

Expedition to the Depths Of the Ocean is About to Start



A team of Australian Oceans Institute researchers are getting ready for a ground-breaking second expedition to the depths of the ocean off Western Australia (WA). The Great Australian Deep Sea Coral and Canyon Adventure is the first-ever deep-sea exploration of the Bremer and Leeuwin submarine canyon systems, south-east and south-west of Albany in WA's Great Southern region.

Led by UWA's Dr Julie Trotter and Dr Paolo Montagna from the Institute of Polar Science (IPS) in Italy, the team has been granted a rare opportunity to launch a deep-sea remotely operated vehicle (ROV) from aboard the oceanographic research vessel *RV Falkor*, which has been provided by the philanthropic Schmidt Ocean Institute (SOI). Using an array of cutting-edge and traditional oceanographic instruments and equipment, the scientists will

study the deep-sea canyons in unprecedented detail.

Deep-sea Ecosystems

"The ROV will give us the first images of deep-sea ecosystems in the canyons, and will provide the team with the opportunity to collect samples such as deep-sea corals," Dr Trotter said.

"Big picture goals are to track changes in the ocean-climate systems that have occurred in these waters in time and space. These will provide a better understanding of the impact of increasing anthropogenic-driven climate change and the long-term 'natural' variability of the ocean-climate system."

Local schools are being invited to participate in a unique public outreach programme including an onboard, live-feed video programme, as part of the expedition between 26 January and 26 February 2020.

In addition, Australian marine and landscape artist Angela Rossen, an Honorary Research Associate at UWA's School of Biological Sciences and OI member will join the researchers and crew on board as artist-in-residence to capture her own unique perspective on the ocean research mission.

Image: Maps of some main study sites: Bremer Canyon and nearby canyons of the Albany Group. Transect indicated by arrows, and nominal ROV dive sites and Rosette casts shown in red and blue. Maps from Exon et al., 20152 (top), Geoscience Australia (bottom).

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