

Fabien Cousteau Calls the Ocean 'Second Home' After 31-Day Undersea Mission

By ALYSSA NEWCOMB • Jul 2, 2014, 10:51 AM ET

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Fabien Cousteau reacts as he returns to the dock after 31 days undersea in the Aquarius Reef Base, July 2, 2014, in Islamorada, in the Florida Keys.

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Fabien Cousteau is a fish out of water.

The grandson of famed oceanographer Jacques Cousteau set foot on dry land today after a marathon 31-day mission living underwater in the Florida Keys -- and said he wished he could have extended his stay.

"I personally would have loved to have continued beyond 31 days," Cousteau said at a news conference, hours after he took his first breath of fresh air in a month.

"I didn't know how I was going to react -- physically, psychologically," Cousteau said of his time living in a small vessel on the ocean floor. "And it was amazing how much it felt like home."

[See Amazing Pictures as Jacques Cousteau's Grandson Starts 31 Days Underwater](#)

[Watch: What It's Like to Visit Fabien Cousteau Underwater](#)

Since embarking on the undersea mission a month ago, Cousteau and his team lived on freeze-dried food and other rations while they conducted marine experiments from the lab and explored the marine life, all while broadcasting the entire mission online.

"Of course we all missed our families and friend," Cousteau said. "But it was such a unique experience and something I wish, hope in some way we were able to gift to the world -- so they could peek into this unusual thing we did and feel like they were part of the mission."

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By choosing long-term saturation over dives, Cousteau said he and his team were able to yield enough research for an estimated ten new research papers.

"The luxury of time is an enormous asset when you're trying to learn more about an alien environment," he said.

The Aquarius laboratory is the only underwater marine laboratory in the world and is operated by Florida International University. Only 46 feet long and 10 feet wide, the laboratory has been used for 21 years by scientists and has a working kitchen with microwave and even Wi-Fi, which Cousteau used to tweet about life underwater.



Fabien Cousteau ✓
@FCousteau

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Wow! A sea turtle swam in front of our bunk room tonight
[@Mission_31](#) right before bed

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While saturated -- Cousteau wasn't completely cut off from the outside world. He welcomed visitors, including his father, Jean-Michel Cousteau, sister, Celine and actor Ian Somerhalder.

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Fabien Cousteau ✓

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Tight but awesome having [@iansomerhalder](#) & [@GregStoneCI](#) down at Aquarius visiting [@Mission_31](#) today

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The mission comes 50 years after Jacques Cousteau conducted a similar experiment, living at the bottom of the Red Sea for 30 days.