

Double Win

Oceanography master's student wins two awards at OCEANS conference

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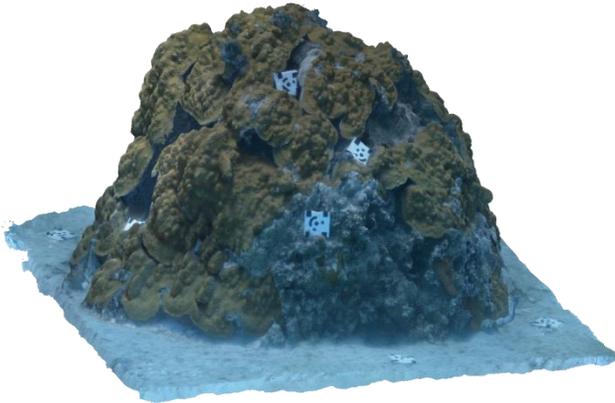


Jordan Pierce, a master's student in UNH's [Oceanography program](#), has just won two notable awards at the 2020 OCEANS Conference—Gulf Coast Division. His paper, "Reducing Annotation Times: Semantic Segmentation of Coral Reef Imagery," won first place, as well as the Norman Miller prize in the Student Poster Competition.

In his research, Pierce creates habitat maps of coral reefs. To do this, he uses a combination of Machine Learning (i.e., Artificial Intelligence) and Computer Vision algorithms. The goal of his work is to

streamline annotated images of coral reefs to make the work of future ecologists more efficient and stable.

The paper that Pierce presented at the OCEANS conference represents the first two chapters of his Master's thesis, which he'll be defending next week. The paper shows how using state-of-the-art Machine Learning algorithms can automate mundane and time-consuming tasks to save researchers time and expenses.



A 3-D PHOTOGRAMMETRIC MODEL OF A CORAL PATCH REEF, CREATED FROM APPROXIMATELY 2200 HIGH-RESOLUTION IMAGES

Last spring, Pierce won first place in the UNH Graduate School's [3-Minute Thesis competition](#). He also participated in the [Graduate Research Conference](#). Pierce says that these programs helped prepare him for his online presentation at the OCEANS Conference.

"I used to get really nervous about giving talks," Pierce says. "But what's changed is that I've learned how I need to prepare in order to feel ready and confident."

His advice to other research students: as much as you can, attend conferences, present posters and engage in conversation.

"You never know who you might meet or influence in the process," says Pierce. "It's an opportunity that will in some shape or form create another opportunity for you somewhere down the line."

Watch Jordan Pierce's 2020 3-Minute Thesis presentation, "Automating the Boring Stuff: Using A.I. to Map Coral Reefs".

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GRADUATE SCHOOL



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