

# RYAN J. ECKERT

Coral reef ecology, mesophotic coral ecosystems, molecular ecology



## EDUCATION

- Present | 2019 • **Ph.D. Candidate 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
- 2019 | 2017 • **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
- 2009 | 2005 • **B.Sc. in Biological Sciences**  
Florida State University 📍 Tallahassee, FL  
Thesis: Associational resistance and susceptibility in *Solanum carolinense*  
Advisor: Dr. Nora Underwood

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2022 • **Graduate Teaching Assistant / Lecturer**  
FAU / FIO 📍 Long Key, FL  
FIO Summer Marine Field Studies
- 2017 • **Graduate Teaching Assistant**  
FAU, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute 📍 Fort Pierce, FL  
Marine Biodiversity
- 2014 | 2013 • **Guest Lecturer**  
Texas A&M University at Galveston 📍 Galveston, TX  
Scientific Diving Field Survey Methods

## CONTACT

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✉ [ryan.j.eckert@gmail.com](mailto:ryan.j.eckert@gmail.com)  
💻 [ryanjeckert.weebly.com](http://ryanjeckert.weebly.com)  
🐦 [CnidaRyan](#)  
👤 [RyanEckert](#)  
📺 [Ryan J Eckert](#)

## SKILLS

Coral reef ecology  
Technical SCUBA diving  
Closed-circuit rebreather diving  
900+ 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

2023



### 16. Coral disease outbreak at the remote Flower Garden Banks, Gulf of Mexico

*Front Mar Sci* (2023). [doi:10.3389/fmars.2023.1111749](https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2023.1111749)

Johnston MA, Studivan MS, Enochs IC, Correa AMS, Besemer N, **Eckert RJ**, Edwards K, Hannum R, Hu X, Nuttall MF, O'Connel K, Palacio-Castro AM, Schmahl GP, Sturm AB, Ushijima B, Voss JD

2022



### 15. Depth-dependent genetic structuring of a depth-generalist coral and its Symbiodiniaceae algal communities at Campeche Bank, Mexico

*Front Mar Sci* (2022). [doi:10.3389/fmars.2022.835789](https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2022.835789)

Sturm AB, **Eckert RJ**, Carreiro AM, Simões N, Voss JD

2022



### 14. Population genetic structure of a broadcast spawning coral, *Montastraea cavernosa*, demonstrates refugia potential of upper mesophotic populations in the Florida Keys

*Coral Reefs* (2022). [doi:10.1007/s00338-021-02112-y](https://doi.org/10.1007/s00338-021-02112-y)

Sturm AB, **Eckert RJ**, Carreiro AM, Voss JD

2021



### 13. Quantifying impacts of stony coral tissue loss disease on corals in Southeast Florida through surveys and 3D photogrammetry

*PLoS ONE* (2021). [doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0252593](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0252593)

Combs IR, Studivan MS, **Eckert RJ**, Voss JD

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**, González Méndez J, González-Díaz P, 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, Voss JD

Citations: 347

h-index: 12

i10-index: 13

- 2020 • **10. Population structure of the scleractinian coral, *Montastraea cavernosa*, in Southeast Florida**  
*Bull Mar Sci* (2020). doi: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  
**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  
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  
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  
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, Saryk 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**  
*BioInvasions 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**  
*BioInvasions 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

● ***Stephanocoenia intersepta* corals in Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary exhibit depth-dependent genetic structure**

. (in prep).

**Eckert RJ**, Sturm AB, Carreiro AM, Klein AM, Voss JD

● **Single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) data show high clonality and horizontal connectivity of *Porites astreoides* populations in southeast Florida**

*Coral Reefs* (in revision).

Shilling EN, **Eckert RJ**, Sturm AB, Voss JD

● **Does depth divide? Variable genetic connectivity patterns among shallow and mesophotic *Montastraea cavernosa* coral populations across the Gulf of Mexico and western Caribbean**

*Mol Ecol* (submitted).

Sturm AB, **Eckert RJ**, Carreiro AM, Klein, AM, Studivan MS, Dodge Farelli D, Simões N; González-Díaz P, González Méndez J, Voss JD

● **Evaluating stony coral tissue loss disease intervention success through whole-transcriptome gene expression profiling**

. (in prep).

Studivan MS, **Eckert RJ**, Shilling EN, Soderberg N, Enochs IC, Voss JD



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

- 2022 ● **Genetic connectivity and algal symbiont communities of shallow and mesophotic *Stephanocoenia intersepta* populations in the Florida Keys**  
 15th International Coral Reef Symposium 📍 Bremen, Germany.  
**Eckert RJ**, Sturm AB, Carreiro AM, Klein AM, Voss JD  
**Oral presentation**
  
- 2022 ● **Genetic connectivity and genetic diversity of shallow and mesophotic *Stephanocoenia intersepta* populations throughout Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.**  
 50th Annual Benthic Ecology Meeting 📍 Portsmouth, NH.  
**Eckert RJ**, Sturm AB, Carreiro AM, Klein AM, Voss JD  
**Oral presentation**

- 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 ● **PADI Foundation Grant**  
 \$4,377
- 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 ● **Florida Atlantic University Presidential Fellow**
- 2020 ● **Florida Atlantic University Student Publishing Award**  
Awarded for 3 publications in 2019
- 2009  
|  
2006 ● **Florida State University Dean's List**
- 2005 ● **Florida State University President's List**



## CERTIFICATIONS

- **AAUS Scientific Diver**  
200', CCR, Trimix
- **TDI Technical SCUBA Diver**  
Advanced Nitrox, Decompression Procedures, Trimix 200', Closed-Circuit Rebreather, Mixed Gas CCR
- **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**



## 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, closed-circuit rebreather 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



## MEMBERSHIP AND SERVICE

Present  
|  
2020

- **Mesophotic.org**  
Content Editor

Present  
|  
2019

- **International Coral Reef Society**

Present  
|  
2017

- **Benthic Ecology Meeting Society**

2022

- **HBOI Graduate Student Association**  
Vice President

📍 Ft. Pierce, FL

2021,  
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](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)