

# DEEPLIFE MISSION

ROATÁN, HONDURAS • FEBRUARY-MAY 2025



## DEEPLIFE 2021 - 2030

### A Scientific Program to Explore Marine Animal Forests in Depth

DEEPLIFE is an international research program (2021-2030), officially recognized as a project of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. Led by Under The Pole, in collaboration with the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) and an international scientific consortium, it aims to better understand the role of Marine Animal Forests (MAFs) in sustaining marine biodiversity.

#### Under The Pole

Since 2008, we have been leading scientific underwater exploration expeditions around the world, dedicated to expanding knowledge and preserving the oceans.

**Our vision:** Underwater exploration, an extraordinary source of inspiration and an essential tool for understanding the oceans, is a powerful driver for their protection.



#### Marine Animal Forests (MAFs)

MAFs, recently recognized as vulnerable marine habitats by the IUCN, are complex ecosystems built by animals such as corals, gorgonians, and sponges. Like terrestrial forests, they play a key ecological role and could serve as refuges for marine biodiversity in the face of human pressures and climate change. These habitats thrive primarily in the mesophotic zone (from the Greek “middle light”), located between 30 and 200 meters deep—an environment that remains largely unknown and unexplored.



# ROATÁN MISSION

## Why Roatán ?

Roatán, a Honduran island in the heart of the Caribbean, is home to marine ecosystems with remarkable biological richness. However, these environments face multiple threats such as pollution (particularly fishing-related debris), climate change, sedimentation from coastal development, or the lack of scientific knowledge about habitats beyond 60 meters deep.



## Mission's objectives

### Exploring and studying MAFs

the species that compose them and their health, the associated biodiversity, and the environmental conditions... All essential elements to understand their ecological role, their vulnerability, and their potential as refuges for marine biodiversity in the face of climate change and other pressures they endure.

### Contributing to the conservation of MAFs

by sharing mission observations and findings with decision-makers and supporting existing advocacy initiatives, to strengthen conservation tools and policies for marine ecosystems in Honduras, particularly the Roatán Marine Park.

### Raising awareness

among the general public and students in Roatán, as well as the wider Honduran population, about the richness and challenges of the deep-sea ecosystems we study.



## Contact us

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