

Richard Aronson, Ph.D.

Department Head | Ocean Engineering and Marine Sciences at Florida Tech

Melbourne, FL, US

Dr. Aronson's research combines paleontology and ecology to reconstruct the response of marine communities to environmental changes.

About

Rich Aronson grew up in Queens, New York, and became interested in marine biology at an early age, collecting shells on Jones Beach, Long Island. He received his A.B. from Dartmouth College in 1979 and a Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1985. Dr. Aronson's research program combines paleontology and ecology to reconstruct the response of marine communities to environmental changes in deep time. He brings this information to bear in predicting the impacts of climate change on modern biotas and the communities they comprise. Dr. Aronson's primary focus is on coral reefs and subtidal communities in Antarctica. The plants and animals living at the latitudinal extremes of the tropics and the poles are quite different, of course, but they share a key characteristic: very narrow ranges of environmental tolerance. Because tropical and polar seas have very little in the way of seasonal temperature variation, most marine species in both zones are adapted to those narrow ranges, making them highly vulnerable to climatic warming. Indeed, the ecological impacts of climate change are being seen earliest and most clearly in the tropics and at the poles. In addition to research and teaching, Dr. Aronson is active in outreach. He visits K-12 classes regularly and works with journalists on stories about our changing planet. Dr. Aronson's lab is active in producing short videos on climate change and other environmental issues created by undergraduate and graduate students at Florida Tech.

Industry Expertise

Research, Education/Learning

Areas of Expertise

Marine Biology, Coral-Reef Ecology, Ecology, Paleobiology, Antarctica

Education

Harvard University

Ph.D. Biology

Dartmouth College

A.B. Biological Sciences

Harvard University

A.M.

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