



EXPEDITION PROFILE

November 9th – 10th, 2018 aboard DISCOVERY Yacht Andiamo

The International SeaKeepers Society teamed up with members of the Boswell Marine Ecology & Acoustics Lab from Florida International University aboard the DISCOVERY Yacht Andiamo to deploy their sonar equipped unmanned survey vehicle (USV) with the aim of surveying goliath grouper spawning aggregations. Personnel on the expedition included Allison White, Daniel Correa, and Gabriel Diez, as well as Tony Gilbert of SeaKeepers and the Captain and Crew of D/Y Andiamo.

Disembarking from West Palm Beach, the team set out for the waters just off of Jupiter, FL. to deploy the USV. Over the past four years, researchers from the Boswell Lab, in conjunction with Mote Marine Laboratory and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, have studied the behavior, abundance and distribution of Goliath Grouper aggregations and associated reef fish communities in Jupiter, Florida. This trip represented the finale to a long season of biweekly surveys that begin every year in late July. In part, this expedition also served as the first opportunity to test a new unmanned survey vehicle (USV) in offshore waters, tasked with conducting fine-scale hydroacoustic surveys on the Goliath aggregations.

Autonomous sampling approaches offer a range of benefits above traditional labor intensive survey methods, and D/Y Andiamo served as an excellent platform to highlight those advantages. Despite the technical difficulties associated with implementing new equipment, the trip was a huge success. Researchers from the Boswell Lab deployed the USV late in the evening of the expedition and collected acoustic data throughout the entire night, something that has been logistically impossible to date. Going forward the Boswell Lab hopes to continue collaborating with Fleet Miami and SeaKeepers to conduct these surveys, and has already begun planning extended USV deployments for next season.

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