

Exploring Deep Water Corals

Voice-over:

It's late at night as research ship, the Seward Johnson, draws into harbour at Gulfport, Mississippi. There are many coral specialists on board, including Europeans collaborating with colleagues from the US. The scientists are tired but happy.

Steve W. Ross:

So we've just come in from a twelve-day cruise, we've covered something like, er, two or three thousand miles of ocean, and, er, sampled coral reefs all the way from the southern Gulf of Mexico into the central Gulf, er, using a submersible and all kinds of other gear.

Voice-over:

At dawn work begins to unload the carefully packed samples. Scientists from the Netherlands and Britain are working with colleagues from the US under a European-funded research programme to better understand deep water corals throughout the Atlantic.

Furu Mienis:

To work with the Americans is the opportunity to actually be able to do research on this side of the Atlantic and to actually start comparing these-these systems, because we think somehow all these cold-water coral reefs are connected, but we don't know how yet.

Steve W. Ross:

The Gulf Stream, like a river, starts in the Gulf of Mexico, flows around Florida, comes up off of the middle, er, Carolinas, shoots straight across to Europe and modifies European climate. As it does so, it's also transporting larvae of a variety of animals. The same coral reefs that are very important off Norway and off Scotland and off Ireland are the same corals that are important here on this side.

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