

# Creep into the Deep: Discovering Deep-Sea Coral

**SEAMAIL™**

TO: Virtual Deep-Sea Science Team  
FROM: Siobhan Kassem  
SUBJECT: How to Pack for a Research Cruise

Hello Virtual Science Team,

My name is Siobhan (pronounced Shih-vawn) Kassem. I'm a student at Florida State University. I'm going on my first research cruise for this project. I thought I'd tell you about what it was like to get ready for the trip and also what it's like on the ship.

I had no idea what to pack. I asked for packing lists from students who had gone on cruises before. Something I did not realize is how many socks I would need! I was told that sometimes your feet get wet during sampling. That's when the ROV returns with coral samples from deep. We can only do laundry once a week, so if you don't take extra, you can run out.

The cruise will be to warm areas, but I still had to bring sweatpants and jackets. The ROV control van is cold because they have to keep the computers cool. The scientists' chairs happen to be right under the air conditioning vent!

I also brought a removable shower shelf. It is handy when the boat starts rocking. Otherwise, my soap and shampoo would fall on the floor all the time!

I brought giant bags of peanut M&M's and Skittles. They're my favorite candies. If I'm having a bad day, I can grab a sweet treat. I brought books to read and coloring books in case I get bored between ROV dives.

Better finish packing. Talk to you soon,

Siobhan

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Illustration by Paul Lopez