

RYAN J. ECKERT

Coral reef ecology, mesophotic coral ecosystems, molecular ecology

EDUCATION

- Present | 2019 • **Ph.D. Student in Integrative Biology**
Florida Atlantic University
Advisor: Dr. Joshua Voss
Boca Raton, FL
- 2019 | 2017 • **M.Sc. in Biological Sciences**
Florida Atlantic University
Thesis: Population genetics and algal symbiont communities of the coral species *Montastraea cavernosa* on the Belize Barrier Reef
Advisor: Dr. Joshua Voss
Boca Raton, FL
- 2009 | 2005 • **B.Sc. in Biological Sciences**
Florida State University
Thesis: Associational resistance and susceptibility in *Solanum carolinense*
Tallahassee, FL

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- Present | 2017 • **Graduate Research Assistant**
FAU, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute
Coral Reef Health and Molecular Ecology Lab
Fort Pierce, FL
- 2017 | 2009 • **Research Specialist**
NOAA's Flower Garden Banks NMS
Science Division
Galveston, TX
- 2009 | 2007 • **Research Assistant**
Florida State University
Underwood Lab
Tallahassee, FL

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2017 • **Graduate Teaching Assistant**
FAU, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute
Marine Biodiversity
Fort Pierce, FL
- 2014 | 2013 • **Guest Lecturer**
Texas A&M University at Galveston
Scientific Diving Field Survey Methods
Galveston, TX
- 2010 • **Instructor**
Galveston Independent School District
21st Century ACE
Galveston, TX



CONTACT

5600 US1 N, Ft. Pierce,
FL 34946

+1 (772) 224-2396

ryan.j.eckert@gmail.com

ryanjeckert.weebly.com

[CnidaRyan](#)

[RyanEckert](#)

[Ryan J Eckert](#)

SKILLS

Coral reef ecology
Technical SCUBA diving
775+ Scientific Dives
450+ Days at Sea
100+ research expeditions
Multivariate data analysis
NGS Library prep
Bioinformatic analyses

LANGUAGE SKILLS





STUDENTS MENTORED

- 2018 ● **Emily Chei**
Link fellowship intern
 Assessing population connectivity of the coral *Montastraea cavernosa* along the northern Florida Reef Tract
 Presently a Ph.D. student at The University of Hong Kong
- 2017 ● **Ashley Reaume**
Link fellowship intern
 Optimized extraction and amplification of algal symbiont DNA from TRIzol preserved corals
 Presently a Ph.D. student at The University of Central Florida



REFEREED PUBLICATIONS

- 2020 ● **12. Population genetic structure of the great star coral, *Montastraea cavernosa*, across the Cuban archipelago with comparisons between microsatellite and SNP markers**
Sci Rep (2020). doi:[10.1038/s41598-020-72112-5](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-020-72112-5)
 Sturm AB, Eckert RJ, Reaume AM, Studivan MS, and Voss JD
- 2020 ● **11. Depth influences Symbiodiniaceae associations among *Montastraea cavernosa* corals on the Belize Barrier Reef**
Front Microbiol (2020). doi:[10.3389/fmicb.2020.00518](https://doi.org/10.3389/fmicb.2020.00518)
 Eckert RJ, Reaume AM, Sturm AB, Studivan MS, and Voss JD
- 2020 ● **10. Population structure of the scleractinian coral, *Montastraea cavernosa*, in Southeast Florida**
Bull Mar Sci (2020). doi:[10.5343/bms.2019.0074](https://doi.org/10.5343/bms.2019.0074)
 Dodge DL, Studivan MS, Eckert RJ, Chei E, Beal J, Voss JD
- 2019 ● **9. Populations of the coral species *Montastraea cavernosa* on the Belize Barrier Reef lack vertical connectivity**
Sci Rep (2019). doi:[10.1038/s41598-019-43479-x](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-019-43479-x)
 Eckert RJ, Studivan MS, Voss JD
- 2019 ● **8. The Mesoamerican Reef**
In: Loya Y, Puglise KA, Bridge TCL (eds) Mesophotic Coral Ecosystems of the World. Springer International Publishing, Cham, pp 71–84 (2019).
[doi:10.1007/978-3-319-92735-0_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-92735-0_5)
 Gress E, Voss JD, Eckert RJ, Rowlands G, Andradi-Brown DA
- 2019 ● **7. Coral bleaching and recovery from 2016 to 2017 at East and West Flower Garden Banks, Gulf of Mexico**
Coral Reefs (2019). doi:[10.1007/s00338-019-01788-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/s00338-019-01788-7)
 Johnston MA, Hickerson EL, Nuttall MF, Blakeway RD, Sterne TK, Eckert RJ, Schmahl GP

Citations: 203

h-index: 8

i10-index: 6

- 2019 ● **6. Localized coral reef mortality event at East Flower Garden Bank, Gulf of Mexico**
Bull Mar Sci (2019). doi:10.5343/bms.2018.0057
 Johnston MA, Nuttall MF, **Eckert RJ**, Blakeway RD, Sterne TK, Hickerson EL, Schmahl GP, Lee MT, MacMillan J, Embesi JA
- 2018 ● **5. Seasonal variability of carbonate chemistry and decadal changes in waters of a marine sanctuary in the Northwestern Gulf of Mexico**
Mar Chem (2018). doi:10.1016/j.marchem.2018.07.006
 Hu X, Nuttall MF, Wang H, Yao H, Staryk CJ, McCutcheon MR, **Eckert RJ**, Embesi JA, Johnston MA, Hickerson EL, Schmahl GP, Manzello D, Enochs IC, DiMarco S, Barbero L
- 2016 ● **4. Persistence of coral assemblages at East and West Flower Garden Banks, Gulf of Mexico**
Coral Reefs (2016). doi:10.1007/s00338-016-1452-x
 Johnston MA, Embesi JA, **Eckert RJ**, Nuttall MF, Hickerson EL, Schmahl GP
- 2016 ● **3. Rapid invasion of Indo-Pacific lionfishes *Pterois volitans* (Linnaeus, 1758) and *P. miles* (Bennett, 1828) in Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, Gulf of Mexico, documented in multiple data sets**
BiolInvasions Rec (2016). doi:10.3391/bir.2016.5.2.09
 Johnston MA, Nuttall MF, **Eckert RJ**, Embesi JA, Sterne TK, Hickerson EL, Schmahl GP
- 2014 ● **2. Lionfish (*Pterois volitans* [Linnaeus, 1758] and *P. miles* [Bennett, 1828]) records within mesophotic depth ranges on natural banks in the Northwestern Gulf of Mexico**
BiolInvasions Rec (2014). doi:10.3391/bir.2014.3.2.09
 Nuttall MF, Johnston MA, **Eckert RJ**, Embesi JA, Hickerson EL, Schmahl GP
- 2012 ● **1. Flower Garden Banks – A refuge in the Gulf of Mexico?**
In: Yellowlees D, Hughes TP (eds) Proceedings of the 12th International Coral Reef Symposium (2012).
 Hickerson EL, Schmahl GP, Johnston MA, Nuttall MF, Embesi JA, **Eckert RJ**



MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION

- **Quantifying impacts of stony coral tissue loss disease on corals in Southeast Florida through surveys and 3D photogrammetry**
PLoS ONE (in review).
 Combs IR, Studivan MS, **Eckert RJ**, Voss JD
- **Population genetic structure of a broadcast spawning coral, *Montastraea cavernosa*, demonstrates refugia potential of upper mesophotic populations in the Florida Keys**
Coral Reefs (in review).
 Sturm AB, **Eckert RJ**, Carreiro AM, and Voss JD

- **Population genetic structure of the giant barrel sponge, *Xestospongia muta*, across shallow and mesophotic habitats in Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary**
Coral Reefs (in prep).
Eckert RJ, Sturm AB, Carreiro AM, and Voss JD
- **Benthic community composition of mesophotic coral ecosystems in the northwest Gulf of Mexico, with comparisons to Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary**
Front Mar Sci (in prep).
Voss JD, Studivan MS, Eckert RJ, Williams MA, Clark RD



TECHNICAL REPORTS

- 2018 ● **Stetson Bank Long-term monitoring: 2016 annual report**
Marine Sanctuaries Conservation Series ONMS-19-02. U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA, FGBNMS, Galveston, TX. (2018).
Nuttall MF, Sterne TK, Eckert RJ, Hu X, Sinclair J, Hickerson EL, Embesi JA, Johnston MA, Schmahl GP
- 2017 ● **Long-term monitoring at East and West Flower Garden Banks: 2016 annual report**
Marine Sanctuaries Conservation Series ONMS-17-09. U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA, FGBNMS, Galveston, TX. (2017).
Johnston MA, Sterne TK, Eckert RJ, Nuttall MF, Embesi JA, Walker RD, Hu X, Hickerson EL, Schmahl GP
- 2017 ● **Long-term monitoring at Stetson Bank, Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, 2015 annual report**
Marine Sanctuaries Conservation Series ONMS-17-06. U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA, FGBNMS, Galveston, TX. (2017).
Johnston MA, Sterne TK, Eckert RJ, Nuttall MF, Embesi JA, Walker RD, Hu X, Hickerson EL, Schmahl GP
- 2017 ● **Long-term monitoring at the East and West Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, 2013–2015, volume 1: technical report**
U.S. Dept. of Interior, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, New Orleans, LA. OCS Study BOEM 2017-058. (2017).
Johnston MA, Eckert RJ, Nuttall MF, Sterne TK, Embesi JA, Manzello DP, Hickerson EL, Schmahl GP
- 2016 ● **Long-term monitoring at East and West Flower Garden Banks: 2015 annual report**
U.S. Marine Sanctuaries Conservation Series ONMS-16-02. U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, Galveston, TX. (2016).
Johnston MA, Eckert RJ, Sterne TK, Nuttall MF, Hu X, Embesi JA, Hickerson EL, Schmahl GP

- 2015 ● **Long-term monitoring at East and West Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary: 2014 annual report**
U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA, FGBNMS, Galveston, TX. (2015).
 Johnston MA, Sterne TK, **Eckert RJ**, Nuttall MF, Embesi JA, Walker RD, Hu X, Hickerson EL, Schmahl GP

- 2015 ● **Long-term monitoring at East and West Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, 2011–2012, volume 1: technical report**
U.S. Dept. of Interior, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, New Orleans, Louisiana. OCS Study BOEM 2015-027. (2015).
 Johnston MA, Nuttall MF, **Eckert RJ**, Embesi JA, Slowey NC, Hickerson EL, Schmahl GP

- 2014 ● **Long-term monitoring at East and West Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary: 2013 annual report**
U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA, FGBNMS, Galveston, TX. (2014).
 Johnston MA, Nuttall MF, **Eckert RJ**, Embesi JA.

- 2013 ● **Long-term monitoring at the East and West Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, 2009–2010, volume 1: technical report**
U.S. Dept. of Interior, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, New Orleans, Louisiana. OCS Study BOEM 2013-214. (2013).
 Johnston MA, Nuttall MF, **Eckert RJ**, Embesi JA, Slowey NC, Hickerson EL, Schmahl GP

PRESENTATIONS

- 2019 ● **Genetically distinct depth-stratified *Montastraea cavernosa* coral populations on the Belize Barrier Reef harbor relatively homogenous Symbiodiniaceae communities**
 48th Annual Benthic Ecology Meeting 📍 St. John's, NL, Canada
Eckert RJ, Reaume A, Voss JD
 Oral presentation

- 2019 ● **Populations of the coral species *Montastraea cavernosa* lack vertical connectivity on the Belize Barrier Reef**
 ASLO Aquatic Sciences Meeting 📍 San Juan, PR.
Eckert RJ, Studivan MS, Voss JD
 Poster presentation

- 2018 ● **Affordable and ecologically relevant graduate research on the world's second largest barrier reef? You better Belize it!**
 HBOI Science Seminar 📍 Ft. Pierce, FL.
Eckert RJ and Studivan MS
 Oral presentation

- 2018 ● **Connected corals: population genetics of *Montastraea cavernosa* on the Belize Barrier Reef**
HBOI Ocean Discovery Center Marine Science Friday 📍 Ft. Pierce, FL.
Eckert RJ
Oral presentation

- 2018 ● **Breaking point: population genetics reveal a lack of vertical connectivity of *Montastraea cavernosa* on the Belize Barrier Reef**
47th Annual Benthic Ecology Meeting 📍 Corpus Christi, TX.
Eckert RJ, Studivan MS, Voss JD
Oral presentation

- 2013 ● **Ciguatera fish poisoning in the northwestern Gulf of Mexico.**
66th Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute Conference 📍 Corpus Christi, TX
Eckert RJ, Loeffler C, Robertson A, Johnston MA, Hickerson EL, Schmahl GP
Poster presentation

- 2009 ● **Associational resistance and susceptibility in *Solanum carolinense***
Southeastern Ecology and Evolution Conference 📍 Gainesville, FL.
Eckert RJ, Kim T, Underwood N
Poster presentation

📄 FUNDING

- 2021 | 2019 ● **FAU Presidential Fellowship**
\$10,000

- 2019 | 2018 ● **FAU GPSA Travel Awards**
\$1,600

- 2018 ● **FAU Thesis Award**
\$500

- 2018 ● **PADI Foundation Grant**
\$4,973

- 2009 ● **Bess H. Ward Honors Thesis Award**
\$1,000

- 2009 | 2005 ● **Florida Bright Futures Academic Scholarship**
\$14,850

- 2009 | 2005 ● **Florida State University Freshman Academic Scholarship**
\$8,000

- 2005 ● **Florida State University Freshman AP Scholarship**
\$500



AWARDS

2021
|
2019

2020

2009
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2006

2005

- **Florida Atlantic University Presidential Fellow**
- **Florida Atlantic University Student Publishing Award**
Awarded for 3 publications in 2019
- **Florida State University Dean's List**
- **Florida State University President's List**



SKILLS

- **DNA and RNA extraction, PCR, qPCR, Gel electrophoresis, NGS library preparation, Agilent Bioanalyzer (DNA, RNA)**
- **Bioinformatic analyses, multivariate statistics, and data visualization**
R statistical software, Python, Bash, PRIMER7, and CPCe
- **Coral sampling, benthic surveys, fish surveys, photography, navigation and mapping**
- **Offshore field research cruise planning, logistics, and execution**
- **Technical SCUBA diving, operation of Nitrox compressor systems, and Trimix blending**
- **Setup, operation, and maintenance of oceanographic equipment**
Sea-Bird Electronics, Onset HOBO, YSI
- **Adobe InDesign, Adobe Illustrator, and Adobe Photoshop**
- **Operation, navigation, and handling of small boats**
Marlinspike, and mooring buoy construction/installation/maintenance



CERTIFICATIONS

- **AAUS Scientific Diver**
190', Trimix
- **TDI Technical SCUBA Diver**
Advanced Nitrox, Decompression Procedures, Trimix 200'
- **PADI Trimix Gas Blender**
- **DAN Oxygen delivery, First Aid, and CPR for scuba diving injuries**
- **USCG Licensed Merchant Mariner**
100 GRT
- **USFWS Motorboat Operator Certification Course**
- **Sea-Bird Electronics technician**
- **NOAA Working SCUBA Diver**



MEMBERSHIP AND SERVICE

Present
|
2020

- **Mesophotic.org**
Content Editor

Present
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2019

- **International Coral Reef Society**

Present
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2017

- **Benthic Ecology Meeting Society**

2019

- **HBOI Graduate Student Association**
Secretary

📍 Ft. Pierce, FL

2019
|
2018

- **Association for the Studies of Limnology and Oceanography**
- **Reviewer for:**
Scientific Reports



REFERENCES



Dr. Joshua Voss

Ph.D. Advisor

+1 (772) 242-2538

📍 Florida Atlantic University

jvoss2@fau.edu



Dr. Adrienne Simoes-Correa

Assistant Professor

+1 (713) 348-3054

📍 Rice University

ac53@rice.edu



G.P. Schmahl

Superintendent

+1 (409) 621-5151

📍 Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary

george.schmahl@noaa.gov