



NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NORTHEAST MARINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION
HONORED AS ENVIRONMENTAL HEROES**

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Gloucester, MA -- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), an agency of the Department of Commerce, has selected the Northeast Marine Pilots Association (NEMP) of Newport, Rhode Island as Environmental Heroes for 2004. NEMP is being recognized for outstanding efforts to educate ship masters about the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale, in support of the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Northeast Regional Office, Gloucester, MA.

Held in conjunction with Earth Day celebrations, the award honors NOAA volunteers for their “tireless efforts to preserve and protect our nation’s environment.”

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NR04.07

May 10, 2004

“NOAA and the nation are fortunate to have such dedicated people volunteer so much of their time,” said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph. D., undersecretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. “They set a perfect example for others to follow in their communities. America needs many more Environmental Heroes like them.”

NOAA officials will present the award on May 24th, at 7:00 pm at the Propeller Club meeting, at The Crowne Plaza at the Crossings located on Greenwich Avenue in the Warwick, Rhode Island. The NEMP presentation will be made during May Maritime Month when U.S. Senator Jack Reed is also scheduled to be honored as Maritime Man of the Year.

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Strong supporters of the NOAA Fisheries right whale education efforts with the shipping industry, the pilots began carrying right whale placards, videos, and information on board vessels in 2002 to help masters understand the vulnerability of these endangered whales to collisions with ships, and to increase awareness of their endangered status. The NE Marine Pilots also provide masters with recent right whale locations and guidance on the Right Whale Mandatory Reporting Ship (MSR) System requirements.

“On behalf of the 12,500 men and women working for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, I am pleased to present you with this 2004 Environmental Hero Award,” Lautenbacher wrote in a letter to the recipients. “Your dedicated efforts and outstanding accomplishments greatly benefit the environment and make our nation a better place for all Americans.”

NOAA named 33 Environmental Heros for 2004—thirty individuals and three organizations. Visit the NOAA Earth Day Web site at <http://www.noaa.gov/earthday> to read more about this year’s award winners.

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NOAA Fisheries is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources through scientific research, management, enforcement, and the conservation of marine mammals and other protected marine species and their habitat. To learn more about NOAA Fisheries, please visit <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

The Commerce Department's [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\)](#) is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources.

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