

Ocean Research & Conservation Association

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**Society of Environmental Journalists (SEJ)
Invites Local Scientists to Speak at
International Conference in Miami**

Fort Pierce, FL.....Dr. Edith Widder and Dr. Sarah Frias-Torres of the Ocean Research & Conservation Association (ORCA) in Fort Pierce have been invited to speak at the 21st Annual Conference of the Society of Environmental Journalists (SEJ) in Miami on October 19-23, 2011.

Dr. Widder has been invited to speak and serve on a panel about deep-sea exploration where she will be describing advances to accessing the deep ocean, including a deep-sea observatory in the Monterey Bay Canyon and China's latest deep-diving submersible, the *Sea Dragon*.

Conference organizer, Jeff Burnside with NBC 6 News, invited Dr. Frias-Torres to talk about the Goliath Grouper, the largest grouper fish in the Atlantic Ocean and the second largest in the world. The Goliath Grouper may be one of the few allies we have against the lionfish invasion.

Dr. Widder and Dr. Frias-Torres join an impressive list of speakers at the SEJ Conference. Famed author, Carl Hiaasen, will be a keynote speaker and legendary photographer, Clyde Butcher, will lead a swamp walk through the Big Cypress Preserve.

Dr. Widder, a 2006 recipient of the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship, is the CEO and Senior Scientist of ORCA, which she helped found in 2005.

Dr. Sarah Frias-Torres earned her doctorate degree in Biological Oceanography from the Florida Institute of Technology and joined the research team at ORCA in 2010 where she is working on the ecology of Goliath Grouper and reef fish spawning aggregations.

ORCA, which is a non-profit research organization that operates with the scientific discipline of a research laboratory, is located at 1420 Seaway Drive in Fort Pierce and employs a staff of more than a dozen people. The ORCA staff, also known as Team ORCA, is currently working on the creation and implementation of high-tech instrumentation to observe and analyze the health of marine ecosystems -- one being the Indian River Lagoon.

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Dr. Edith Widder & Dr. Sarah Frias-Torres

The Society of Environmental Journalists (SEJ) membership includes more than 1,500 journalists and academics working in every type of news media in the USA, Canada, Mexico and 27 other countries. The mission of SEJ is “to strengthen the quality, reach and viability of journalism across all media to advance public understanding of environmental issues.” This will be SEJ’s first annual conference in Florida and its agenda will include environmental issues in Florida, as well as global issues.

For more information on Team ORCA , go to www.teamorca.org or call (772) 467-1600.