



Local Nonprofit Tackles Remote Learning Challenges and Brings Marine Scientists into Homes

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A promotional graphic with a teal background. On the left, there is a white Wi-Fi symbol above the text 'OCEAN EXPERT EXCHANGE' in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. On the right, the text 'LIVESTREAM Q&A EVENTS WITH MARINE SCIENTISTS!' is written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Below this, it says 'PRODUCED BY:' followed by the 'ANGARI FOUNDATION' logo and the 'Scientist in Every Florida School' logo, which includes the text 'Thompson Earth Systems Institute'.

The COVID-19 pandemic quickly changed everyday life and created unprecedented challenges for the education community. In response, ANGARI Foundation, a West Palm Beach marine science research and education nonprofit, joined forces with the University of Florida Thompson Earth Systems Institute's Scientist in Every Florida School program to bring a series of free live webinar events with marine scientists to students, teachers and the public.

Branded [Ocean Expert Exchange \(OEE\)](#), the series is accessible to audiences of all ages, with each 30-minute event featuring scientists who have participated in expeditions onboard ANGARI Foundation's 65-foot research vessel, [RV ANGARI](#). OEE livestream events are available via Zoom and Facebook Live, and each segment includes a brief presentation on the scientist's area of expertise followed by a moderated question and answer session with participants.

“This pandemic has fundamentally altered the nature of education as we know it. We are proud to have been able to work with our partners to quickly establish this unique program and support distance educators, learners and even the general public during this period of adversity,” explains Amanda Waite, ANGARI Foundation’s Director of Science Education & Advancement.

Providing engaging educational content while ensuring flexibility for teachers and students was at the forefront of the development of Ocean Expert Exchange. For teachers that want to integrate the OEE webinars into their remote instruction, ANGARI Foundation and its collaborators have curated and made available complementary educational resources for each featured scientist’s area of expertise. These resources include video shorts, readings, activities, lessons and career profiles that enable students and teachers to dig deeper into the subject matter and ultimately advance ocean literacy.

OEE has already drawn diverse and even international audiences, with participants ranging from school age children to science curious adults. The first event held in mid-April featured meteorologist Joe Merchant from the National Weather Service who spoke about hurricane formation and how best to prepare for impending storms. A couple weeks later, Stephen Kajiura, a shark expert from Florida Atlantic University, shared his research and techniques for studying the blacktip shark migration observed along the east coast of Florida every winter. Most recently, ANGARI Foundation’s own president and captain of R/V *ANGARI* shared insider information on operating a research vessel to support fieldwork ranging from sea turtle studies to coral reef research to manned submersible dives.

Two events remain in this spring’s OEE series, though the series’ popularity points to continuing the collaborative program this fall. On May 28, Krista Sherman, senior scientist at the Perry Institute for Marine Science, will talk about her work to conserve key fish species, like grouper, in The Bahamas. On June 15, Roxane Boonstra, dive and volunteer coordinator for the largest coral reef restoration organization in the world, Coral Restoration Foundation™, will join the OEE lineup and speak about reef degradation and restoration efforts in the Florida Keys.

After each live OEE event, recordings of the segment, along with links to the associated educational resources, are made publicly available via [YouTube](#). To further supplement these resources, ANGARI Foundation’s website also hosts detailed information about the research [expeditions](#) the speakers have participated in aboard R/V *ANGARI*.