



## EXPEDITION PROFILE

**January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021 aboard DISCOVERY Yacht Isabel**

The International SeaKeepers Society assisted The Surfrider Foundation in conducting field research in Emerald Reef aboard DISCOVERY Yacht Isabel, a 38' 1973 Bertram sport fisher. Surfrider's Regional Manager for Florida and Puerto Rico, Marilu Flores, and volunteer Ryan Darling tested out the effectiveness of using a commercial grade submersible drone/ROV ( in this case, a Trident underwater drone from Sofar Ocean) to do coral reef surveys. The surveys are being done for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to document any signs of coral bleaching, disease, or degradation in reefs just off the south Florida coast; specifically offshore of Miami.

Spotted in the survey footage were some xestospongia muta (giant barrel sponge), gorgonia ventalina, and some pseudoplexaura. While this outing was more of a brief test run, Marilu and other volunteers plan to head out to about six other reefs in the coming months. Last but not least, a crucial part of the success of this outing is due to the expertise of captain Till Koerber to get the team out to the survey site and returned safely.

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