

FINAL REPORT

AN OCEAN BLUEPRINT

FOR THE 21st CENTURY

U.S. COMMISSION ON
OCEAN POLICY

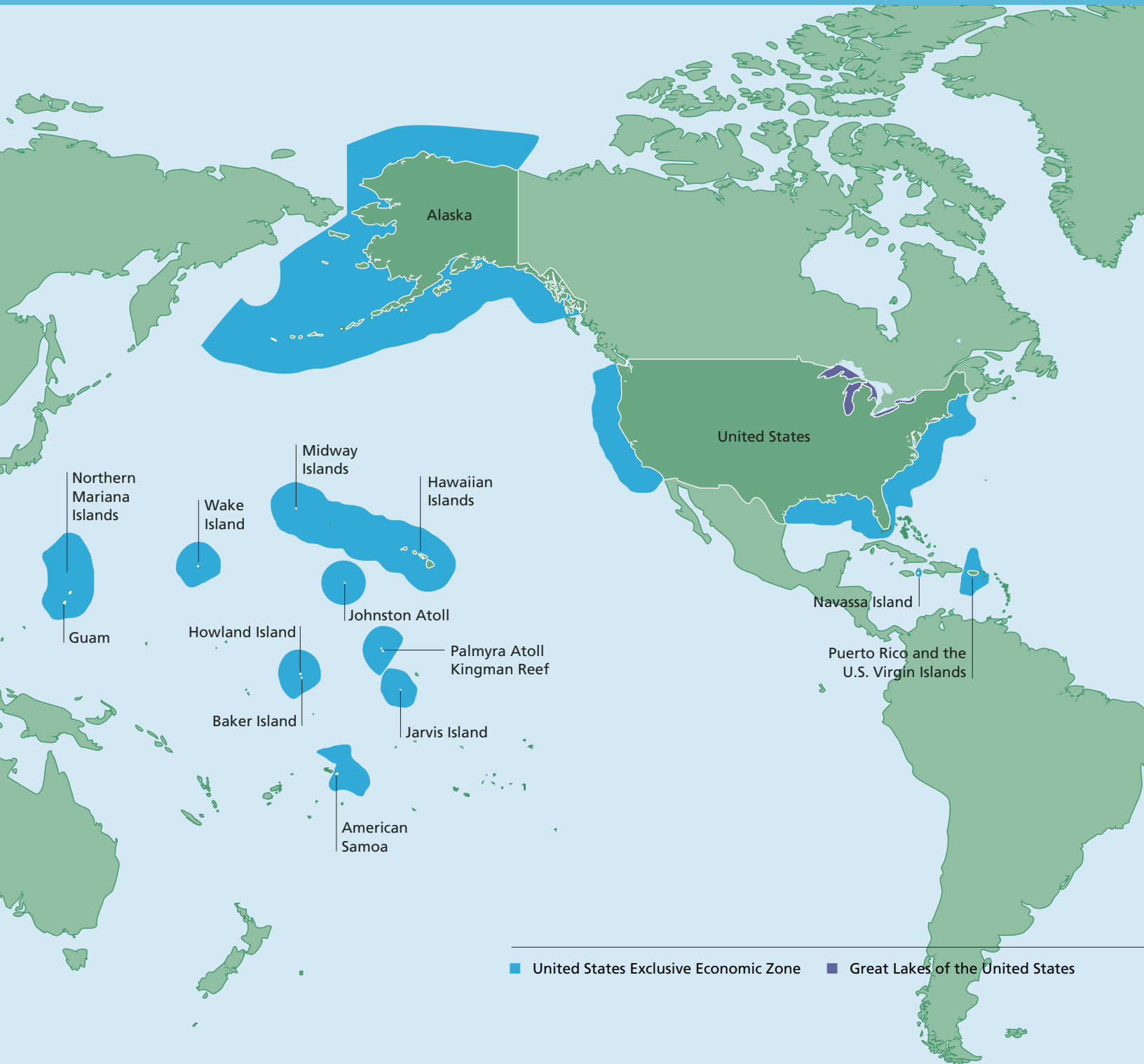

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This document may be cited as follows:
U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy.
An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century.
Final Report.
Washington, DC, 2004
ISBN#0-9759462-0-X

THE UNITED STATES IS AN OCEAN NATION

The U.S. exclusive economic zone (EEZ) extends 200 nautical miles offshore, encompassing diverse ecosystems and vast natural resources, such as fisheries and energy and other mineral resources. The U.S. EEZ is the largest in the world, spanning over 13,000 miles of coastline and containing 3.4 million square nautical miles of ocean—larger than the combined land area of all fifty states. (A square nautical mile is equal to 1.3 square miles.)

U.S. states also have jurisdiction over a significant portion of the Great Lakes. This chain of freshwater lakes and its tributaries constitute the largest reservoir of fresh surface water on the planet, containing 6.5 quadrillion gallons of fresh water and covering an area of about 72,000 square nautical miles. The Great Lakes' U.S. coastline borders eight states and is roughly the same length as the entire Atlantic Coast.





U.S. COMMISSION ON
OCEAN POLICY



July 22, 2004

*The Members of the U.S. COMMISSION ON OCEAN POLICY,
directed by the United States Congress and appointed by the President
under the Oceans Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-256) to
make recommendations for a coordinated and comprehensive
national ocean policy, hereby approve*

An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century,
*the final report of the Commission's findings and recommendations in
fulfillment of our responsibilities and obligations under such Act.*

James D. Watkins
Admiral James D. Watkins, USN (Ret.), Chairman

Robert Ballard, Ph.D.

Mr. Lawrence Dickerson

Dr. Frank Muller-Karger

Mr. Ted A. Beattie

Vice Admiral Paul G. Gaffney II, USN (Ret.)

Mr. Edward B. Rasmuson

Mrs. Lillian Borrone

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Mr. Paul L. Kelly

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Mr. Christopher Koch

Dr. Paul A. Sandifer

U.S. COMMISSION ON
OCEAN POLICY



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September 2004

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am pleased to submit for your consideration *An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century*, the final report of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy. As mandated by the Oceans Act of 2000, this report contains balanced and practical proposals for the establishment of a comprehensive and coordinated ocean policy for our nation. The sixteen Commissioners you appointed, representing diverse interests and experience, unanimously support the Commissions' findings, recommendations and vision for the future.

The value of the oceans and coasts to the nation is immense and their full potential remains unrealized. Over half the U.S. population lives in coastal watershed counties and roughly one-half of the nation's gross domestic product (\$4.5 trillion in 2000) is generated in those counties and in adjacent ocean waters.

However, there is widespread agreement that our oceans and marine resources are in serious trouble, increasingly affected by rapid growth along our coasts, land and air pollution, unsustainable exploitation of too many of our fishery resources, and frequently ineffective management. The consistent message we heard throughout the country is that we must act now to halt continuing degradation.

We believe that a historic opportunity is at hand to make positive and lasting changes in the way we manage our oceans. The comments we received from Governors of states and territories, tribal leaders, industry, nongovernmental organizations, and the public at large were strongly supportive of our assessment of declining ocean and coastal conditions, the need for a new management approach, and our call for immediate action.

A comprehensive and coordinated national ocean policy requires moving away from the current fragmented, single-issue way of doing business and toward ecosystem-based management. This new approach considers the relationships among all ecosystem components, and will lead to better decisions that protect the environment while promoting the economy and balancing multiple uses of our oceans and coasts.

The Commission, therefore, considers the following actions essential. First, a new national ocean policy framework must be established to improve federal coordination and effectiveness. An important part of this new framework is strengthening support for state, territorial, tribal, and local efforts to identify and resolve issues at the regional level. Second, it is also critical that decisions about ocean and coastal resources be based on the most current, credible, and unbiased scientific data and information. Finally, formal and informal

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Thomas R. Kitsos, Ph.D., Executive Director

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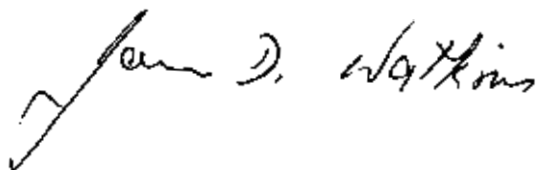
Implementation of the Commission's recommendations, which will require a new and modest investment over current funding levels, can create a system that sustains our resources and generates significantly greater benefits for our nation. We have recommended creation of an Ocean Policy Trust Fund that will dedicate funds generated from ocean activities to implement our Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century.

The urgent need for action is clear. It is equally clear that, by rising to the challenge today and addressing the many activities that are affecting our continent at its edges, our nation can protect the ocean environment, create jobs, increase revenues, enhance security, expand trade, and ensure ample supplies of energy, minerals, food, and life-saving drugs.

Our report is just the beginning of what must be a sustained effort. The Commission encourages you to work with Congress, the Governors and other stakeholders, and, where appropriate, to use existing Presidential authorities to commence implementation of our recommendations at an early date.

On behalf of all sixteen Commissioners, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to serve our nation as members of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy. It has been a privilege to contribute to a new age of ocean awareness and stewardship. Although our work officially ends ninety days after submission of this report, we stand ready now and in the future to assist in the implementation of our recommendations and achievement of our vision—one in which our oceans and coasts are clean, safe, sustainably managed, and preserved for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James D. Watkins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

James D. Watkins
Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)
Chairman

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September 2004

The Honorable William H. Frist, M.D.
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Leader:

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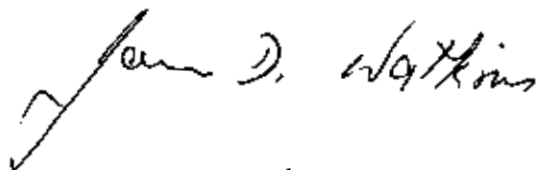
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Sincerely,

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James D. Watkins
Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Tom Daschle

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September 2004

The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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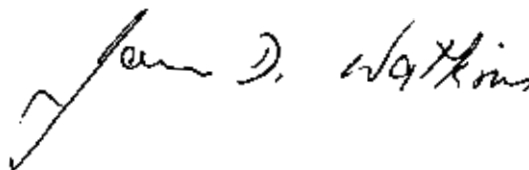
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James D. Watkins
Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An effort of this magnitude could not have been completed without the help of many dedicated people. The Commission is deeply grateful to the scores of individuals who provided testimony, technical input, insightful comments, figures and photographs, production help, and many other forms of assistance in completing this momentous task.

A complete record of testimony presented to the Commission can be found in Appendices 1 and 2, and on the Commission's Web site at www.oceancommission.gov. These presentations were invaluable in communicating the problems facing our oceans and coasts—and suggesting positive solutions.

A number of consultants were instrumental in helping the Commission conduct its meetings and complete its report, particularly in the following areas:

Meeting facilitation, strategy, and advice—John Ehrmann and Jay West of the Meridian Institute, and Philip Angell.

Research, writing, and editing—Charles Colgan, M. Richard DeVoe, Peter Fippinger, Jeremy Firestone, Gabriela Goldfarb, Montserrat Gorina-Ysern, Ray Kammer, Fredrika Moser, Joan O'Callaghan, Julie Phillips, Ellen Prager, Robert Wayland III, and Bill Woodward.

Public relations—Scott Treibitz, David Roscow, Victoria Sackett, and Dean Tinnin of Tricom Associates, and Herbert Rosen.

Report design and production—Cynthia Cliff, James Durham, and Lisa Wells of Janin/Cliff Design, Inc.

Web site development and maintenance—Tom LaPoint, Jerry Lau, and Davida Remer of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Ocean Service.

The members of the Commission's Science Advisory Panel (listed in the preceding pages) were at our side from start to finish, answering questions, clarifying technical points, preparing and reviewing written materials, and generally sharing their decades of collective wisdom. In addition, we extend our thanks to the following individuals who served as researchers, reviewers, and wise advisors, or helped in dozens of other ways:

Craig Allen, Donald Anderson, Anthony Andrady, Lori Arguellas, Stefano Belfiore, Joan Myers Bondareff, Nicole Breznock, Richard Brill, David Brower, R. Steven Brown, Joedy Cambridge, James Carlton, Thomas Chase, David Colson, James Corbett, Barry Costa-Pierce, Penelope Dalton, Shelley Dawicki, Richard Delaney, Jessica Demian, Alex Echols, Carolyn Elefant, Amanda Enser, Karen Foerstel, Kim Fulton-Bennett, Marc Gaden, Joseph Geraci, Roger Germann, W. Rockwell Geyer, Suzanne Giles, David Godschalk, James Good, Shannon Gordon, Dale Green, Karl Gustavson, Kathryn Hayes, Amy Heywood, Barbara Hinthorn, Robert Hofman, Edward Houde, John Justus, Geri Kantor, Jill Karsten, David Keeley, Jim Kent, Joanna Knight, Robert Knox, Kei Koizumi, Jennie Kopelson, Judith Krauthamer, Stephen Leatherman, James R. Lyons, Tony MacDonald, Elizabeth Martin, Emily McBride, Tom McCann, Shannon McCoy, David McGrath, James Murley, Savithri Narayanan, Scott Newsham, John Ogden, Rafael Olivieri, Joan Oltman-Shay, John O'Shea, Edward Page, Richard Pittenger, Eugene Proulx, Timothy Ragen, Andrew Read,

Robert Richmond, Robert Ross, Amy Schick, Sarah Schoedinger, Gerry Schubel, Richard Seymour, Seba Sheavly, Rexford Sherman, Andrea Sanico, Judson Starr, Denise Stephenson-Hawk, Robert Stickney, Maurice Tarares, Joanne Tromp, Nicole Vickey, Daniel Walker, Ferris Webster, Robert Weller, and Art Wong.

The members and staff of the Pew Oceans Commission, led by the Honorable Leon Panetta, also deserve our recognition and thanks for their contributions to the development of a new national ocean policy and their steadfast support for the work of this Commission.

Input from Governors and other state-level representatives and groups were invaluable to the development of this report. The official comments from thirty-seven state and territorial Governors and five tribal leaders can be found in the Special Addendum to this report, and on the Commission's Web site at www.oceancommission.gov. Special thanks go to the members and staff of the Coastal States Organization and the National Governors Association for their critical roles in conveying state level interests and perspectives.

Although too numerous to list by name, the Commission extends its heartfelt appreciation to the many knowledgeable and dedicated federal agency employees who supplied detailed information, answered a barrage of questions, and offered excellent advice. Particular thanks go to the Council on Environmental Quality for its role as the Administration's chief liaison to the Commission.

We also appreciate the support provided to the Commission by the Members of Congress and their staffs, in particular those who serve on committees with key jurisdiction over ocean and coastal issues and who have closely followed the progress of the Commission's work. This includes the Members and staff of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, and the Committee on Appropriations, as well as the House Committees on Science, Resources, and Transportation and Infrastructure. Additional thanks are extended to the Members of the House Oceans Caucus and their staff.

Finally, the work reflected in this report would simply not have been possible without the support and dedication of a talented group of professionals, the members of the Commission staff, to whom we extend our deepest gratitude for their tireless effort on behalf of a new national ocean policy.

CONTENTS

Letter to the President	vii
Letter to the Senate Majority Leader	ix
Letter to the Speaker of the House	xi
Members of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy	xii
Members of the Science Advisory Panel.....	xiv
Commission Staff	xvi
Acknowledgements.....	xvii

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
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PART I

OUR OCEANS: A NATIONAL ASSET

CHAPTER 1

RECOGNIZING OCEAN ASSETS AND CHALLENGES

30

Evaluating the Vast Wealth of U.S. Oceans and Coasts	30
Economic and Employment Value	30
Marine Transportation and Ports.....	32
Marine Fisheries	32
Offshore Energy, Minerals, and Emerging Uses.....	33
Human Health and Biodiversity	33
Tourism and Recreation.....	35
Coastal Real Estate	36
Nonmarket Values.....	36
Undermining America’s Ocean and Coastal Assets.....	38
Degraded Waters.....	38
Compromised Resources	40
Conflicts Between Man and Nature	41
Acting Today for Tomorrow’s Generations.....	44

CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING THE PAST TO SHAPE

A NEW NATIONAL OCEAN POLICY.....

48

Ocean Policy from World War II to the Oceans Act of 2000.....	48
Formative Years.....	48
From Sputnik to Stratton	49
Years of Activism	51
Contention and Stalemate	53
Search for Coherence	54
Consensus for Change.....	55
Launching the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy	55
A Broad Mandate	55
The Commission Members	56
How the Commission Did Its Work.....	56
The Preliminary Report and Governor’s Comments.....	59
The Result.....	59



CHAPTER 3

SETTING THE NATION’S SIGHTS 60

Imagining a Brighter Future..... 60

Building Ocean Policy on Sound Guiding Principles 61

Translating Principles into Policy..... 63

 Ecosystem-based Management 63

 Science for Decision Making..... 67

 Effective Ocean Governance 68

 Public Education 68

PRIMER ON OCEAN JURISDICTIONS:

DRAWING LINES IN THE WATER..... 70

PART II

**BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE:
A NEW NATIONAL OCEAN POLICY FRAMEWORK**



CHAPTER 4

ENHANCING OCEAN LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION 76

Making Improvements at the National Level..... 76

 National Ocean Council 79

 Assistant to the President 80

 President’s Council of Advisors on Ocean Policy..... 81

 Other Needed Elements..... 81

CHAPTER 5

ADVANCING A REGIONAL APPROACH 86

Addressing Issues Across Jurisdictional Lines 86

Facilitating Bottom-up Responses..... 87

 National Support and Guidelines..... 87

 Nature and Functions of Regional Ocean Councils..... 90

 Building on Existing Regional Initiatives..... 91

Enhancing Federal Support for a Regional Approach 92

 Federal Agency Coordination..... 92

 Moving Toward Common Regional Boundaries..... 92

Meeting Regional Research and Information Needs 94

Developing Regional Ecosystem Assessments 96

CHAPTER 6

COORDINATING MANAGEMENT IN FEDERAL WATERS..... 98

Meeting Growing Needs 98

Clarifying Offshore Responsibilities..... 100

Establishing a Coordinated Offshore Management Regime 100

 A Fair Return for the Use of Offshore Resources..... 102

Employing Marine Protected Areas as a Management Tool 103

Federal Efforts	103
The Role of Marine Protected Areas	104
National Interests	105
Regional and Local Stakeholders	106

CHAPTER 7

STRENGTHENING THE FEDERAL AGENCY STRUCTURE	108
Reorganizing to Support an Ecosystem-based Management Approach	108
Reviewing Previous Reorganization Proposals	109
Strengthening NOAA: Phase I	110
Consolidating Ocean and Coastal Programs: Phase II	112
Managing All Natural Resources in an Ecosystem-based Management Approach: Phase III	115

PART III

OCEAN STEWARDSHIP: THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

CHAPTER 8

PROMOTING LIFELONG OCEAN EDUCATION	122
Strengthening the Nation’s Ocean Awareness	122
Ocean Stewardship	123
Science Literacy	123
Future Ocean Leaders	123
Crosscutting Themes	124
Building a Collaborative Ocean Education Network	124
Participants in Ocean Education	124
Coordinating Ocean Education	125
Funding and Assessment	128
Linking the Research and Education Communities	129
Incorporating Oceans into K-12 Education	130
Using Ocean-based Examples to Meet Education Standards	131
Bridging the Gap between Scientists and Educators	133
Investing in Higher Education and the Future Ocean Workforce	136
The Leadership Void	137
Drawing Students into the Field	137
Expanding Graduate Educational Opportunities	138
Workforce Needs	139
Specific Federal Responsibilities	139
Strength through Diversity	141
Bringing the Ocean and Coasts to All Americans	142
Multifaceted Approaches	142
Coordinating Messages	143
Broad Outreach	144



PART IV

**LIVING ON THE EDGE: ECONOMIC GROWTH AND
RESOURCE CONSERVATION ALONG THE COAST**



CHAPTER 9

MANAGING COASTS AND THEIR WATERSHEDS 150

Attracting Crowds, Creating Opportunities 150
 Implications of Growth 150
Strengthening Coastal Planning and Management 152
 Multi-layered Decision Making 152
 Federal Area-based Coastal Programs 153
 Other Relevant Federal Programs 157
Linking Coastal and Watershed Management 157
Linking Coastal and Offshore Management 160
Increasing Understanding of Coastal Ecosystems 160

CHAPTER 10

**GUARDING PEOPLE AND PROPERTY AGAINST
NATURAL HAZARDS 162**

Assessing the Growing Cost of Natural Hazards 162
Improving Federal Management of Hazards in Coastal Areas 163
 Changing Inappropriate Federal Incentives 163
 Improving Understanding 164
 The National Flood Insurance Program 166
 Hazard Mitigation Planning 168

CHAPTER 11

CONSERVING AND RESTORING COASTAL HABITAT 170

Assessing the Threats to Coastal Habitat 170
Conserving Coastal Habitat 171
 Habitat Conservation Programs 171
Restoring Coastal Habitat 172
Improving Habitat Conservation and Restoration 176
Enhancing Information and Understanding 176
Protecting the Nation's Wetlands: A Special Case 178

CHAPTER 12

MANAGING SEDIMENT AND SHORELINES 180

Understanding the Dual Nature of Sediment 180
Reviewing Federal Roles in Sediment Management 181
Altering Sediments through Human Intervention 182
 Changing Sediment Quantities 182
 Changing Sediment Quality 183
Developing Regional Strategies for Sediment Management 184
 Moving Toward Regional Sediment Management at USACE 185
Weighing the Costs and Benefits of Dredging 185
 Navigational Dredging 185
 Beneficial Uses of Dredged Material 187

Techniques of Cost-Benefit Analysis	187
National and Regional Dredging Teams.....	187
Improving Understanding, Assessment, and Treatment	188
Coordinated Strategy Needed.....	188
Contaminated Sediment.....	189

CHAPTER 13

SUPPORTING MARINE COMMERCE AND TRANSPORTATION.....192

Connecting People, Places, and Products.....	192
Value of the Marine Transportation System	192
Components of the Marine Transportation System.....	193
Positioning the U.S. Marine Transportation System for the Future	196
Federal Roles	197
Links to the National Transportation Infrastructure.....	198
Information Needs.....	199
Emergency Preparedness	200

PART V

**CLEAR WATERS AHEAD:
COASTAL AND OCEAN WATER QUALITY**

CHAPTER 14

ADDRESSING COASTAL WATER POLLUTION.....204

Stopping the Degradation of Coastal Waters.....	204
Reducing Point Sources of Pollution.....	205
Existing Management Tools.....	207
Major Point Sources.....	208
Improving the Control of Point Sources.....	211
Increasing the Focus on Nonpoint Sources of Pollution	212
Existing Management Tools.....	213
Major Nonpoint Sources.....	215
Improving the Control of Nonpoint Sources	217
Collaboration at the Watershed Scale	222
International Efforts	222
Addressing Atmospheric Sources of Pollution.....	223
Improving Control of Atmospheric Sources.....	223

CHAPTER 15

CREATING A NATIONAL MONITORING NETWORK.....226

Recognizing the Value of Monitoring.....	226
Monitoring at the Federal Level.....	227
Federal Programs	228
Shortcomings in Federal Programs.....	229
Promoting Interagency Coordination.....	230
Ensuring Comprehensive, Coordinated Coverage	231
Creating an Effective Monitoring Network	232
System Goals and Objectives.....	232
System Design	233
Technical Coordination.....	233



Periodic Review and Modification.....	233
Design Based on User Input	234
Making Data Accessible and Useful.....	235

CHAPTER 16

LIMITING VESSEL POLLUTION AND IMPROVING VESSEL SAFETY..... 236

Assessing the Benefits and Risks of Vessel Activities	236
Strengthening Vessel Safety, Security, and Environmental Compliance.....	237
A Culture of Compliance and Safety	237
Flag State Oversight and Enforcement.....	238
Port State Control.....	240
Reducing Vessel Pollution.....	241
Waste Stream Discharges.....	241
Air Emissions.....	244
Oil Releases	245
Increasing Knowledge to Guide Change.....	248
Improving Awareness of Ocean Activities	249

CHAPTER 17

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES 252

Acknowledging the Problem	252
Assessing Existing Approaches	253
Federal Statutes.....	253
State and Federal Programs	255
Identifying Major Pathways for Introduction of Non-native Species	256
Ballast Water	256
Global Trade in Marine Organisms	257
Making Prevention the First Line of Defense.....	257
Ballast Water Management	257
Controlling Other Pathways.....	258
Accelerating Detection and Response	259
Improving the Control of Invasive Species.....	260
Coordinated Action	260
International Partnerships	261
Research Needs.....	262

CHAPTER 18

REDUCING MARINE DEBRIS 264

Assessing the Sources and Consequences of Marine Debris	264
Addressing Marine Debris Nationally	265
Existing Programs.....	265
NOAA's Role	266
Expanding Marine Debris Efforts.....	267
Reducing Derelict Fishing Gear	269
Ensuring Adequate Facilities for Disposal of Garbage from Ships	270

**CHAPTER 19**

ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES	274
Contemplating Thirty Years of Fishery Management.....	274
Building Sustainable Fisheries Based on Sound Science.....	276
The Value of Science for Wise Management	276
Separating Scientific and Management Decisions.....	277
The Need for Independent Review.....	278
Using Default Measures to Ensure Progress.....	279
Making Research Relevant.....	280
Strengthening Fishery Governance	283
Clarifying Fishery Management Authority and Jurisdiction.....	283
Improving the Regional Fishery Management Councils	285
Ending the Race for Fish.....	287
Traditional Management Approaches.....	287
Dedicated Access Privileges.....	288
Reducing Overcapitalization of Fishing Fleets	290
Improving Fishery Enforcement.....	291
Fishery Enforcement Mechanisms.....	291
Enforcement Partnerships.....	292
Technology for Enforcement.....	293
Improving Enforceability as Part of the Management Process.....	294
Moving Toward an Ecosystem-based Management Approach.....	295
Linking Fisheries Management with other Regional Concerns.....	295
Essential Fish Habitat.....	297
Reducing Bycatch.....	298
Managing International Fisheries	299
The Status of International Fisheries	299
The Law of the Sea Framework	300
International Fishery Conservation Agreements	300
International Fisheries and Trade	303

CHAPTER 20

PROTECTING MARINE MAMMALS AND ENDANGERED MARINE SPECIES.....	306
Assessing the Threats to Marine Populations	306
Marine Mammals	306
Endangered Species	307
Reviewing Authorities and Responsibilities	309
The Marine Mammal Protection Act.....	309
The Endangered Species Act	309
Identifying and Overcoming Gaps in Protection	310
Clarifying Jurisdiction and Authority	310
Cooperation with States.....	311
Unclear Permitting and Review Standards	311
The Meaning of Harassment in the MMPA	312
The Promise of Programmatic Permitting For Marine Mammals	312

Expanding Research and Education	314
Understanding Behavior and Human Impacts.....	314
Effects of Noise on Marine Mammals	315
Public Education and Outreach.....	316
Applying Ecosystem-based Management Principles	316
Domestic Action.....	316
International Coordination.....	318

CHAPTER 21

PRESERVING CORAL REEFS AND OTHER CORAL COMMUNITIES.....320

Assessing the Status of Coral Ecosystems.....	320
The Distribution of Coral Ecosystems	320
The Value of Coral Ecosystems.....	321
Threats to Coral Ecosystems	322
Managing U.S. Coral Resources.....	323
Federal Agency Roles and Responsibilities	323
Interagency and Intergovernmental Coral Reef Management Initiatives.....	324
Improving the Management of U.S. Coral Resources	325
Promoting International Coral Reef Initiatives.....	326
Creating More Sustainable Harvesting Practices.....	327
Improving Understanding of Coral Ecosystems	327

CHAPTER 22

SETTING A COURSE FOR SUSTAINABLE MARINE AQUACULTURE.....330

Acknowledging the Growing Significance of Marine Aquaculture	330
Addressing Environmental Impacts of Aquaculture.....	331
Dealing with Uncertainties in the Existing Management Structure	332
Marine Aquaculture in Offshore Areas	332
The Current Regulatory Conundrum	332
Developing a New Marine Aquaculture Management Framework	333
Coordinated Action	333
Implementation.....	334
Increasing the Knowledge Base.....	335
Promoting International Improvements and Cooperation.....	336

CHAPTER 23

CONNECTING THE OCEANS AND HUMAN HEALTH.....338

Understanding the Links between the Oceans and Human Health	338
Maximizing the Beneficial Uses of Marine-derived Bioproducts.....	339
Specific Applications	340
Encouraging Interdisciplinary Marine Biomedical Research	341
Managing Marine Bioproduct Discovery and Development	343
Reducing the Negative Health Impacts of Marine Microorganisms.....	343
Harmful Algal Blooms	344
Marine Bacteria and Viruses.....	346
Contaminated Seafood	346
Implications of Global Climate Change.....	346
Progress through Research and Technology Development.....	347
Increasing Federal Coordination on Oceans and Human Health.....	348
Implementing Human Health Protections.....	348

Seafood Safety.....	348
Coastal Water Quality	349
Public Education and Outreach.....	350
Regional Dimensions.....	350

CHAPTER 24

MANAGING OFFSHORE ENERGY AND OTHER MINERAL RESOURCES ...352

Exercising Jurisdiction over Nonliving Resources in Federal Waters.....	352
Managing Offshore Oil and Gas Resources.....	352
From a Quiet Beginning to Prohibitions on Leasing.....	353
The OCS Leasing, Exploration, and Development Process.....	354
Trends in Domestic Offshore Oil and Gas Production.....	357
Federal Revenues from Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing and Production.....	357
State Involvement in OCS Oil and Gas Decision Making	361
Environmental Issues Related to Offshore Oil and Gas Production	361
Opportunities for Sharing Ocean Observation Information and Resources	364
Assessing the Potential of Offshore Methane Hydrates.....	364
Developing Offshore Renewable Energy Resources	365
Offshore Wind Energy Development	365
Wave Energy Conversion—Current and Tidal	366
Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion	367
Comprehensive Management for Offshore Renewable Energy.....	368
Managing Other Marine Minerals.....	368

PART VII

SCIENCE-BASED DECISIONS: ADVANCING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE OCEANS

CHAPTER 25

CREATING A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR INCREASING SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE.....374

Fortifying the Foundations of Ocean Understanding	374
Components of Ocean Science and Technology	374
Federal Leadership in Ocean Science and Technology	375
Reviving the Federal Investment	376
Creating a National Strategy.....	377
Advancing Ocean and Coastal Research	378
Climate Change.....	378
Marine Biodiversity.....	379
Regional Ecosystem Dynamics.....	379
Social and Economic Research.....	379
The National Sea Grant College Program.....	385
Agency Strategies and Funding Mechanisms	385
Building a National Ocean Exploration Program	386
The Value of Ocean Exploration.....	387
Growing Calls for a National Program.....	387
Coordinating and Consolidating Marine Operations	388
Integrated National Maps and Assessments	389
Federal Mapping and Charting Activities.....	389
Providing Useful Information to Congress.....	391



CHAPTER 26

ACHIEVING A SUSTAINED, INTEGRATED OCEAN

OBSERVING SYSTEM	394
Making the Case for an Integrated Ocean Observing System.....	394
Assessing Existing Observing Systems	395
Coastal and Ocean Observing Systems	395
Committing to Creation of the IOOS.....	396
Creating a Governance Structure for the IOOS.....	397
National Planning.....	397
Ocean.US.....	398
Regional Structure	398
Reaching Out to the User Community.....	399
Assembling the Elements of a Successful IOOS.....	400
Critical Environmental Variables.....	400
Converting Research into Operational Capabilities	402
Coordinating Civilian Satellite Observations.....	403
Developing Useful End Products Based on IOOS Data.....	405
Funding the National IOOS.....	406
System Cost Estimates.....	407
Strengthening Earth Observations through National and International Partnerships....	409
Other U.S. Operational Observing Systems.....	409
Enhancing Global Cooperation	409

CHAPTER 27

ENHANCING OCEAN INFRASTRUCTURE AND

TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT	412
Supporting Ocean and Coastal Activities with Modern Tools	412
Improving Infrastructure and Technology.....	413
Gaps in Infrastructure	413
Gaps in Technology Development.....	413
Maximizing Resources through Collaboration	414
A National Strategy.....	414
Periodic Reviews and Assessments	415
Funding the Modernization of Critically Needed Assets.....	416
Essential Science Infrastructure and Technology Components.....	416
Other Essential Infrastructure and Technology Components.....	421
Creating Virtual Marine Technology Centers.....	426

CHAPTER 28

MODERNIZING OCEAN DATA AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

428	
Turning Oceans of Data into Useful Products.....	428
Reviewing the Data Management Structure	429
Types of Data Centers.....	429
Ocean and Coastal Data	431
Coping with the Flood of Incoming Data.....	432
Reinventing Data and Information Management.....	432
Interagency Planning.....	432
Access to Data and Information.....	435
Incorporating Data into the National Data Centers	437
Meeting the Challenges of a New Century.....	438

PART VIII

**THE GLOBAL OCEAN:
U.S. PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL POLICY**



CHAPTER 29

ADVANCING INTERNATIONAL OCEAN SCIENCE AND POLICY.....442

Acting Globally to Safeguard the Oceans.....442

Reviewing the Evolution of the International Ocean Regime.....443

Developing and Implementing International Policy443

 Guiding Principles.....444

 The Law of the Sea Convention.....444

 Other Ocean-related International Agreements.....445

 Collaboration for International Ocean Policy.....449

 Emerging International Management Challenges450

 Scientific Input to U.S. Policy Makers452

Enhancing International Ocean Science.....452

 International Ocean Science Programs.....453

 The Global Ocean Observing System.....453

 U.S. Scientific Activities Abroad454

Building International Capacity in Ocean Science and Management.....454

PART IX

**MOVING AHEAD: IMPLEMENTING A
NEW NATIONAL OCEAN POLICY**



CHAPTER 30

FUNDING NEEDS AND POSSIBLE SOURCES458

Investing in Change.....458

Acknowledging the Cost of Taking Action.....459

 Deferred Costs.....462

 Costs Beyond the Scope of the Commission’s Report.....463

Itemizing Major Funding Areas463

 The National Ocean Policy Framework.....463

 Ocean Education.....464

 Ocean Science and Exploration464

 Monitoring, Observing, and Mapping.....465

 Other Ocean and Coastal Management Challenges.....466

Recognizing the Important Roles of Nonfederal Authorities.....466

Dedicating Revenue from Ocean Uses for Improved Ocean Management.....467

 Existing and Emerging Uses.....467

 Revenues for Ocean and Coastal Management: The Ocean Policy Trust Fund.....468

Understanding the Changing Ocean and Coastal Budget.....469

CHAPTER 31

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS.....472

Context for the Recommendations.....472

 Guiding Principles.....472

 Creating a Strong Role for States473

 The Need for Congressional Leadership.....474

Index to the Recommendations	475
Recommendations to Congress.....	475
Recommendations to the Executive Branch Leadership.....	475
Recommendations to Federal Government Agencies	476
Recommendations to Regional Bodies	479
Recommendations to States.....	479
Recommendations Related to International Ocean Science, Policy, and Management	479
Complete List of Recommendations as They Appear in the Report.....	480

PART X
APPENDICES



Printed in the Main Report:

APPENDIX A	
OCEANS ACT OF 2000	A 1
APPENDIX B	
ACRONYMS APPEARING IN THE REPORT	B 1
APPENDIX C	
LIVING NEAR... AND MAKING A LIVING FROM... THE NATION’S COASTS AND OCEANS, BY CHARLES S. COLGAN.....	C 1
APPENDIX D	
GLOSSARY OF FEDERAL OCEAN AND COASTAL-RELATED COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES, COUNCILS, LAWS, AND PROGRAMS.....	D 1
APPENDIX E	
PROPOSED STRUCTURE FOR COORDINATION OF FEDERAL OCEAN ACTIVITIES	E 1
APPENDIX F	
CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES AND SUBCOMMITTEES WITH JURISDICTION OVER OCEAN AND COASTAL ISSUES	F 1
APPENDIX G	
DETAILED COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE U.S. COMMISSION ON OCEAN POLICY	G 1

INDEX

EXTERNAL APPENDICES

Printed as Separate Documents:

Available Electronically on CD or at www.oceancommission.gov

SPECIAL ADDENDUM

GOVERNORS' COMMENTS ON THE PRELIMINARY REPORT

APPENDIX 1

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE U.S. COMMISSION ON OCEAN POLICY SYNTHESIS INDEXED BY POLICY TOPIC

APPENDIX 2

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE U.S. COMMISSION ON OCEAN POLICY SUMMARY INDEXED BY PRESENTER

APPENDIX 3

NATIONAL MARINE EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

APPENDIX 4

U.S. OCEAN-RELATED ACADEMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

APPENDIX 5

INVENTORY OF U.S. OCEAN AND COASTAL FACILITIES

APPENDIX 6

REVIEW OF U.S. OCEAN AND COASTAL LAW: THE EVOLUTION OF OCEAN GOVERNANCE OVER THREE DECADES

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1.1 The Value of the Oceans	31
Figure 1.2 The Value of the Coasts	32
Figure 1.3 The Coasts: From the Nearshore to Coastal Watersheds	35
Figure 1.4 The Shift from Goods to Services in the Ocean Economy	36
Figure 1.5 Population Density Peaks Near the Shore	43
Figure 2.1 Invited Panelists Represented All Sectors of the Ocean Community	58
Figure 3.1 Large Marine Ecosystems Correspond to Natural Features	64
Figure 3.2 The Foundations of a New National Ocean Policy	68
Figure P.1 Lines of U.S. Authority in Offshore Waters	71
Figure 4.1 Ocean and Coastal Activities Are Conducted by Many Federal Departments and Agencies	78
Figure 4.2 Proposed Structure for Coordination of Federal Ocean Activities.....	83
Figure 5.1 Alignment of Federal Regions Is Essential for Communication.....	94
Figure 6.1 Coordination Is Essential in Busy Offshore Waters	99
Figure 7.1 Proposals to Reorganize Federal Ocean Management.....	109
Table 7.1 Thirty Years of Proposals to Reorganize Federal Management of Ocean and Coastal Resources	116
Figure 8.1 Proposed Structure for the Coordination of Federal Ocean Education Activities.....	126
Figure 8.2 U.S. Students Fall Behind in Science.....	131
Figure 8.3 Environment-based Education Boosts Overall Academic Achievement.....	131
Figure 10.1 The Growing Cost of Natural Disasters	163
Figure 11.1 Dramatic Coastal Land Loss in Louisiana.....	174
Figure 12.1 Dams Impede Sediment Destined for the Coast	182
Table 13.1 The Leading Role of the United States in International Trade.....	193
Figure 13.1 Ports Are the Primary Gateway for International Trade	194
Figure 13.2 Goods Traveling through U.S. Ports Are Transported Nationwide	195
Figure 14.1 Report Card on Regional Coastal Conditions	205
Figure 14.2 Land-based Nutrients Can Cause Death on the Seafloor.....	206
Figure 14.3 Changes in Funding for Water Pollution Controls	208
Figure 14.4 Controlling Nonpoint Source Pollution Is Key to Cleaner Waters	213
Figure 14.5 Thirty States Contribute to the “Dead Zone” in the Gulf of Mexico	216
Figure 14.6 Looking Skyward: Accounting for Airshed Deposition	223
Figure 15.1 Watershed Monitoring Has Been Reduced Near the Coasts.....	230
Figure 16.1 Most Cruise Ship Travel Originates in U.S. Waters	242
Figure 16.2 The Oil Pollution Act Curbs Spills in U.S. Waters	247
Figure 17.1 Great Lakes States Take Lead in Implementing Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plans	254
Figure 17.2 Addressing Aquatic Invasive Species Regionally	255
Figure 18.1 Trash at the Beach Comes from Many Sources	265
Figure 19.1 Fishery Litigation Grows as Interests Clash.....	276
Figure 19.2 U.S. Fisheries Are Managed at the Regional Level.....	283
Figure 19.3 Migratory Fish Require Coordination Across Multiple Jurisdictions	284
Figure 20.1 Sea Lion Populations in Danger.....	317
Figure 21.1 Tropical Waters Are Home to the Majority of Known Reefs	321
Figure 21.2 Deep, Cold-water Coral Reefs Found Throughout U.S. Waters.....	322
Figure 22.1 The United States Imports More Seafood Than It Exports.....	331
Table 23.1 The Bounty of the Sea	342

Figure 23.1 Harmful Algal Blooms on the Rise.....	345
Figure 24.1 Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing Has Been Limited to a Few Planning Areas.....	355
Figure 24.2 A “Process Rich” but Clear Path to Offshore Leasing, Exploration, and Development Activities.....	356
Table 24.1 Federal Revenues from Offshore Mineral Development.....	359
Figure 24.3 Oil Inputs to the North American Marine Environment.....	363
Figure 24.4 Pipelines Are a Leading Source of Oil Leaks from OCS Infrastructure.....	363
Figure 25.1 Proposed Structure for the Coordination of Federal Ocean Science Activities.....	376
Figure 25.2 Ocean Research Is Neglected as Part of the National Research Budget.....	377
Table 25.1 Organizations Collecting Socioeconomic Data on the Ocean and Coasts.....	383
Figure 26.1 Many Different Platforms Collect Data as Part of the IOOS.....	396
Table 26.1 Proposed Core Variables for the IOOS.....	401
Table 26.2 Proposed Supplemental IOOS Variables.....	401
Table 26.3 Proposed Annual Costs for Implementation of the IOOS.....	407
Table 26.4 Proposed Start-up Costs for the IOOS.....	407
Table 28.1 National Civilian and Military Data Centers.....	430
Figure 28.1 The Flood of Ocean and Coastal Data into NOAA.....	432
Figure 28.2 The Growing Demand for Ocean Data.....	433
Table 29.1 U.S. Participation in International Ocean Agreements.....	446
Table 30.1 Summary of Costs Associated with Recommendations of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy.....	460

LIST OF BOXES

Box 1.1 Defining Coastal Areas.....	34
Box 1.2 The “Fourth Seacoast”—The Great Lakes	38
Box. 2.1 Public Meetings of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy	57
Box P.1 Acknowledging Change: The Need to Update Federal Laws	73
Box 5.1 Regional Approaches at Work	88
Box 5.2 Nature and Functions of Regional Ocean Councils.....	91
Box 5.3 Moving Toward Improved Federal and Stakeholder Coordination in the Great Lakes Region	93
Box 6.1 Swimming through Hoops: Establishing an Offshore Aquaculture Facility	101
Box 6.2 Sunken Treasure: Our Underwater Cultural Heritage	102
Box 7.1 Improving Ocean and Coastal Management by Enhancing NOAA’s Capacity	111
Box 7.2 Federal Ocean and Coastal Activities in Agencies other than NOAA	113
Box 7.3 Historical Precedent for Presidential Reorganization of the Executive Branch	115
Box 8.1 The Need for Qualified Science Teachers	133
Box 8.2 COOL Professional Development for Teachers.....	134
Box 8.3 Today’s Kids ... Tomorrow’s Ocean Professionals.....	135
Box 8.4 The Ocean Information Gap	142
Box 8.5 What Is Informal Education?	143
Box 8.6 NOAA’s National Marine Sanctuaries Program as a Vehicle for Public Education.....	144
Box 8.7 Equal Opportunity Educators	145
Box 9.1 Coastal Activities Are Big Business.....	151
Box 9.2 The Smart Growth Movement.....	152
Box 9.3 What Is a Coastal Watershed?.....	154
Box 9.4 Balancing Federal Ocean Activities with State Coastal Management Programs: The Federal Consistency Tool	158
Box 10.1 Hurricanes Wreak Havoc Along the Coast.....	164
Box 10.2 New Orleans at Risk	165
Box 11.1 Examples of Large-scale Coastal Habitat Restoration Efforts	174
Box 11.2 A Community Habitat Restoration Effort: Friends of Heeia State Park	177
Box 12.1 Sediment: Friend or Foe	181
Box 12.2 The Legacy of Sediment Contamination	183
Box 12.3 Beach Nourishment: One Use for Dredged Sediment.....	186
Box 13.1 Federal Members of the Interagency Committee for the Marine Transportation System	199
Box 13.2 Nonfederal Member Organizations of the Marine Transportation System National Advisory Council	199
Box 14.1 Nutrient Pollution in Coastal Waters	206
Box 14.2 The Impact of Farm Nutrients on the Marine Environment	216
Box 15.1 Ocean and Coastal Monitoring Needs	227
Box 15.2 Keeping Up With New Contaminants	234
Box 17.1 What Is an Invasive Species?	253
Box 17.2 Federal Departments and Agencies with Roles in Invasive Species Management.....	260
Box 18.1 Abandoned Fishing Nets Catch a Wave to Hawaii.....	270
Box 19.1 Dedicated Access Privileges: A Better Description.....	289

Box 20.1 Making a Case for Ecosystem-based Management: The Steller Sea Lion.....	317
Box 23.1 Special Focus on Microbial Diversity.....	341
Box 24.1 Offshore Liquefied Natural Gas Ports May Be on the Horizon	358
Box 24.2 The Federal Consistency Provision and Offshore Oil and Gas Development	362
Box 24.3 A Mighty Wind Blows in Cape Cod	367
Box 25.1 Examples of Ocean and Coastal Science Needs.....	380
Box 25.2 Primary Federal Agencies that Conduct Science-based Marine Operations	389
Box 25.3 Selected Ocean and Coastal Reports from the Former Congressional Office of Technology Assessment.....	391
Box 26.1 Components of the Integrated Ocean Observing System.....	396
Box 26.2 Signatories to the Ocean.US Memorandum of Agreement.....	398
Box 26.3 The National Weather Service: An Investment That Paid Off.....	406
Box 26.4 An Investment with Big Returns: The Economic Value of Ocean Observations.....	408
Box 28.1 Data Management Terminology.....	429
Box 29.1 Selected International Bodies with Ocean-related Responsibilities	451
Box 29.2 U.S. Involvement in International Capacity Building Efforts	455

PHOTOGRAPH IDENTIFICATION AND CREDITS

Bass Harbor lighthouse, ME, <i>Fotosearch</i>	28
Sunbathers on the beach, <i>Corbis</i>	30
Ship's wheel and maps, <i>Corbis</i>	48
Driftwood and beach, <i>Photolink</i>	60
Satellite photograph of Boston, MA, <i>Corbis</i>	74
Bridge in Newport, RI, <i>Fotosearch</i>	76
Waves crashing on the shore, <i>Photolink</i>	86
Fishing boat, <i>Corbis</i>	98
Storm clouds over the ocean, <i>Photolink</i>	108
Man and children net fishing, <i>Wonderfile</i>	120
Boy examining aquatic organisms, <i>Corbis</i>	122
Fort Lauderdale, FL, <i>Wonderfile</i>	148
Sailboats in front of Boston skyline, <i>Photolink</i>	150
Hurricane damage near the shore, NOAA Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research.....	162
Sunset and reeds, <i>Photolink</i>	170
A heavily silted river enters the ocean near San Juan, PR, NOAA Photo Library.....	180
Cranes at shipyard loading and unloading cargo, <i>Fotosearch</i>	192
Coastal waters, <i>Corbis</i>	202
Sewage outfall, <i>Corbis</i>	204
Polluted stream, <i>Corbis</i>	226
Coast Guard helicopter assists sinking vessel, <i>PhotoLink</i>	236
Inside of a 2-inch pipe clogged with zebra mussels, <i>Don Schloesser</i> , <i>Great Lakes Science Center, National Biological Services</i>	252
Trash and debris washed up on a beach, <i>PhotoLink</i>	264
Pink fish near crinoid on reef, <i>Corbis</i>	272
Fishermen haul in their catch, NOAA Photo Library.....	274
Leopard seal, <i>PhotoLink</i>	306
Blue starfish on coral reef, <i>Corbis</i>	320
Fish farms in Ago Bay, Japan, <i>Corbis</i>	330
A red-tide event off the coast of San Diego, CA, <i>Peter J.S. Franks, SIO</i>	338
Ocean Confidence oil rig, <i>Diamond Offshore Drilling Company</i>	352
Scientist collecting samples from Antarctic waters, <i>Scripps Institution of Oceanography</i>	372
Sample collecting device being lowered from a research vessel, <i>Scripps Institution of Oceanography</i>	374
False-color satellite image showing Chlorophyll A concentration, 1997–2002, <i>The SeaWiFS Project, NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center and ORBIMAGE</i>	394
DSV Alvin underwater exploration vehicle, NOAA Photo Library	412
Space Environment Center, Boulder, CO, <i>NOAA Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research</i>	428
Planet Earth, <i>Corbis</i>	440
Flags of the world, <i>Corbis</i>	442
School of Bluelined Snapper fish, <i>Corbis</i>	456
Aerial view of Seattle, NOAA Photo Library.....	458
Jellyfish, NOAA Office of Exploration.....	472
Green turtle, <i>Corbis</i>	524