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Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary research coordinator to be inducted in Women Divers Hall of Fame

Emma Hickerson, research coordinator at NOAA's Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, will be inducted into the Women Divers Hall of Fame tomorrow during a ceremony in New Jersey. The Hall of Fame recognizes and honors women divers who have made outstanding contributions to the exploration, understanding, safety and enjoyment of our underwater world.

"The only way to really know the Flower Garden Banks is through diving," said George Schmahl, sanctuary superintendent. "Emma has taken full advantage of a variety of diving technologies, from scuba to submarines, to explore and understand the underwater world of the Gulf of Mexico and beyond. Her commitment to protecting the ocean environment is evident in everything she does. Emma is a huge asset to the sanctuary team, and is truly deserving of this prestigious honor."

A graduate of Texas A&M University, Hickerson has been sanctuary research coordinator since 1997. She has coordinated or participated in more than 150 research missions, using scuba, remotely operated vehicles (ROVs), and submersibles. She has also logged more than 1,200 scuba dives, lived and worked underwater as a saturation diver at the Aquarius research laboratory in Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, and piloted a handful of submersible dives. Much of the focus of the science she has been involved in has been used to inform management in the sanctuary. She is not only passionate about studying the marine environment, but also interpreting science through photography, videography and art.

"I am tremendously honored and humbled that I have been nominated and accepted as a member of the [Women Divers Hall of Fame](#)," Hickerson said "My accomplishments reflect the amazing opportunities I have been afforded through my work with the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, which I don't consider work, but a lifestyle. I am surrounded by talented, passionate friends and colleagues who are all partially responsible for accomplishments that led to this honor. A day doesn't go by without thinking how very fortunate I am to be able to study, observe, protect, photograph, film and share the marine environment."

Hickerson is one of six new members in the Women Divers Hall of Fame Class of 2014. The women, who represent a wide variety of disciplines, will be inducted at the Beneath the Sea Awards Banquet in Secaucus, N.J. For additional information about the Women Divers Hall of Fame: <http://www.wdhof.org/aboutus.shtml>

Located 115 miles off the Texas/Louisiana coast, Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary includes the northernmost coral reefs in the continental United States, sponge communities and other essential habitats for a variety of species.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Join us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and our other [social media channels](#).

On the Web:

Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary: <http://flowergarden.noaa.gov/>

NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/>

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