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AQUATIC HABITAT -- Aquarius, called the most advanced habitat ever developed for research under the sea, has been placed on the floor of the Salt River Canyon off the island of St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is sponsoring the 81-ton research station which is designed to enable scientists to live and work on the ocean floor for virtually unlimited time. Measuring 13 meters long, 3.6 meters wide and 5 meters high, Aquarius has three compartments and can house up to six people. It is connected by an umbilical system to an unmanned surface support boat and functions without aid from shore. Mission of the first two-year project is to study fisheries, physical oceanography, marine engineering research and the causes of coral bleaching in the Caribbean.

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