



NOAA

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Alabama teacher returns from deep coral research aboard NOAA Ship *Pisces*

Sue Zupko, a science teacher from Weatherly Heights Elementary School in Huntsville, Ala., returned home this week after a 15-day voyage aboard NOAA Ship *Pisces*, during which she assisted scientists studying deep water coral off the east coast of Florida.

"I was thrilled to be part of this opportunity aboard NOAA Ship *Pisces*, which allowed me to participate in real-world scientific research about deep water corals and to experience life at sea," said Zupko. "Through the NOAA Teacher at Sea program, my students will not only be able to learn first-hand through my experience about exciting research projects at sea, they will also be witnesses to them, and on some level, participants in them. Making their learning relevant through my own hands-on experiences is vital to getting students excited about science."

Zupko boarded the *Pisces* in Jacksonville, Fla., and left port on May 31. Over the next two weeks, as she assisted the scientists onboard studying deep water coral off the east coast of Florida, she kept a blog with regular updates, photos, and even some surveys. To read her blog go to: NOAA's Teacher at Sea website at <http://teacheratsea.noaa.gov/2011/zupko/>.

"NOAA's Teacher at Sea program immerses teachers in hands-on research experiences that give them clearer insight into our ocean planet, a greater understanding of maritime work and studies, and increased knowledge of environmental literacy," said Jennifer Hammond, the program's director. "Participating in real-world research allows teachers to gain experience actually doing science, which makes a significant impact when they bring back their knowledge to their classrooms, teaching students how the oceans affect their lives."

Now in its 21st year, the program has provided over 600 teachers the opportunity to gain first-hand experience participating in science at sea. This year, NOAA received applications from more than 250 teachers, and chose 33 to participate in research cruises. The educators chosen are able to enrich their curricula with the depth of understanding they gain by living and working side-by-side, day and night, with scientists studying the marine environment.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Find us on [Facebook](#).