

# RYAN J. ECKERT

Coral reef ecology, mesophotic coral ecosystems, molecular ecology

## EDUCATION

- Ph.D. Student in Integrative Biology**  
Florida Atlantic University  
Advisor: Dr. Joshua Voss  
Boca Raton, FL  
Present | 2019
- 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  
2019 | 2017
- B.Sc. in Biological Sciences**  
Florida State University  
Thesis: Associational resistance and susceptibility in *Solanum carolinense*  
Tallahassee, FL  
2009 | 2005

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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



## CONTACT

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## 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: 180

h-index: 7

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* (submitted).  
 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  
|  
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  
|  
2019

- **International Coral Reef Society**

Present  
|  
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

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📍 Florida Atlantic University

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- **Dr. Adrienne Simoes-Correa**

Assistant Professor

+1 (713) 348-3054

📍 Rice University

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

- **G.P. Schmahl**

Superintendent

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📍 Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary

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