

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

The Island University

6300 Ocean Drive, Corpus Christi, TX 78412 (361) 825-2420 FAX (361) 825-2620

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: July 7, 2009

CONTACT: Dr. Tom Shirley 361.825.2030; Steve Paschal 825.2336

Dr. Tom Shirley to Discuss ‘Finding Coral’ Expedition At Weekly Harte Research Institute Seminar

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas – Harte Research Institute Chair Dr. Tom Shirley will speak on “The ‘Finding Coral’ Expedition or Tom S. and the Mini-sub” on Friday, July 10, from 3:30-4:30 p.m. in the Harte Research Institute, Room 127. The seminar is free and open to the public.

Dr. Shirley was a key member of the science team that recently returned from the Finding Coral Expedition, a research project organized by Living Oceans Society that took place off the Pacific coast of Canada. Two, one-man research submersibles were used to conduct transects, photograph, and collect coral samples at depths sometimes exceeding 500 meters. Dr. Shirley will describe the expedition, show videos and photographs and present preliminary finds.

“Deep sea corals provide structural complexity and habit for many marine species, yet little is known of their taxonomy, distribution, habitat preferences, life history, or ecological interactions,” said Shirley. “In many places these deep sea octocorals form extensive meadows and are the primary habitat for some marine animals. Unfortunately, many of our modern commercial fishing techniques are destroying these long-lived colonial animals.”

-A&M-CC-