

June

# NewsWave



DOI'S [Oceans and Coastal](#) Newsletter  
*From Continental Divide to Continental Shelf*

Dear Members of DOI's Ocean and Coastal Community:

With the goal of enhancing cooperation between DOI bureaus, NewsWave is a forum to share news, information, and upcoming events related to ocean and coastal issues. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

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### *This Month's Stories*

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## Top Story

### **DOI Ocean and Coastal Program Retreat**

The Department of the Interior held its second Ocean and Coastal Program Retreat, April 22-25, at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Conservation Training Center in Sheperdstown, WV. Over 100 DOI employees representing MMS, NPS, USGS, BLM, FWS, Office of Insular Affairs, and the Office of the Secretary were in attendance.

The purpose of the 2008 DOI Ocean and Coastal Program Retreat was to collectively develop a set of recommendations for four theme areas that support the shared priorities of the Department, bureaus, and offices in regard to ocean and coastal issues. The themes included: a) collaborative uses of ocean



and coastal areas; b) mapping, monitoring, and science to enhance resource management decision making; c) marine-managed areas; and d) regional alliances. The participants developed a set of recommendations that address actions that the Department and its bureaus can undertake to enhance cooperative and collaborative approaches to fulfilling DOI's ocean and coastal stewardship responsibilities.

### **National Park Service Hires Ocean Branch Chief**

NPS has appointed Jeffrey Cross as Chief of its new Ocean and Coastal Resources Branch (OCRB) in the Natural Resource Program Center in Fort Collins, CO. Jeff earned his PhD in fisheries and has a strong ocean science and resource management background, having served as Director of the James J. Howard Marine Sciences Laboratory at the NOAA Northeast Fisheries Science Center, Executive Director of Southern California Coastal Water Resource Project and Director of the Grand Canyon Science



Center for the NPS. The new Oceans Branch of the Water Resources Division will provide internal coordination of ocean programs and external liaison with partners, as well as technical and policy assistance to ocean and coastal national park units around the country. Currently staffed by a marine management specialist in Washington DC, the NPS is in the process of hiring a marine pollution ecologist. The new Branch is working on a large number of projects including benthic habitat mapping, coastal park condition assessments, joint projects with USGS, FWS and NOAA, estuarine restoration

projects, oil spill response, recreational vessel management, and other types of technical assistance. A goal of the OCRB is to improve communication throughout the NPS about ocean and coastal topics. With 75 ocean and Great Lakes parks attracting more than 75 million visits per year, increased attention and communication will enhance NPS management of these resources and public understanding of their value.

### **USGS Antarctica Research Cruise**

On May 25, USGS scientists Kathy Scanlon and Dann Blackwood returned from a 37-day research cruise onboard the icebreaker R/V Nathaniel B. Palmer. Kathy and Dann joined a team of geophysicists from the University of Texas at Austin to investigate the history of deep-water corals living on seamounts across the Antarctic Circumpolar Current. The cruise brought together experts in coral ecology, habitat geoscience, and seafloor mapping, as well as paleoclimate, to start building a coherent picture of the long-term temporal and spatial distributions of deep-sea corals in the Southern Ocean.



*Pink stylasterid brought up from 1600 m. (photo by Dann Blackwood)*

The team used multi-beam mapping and deep-towed camera work to visualize the corals in their natural habitat and collect samples of deep-water corals across the Drake Passage and Scotia Sea. The cruise was funded by the NSF Office of Polar Programs (OPP) Antarctic Sciences. Watch for the full story in next months SoundWaves: <http://soundwaves.usgs.gov/>. More information about the cruise, including great photographs by Dann Blackwood, can be seen on the cruise web site: [http://censeam.niwa.co.nz/outreach/nathaniel\\_b.\\_palmer](http://censeam.niwa.co.nz/outreach/nathaniel_b._palmer).

### **Major Tuna Fishing Bans in Western Pacific Region**

To combat over-fishing, eight Pacific Island countries will ban foreign fishing vessels from two major zones in the Pacific. The Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu have all come together in a new agreement. The agreement bans foreign fishing vessels from fishing in two major fishing regions and requires them to carry fisheries



observers on board at all times. Furthermore, foreign vessels will be required to retain their full catches. This will reduce the amount of time the boats spend at sea and the amount of tuna that they can catch. Currently, fishermen throw away non-tuna species to make room in their holds for the more valuable catch. Under the agreement, the new rules will take affect June 15. See the Office of Insular Affairs press release: <http://www.doi.gov/oia/press/2008/06042008.html>.

## **MMS Awards \$18 Million Grant to Louisiana for Coastal Restoration**

The Minerals Management Service (MMS) has awarded an \$18 million grant to the State of Louisiana through the [Coastal Impact Assistance Program \(CIAP\)](#) for the Barataria Land Bridge Dedicated Dredging project. The project will enhance the creation and nourishment of 752 acres of marshland in Jefferson Parish approximately 35 miles south of New Orleans, LA. “This is the largest grant to date that we have awarded Louisiana under CIAP,” said MMS Director Randall Luthi. “And, we are very much looking forward to working with Louisiana to award the remaining money allocated for the state’s other projects.” The Barataria Land Bridge project, which was initially engineered, designed and permitted through the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA) program, will protect existing marshland and create new marshland by enabling sediment building and inhibiting interior deterioration from rising sea-levels and excessive tidal exchange. The area has experienced annual land loss and is currently mostly shallow, open water with some existing broken marsh. See the MMS press release at: <http://www.mms.gov/ooc/press/2008/press0609.htm>



### **Upcoming Meetings around the Nation**

**11<sup>th</sup> International Coral Reef Symposium:** July 7-11 at the Broward County Convention Center in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA. The world's largest coral reef science meeting, sanctioned by the International Society of Reef Studies, is held every 4 years. The ICRS is devoted to the best reef science available, with the purpose of sharing scientific findings with government agencies, resource management, and non-government organizations throughout the world. The previous ICRS was held in Okinawa in 2004. Cosponsors of this year’s event include: DOI, FWS, MMS, NPS, USGS, OIA, and NOAA. <http://www.nova.edu/ncri/11icrs/index.html>.

**World Ocean Conference 2009:** May 11-15, 2009, Manado, North Sulawesi, Indonesia. The World Ocean Conference (WOC) 2009 is a forum for the world community to discuss current issues in the marine field particularly those related to climate change. The goal of the conference is to achieve an international agreement and draw up an adaptive strategy to promote the wise use of marine resources for the benefit of humanity. [http://www.woc2009.org/woc\\_home.php](http://www.woc2009.org/woc_home.php)



**[DOI Ocean and Coastal Calendar – events, meetings, workshops, and other important dates](#)**

To submit a story for next month's NewsWave contact [bret\\_wolfe@fws.gov](mailto:bret_wolfe@fws.gov). Suggestions and comments are also welcome. We are also producing a DOI Oceans calendar to be accessed via the DOI oceans [website](#). Please forward details of any upcoming meetings or events concerning ocean, estuarine, or coastal issues.

To learn more about the ocean and coastal activities of the participating agencies visit their websites:



National Park Service



Minerals Management Service



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Office of Insular Affairs



Bureau of Land Management



U.S. Geological Survey