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# Coral Reef News



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The Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) is a partnership between the NOAA Line Offices working on coral reef issues, including the National Ocean Service (NOS), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) and the National Environmental Satellites, Data and Information Service (NESDIS). From mapping and monitoring to managing reef resources and removing harmful debris, the CRCP addresses the priorities laid out in both the [National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs](#) and the [National Coral Reef Action Strategy](#).

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## Of Special Note

### 19th U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Meeting.

On February 27, NOAA co-chaired the 19th meeting of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (Task Force). The Task Force celebrated its tenth anniversary and IYOR 2008, and discussed the priority threats facing coral reef ecosystems and what actions and commitments are necessary to ensure the long-term sustainability of these valuable ecosystems. During the meeting, the Task Force heard a keynote address from Dr. Nancy Knowlton, Smithsonian Institution Sant Chair of Marine Science. Dr. Knowlton challenged the Task Force to focus on outcomes that have measurable impacts on coral reef health. The president of the Republic of Palau, HE Tommy Remengesau Jr., gave an inspiring address that highlighted the successes possible when we work beyond traditional political boundaries. Finally, Wyland, the artist of IYOR 2008, unveiled his original painting "Year of the Reef," shown below. All meeting documents will soon be available on the Task Force Web site's [Meetings page](#).

### American Samoa Governor Participates in Reef Monitoring Cruise.

The Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) sponsored American Samoa (AS) Governor Togiola Tulafono and Mr. Lelei Peau, Deputy Director of the AS Government Department of Commerce aboard the NOAA ship *Hi'ialakai* for a portion of the March 2008 American Samoa Reef Assessment and Monitoring Program (ASRAMP) cruise. The ship departed Pago Pago, AS on March 10 and made stops at Rose Atoll National Wildlife Refuge and Swain's Island, both are part of the U.S. Territory of AS. Governor Tulafono is the first governor of AS to visit the uninhabited Rose Atoll; the Governor and Mr. Peau were taken ashore on March 11 for a tour by Refuge Manager Don Palawski. During their visit, they assisted in the righting of a U.S. Navy historic monument that had been installed on Rose Atoll approximately 80 years ago and had since toppled. The Governor and Mr. Peau were also able to participate in snorkeling and nightly scientific planning (*continued on page 2*)



In celebration of IYOR 2008, the artist Wyland created this commemorative painting, 'Year of the Reef'. Courtesy: Wyland ©2008

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### March 2008

**27-30:** [National Science Teacher's Association 56th National Conference](#), Boston, MA

### April 2008

**18-21:** 'Responding to Climate Change' Workshop, Pidgeon Key, FL. Attendance by Invitation, [contact us](#) for more info.

### May 2008

**5-9:** 'SEM-Pasifika Socioeconomic Monitoring' Training, Republic of the Marshall Islands. [Contact us](#) for more info.



Jocelyn Karaszia accepts her 'Shining Star' award. Courtesy: Florida Department of Environmental Protection

## Of Special Note continued...

meetings; they observed CRED working divers conduct benthic and fish surveys, recover a Coral Reef Early Warning System (CREWS) buoy and coral settlement plates, deploy a sea surface temperature buoy, and replace subsurface temperature recorders. The Governor disembarked on March 13 at Ta'u Island, the location of the largest known coral colonies in

the U.S., where the Governor is currently evaluating management options. Governor Tulafono and Mr. Peau have initiated major resource management efforts to improve the conservation of the coral reef ecosystems of AS; participation in this research endeavor further enhanced the NOAA-AS partnership.

## Announcements

**NOAA Releases Report on Deep Sea Coral Program.** On March 13, NOAA released the first report to Congress on the '[Implementation of the Deep Sea Coral Research and Technology Program](#)', called for in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006 (MSRA). Prepared under the auspices of the Coral Reef Conservation Program and in consultation with the Nation's eight Regional Fishery Management Councils (FMCs), the report provides information on steps taken by NOAA and its partners to identify, monitor, and protect deep sea coral areas. The report provides a discussion of current knowledge and knowledge gaps about deep sea corals (also known as deep water or cold-water corals), NOAA's expertise and authorities to conserve deep sea coral communities, and summaries of management actions taken by NOAA, the FMCs, other federal agencies, and international organizations in 2007. It also highlights research priorities for 2009 and recommendations for addressing knowledge gaps, and includes an initial list of areas known to contain deep sea corals which NOAA recommends the Regional FMCs evaluate in considering zones to protect deep sea corals, as allowed in discretionary provisions of the MSRA.

**NOAA Staff Recognized by State Agency for Coral Conservation.** On February 8, the [Florida Department of Environmental Protection](#) (FDEP) presented Jocelyn Karaszia with the "Shining Star" award for her outstanding contributions to the [Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative](#) (SEFCRI) Marine Industry and Coastal Construction Impacts Team. Facilitating creation of SEFCRI and its preparation of a [Local Action Strategy](#) for coral reef conservation are components of NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program. During the presentation, it was noted that Jocelyn leads or co-leads four projects for the team bringing enthusiasm and focus to these efforts. She also is the "federal naviga-

tor" for the team, serving as the liaison between the team and federal agencies. FDEP praised Jocelyn for her dedication, attention to detail, and willingness to share experiences that ensure SEFCRI projects reach their full potential. Jocelyn sits in the [Southeast Regional Office](#) of NOAA Fisheries.

**CRCP Research Paper Receives 'Jack Bayless Award' for Article on Black Grouper Spawning.** Guillermo Paz of Green Reef Environmental Institute and Dr. George Sedberry of [Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary](#) completed research sponsored by NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program related to spawning of black grouper (*Mycteroperca bonaci*) in Belize. The species, which has been listed as 'vulnerable' by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), has historically been fished during their peak spawning season in Belize. The goal was to document spawning locations, spawning habitat features and spawning seasons for black grouper in Belize; to describe their observed spawning behavior and aggregation; and to evaluate management measures to avoid population decline and spawning failure of this species. Dr. Sedberry presented their findings at the [South Carolina Chapter of the American Fisheries Society](#) Meeting and won the Jack Bayless Award for best scientific paper for the report, 'Identifying Black Grouper (*Mycteroperca bonaci*) Spawning Aggregations off Belize: Conservation and Management.' For a copy of the full report, please [contact us](#).

**Mariana Archipelago 2007 Cruise Data Now Available.** Multibeam swath bathymetry and metadata for data collected in the Mariana Archipelago 2003-2007 are now [online](#) at the [National Geophysical Data Center](#) (NGDC), the official NOAA repository for geophysical data. NOAA's [Coral Reef Ecosystem Division](#) (CRED) personnel collected these data in May-June 2007, posted gridded data and (*continued on page 3*)

## Announcements continued...

metadata [online](#) in January 2008, and submitted the multibeam swath files with metadata to NGDC and to the [Coral Reef Information System](#) in eight months from collection to finalized submission. Backscatter data processing for this data set is now underway.

### NOAA Offers High-Res Satellite Imagery of FL Benthic Habitats Via Google Earth.

The NOAA Coral Ecosystem Mapping Team and the Special Projects Office are using the visualization capabilities of [Google Earth](#) to provide the public with access to the high-resolution satellite imagery of southern Florida. Visual interpretation using a Geographic Information System produces maps of southern Florida's benthic habitats. By downloading the [KML file](#), users can add an interactive capability to Google Earth that briefly describes the imagery and provides a link where more can be learned about the project. By clicking on any red dot in the Google Earth map, users can preview and download the georeferenced imagery. KML files will launch in both Google Earth and [Google Maps](#), as well as in many other geographic browsers.

**NOAA Offers Video and Images of FL Benthic Habitats Via Google Earth.** The NOAA Coral Ecosystem Mapping Team and the Special Projects Office are using the visualization capabilities of [Google Earth](#) to provide the public with access to underwater video and still imagery of the Florida Keys. As part of the procedures for generating a draft map of southern Florida's benthic habitats, ground validation

video and still images are collected at hundreds of locations. These images are used to confirm the visual interpretation of satellite imagery that defines the location and extent of benthic habitat polygons in the Geographic Information System. The NOAA Coral Ecosystem Mapping Team has developed a Google Earth-based capability where these videos and still images can be viewed from your computer and downloaded. To utilize this new capability, download the [KMZ file](#). KMZ files will launch in both Google Earth and [Google Maps](#), as well as in many other geographic browsers.

**BMP Manual Available for Construction, Dredge and Fill and Other Activities Adjacent to Coral Reefs.** The [Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative](#) (SEFCRI) Maritime Industry and Coastal Construction Impacts Team recently announced the completion of a "Best Management Practices" guidelines document aimed at reducing or eliminating impacts to coral reefs from coastal construction projects. The manual, '[Best Management Practices \(BMPs\) for Construction, Dredge and Fill and Other Activities Adjacent to Coral Reefs](#),' (pdf, 3.0 MB) provides recommendations for constructing, managing, and monitoring coastal construction projects including dredging, beach renourishment, blasting, or the installation of pipes and cables that impact, or could impact coral reefs. The document is meant to serve as a guide for coastal construction engineers and firms, environmental managers, planners, regulators and resource users in the coastal construction industry.

## Updates from the Atlantic/Caribbean Region

**Monitoring Cruise Visits USVI Managed Areas.** NOAA's [Center for Coastal Monitoring and Assessment](#) (CCMA) is conducting a mission to [Buck Island Reef National Monument](#) in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) from March 10-21 in conjunction with partners from the [National Park Service](#). The mission will continue monitoring of reef fish populations and benthic habitats in and around Buck Island and the [St. Croix East End Marine Park](#). Both managed areas now use the same methodologies to quantify resource conditions, thus enabling greater applicability of data and comparisons among managed and unmanaged areas.

**NOAA Explores Underwater Habitats of Southwest Puerto Rico.** From February 25

through March 8, NOAA's [Center for Coastal Monitoring and Assessment](#) (CCMA) conducted the fifth year of an ongoing scientific research mission onboard the NOAA Ship [Nancy Foster](#). This was a collaborative mission with the [Caribbean Fishery Management Council](#), the [government of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico](#), the [University of Puerto Rico](#) (Mayagüez), and the [Caribbean Coral Reef Institute](#) to collect data to support local marine management and monitoring strategies. The primary objective of the 2008 mission, funded by NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program and the CCMA, was to collect and integrate data obtained from a multi-beam acoustic sonar system and data obtained from underwater imagery systems to create the first comprehensive map of (continued on page 4)



The [International Year of the Reef \(IYOR\) 2008](#) is a worldwide campaign to raise awareness about the value and importance of coral reefs and threats to their sustainability, and to motivate people to take action to protect them.



**TAKE ACTION!** Sign the [International Declaration of Reef Rights](#) and the [pledge to Protect Ocean Life During International Year of the Reef](#).

While you're online, send your friends one of three free IYOR-themed [E-cards](#).



Are you or your organization participating in events for IYOR 2008?

Want to learn more about what you can do to support the goals of IYOR 2008?

Download free educational ads [here](#).

Be an agent of change: Every act counts.



The 11th ICRS, with the theme of Reefs for the Future, will be held in Ft. Lauderdale, FL, July 7-11, 2008. The 11th ICRS is also a key-stone event within the International Year of the Reef (IYOR) 2008.

## Atlantic/Caribbean continued...

coral ecosystems. Other project objectives included imaging and documenting the spatial distribution, abundance, and condition of fish, coral reefs and fishery resources. Data generated during this mission will support natural resource management in Federal and commonwealth waters of Puerto Rico, as well as help NOAA continue to meet its commitment to the [U.S. Coral Reef Task Force](#) to map moderate depth (20-1000m) coral reef ecosystems. The mission has a dedicated [Web page](#) which includes daily logs, crew profiles, images, and more. This mission also incorporated a successful media day on February 27; two local Puerto Rican newspapers and the *Associated Press* (AP) participated. The AP story has been picked up by several affiliates, including this [MSNBC](#) story. In addition, Chief Scientist, Tim Battista, was interviewed by a Boston National Public Radio affiliate; the story [aired](#) on March 3.

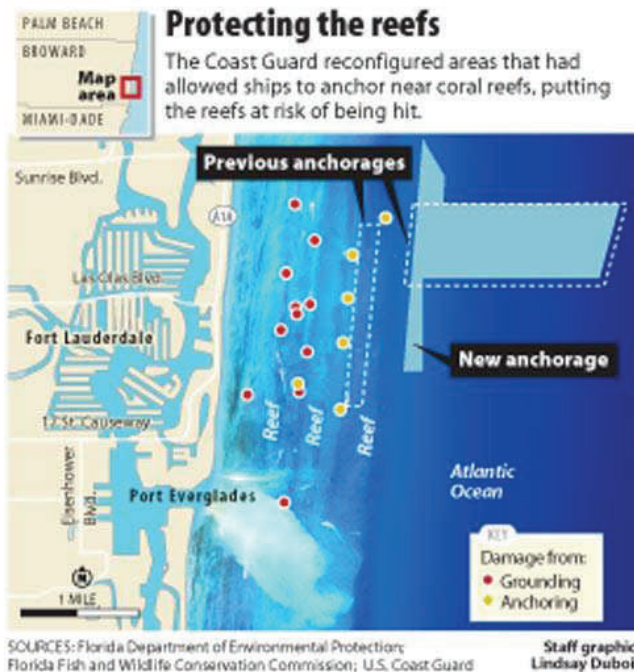
**Changes made to Port Everglades Anchorage to protect Reefs off Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.** Effective March 6, 2008, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) began enforcing a new rule that amends the Port Everglades anchorage area and regulations and provides increased protection to near shore coral reefs that have been repeatedly impacted by ship groundings or dragging anchors. This action is a direct result of recommendations made by the Port Everglades Harbor Safety Committee's Anchorage Working Group following a review of recent commercial

vessel groundings. The Committee, chaired by USCG Sector Miami, includes representation from federal, state, county, and local maritime and environmental stakeholders. Anchorage changes include (1) eliminating the section of the anchorage closest to sensitive living coral reefs, (2) expanding the anchorage in deeper waters further away from the reef, and (3) limiting the time a vessel may remain in the anchorage to 72 hours. A future project is planned to analyze similar alternatives for the Ports of Miami and Palm Beach anchorages.

### NOAA Trains TSA Agents in Puerto Rico to Reduce Removal of Coral by Tourists.

On February 27, NOAA Fisheries Caribbean Field Office (CFO) and NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) completed a training with directors, supervisors, trainers, managers, and other checkpoint personnel for the [Transportation Security Administration](#) (TSA) of San Juan Airport. This training is part of a coordinated effort between NOAA Fisheries, OLE and the Caribbean Fisheries Management Council (CFMC) to address the growing problem of tourists collecting large pieces and quantities of coral as souvenirs of their Caribbean vacation, as well as collection by persons with the intent to sell corals for use in aquaria. Local regulations indicate that tourists can take a small quantity of coral as souvenirs, but the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (DNER) has verified that the term 'small quantity'

is defined as an amount that can fit in the palm of one's hand and the hand can be closed around it. In contrast, a recent infraction involved the removal of over 35 pounds of coral, much of which was live, by one individual. This training presented information regarding Endangered Species Act regulations pertaining to elkhorn and staghorn corals and local regulations for the protection of corals that may result in Lacey Act violations when tourists attempt to transport corals outside Puerto Rico. OLE developed an information sheet for TSA agents to complete during interventions. Trainings are also being coordinated with TSA personnel in the Ponce and Aguadilla airports and Office of Homeland Security Marine Interdiction agents as a refresher to previous training. TSA has also (*continued on page 5*)



## Atlantic/Caribbean continued...

expressed an interest in expanding trainings to the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI). The CFO has designed an educational billboard for the San Juan airport and another for the Ponce and Aguadilla airports that will be installed for during peak tourist seasons. In addition, the CFMC and DNER are collaborating on the creation of post-

ers indicating that the possession and transport of corals is illegal; these will be placed in the TSA areas in the San Juan, Ponce, and Aguadilla airports. The CFMC has already placed a similar poster in USVI airports. These endeavors are partially funded by NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program.

## Updates from the Pacific Region

**Land-based Sources of Pollution Workshop Held in Guam.** A CRCP-funded workshop was held on February 11-13, 2008 at the University of Guam to enhance the effectiveness of local management in addressing land-based sources of pollution that threaten coral reef ecosystems. The workshop, conducted by the Center for Watershed Protection in conjunction with the Guam Coastal Management Program, aimed to improve local understanding of watershed management and provide enhanced technical knowledge in erosion control and innovative storm water management and site design practices. All three days were well-attended by engineers and key resource, regulatory and technical staff from numerous local agencies and academic institutions. A series of recommendations and a timeline were produced for addressing specific critical watershed issues in Guam, including incorporating storm water measures and better site design principles into existing regulations, updating erosion and sediment control (ESC) regulations, and improving ESC site inspections and compliance. An action plan is being developed to address key recommendations and to implement select innovative practices at a demonstration site.

**Coral Fellows and Their Supervisors Attend Orientation.** From January 28-February 2, the new Coral Reef Management Fellows and their supervisors traveled to Maui, Hawaii to take part in an orientation where they learned about the coral fellowship program's policies and procedures, received professional development training and began development of their

two-year project plans. Professional development courses focused on incorporating cultural practices into resource management and the development of facilitation skills for the environmental professional. The orientation also pre-



**The current Coral Reef Management Fellows are pictured here during their orientation. (L-R: Petra MacGowan, Alyssa Edwards, Elaina Todd, Kathleen Herrmann, Karlyn Langjahr, and Raimundo Espinoza) Courtesy: NOAA CRCP**

sented an excellent opportunity for fellows to build networks between jurisdictions and to learn about marine resource management strategies in Maui. Fellows and their supervisors had the opportunity to learn more about the monitoring and outreach programs conducted by the [Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary](#) and the [Maui Ocean Center](#), and to visit a Marine Life Conservation District to learn from outreach professionals and enforcement rangers.

## International Updates

**CRW Participates in Meeting for World Bank/Global Environment Facility Project:** Four scientists from NOAA's [Coral Reef Watch](#) (CRW) participated in a synthesis meeting for the World Bank/Global Environment Facility

[Coral Reef Targeted Research and Capacity Building for Management Project](#). The meeting of the Remote Sensing Working Group brought together scientists meeting from the Philippines, U.S., U.K., Canada, and Australia (*continued on page 6*)

## Every Act Counts

**It Stinks to Send Chemicals into Our Waterways.**

The chemicals we use to clean our houses and beautify our lawns end up in our waterways and are carried to the oceans. Just one pound of phosphorus in water produces an estimated five hundred pounds of algae, blocking sunlight and starving coral reefs. Do your part by using naturally derived and biodegradable detergents and cleaning products. Outside the house, minimize the impacts of fertilizer by using zero-phosphorus products or no more than one pound per 1,000 square feet of turf area for nitrogen (you need just half that amount in the shade).

## International continued...

to plan work for the last two years of this five-year project. The group also identified a total of 25 scientific papers in development, many of which involve NOAA scientists. The work ranges from the development of new remote sensing tools, to analysis of Sea Surface Temperature patterns and trends, to management applications of remotely-sensed information.

**NOAA Scientist Attends Ground-breaking Ceremony for Tobago's New Marine Laboratory.** Mr. J. David Hardy, a NOAA National Oceanographic Data Center marine scientist and member of the Board of Directors of the [Buccoo Reef Trust \(USA\)](#), visited Tobago in early March to participate in the ground-breaking ceremony for the new Marine Research Laboratory which is being built by the Trust. Mr. Hardy, who has made extensive studies of biodiversity in Tobago, was able to discuss his work on coral reefs and other To-



**NOAA biologist, Dave Hardy, briefs the Prince of Wales on his work on the biodiversity of the coral reefs of Tobago.**  
Courtesy: NOAA National Oceanographic Data Center

bago ecosystems with the Prince of Wales, who was the keynote speaker at the ceremony.

### Coral Reef Watch Scientist Gives Presentation at US Embassy in the Philippines:

On February 20, 2008, [Coral Reef Watch](#) (CRW) Coordinator, Dr. Mark Eakin gave a presentation on climate change and coral reefs at the U.S. Embassy in Manila. The audience included staff from the Embassy, [U.S. Agency for International Development](#) (USAID), and [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) (USDA). Of particular interest were likely impacts of climate change in the region and how this will influence the new multi-million dollar Coral Triangle Initiative. The presentation discussed temperature trends in the coral triangle region and the influence that both rising temperatures and ocean acidification are having

on coral reefs.

## New Products in CoRIS

**Updated CoRIS Glossary Available.** The updated pdf version of the [CoRIS Glossary](#) is available for downloading from the glossary page of the Coral Reef Information System (CoRIS) web site. It has recently been updated to include all of the approximately 5300 terms of the glossary. The updated version has also been expanded with a more user friendly means of navigation.

Even if you don't live near a reef, you can [help protect coral reefs](#) in the U.S.A. and around the world.

## Publications

Kenyon, Jean C., Matthew J. Dunlap, Casey B. Wilkinson, Kimberly N. Page, Peter S. Vroom, Greta S. Aeby (2008) Community structure of hermatypic corals at Pearl and Hermes Atoll, Northwestern Hawaiian Islands: unique conservation challenges within the Hawaiian archipelago. *Atoll Research Bulletin* 549: 1-25.

Kenyon JC, Wilkinson CB, Dunlap MJ, Aeby GS, Kryss C. (2007) Community structure of hermatypic corals at Laysan Island and Lisianski Island/Neva Shoal in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands: a new layer of scientific exploration. *Atoll Research Bulletin* 550: 1-28.

Tsuda, Roy T., Peter S. Vroom, Isabella A. Abbott, Jack R. Fisher, Kevin B. Foster (2008) Additional marine benthic algae from Howland and Baker Islands, Central Pacific. *Pacific Science* 62: 271-290.

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*The CRCP supports effective management and sound science to preserve, sustain and restore valuable coral reef ecosystems.*



We value your feedback. Feel free to [email](#) us comments on the new format.