EXPLORATION OF THE GEORGIA BIGHT USING A ONE–PERSON SUBMERSIBLE

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The Sustainable Seas Expeditions is providing access to the recently developed DeepWorker one-person submersible to explore and compare deep-reef, live-bottom habitats in the Georgia Bight and to acquire data as part of habitat characterization programs. The Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary project is also one in a series of expeditions that began to explore protocols for censusing fish, characterizing invertebrate communities, and observing bioluminescence using the submersible. In 1999, pilots accumulated over 30 hours of bottom time and recorded over 15 hours of videotape from three locations under varying conditions in order to identify the strengths and limitations of using the submersible for research. Preliminary data from video, visual transects, and stationary observations will be presented.