



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MEDIA ALERT/CALENDAR LISTING

The International SeaKeepers Society Spends an Educational Day on the Water with UF and MacArthur Beach State Park.

December 2015- Onboard the DISCOVERY Yacht *Vigilante*, The International SeaKeepers Society partnered with researchers from the Whitney Laboratory for Marine Bioscience at the University of Florida (UF). The purpose of the event was to give MacArthur Beach State Park educators, a hands-on day of collecting and studying planktonic organisms in West Palm Beach.

Twenty-one researchers, educators, and boat crew completed a full day in the field sampling and examining plankton. At the start of the day, participants were introduced to the various species of plankton common to South Florida waters and which animals were most beneficial for specific research fields like neuroscience and medicine. Everyone then boarded the 30-foot center console D/Y *Vigilante*, which served as the at sea research platform for the day.

Once offshore, plankton nets were deployed and towed behind the vessel to collect samples. In total, eight tows were completed. Samples were quickly brought back to shore where participants worked alongside researchers to sort and identify organisms using a light microscope. The biodiversity observed during this single day of sampling was significant, resulting in Cephalopod, Ctenophore, Cnidarian, Tunicate and Mollusk samples. Many of the samples were also preserved and taken to the Whitney Laboratory for further genetics analyses.

This is the first time The International SeaKeepers Society put together an educational event for adult educators as well as the first trip with MacArthur Beach State Park. D/Y *Vigilante* was previously utilized in an expedition examining coral reef bioerosion in the Florida Keys and shark work in the Bahamas. Sailfish Marina Resort supported this project by providing an indoor space for the laboratory and microscope setup.

About The International SeaKeepers Society®

The International SeaKeepers Society is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization focusing on the health of the world's oceans and climate. SeaKeepers works with the boating and yachting community to take advantage of their unique potential in order to further marine research and to raise awareness about the issues our oceans face. The International SeaKeepers Society acts as a global catalyst working with governments, scientists, industry, and other marine organizations to further its mission and to support sensible, achievable marine protection and restoration. For more information visit www.seakeepers.org

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