

# RYAN J. ECKERT

Coral reef ecology, mesophotic coral ecosystems, molecular ecology



## EDUCATION

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

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- Graduate Teaching Assistant**  
FAU, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute 📍 Fort Pierce, FL  
Marine Biodiversity  
2017
- Guest Lecturer**  
Texas A&M University at Galveston 📍 Galveston, TX  
Scientific Diving Field Survey Methods  
2014 | 2013

## CONTACT

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🐦 [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



2010 • **Instructor**  
Galveston Independent School District  
21<sup>st</sup> Century ACE

📍 Galveston, TX

## 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

Citations: 203

h-index: 8

i10-index: 6

- 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
- 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](https://doi.org/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](https://doi.org/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](https://doi.org/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**  
*Biol Invasions Rec* (2016). doi:[10.3391/bir.2016.5.2.09](https://doi.org/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**  
*Biol Invasions Rec* (2014). doi:[10.3391/bir.2014.3.2.09](https://doi.org/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

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**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

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**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

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**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  
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2019

●

**FAU Presidential Fellowship**

\$10,000
- 2019  
|  
2018

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**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  
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2005

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**Florida Bright Futures Academic Scholarship**

\$14,850
- 2009  
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2005

●

**Florida State University Freshman Academic Scholarship**

\$8,000

2005

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



## AWARDS

2021

- **Florida Atlantic University Presidential Fellow**

2019

2020

- **Florida Atlantic University Student Publishing Award**  
Awarded for 3 publications in 2019

2009

- **Florida State University Dean's List**

2006

2005

- **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  
|  
2019

- **International Coral Reef Society**

Present  
|  
2017

- **Benthic Ecology Meeting Society**

2019,  
2021

- **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](mailto:jvoss2@fau.edu)

- **Dr. Adrienne Simoes-Correa**

Assistant Professor

+1 (713) 348-3054

📍 Rice University

[ac53@rice.edu](mailto:ac53@rice.edu)

- **G.P. Schmahl**

Superintendent

+1 (409) 621-5151

📍 Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary

[george.schmahl@noaa.gov](mailto:george.schmahl@noaa.gov)