Scientists to Study Impact of Water Acidity on Antarctic Underwater Life

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The research will consist of placing four acrylic cameras at O'Brien Bay near Casey Station in Antarctica at a depth of 10-20 meters below the sea ice, Australian Antarctic Division told the press. The process will start Nov. 2014 and finish Mar. 2015.

Researchers will increase the acidity of the water in the areas where the cameras will be located in order to replicate the future condition of the Antarctic Ocean, where the acidity levels are expected to rise by 2.5 times in 2100.

Project leader, ecologist and member of the Australian Antarctic Division Jonny Stark said that the experiment would help them detect any changes in the ecosystem of the area under study, including changes in underwater plants and animals, sediment from the seabed and any variations in the chemical composition of the water.

Scientists will have to dive into the Antarctic Sea while the experiment takes place, which would mean diving at a temperature of minus 1.8° C.

The dissolving of the atmosphere's carbon dioxide in the sea will lead to an increase of water acidity during the 21st century, affecting marine organisms, such as unicellular algae, corals and bivalves, among others.