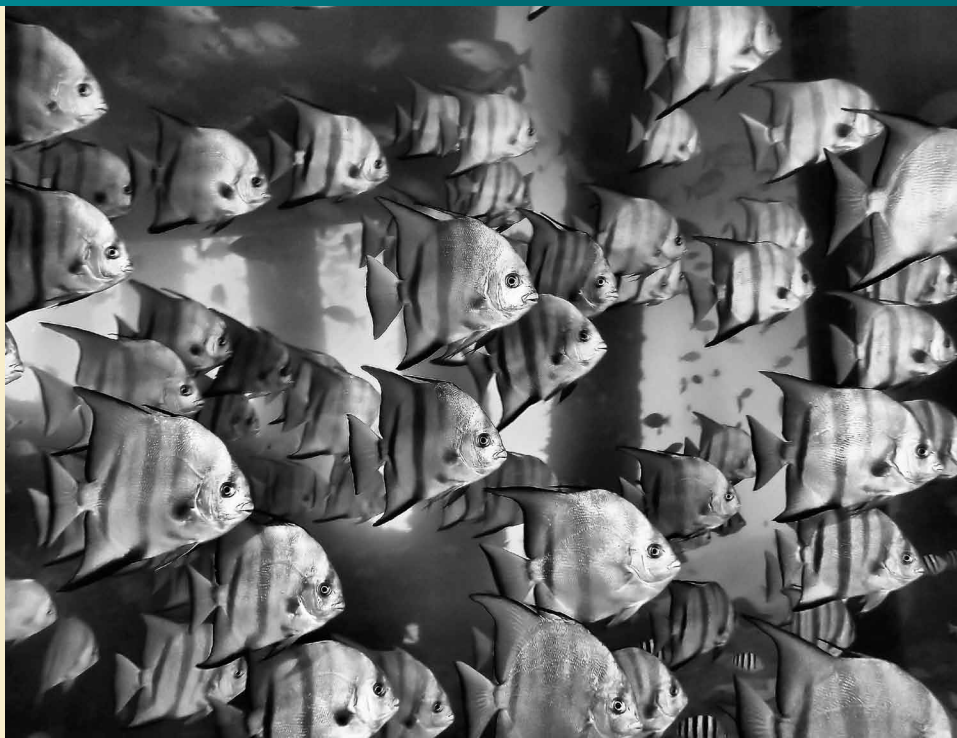
M.S. degree specialties are marine biology, coastal zone management, marine environmental sciences, and biological sciences. M.A. degree speciality is marine and coastal studies. Each course carries 3 credit hours or may be audited. Tuition is \$898 per credit hour (50 percent less for audit). Classes are 12 weeks in length and meet once a week from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the Oceanographic Center (unless otherwise specified.) Registration (\$25 fee) for summer term, which runs from May 7–July 27, 2012, begins March 26, 2012, and takes place at [www.webstar.nova.edu](http://www.webstar.nova.edu) or at the Oceanographic Center. For further information, call Richard Spieler, Ph.D., or Melissa Dore at (954) 262-3610 or 800-396-2326, or email [imcs@nova.edu](mailto:imcs@nova.edu). More information can be found at the Web site: [www.nova.edu/ocean](http://www.nova.edu/ocean). 🐡



## Shutter Shark 2011 a Success!

This fall, the OC's Student Government Association hosted the fourth annual amateur marine photography Shutter Shark photography contest. The event featured 238 photographs from 38 students. Winners received their prizes from Shutter Shark's generous sponsors during a reception at the OC. The grand prize, a dive trip to the Bahamas by Blackbeard's Cruises, was presented to **Kristian Taylor** for his black and white photo of schooling Atlantic spadefish taken locally at Blue Heron Bridge.

To learn more about the event and see all previous winners, visit [www.nova.edu/ocean/shuttershark/](http://www.nova.edu/ocean/shuttershark/). This year's winning photos are on display at the OC in Modular One. ➡



Winning photo by Kristian Taylor

## OC Peer Mentors Welcome New Students

2011 marked the largest group of peer mentors at the OC. The mentor program is directed toward supporting new and current students with the transition into graduate school and also throughout their time at the OC. Both in-house and distance mentors, dedicated to building a better community at the OC, are currently volunteering.

January is Mentor Awareness Month. The OC will be hosting a Mentorship Summit that will allow peer mentors, and other interested members of the OC community, the opportunity to discuss the importance of mentoring in the scientific community.

The OC thanks and recognizes our current mentors for their excellent work: Cody Bliss, Andia Chaves-Fonnegra, Nicole D'Antonio, Jeffrey Ellis, Paola Espitia, Joan Lorraine Guerra, Ari Halperin, Beranda Harper, Stephanie Hayes, Chris Lapointe, Jennifer Lash, Andres Lester-Coll, Shawn Martin, Stephanie Mclean, Keri O'Neil, Zach Ostroff, Jignasa Patel, Julio Perez, Theresa Robitaille, Mark Rogers, Kristina Trotta, Joyce Varela, Chuck Walton, Keely Wells, Christiana Wittmaack, and Sammy Woodward. ➡



2011 peer mentors

## OC Goes to the Classroom

In November, **Melissa Dore**, director of academic support and administration at the OC, and **Stephanie Hayes**, M.S. student, took the OC on the road and introduced 20 home-schooled children to the ocean and its wonders. The students learned about food webs, marine animals, and the oceans through games and hands-on learning. Educational and community outreach is one of the missions of the OC. ➡



OC staff member Melissa Dore and M.S. student Stephanie Hayes introduce students to ocean science.



# MASTERCURRENTS

## Institute of Marine and Coastal Studies

The following graduate degree defenses took place September–December 2011.

### Ph.D. Defense

**Kristi Foster**, “Field ecology patterns of high-latitude coral communities.” Committee: Bernhard Riegl, Ph.D., Chair; Sam Purkis, Ph.D.; Richard Dodge, Ph.D.; and Allison Moulding, Ph.D. Dissertation. November 4.

### M.S. Defenses

**Nina Thompson**, “Changes in Northwest Hawaiian Island Monk Seal (*Monachus schauinslandi*) populations as evidenced by stable isotope ratios.” Committee: Amy Hirons, Ph.D., Chair; Charley Potter, Ph.D.; and Charles Littnan, Ph.D. Thesis. November 3.

**Holly Hubbell**, “Whale strikes by ships: Causes and solutions.” Committee: Edward Keith, Ph.D., Chair, and Steffen Schmidt, Ph.D. Capstone. November 4.

**Haille Carter**, “An international assessment of mangrove management: Incorporation in integrated coastal zone management and land-use planning.” Committee: Steffen Schmidt, Ph.D., Chair, and Amy Hirons, Ph.D. Capstone. November 4.

**Whitney Nolton**, “Coral reef conservation and the role of local community outreach involvement through education and marine protected areas.” Committee: Joshua Feingold, Ph.D., Chair, and Don McCorquodale, Ph.D. Capstone. November 10.

**Vincent Cordero**, “The influences of sea surface temperature, chlorophyll concentration, and upwelling index on Kogia strandings in Florida.” Committee: Edward Keith, Ph.D., Chair; Jose Lopez, Ph.D.; and Dan Odell, Ph.D. Thesis. November 11.

**Shannon Alexander**, “Obstacles of successful restoration on mangrove areas degraded by coastal aquaculture in Southern Thailand.” Committee: Steffen Schmidt, Ph.D., Chair; James Thomas, Ph.D.; and Roy Lewis III, Ph.D. Capstone. November 17.

**Lanet Hall**, “Protecting the North Atlantic right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*) from extinction in the western North Atlantic Ocean: A review of United States and Canada governmental public policy through 2009.” Committee: Steffen Schmidt, Ph.D., Chair, and Edward Keith, Ph.D. Capstone. November 21.

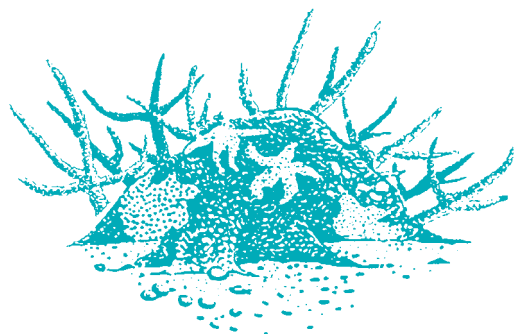
**Christopher Maingot**, “Observation of natural and artificial features on the sea surface from synthetic aperture radar satellite imagery with in situ measurements.” Committee: Alexandre Soloviev, Ph.D., Chair; Richard Dodge, Ph.D.; and Eric Hochberg, Ph.D. Thesis. November 22.

**Carmen Rodriguez**, “Did commercial whaling cause the sequential decline of marine mammals in Alaska?” Committee: Edward Keith, Ph.D., Chair, and Amy Hirons, Ph.D. Capstone. December 5.

**Beth Brady**, “Intraspecific comparison of vocalizations of the Florida manatee (*Trichechus manatus latirostris*) on the east and west coast of Florida.” Committee: Edward Keith, Ph.D., Chair; Patrick Hardigan, Ph.D.; and Edmund Gerstein, Ph.D. Thesis. December 5.

**Stephanie McLean**, “The effects of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and organochlorine pesticides on sea turtles.” Committee: Don McCorquodale, Ph.D., Chair, and Curtis Burney, Ph.D. Capstone. December 7.

**Kerstin Green**, “Comparison of wetland assessment methods.” Committee: Richard Spieler, Ph.D., Chair; Curtis Burney, Ph.D.; and Don McCorquodale, Ph.D. Thesis. December 9. 🐟



## Two Students Receive Scholarships from Batchelor Foundation

This past November, M.S. students **Brittnee Barris** and **Alexandra Campbell** received scholarships from the Batchelor Foundation to support their research projects at the OC.

Barris' research will focus on the population dynamics of shrimp colonies of the gambarelloides group within loggerhead sponges (*S. vesparium*) in the middle and lower shallow water habitats of the Florida Keys. The population structure of each shrimp colony will provide comparative data for not only the distribution of shrimp species in the Western Atlantic, but also for the distribution of sponge hosts.

Campbell's project will expand microbial characterizations that are currently ongoing at the Miami NOAA/AOML laboratory by adding a next generation, deep DNA sequencing component to the water samples currently collected for the Florida Area Coastal Environment (FACE) program. This will increase the number of sequences and overall data volume over standard sequencing by a few orders of magnitude. Following DNA extraction, modern bioinformatics methods will be applied to analyze the DNA data, which are currently being applied in the laboratory.



M.S. student Brittnee Barris



M.S. student Alexandra Campbell

The Batchelor Foundation focuses its giving on South Florida. The foundation supports museums and other arts and cultural organizations and programs; educational programs and institutions including institutions of higher education and elementary/secondary educational programs and institutions; and programs, organizations, and projects benefiting the environment including research and education programs and those focused on animals, wildlife, and natural resources. 🐟

## OC Student Receives EPA STAR Fellowship Award

**Harmony Hancock**, M.S. student, has received an EPA STAR Fellowship Award. This program, sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), supports master's and doctoral degree candidates specializing in environmental studies. Applicants must go through a rigorous review process. Since the program began in 1995, only 1,500 fellows have been awarded. Part of this fellowship included attending the EPA STAR Fellowship conference held in Washington, D.C., and traveling to Indonesia to present her research at the second Coral Reef Symposium on the Coral Triangle Area. 🐟



M.S. student Harmony Hancock arrives in Indonesia for her conference

## Students and Faculty Members Attend Coral Conference in Mexico

In August 2011, **Joshua Feingold**, Ph.D., OC associate professor, along with OC master's degree student **Nicole Paul** and undergraduate student Angelica Garcia attended the VI Congreso Mexicano de Arecifes de Coral at Ensenada, Mexico. All three presented posters on coral research conducted in Central America. Research in Mexico was supported by an NSU Chancellor's Faculty Research Development Grant.

The group was also invited on a tour of Universidad Autonoma of Baja, California, by Feingold's colleague, Eugenio Carpizo Ituarte. 🐟



Eugenio Carpizo Ituarte with M.S. student Nicole Paul and undergraduate student Angelica Garcia



## OC Students and Faculty Members Present Research in Saudi Arabia

This January, OC faculty members **Bernhard Riegl**, Ph.D., and **Sam Purkis**, Ph.D., along with their doctoral candidates **Gwilym Rowlands** and **Jeremy Kerr**, presented their research at the Coral Reef Conservation of the Red Sea Symposium in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Organized by Khaled bin Sultan Living Ocean Foundation and hosted by the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, the opening ceremonies marked the release of the *Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation Atlas of Saudi Arabian Red Sea Marine Habitats*, an unprecedented, bird's-eye view of nearly 20,000 km<sup>2</sup> of benthic habitats along the Saudi coastline of the Red Sea.

This publication is the culmination of a four-year collaboration between researchers here at the OC, the Living Ocean Foundation, the Saudi Wildlife Commission, and the Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. 🐟



OC faculty members Bernhard Riegl and Sam Purkis, with doctoral students Gwilym Rowlands and Jeremy Kerr, presented at the Coral Reef Conservation in the Red Sea Symposium 2012 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

## OC Fishing Tournament Awards Two Scholarships

In fall 2011, OC Ph.D. candidates **Andrea Bernhard** and **Anastasios Stathakopoulous** were each awarded an OC Fishing Tournament scholarship. Bernhard's research uses genetic tools for understanding stock structure of recreational and commercial fish species, including billfish, groupers, and sharks. Stathakopoulous is investigating the response of southeast Florida coral reefs to global environmental change including sea level and climate. This endowed scholarship will fund each student for two years.

The Fifth Annual NSU Oceanographic Center Scholarship Tournament was held at Hawks Cay from November 3–5. This year, the tournament raised more than \$150,000. OC students also used this event as part of their research by assisting at the weigh-in and collecting gut samples for current and future research. 🐟



Scholarship winners and Ph.D. candidates Anastasios Stathakopoulous (top) and Andrea Bernhard thank tournament participants while Richard Dodge, OC dean, looks on.



OC students from the Fisheries Research Laboratory collect specimens during the tournament.



## OC Receives Donation of Seized Corals

(story on pages 1 and 2)



OC professor James Thomas, Ph.D. (dark green shirt), supervises the coral sorting







## Kevin Kohler Research Fund Scholarship Awarded

This fall, M.S. students **Naoko Kurata** and **Kate Vella** were awarded the first scholarships from the Kevin Kohler Memorial Scholarship Research Fund. Nominated by associate professor **Alexander Soloviev**, Ph.D., the purpose of the scholarship fund is to provide financial support to students at the NSUOC to encourage active engagement in research in the marine sciences. Financial support for this fund is from donations made in memory of Kevin Kohler, a distinguished researcher and computer programmer at the OC. 🐟



*M.S. students  
Naoko Kurata  
and Kate Vella  
with Alexander  
Soloviev, Ph.D.,  
OC associate  
professor*

Editor: **Melissa L. Dore**

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