

MEDIA CONTACT

- Press@oet.org
- www.NautilusLive.org
- [Press Room](#) | #NautilusLive
- Credits for underwater images and video: “OET/Nautilus Live, NOAA”

[@EVNautilus](#)[@NautilusLive](#)[@NautilusLive](#)[@EVNautilus](#)

Fact Sheet | First nautiloids spotted from E/V *Nautilus*!

During a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) dive in the German Channel near Palau, the Ocean Exploration Trust (OET) witnessed four Palau nautilus individuals (*Nautilus belauensis*). These are the first sightings of nautiloids — the most primitive cephalopods — from E/V *Nautilus* after 1000+ ROV dives over the last 15 years of operations worldwide. Because of its depth range, this marine mollusk found in the Indo-Pacific is rarely photographed — let alone caught on video — and 2024’s expeditions represent the first of OET’s expeditions within the nautilus’s expected distribution.

Founder [Dr. Robert Ballard](#) named OET’s ship E/V *Nautilus* after the famous fictional submarine from the novel “20,000 Leagues Under the Sea.” Similar to the vertical movements of submarines, nautiluses are known for moving up and down in the water column. The name “Nautilus” comes from the [Greek word for sailor](#).

[Watch the highlight video here](#) and [see additional assets here](#).

Encounter Information: Spotted on November 27, 2024, swimming at depths between 220 to 375 meters during ROV dive H2085.

Expedition: [NA169: Mapping and Water Column Exploration around the Palauan Islands](#)

Location: German Channel, Koror State, Palau

Identification: Palau nautilus (*Nautilus belauensis*)

Species information:

The Palau nautilus is a highly mobile marine scavenger and predator found on reef slopes between [95 to 504 meters deep](#). Not much is known about these cephalopods listed as Near Threatened by the [IUCN Red List](#). There are 11 species of chambered nautilus recognized in the [Family Nautilida](#), with the Palau nautilus [identifiable by differences](#) in shell coloration, pattern, and shape. The species displays behavior associated with [diel vertical migration](#) as it [migrates into](#) shallower waters after dark and back down to the deep before sunlight.

Additional Information:

Dive H2805 was the last dive of the 2024 Nautilus season and provided a smorgasbord of biological, geological, and archaeological highlights. As the vehicles moved upslope from the base towards the mouth of the German Channel, the team documented the changing geomorphology and sand ripple features via video surveys and high-resolution multibeam surveys. Multiple large sixgill sharks swam by the ROVs. In addition to these charismatic creatures, anthropogenic objects were also observed, including rusted metal debris, munitions, glass soda bottles, an anchor chain, and a large anchor thought to be from World War II.

About the Expedition:

This expedition is led by Ocean Exploration Trust and funded by NOAA Ocean Exploration via the Ocean Exploration Cooperative Institute as one of several expeditions fulfilling the US Government commitment made at the 7th Our Oceans Conference to support ocean mapping of Palau National Marine Sanctuary. This expedition is in close partnership with the Scripps Institution of Oceanography with support from the Office of Naval Research.

This 17-day expedition is exploring the physical and biological oceanography of Palau's offshore waters via the deployment of wave gliders, buoyancy gliders, autonomous surface vehicles, and vertical microstructure turbulence profilers from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography. The team is also using E/V *Nautilus*' hull-mounted sonars to map seafloor and water column habitats and its remotely operated vehicles to conduct benthic surveys to explore the complex dynamics above the seafloor as major ocean currents encounter the steep slopes of Palau's islands generating complex circulation patterns, which are important in maintaining the health of marine ecosystems.

Team members available for interview at sea — contact press@oceanexplorationtrust.org.

Reference links:

- <https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/123465-Nautilus-belauensis>
- <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/163321/998336>
- <https://www.sealifebase.se/summary/FamilySummary.php?ID=1883>
- <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nautilus>