



## **Identification of *Vibrio* Species within Gulf Pipefish (*Syngnathus scovelli*) from Tampa Bay, FL**

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Marine pathogens are often the causative agent of disease in both marine species and humans. The gulf pipefish, *Syngnathus scovelli*, is a common species found up and down the gulf coast of Florida and is often studied for its sex reversal characteristics. The pipefish exhibit an outer mucosal layer that may protect against or carry certain pathogenic species including *Vibrio spp.* In this study, we examined the bacterial growth on pipefish that were isolated from the Tampa Bay as well as pipefish in captivity. Fish were swabbed and used to inoculate nutrient agar and Thiosulfate-citrate-bile salts-sucrose (TCBS) agar to examine total species and *Vibrio* species, respectively. Our results revealed that *Vibrio cholerae* was present on pipefish isolated from Tampa Bay. Although previous studies have identified other fish as reservoirs for *V. cholerae*, this is the first report that the gulf pipefish can harbor this important human pathogen.