

CORAL REEF NEWS
Coral Reef Conservation Program
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
July 2004 Volume 1 No. 3



NOAA Coral Reef News is a monthly e-newsletter established to provide current information on the activities of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) and other relevant NOAA programs. The CRCP supports effective management and sound science to preserve, sustain and restore valuable coral reef ecosystems. Back issues are available at <http://www.coralreef.noaa.gov>.

IN THIS ISSUE:

OF SPECIAL NOTE (PAGE 2)

- **New NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program Web Site Launched.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS (PAGE 2)

- **NOAA Coral Reef Funding Opportunity Announced.**
- **Upcoming Conference on the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.**
- **Twelfth U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Meeting To Be Held September 14 –15, 2004.**
- **NOAA's Coastal Services Center Funding Announcement.**
- **Coral Program Receives Check from Concerned Students.**

UPDATES (PAGE 2)

- **Additional Input Sought for Coral Threats Survey.**
- **Coral Reef Watch launches new Web Page for Operational Products.**
- **Number of Coral Data Sets Available Doubled on NOAA's Coral Reef Information System.**
- **Workshop Sponsored by the Caribbean Marine Research Center and The Ocean Conservancy Inspires Comprehensive Book on Marine Reserves.**
- **Researchers Investigate Alien Soft Coral Invading Hawaii's Black Coral Reef Communities.**
- **NOAA Releases Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Seagrass Restoration in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.**

CORAL REEFS IN THE NEWS (PAGE 5)

- **ICRI Releases Second Newsletter.**
- ***Ecological Monographs* Article on Competition and Diversity of Corals.**
- **Recent *Nature* Articles on Corals.**
- **Guam Pacific Daily News - Special Insert on Coral Reefs.**
- **News from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.**

UPCOMING EVENTS (PAGE 6)



OF SPECIAL NOTE

The NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) has recently launched a redesigned and updated program Web site at <http://www.coralreef.noaa.gov>. The new site contains several key sections including: News and Highlights, Funding Opportunities, and Outreach and Education. The site also includes background information about the program, subscription information for the program newsletter and contacts for media inquiries. The new site is a companion site to NOAA's Coral Reef Information System (CoRIS, <http://www.coris.noaa.gov>). CoRIS provides searchable access to data and information derived from CRCP activities as well as extensive background information and essays on coral reefs. The new site provides links to CoRIS and compliments these offerings by providing news and highlights of recent NOAA coral reef activities.

Send potential items of Special Note (new discoveries, key events, notable facts, etc.) for future issues to coralreef@noaa.gov.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NOAA Coral Reef Funding Opportunity Announced. The NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program, as authorized under the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, provides matching grants of financial assistance for coral reef conservation projects. The Program solicits proposals under six funding categories: State and Territory Coral Reef Management, State and Territory Coral Reef Ecosystem Monitoring; Coral Reef Ecosystem Research; General Coral Reef Conservation; Projects to Improve or Amend Coral Reef Fishery Management Plans; and International Coral Reef Conservation. Each funding category has specific applicant and project

eligibility criteria. Pre-applications must be received by NOAA by 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time, on December 10, 2004. Visit <http://www.coralreef.noaa.gov/grants.html> for more information on the grants program or to download the full funding announcement.

Upcoming Conference on the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. August 19 through 21, 2004 the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary will host a new conference - *Connectivity: Science, People and Policy in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary*. *Connectivity* is a new event aimed at connecting the science, people and policy of the Florida Keys, based on more than a decade of research, management and experience in the Sanctuary. It is also aimed at bringing together regional and international perspectives on issues that affect the Sanctuary at those larger scales. Conference speakers will include Dr. Carl Safina, Dr. Terry Done and Dr. Elliot Norse. Field trips are planned to look at different levels of zoning management in the Sanctuary (three dives) and a snorkel trip to the Dry Tortugas National Park and Fort Jefferson. Visit <http://www.keysconnectivity.org> for additional information.

Twelfth U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Meeting To Be Held September 14 –15, 2004. The next meeting of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force will be held September 14 and 15, 2005 in Miami Beach, Florida. This meeting will be held in conjunction with the meeting of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force. There will also be a series of scientific, management and volunteer seminars and workshops on Monday, September 13, sponsored by the Task Force. Details will be posted in the near future, as will the meeting agenda. The meeting is open to the public, but all those planning to attend should register in advance at <http://www.ces.fau.edu/taskforce>. *Additional information on the U.S. Coral Reef*

Task Force is available at <http://www.coralreef.gov>.

NOAA's Coastal Services Center Funding Announcement. NOAA's Coastal Services Center recently announced funding opportunities in the areas of 1) remote sensing, 2) application of spatial technology in coastal management, and 3) environmental characterization of a coastal estuary, watershed, or special management area. Visit <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/funding/> for more information.

Coral Program Receives Check from Concerned Students. NOAA recently received something unusual from a group of students in Littleton, Massachusetts: a \$360 check. The students, who are in the Roots and Shoots Environmental Group, became concerned about the state of coral reefs, created a slideshow to educate their fellow students, and held a game day and bake sale to raise funds. They sent the results of these fundraisers to NOAA in early June. This money has been set aside for coral reef outreach and education efforts in the NOAA Administrator's discretionary fund.

UPDATES

Additional Input Sought for Coral Threats Survey. In concert with the "Coral Reefs and Global Changes" series of mini-symposia at the 10th International Coral Reef Symposium meeting in Okinawa, the session chairs put together a survey on "Coral Reef Threats" which is designed to obtain opinions about the most serious threats facing coral reefs. The chairs report that the results of the survey so far are very interesting. Before releasing the survey results, the chairs are interested in getting more responses to the survey. The

survey will remain open until August 1, 2004 and takes five to ten minutes to complete. The survey can be accessed on-line at: http://www.esig.ucar.edu/ICRS/icrs_survey.html or <http://www2.ims-plaza.co.jp/icrs2004/survey.html>.

Coral Reef Watch launches new Web Page for Operational Products. NOAA's Coral Reef Watch, a joint coral project with NOAA Fisheries, NOAA Research and NOAA Satellites, has launched a new Web site. Early Warnings for coral bleaching events, based on evolving satellite information, can be found in the "satellite" section of the site: at <http://coralreefwatch.noaa.gov/satellite/>. These products include: HotSpots, Degree Heating Weeks, and other operational and experimental products. Visit <http://coralreefwatch.noaa.gov/> to view the new site.

Number of Coral Data Sets Available Doubled on NOAA's Coral Reef Information System. Thanks to contributions from NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program and other project scientists, NOAA's Coral Reef Information System (CoRIS) now has 530 metadata records that document coral related data sets. This represents an increase of over 100% in the number of metadata records during fiscal year 2004 to date. These metadata records lead CoRIS Web site Data Discovery users to over 9,500 products. Among the recent additions to the site are ninety-six Hawaii Environmental Sensitivity Index (ESI) Atlas Maps, created by the National Ocean Service's Office of Response and Restoration. In addition, in response to user suggestions for improved operation, the CoRIS team recently updated its Web-based data discovery tools. Users can now access browse-able lists of subject and place keywords that lead to documentation and links to coral data sets. In addition, the Map Search tool was updated with

many new data sets and functional improvements. A new *Map Search Tutorial* and help pages were added for the Map Search as well. Visit <http://www.coris.noaa.gov>.

Workshop Sponsored by the Caribbean Marine Research Center and The Ocean Conservancy Inspires Comprehensive Book on Marine Reserves. A new book entitled *Marine Reserves: A Guide to Science, Design, and Use*, provides a comprehensive overview of marine reserves. The book is the first guidebook on marine reserves for scientists, students, conservationists, and marine resource managers. It covers a wide range of issues related to the use of marine reserves, including: biological and geophysical issues relevant to reserve design; potential ecological and economic benefits and the likelihood of achieving them; general principles for design and siting; and, the influence of socioeconomic factors on design and implementation. The book also highlights lessons learned from past marine reserve efforts through case studies in the Bahamas, Belize, California, and the Florida Keys as well as a global review of marine reserve use. The book is a culmination of a relationship between The Ocean Conservancy (TOC) and the National Undersea Research Program's (NURP) Caribbean Marine Research Center (CMRC) that began in 1996 with a NURP sponsored workshop that TOC hosted at the CMRC field station on Lee Stocking Island, Bahamas. This workshop was one of the first efforts to bring together scientists from around the world to discuss the use of no-take marine reserves. *The book is available on the Island Press Web site at: (<http://www.islandpress.org>). Visit <http://www.nurp.noaa.gov/carib.html> or <http://www.cmrc.org/> for more information about NURP and the CMRC.*

Researchers Investigate Alien Soft Coral Invading Hawaii's Black Coral Reef Communities. With funding from Hawaii Sea Grant, the University of Hawaii's (UH) department of oceanography is expanding its research into the alien soft coral species *Carijoa riisei*, which has been found to be overgrowing and killing up to 90 percent of black coral colonies below 75 meters deep. Until that discovery in 2001, *C. riisei* - native to the tropical Western Atlantic and Caribbean - was considered a benign, shallow-water species. *C. riisei* is commonly called snowflake coral or branched pipe coral. The research seeks to answer these questions: How extensive is the *C. riisei* infestation in Hawaii? What is its ecological impact? Why is it so successful? What can be done to manage the threat and limit the ecological damage? The answers will not only improve the understanding of *Carijoa* - explaining its success in the tropical Pacific, patterns of introduction, and long-range migration - but also the ecological dynamics of nonindigenous marine invertebrates and their general process of invasion. Contact [Richard Grigg](#), Sea Grant Oceanography Researcher, or [Mary Donohue](#), Hawaii Sea Grant Communications Leader for more information.

NOAA Releases Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Seagrass Restoration in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. On June 25, 2004, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) released for public review and comment a draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) that evaluated the short and long-term environmental and socioeconomic effects related to the implementation of seagrass restoration and seagrass injury prevention projects in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS). The FKNMS contains some of the most extensive seagrass beds in the

continental United States; the trustees for the FKNMS are NOAA and the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund of the State of Florida. The goal of this PEIS is to describe a range of seagrass restoration techniques, used for both primary and compensatory restoration projects, and seagrass injury prevention actions that may potentially be implemented in the FKNMS. The draft PEIS proposed that implementing seagrass restoration projects in the FKNMS will prevent the injuries from expanding in size or increasing in severity, create the site conditions necessary for the injured areas to recover to pre-incident conditions, and compensate the public and the environment for the services lost from the time of injury until full recovery. The comment period on the draft PEIS ends August 9, 2004. *The draft is available at <http://www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov/library/library.html>.*

CORAL REEFS IN THE NEWS

ICRI Releases Second Newsletter. To view the second edition of the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) Newsletter, visit <http://www.icriforum.org> and click on News. Contact the ICRI News Editorial Team (newsletter@icriforum.org) with comments, suggestions for topics and news for the next edition.

Ecological Monographs Article on Competition and Diversity of Corals. Read the Connell, et al. abstract for “A long-term study of competition and diversity of corals” on-line at <http://www.esajournals.org>. The article can be found in *Ecological Monographs*: Vol. 74, No. 2, pp. 179–210.

Recent Nature Articles on Corals. Several articles appeared in the June 24, 2004 edition of Nature. Bellwood, et al. “Confronting the coral crisis” and Karlson, et al. “Coral communities are regionally enriched along an oceanic biodiversity gradient” can be read online at <http://www.nature.com/nature/>.

Guam Pacific Daily News - Special Insert on Coral Reefs. In conjunction with World Environment Day (June 5, 2004) activities the Guam Pacific Daily News published a special insert on protecting coral reefs. *The insert is available on-line at <http://www.guampdn.com/guampublishing/special-sections/gepa/island-pride.htm>.*

News from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Read the July 1, 2004 article “Australia creates world’s largest reef sanctuary” online at <http://www.cnn.com/>. Visit the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Web site (<http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/>) for more information.

UPCOMING EVENTS

If you have events you would like listed in future newsletters please contact coralreef@noaa.gov.

August 2004

1 – 6: **Ecological Society of America – Annual Meeting.** Portland, OR.

<http://www.esa.org/portland>.

19 – 21: **Connectivity: Science, People and Policy in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.** Key West, Florida. <http://www.keysconnectivity.org>.

September 2004

12 – 15: **Restore America's Estuaries' 2nd National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration.** Seattle, WA. <http://www.estuaries.org>.

13 – 15: **America's Shoreline: Beach and Ecosystem Restoration in the 21st Century.** New Orleans, LA. <http://www.asbpa.org/cfp2004mtg.html>.

14 – 15: **12th U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Meeting.** Miami Beach, Florida.

<http://www.coralreef.gov>.

18 – 23: **American Zoo and Aquarium Association – Annual Conference.** New Orleans, LA.

<http://www.aza2004.com>.

20 – 24: **13th International Conference of Aquatic Invasive Species.** Ennis, County Clare, Ireland. <http://www.aquatic-invasive-species-conference.org>.

21 – 23: **MPA Federal Advisory Committee Meeting.** Honolulu, HI. <http://www.mpa.gov>.

November 2004

17 – 25: **3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress.** Bangkok, Thailand.

<http://www.iucn.org/congress>.

2 – 4: **Third Scientific Symposium on Resource Investigations in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.** Honolulu, HI. <http://www.wpcouncil.org/nwhisymposium.htm>.

December 2004

13 – 17: **American Geophysical Union Annual Meeting.** San Francisco, CA.

<http://www.agu.org/meetings/fm04>.

TO SUBSCRIBE: Send an e-mail to requests@willamette.nos.noaa.gov with "Subscribe coralreefnews" in the subject line.

TO UNSUBSCRIBE: Send an e-mail to requests@willamette.nos.noaa.gov with "Unsubscribe coralreefnews" in the subject line.

Questions, comments?

Contact coralreef@noaa.gov, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program.

Access to NOAA's coral reef data and information is provided through NOAA's Coral Reef Information System at <http://www.coris.noaa.gov>. Current news on NOAA's coral reef activities can be found on the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program Web site, <http://www.coralreef.noaa.gov>.

