

Valeport Supports Biodiversity Research on Seamounts



Valeport is supporting scientists with research to expand knowledge of marine biodiversity with its [fastCTD](#), which records the conductivity, temperature and depth of sea water. The fastCTD is integral to the research kit that will accompany respected marine biologist Dr Sonia Rowley as she undertakes her expedition to the island of Pohnpei, in the western Pacific Ocean, from 2 August until 13 September 2017.

The trip follows in the wake of successful explorations at Pohnpei, the Cook and McCall seamounts, and L  ihi volcano in 2016. Data recorded by Valeport's CTD profiler contributes to the research team's understanding of biological processes, such as an invasive algal bloom that was found at the reefs of Pohnpei during the previous projects.

Dr Rowley, originally from Devon, UK, and now based at the University of Hawaii, uses the latest technological advances in closed circuit rebreather diving to explore the biodiversity of 'twilight coral reefs' at seamounts, which are underwater mountains formed by volcanic activity. The majority of tropical coral reefs exist at depths between 100-500 feet which is too deep for traditional scuba diving, but too shallow to justify the cost of using manned or unmanned submersible craft to reach them. Dr Rowley's advanced training enables her to reach these unexplored regions of the marine environment.