

Spray Glider Completes Shallow Operations

A Bluefin Spray Glider recently completed a two-month deployment conducted by the Glider Research and Operations Center (GROC) at FAU's Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute (HBOI), USA. The operations took place at Pully Ridge near the West Florida Shelf in approximately 60 metres water depth. It performed 3,200 dives over 100 kilometres distance over a period of two months. The Spray's payload included conductivity, temperature and depth equipment and optical scattering and chlorophyll sensors.

Fraser Dalgleish, Ph.D., Director of the Ocean Visibility and Optics Lab at HBOI said that the next survey will be in waters close to a mile deep. The Spray Glider's combination of endurance, depth-capability, reliability and payload capacity fills the exact needs of oceanographic research and monitoring. The data acquired are providing information about the large scale distribution of plankton and larval populations and the next mission will allow to venture into much deeper waters with two spray units to also determine background hydrocarbon levels around these deep coral reef ecosystems.

The deployment was in support of the Florida Shelf Edge Exploration (FLOSEE-II) expedition led by HBOI. The expedition objectives were to locate and characterise coral reefs that are so deep that natural light barely reaches them. The scientists focused on coral communities and commercial fish species on these reefs. They also collected data about the effectiveness of marine managed areas for ecosystem restoration, and took samples to test for the presence of hydrocarbons.

Results of this cruise will be presented by HBOI researchers at The American Geophysical Union's Ocean Sciences Meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah in February 2012.

<https://www.hydro-international.com/content/news/spray-glider-completes-shallow-operations>
