

## MARINE RESEARCH AT THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

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*The Smithsonian Institution fulfills a variety of museum and research functions designed to enhance our nation's scientific and educational experience. The Institution is the world's largest museum/research organization with ongoing national and international projects in conservation issues and environmental research. Several hundred Smithsonian curators, research scientists and staff, as well as visiting scientific collaborators are involved in underwater biological research that focuses on the biodiversity and systematics of species, coral reef ecology, conservation projects and the global change dilemma. Smithsonian research centers and field stations are strategically located in Panama, Florida, Washington DC, Chesapeake Bay, Aldabra, and Belize. A brief history of the Smithsonian Institution's marine research efforts and scientific diving program evolution points to an increase in focused effort in advancing the science and practice of scientific diving. Preparations for the 8th International Coral Reef Symposium at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama are in an advanced stage, an effort that should highlight scientific diving on a worldwide basis.*