

**CORAL REEF NEWS**  
Coral Reef Conservation Program  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
August 2005 Volume 2 No. 11



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>.

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## OF SPECIAL NOTE

***The State of Coral Reef Ecosystems of the United States and Pacific Freely Associated States: 2005 Report Now Available.*** At a press roundtable on August 18, Vice Admiral Lautenbacher and other NOAA leaders announced the availability of a significant new report, entitled *The State of Coral Reef Ecosystems of the United States and Pacific Freely Associated States: 2005*. The report, which is the second in a series, represents the first attempt to establish a quantitative baseline of the conditions of U.S. shallow coral reef ecosystems. The data and results in the report, which were contributed by over 160 scientists and resources managers in 14 jurisdictions, contribute to the nation's Integrated Ocean Observing System and support elements of the U.S. Ocean Action Plan. Each jurisdictional chapter was written by a team of local experts and provides a wealth of descriptive and spatial information, including the geographic extent of reef ecosystems; existing monitoring activities; summary information on water quality, benthic habitats, associated biological communities, and key threats to ecosystem health; current conservation management activities; and recommendations for future research and management actions. The report was coordinated, edited and published by the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science/Center for Coastal Monitoring and Assessment/Biogeography Team for NOAA's CRCP, and was designed to address priorities identified in the *National Coral Reef Action Strategy*, the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, and other guidance documents from the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force. The report may be downloaded at [http://ccma.nos.noaa.gov/ecosystems/coralreef/coral\\_report\\_2005](http://ccma.nos.noaa.gov/ecosystems/coralreef/coral_report_2005). See the "Coral Reefs in the News" section for media coverage of the release.

**NOAA CRCP Report to Congress Available Soon.** The CRCP's *Implementation of the National Coral Reef Action Strategy: Report to Congress on the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Agency Activities from 2002-2003* will soon be available. This document is the first of the biennial reports required by the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 to provide an update on all activities undertaken to implement the *National Coral Reef Action Strategy*, including a description of the funds obligated each fiscal year to advance coral reef conservation. As mandated, this report has been provided to Congress. The Report was developed in collaboration with the members of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force, including extensive input from state, territory and federal agency partners. This document proves valuable in recognizing the many accomplishments and partnerships that NOAA has initiated and participated in from 2002-2003.

**Post Hurricane Dennis Coral Damage Assessment in the Florida Keys.** On July 14th, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) Damage Assessment and Restoration team conducted a post Hurricane Dennis survey. From Key Largo to Key West, reefs showed evidence of the enormous hydrodynamic energy of this storm. The most striking example was the steel I-beam channel and reef markers that were bent in half at the substrate level. Elkhorn coral (*Acropora palmata*) thickets in Horseshoe Reef (Key Largo) had extensive sandblasting and scouring, while thickets in Looe Key were virtually destroyed and those in Western Sambo were heavily damaged. Many boulder brain (*Colpophyllia natans*) and star corals (*Montastrea annularis*, *Montastrea cavernosa*) were physically disrupted to the extent that the only remaining living tissue was on their underlying skeletons. For more information on the FKNMS, visit <http://www.fknms.nos.noaa.gov/>.

**Post Hurricane Dennis Coral Disease Monitoring in the Florida Keys.** Coral researchers at the Southeast Fisheries Science Center are observing extensive mortality of elkhorn coral (*Acropora palmata*) in the upper Florida Keys, including several populations that had appeared healthy and expanding over the previous 2-8 years of monitoring. The onset of the mortality event coincided with the occurrence of Hurricane Dennis, which caused obvious physical damage (see above news item). However, in the weeks since the hurricane, apparent disease mortality of standing colonies appears to be continuing. Substantial disease signs have been observed in at least nine reefs ranging from Biscayne National Park to Molasses Reef. This latest event exemplifies the rapid declines that have characterized the modern history of this species and have led NOAA Fisheries Service to propose listing it as 'threatened' under the Endangered Species Act. Learn about the proposed listing at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/protres.htm>.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Profiles Document Released Highlighting NOAA's Activities on Deep Coral Communities.** The first version of a document highlighting NOAA's research activities on Deep Coral Communities (formerly referred to as Deep Water Corals) has been completed and is now available via NOAA's Coral Reef Information System at <http://coris.noaa.gov>. This is a living document and will be updated periodically to include programs across NOAA, and eventually national and international partners.

**NOAA Identification Guide on Atlantic Fishes to be Published Soon.** A new book, "Early Stages of Atlantic Fishes: An Identification Guide for the Western Central North Atlantic" was published in early

August. This is a two volume set comprising over 2,600 pages that treats all fishes with pelagic eggs, larvae, and juveniles from North Carolina to the Equator including the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea (FAO Fishing Area 31). All reef fish families are covered including, *Lutjanidae*, *Chaetodontidae*, *Labridae*, *Scaridae*, *Pomacanthidae*, *Pomacentridae*, *Gobiidae*, *Blenniidae*, to name a few. Over 70 international experts contributed chapters to this effort that was edited and coordinated by William J. Richards, Ph.D. of the NOAA Fisheries Southeast Fisheries Science Center in Miami. The two-volume set may be ordered from CRC Press (<http://www.crcpress.com/>, 800-272-7737). Catalog No. 1916, ISBN:0-8493-1916-1. Price \$395.00.

**New Study Published on the Potential Area of Shallow-water Coral Reef Ecosystems in the U.S.** *Coral Reefs*, the journal of the International Society for Reef Studies, recently published on-line a new study presenting the results of a geographic information system-based analysis to derive comprehensive, consistent estimates of the potential area of shallow-water, tropical and subtropical coral ecosystems within the territorial sea and exclusive economic zone of the United States. Results indicate that previous studies underestimated the extent of potential coral ecosystems for some locations in U.S. tropical and subtropical waters by as much as 100 percent and that the regional distribution of coral ecosystems has been incorrectly reported. The article can be accessed at: <http://www.springerlink.com/app/home/contribution.asp?wasp=f7e6379e51a94d1391a14fa188202819&referrer=parent&backto=issue,5,27;journal,1,44;linkingpublicationresults,1:100407,1>

**New Publication Available on the Movement of Yellowtail Snapper and Black Grouper in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.** In November 2001, NOAA scientists tagged a total of 14 yellowtail

snapper (*Ocyurus chrysurus* Bloch 1790) and black grouper (*Mycteroperca bonaci* Poey 1860) inside the Conch Reef Research Only Area (a no-take marine reserve) in the northern Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. Their objective was to characterize site fidelity and movement behavior of these heavily exploited species along the reef tract to the north and south of the release point using acoustic telemetry. Results indicate that both species show site fidelity to Conch Reef. Future studies will seek to characterize this site fidelity with increased temporal and spatial resolution at Conch Reef. This report is available on the National Marine Sanctuary Program website at [http://www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov/special/con\\_series/lindholm.html](http://www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov/special/con_series/lindholm.html), and in hard copy.

**New NOAA Publication Available on Coral/Sponge Assemblages at the Olympic Coast NMS.** The following NOAA Technical Memorandum was published with three Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (OCNMS) staff members as co-authors: “Hyland, J., C. Cooksey, E. Bowlby, M.S. Brancato, and S. Intelmann. 2005. A pilot survey of deepwater coral/sponge assemblages and their susceptibility to fishing/harvest impacts at the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary. Cruise Report for NOAA Ship McArthur II Cruise AR-04-04; Leg 2. NOAA Technical Memorandum NOS NCCOS 15. NOAA/NOS Center for Coastal Environmental Health and Biomolecular Research, Charleston, SC. 13 p.” The document can be accessed at <http://www.coastalscience.noaa.gov/documents/ar0404leg2.pdf> (pdf).

## UPDATES

### *Atlantic*

**Coral Disease and Health Experts Meet to Develop Standardized Nomenclature for Coral Diseases.** Fifteen members of the Coral

Disease and Health Consortium (CDHC), representing human and veterinary pathology as well as the world’s leading experts in coral pathology, met for a workshop at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine in Charleston, South Carolina from July 11-14, 2005. Their mission was to devise a standardized scientific nomenclature for studying coral diseases microscopically, much like the work done in human pathology two centuries ago. Participants at the workshop observed structures microscopically that had never been described, requiring them to devise a scientifically acceptable nomenclature that could precisely describe their observations to other pathologists. A new high-resolution digital technology called Virtual Slides was also introduced and used at the workshop. This technology allows coral disease researchers to connect with experts across the globe and communicate in real-time on issues of coral disease. The workshop, titled “The Coral Disease and Health Workshop: Advanced Coral Histopathology II,” was co-organized by scientists from the NOAA Center for Coastal Environmental Health and Biomolecular Research (CCEHBR) and the United States Geological Survey. The workshop was sponsored by CDHC, CCEHBR International Registry of Coral Pathology, the CRCP, and the MUSC Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine. Learn more about the CDHC at [http://www.coral.noaa.gov/coral\\_disease/index.shtml](http://www.coral.noaa.gov/coral_disease/index.shtml).

### **Coral Disease Survey Completed in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.**

The NOAA ship *NANCY FOSTER* (<http://www.moc.noaa.gov/nf/index.html>) recently completed its annual coral reef disease survey in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS), conducted from August 16th-28th. The cruise re-visited long-term sampling stations from the Tortugas to the

upper Keys. Those on board the cruise included FKNMS staff, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) scientist for the FKNMS, scientists from EPA's Gulf Breeze lab, and the former director of Mote's Tropical Research Laboratory.

**Research and Outreach Activities Planned for Oculina Banks Cruise.** During the week of August 8<sup>th</sup>, scientists from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) met with collaborators in Ft. Pierce, Florida to finalize plans for the upcoming Oculina Banks research and monitoring cruise that will take place in October 2005. Representatives from NOAA's Undersea Research Center, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute discussed logistics, site selection, and research objectives for the cruise. Additionally, scientists had the opportunity to meet with NOAA representatives from the Deep Water Coral Outreach and Education team to prepare for outreach activities associated with the cruise. These include a (1) teachers' workshop scheduled for September 17<sup>th</sup> in Titusville, Florida; (2) a Port Day event for regional managers, teachers, students, media, etc; (3) a media excursion on the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission vessel *C.T. RANDALL* out to the Oculina Banks during the research cruise; and (4) At-Sea weblogs which will be posted daily during the cruise. Learn more about the SEFSC at <http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/>.

**Film Crews Capture Mass Coral Spawning Event in Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary at End of August.** The annual mass coral spawning event in the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary (FGBNMS) occurred between August 24<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. This year, two major film projects were conducted during this event. First, the production crew from Jean-Michel Cousteau's Ocean Futures Society was at the

FGBNMS aboard the vessel *HOLO KAI* (owned by the Oceanic Conservation Organization) to film a segment for their upcoming PBS documentary on America's National Marine Sanctuaries. The FGBNMS vessel *POINT GLASS* was on hand to help support the Ocean Futures Society's diving operations, and to conduct additional research. For the coral spawning segment, Dr. Mark Vermeij (University of Amsterdam) provided expertise on coral reproductive ecology and investigated the use of fluorescence technology in coral recruitment studies. The segment will include the below-water portions of the oil and gas platforms located inside the boundary of the FGBNMS, and an "on-platform" interview between Jean-Michel Cousteau and Tracy Krohn, the Chief Executive Officer of W&T Offshore, the company that operates the platform. The second major film project conducted to document the coral spawning event in the FGBNMS was led by Howard and Michele Hall of Howard Hall Productions, who filmed the event for an upcoming IMAX 3D film. The IMAX camera and underwater housing weighs close to 2000 lbs., and had to be lifted into the water with a davit. Hurricane Katrina cut the cruises short by two days, but the main spawning event that occurred on August 26<sup>th</sup> was captured on film by both crews. Learn more about the FGBNMS at <http://flowergarden.noaa.gov/>.

### *Pacific*

**Hanalei Watershed Hui Coordinates Another Summer of Research at Hanalei Bay, Kauai.** Hanalei Watershed Hui, a community-based American Heritage River Initiative and an Environmental Protection Agency Targeted Watershed Grant Project, is partnering with scientists for another summer of intensive interagency cooperative research on the effects of sediment and other non-point source pollution on the coral reefs of Hanalei

Bay, Kauai, Hawai'i. Scientists will be collaborating to continue projects in Hanalei Bay on coral larval recruitment, sedimentation of the reefs, porewater toxicity testing, and submarine groundwater discharge. A study was recently completed on "Temporal Trends in Hanalei Bay Marine Benthic Communities Since 1992," and the sixth annual Coral Reef Assessment and Monitoring Program survey will be conducted. For more info, visit <http://www.hanaleiwatershedhui.org/science/research.htm>.

**Coral Reef Watch Completes Project to Model Climate Impacts on Palau's Coral Reef Ecosystem.** NOAA's Coral Reef Watch recently completed a project to create a model for predicting heat stress on Palau's coral reef ecosystem. This project emerged from a need to better understand the response of this ecosystem to one of its major future threats – heat stress – as The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Palau Government worked to design and implement a marine protected areas network (PAN) for Palau. The Palau Government is very pleased with the outcome of the project, which has helped to significantly increase knowledge of hydrodynamic processes around Palau, and to predict heat stress with great accuracy by current oceanographic modeling standards. Information from the model will be used in strategic development of the PAN, in an attempt to build in resilience against potential changes to future climate. The final report will soon be available through TNC and later as a NOAA Technical Report. These results will also be presented at the upcoming U.S. Coral Reef Task Force meetings in Palau in November. Learn more about NOAA's Coral Reef Watch at <http://coralreefwatch.noaa.gov/>.

**Increase of Invasive Algae Noted in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.** An internationally recognized phycologist and member of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve

Advisory Council has documented a rapid increase in the biomass of the invasive algae *Hypnea musciformis* entangled in NOAA Fisheries lobster traps recovered at Mokumanamana (Necker Island) in July. This trend is disturbing given the relative scarcity of alien and invasive marine species in the NWHI. *Hypnea* is best known in Hawai'i as an invasive algae that washes ashore by the ton onto the south-facing beaches of Maui. The NOAA ship *HI'IALAKAI*, currently engaged in a cruise for the NWHI Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve, supported initial *in situ* diver surveys for *Hypnea* at Mokumanamana this week. Thus far, these surveys have failed to find large quantities of *Hypnea*. The Reserve's NWHI Reef Assessment and Monitoring Program cruise on *HI'IALAKAI* will also conduct further surveys at Mokumanamana when it stops there next month. For more information, read the August 12<sup>th</sup> *Associated Press* article "Scientists tracking pesky alien seaweed in Hawaiian Islands" at <http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/science/20050812-0926-wst-alienseaweed.html>.

**Congressman Ed Case Joins NWHI Reserve's Educator-at-Sea Expedition.** Hawai'i Congressman Ed Case recently referred from the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve's first-ever Educator-at-Sea expedition aboard the NOAA *R/V HI'IALAKAI*, which set sail from Honolulu on Friday, August 12. Reserve Education Coordinator Andy Collins led a select group of ten Hawai'i educators on an expedition of discovery to the first three islands and atolls in the NWHI - Nihoa, Mokumanamana, and French Frigate Shoals. During the voyage the participants learned about the marine and terrestrial environments of the NWHI through a variety of hands-on activities and compared them to their "marine backyards" in the main Hawaiian Islands. Teacher journals, lessons and activities were posted to the NWHI Reserve website during the

voyage, and more formal curricula based on concepts gleaned from the voyage will be developed in the following months. On board were two scientists who gave lectures in the evenings and served as technical resources, as well as a support staff that ran the programs and aided in preparing education materials. Representative Case joined the voyage as a participant at French Frigate Shoals midway through the education cruise. A reporter from the Honolulu Star-Bulletin was onboard to document the entire voyage and posted daily stories from the vessel to the paper's website: [www.starbulletin.com](http://www.starbulletin.com). To learn more about the voyage, visit [www.hawaiianatolls.org](http://www.hawaiianatolls.org).

### International

**Census of Marine Life Coral Reef Research Initiative Kicks Off.** The Census of Marine Life (CoML)/Census of Coral Reefs (CReefs) project is a new research initiative to conduct a taxonomically diversified census of coral reef ecosystems throughout the globe. This international partnership, led by NOAA's Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center, the Australian Institute of Marine Science, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, and the Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology, will expand tropical taxonomic knowledge (with a particular focus on understudied species), increase the exchange of coral reef ecosystem data dispersed throughout the globe, and develop new and innovative technology and sampling strategies, as well as contribute to the CoML barcode initiative. CReefs plans to work closely with the NOAA CRCP and other organizations on outreach and education, collaboration with other existing coral reef efforts, and collection and unification of data into the Ocean Biogeographic Information Center for research, management, and preservation purposes. For more information, visit the new CoML CReefs web page (CReefs site coming soon) at [www.coml.org/descrip/creefs.htm](http://www.coml.org/descrip/creefs.htm).

### National/Headquarters

**Coral Reef Monitoring Session Planned for Ocean Sciences Meeting in February.** Three NOAA scientists will convene a special session at the upcoming 2006 Ocean Sciences Meeting, February 20-24, in Hawai'i that highlights NOAA's Coral Reef Ecosystem Integrated Observing System (CREIOS). The session, entitled "Coral Reef Observing Systems: Monitoring Threats for Today and Tomorrow," will address the wide range of observing systems that have either been developed or are under development to monitor the threats facing coral reef ecosystems. These include satellites, buoy networks, *in situ* sensors, dedicated repeat cruises, and diver-based observations. More important than the individual observations, new approaches are needed to integrate these data and provide real-time or predictive information to managers. A centerpiece for this effort is the NOAA CREIOS, a potential component of NOAA's developing coastal Integrated Ocean Observing System. Talks will address the observing systems and efforts to integrate them into knowledge products and tools for managers to cope with increasing threats to coral ecosystems. Additional Meeting information is available from <http://www.agu.org/meetings/os06/>. Note that other NOAA scientists will also be leading sessions, including "Biodiversity of Coral Reef Ecosystems," "Benthic Environments I: Shallow-Water Habitats," and "Environmental Change and Its Impact on Coral Reefs."

**Multi-Agency Workshops on Coral Reef Grant Opportunities Held in the Caribbean.** On August 2-5, 2005, NOAA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service held a series of workshops on federal (and other) grant opportunities related to coral reef ecosystems in Puerto Rico and the U.S.

Virgin Islands. These workshops provided information on funding opportunities available to help address locally-based conservation and management of coral reef ecosystems (from watersheds to reefs). The workshops also offered guidance and tips for preparing a competitive grant application and opportunities for direct interaction with representatives from federal granting agencies. Information presented during the workshops will be posted on the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force website under “News and Announcements” at <http://www.coralreef.gov/>. Visit <http://www.coralreef.noaa.gov/funding/welcome.html> for funding opportunities available through the CRCP.

#### **Recent Data Product Additions to**

**CoRIS.** Coral bleaching alert emails, generated from satellite data and distributed by the Coral Reef Watch Program, are now collected and archived by NOAA’s Coral Reef Information System (CoRIS) at <ftp://data.nodc.noaa.gov/pub/outgoing/CoRIS/data/nesdis/ora/BleachingAlerts/>. The 24 reef locations for which Satellite Bleaching Alerts are available can be viewed at [http://www.osdpd.noaa.gov/PSB/EPS/CB\\_indices/coral\\_bleaching\\_indices.html](http://www.osdpd.noaa.gov/PSB/EPS/CB_indices/coral_bleaching_indices.html). In addition, three other products of the CRCP were recently added to NOAA’s Coral Reef Information System (CoRIS): (1) Data for predicting the flowpaths of floating pollutants from the Office of Response & Restoration’s Hawai’i Drift Card Survey (<http://response.restoration.noaa.gov/drifter.html>), (2) aerial photomosaics and habitat products from the Center for Coastal Monitoring and Assessment, Biogeography Team’s “An Ecological Characterization of the Salt River Bay National Historical Park and Ecological Preserve, U.S. Virgin Islands” project ([http://biogeo.nos.noaa.gov/products/sari\\_cd/data.htm](http://biogeo.nos.noaa.gov/products/sari_cd/data.htm)), and (3) fish and habitat assessment monitoring data for La Parguera, Puerto Rico; St. Croix, and St. John for the Caribbean Coral

Reef Ecosystem Monitoring project, also a product of the Biogeography Team ([http://www8.nos.noaa.gov/biogeo\\_public/quiry\\_main.aspx](http://www8.nos.noaa.gov/biogeo_public/quiry_main.aspx)). The CoRIS web site now offers users access to 13,672 diverse coral products.

## **CORAL REEFS IN THE NEWS**

### *Articles mentioning NOAA*

**“Researchers find recovering coral reef” – August 3, 2005 (*Antigua Sun*).** “A team of renowned researchers is making a rare and valuable find off the coast of Antigua: a ‘recovering’ coral reef.” <http://www.antiguasun.com/paper/?as=view&un=281935077507132005&an=183752099508032005&ac=Local>

**“National Geographic Leads Students On National Marine Sanctuary Field Study In Hawaii” – August 4, 2005 (*National Geographic News on WebWire*).** “Twelve middle-school students and their teachers are taking part in a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) National Marine Sanctuary Field Studies trip to the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary from Aug. 4 to 9, organized by the National Geographic Society.” <http://webwire.com/ViewPressRel.asp?SESSIONID=&aId=3592>

**“Ship off reef, sunk in deep water” – August 5, 2005 (*Honolulu Advertiser*).** “Recovery crews yesterday refloated and sank a 145-foot ship that had been aground on a reef in the Northwest Hawaiian Islands for more than a month.” <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050805/NEWS01/508050372/1190/NEWS>



**“Grounded Casitas is scuttled at sea” – August 5, 2005 (*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*).** “A ship that went aground in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands on July 2 was successfully removed from the reef and scuttled at sea yesterday.”  
<http://starbulletin.com/2005/08/05/news/story9.html>

**“Grounded Vessel Pulled off Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Reef” – August 5, 2005 (*Environment News Service*).** “The 145 foot motor vessel Casitas, which ran aground at Pearl and Hermes Atoll last month, has been extracted from the reef and "entombed" northwest of the atoll in approximately 7,200 feet of water, the Unified Command announced Thursday.” <http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/aug2005/2005-08-05-09.asp#anchor6>

**“Largest marine protected area in U.S. water designated” – August 9, 2005 (*SitNews, AK*).** “Monday NOAA Fisheries formalized the decision to proceed with designating the largest marine protected area in U.S. waters-bigger than the entire states of Texas and Colorado combined. The new Aleutian Islands Habitat Conservation Area will prohibit bottom trawling in an area exceeding 274,000 square nautical miles.”  
[http://www.sitnews.us/0805news/080905/080905\\_fish\\_habitat.html](http://www.sitnews.us/0805news/080905/080905_fish_habitat.html)

**“Governor Bush and Cabinet Approve Plan for Dry Tortugas National Park Creating the Largest Marine Reserve in North America” – August 9, 2005 (*The Ocean Conservancy Press Release in Environmental Media Services*).** “Tallahassee, FL – Governor Bush and the Florida Cabinet have unanimously approved the National Park Service’s management plan for the Dry Tortugas National Park.”  
[http://www.ems.org/nws/2005/08/09/governor\\_bush\\_an](http://www.ems.org/nws/2005/08/09/governor_bush_an)

**“Derelict fishing gear poses global threat to oceans” – August 10, 2005 (*San Diego Union-Tribune*).** “...Although the vast majority of fishing equipment is lost accidentally, fishermen sometimes discard fouled gear to avoid the hassle of proper disposal, said Russell Brainard, an oceanographer for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Honolulu. He has led a 7-year-old project to remove derelict commercial fishing nets from the northwestern Hawaiian Islands.”  
<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/world/20050810-9999-1n10gear.html>

**“Exploration of South Pacific Finds Strange New Species and Magical Scenes; Sets Records for NOAA Undersea Research” – August 10, 2005 (*NOAA Magazine*).** “...On one leg of the mission, researchers assessed living marine resources in waters of U.S. territories near Palmyra Atoll, Kingman Reef, Rose Atoll, Jarvis Island and American Samoa. In the first exploration of these waters below 200 meters, scientists expected to find high productivity, based on the numbers and diversity of organisms they observed in shallow coral reefs.”  
<http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2005/s2487.htm>

**“Cabinet urges fishing ban near Tortugas” – August 10, 2005 (*The Miami Herald*).** “The state Cabinet signed off on a new no-fishing research reserve in the Dry Tortugas, but a sportfishing lobbying group vowed to fight the plan.”  
<http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/news/12344058.htm>

**“Ocean classroom: Educators Go to the Northwestern Hawaiian Isles for Reef Lessons” – August 12, 2005 (*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*).** “Ten Hawaii educators embark today on an unprecedented trip to the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, where they will experience firsthand a unique coral reef ecosystem.”

<http://starbulletin.com/2005/08/12/news/story2.html>

**“White Plague Disease threatens local reef eco-systems around Islands” – August 12, 2005 (Cayman Net News, Cayman Islands).**

“The reef on Little Cayman is suffering from a chronic disease and this is causing most of the mortality that is being recorded in corals.”

<http://caymannetnews.com/2005/08/900/white.shtml>

**“Scientists tracking pesky alien seaweed in Hawaiian Islands” – August 12, 2005**

**(Associated Press in the San Diego Union Tribune and approx. 35 other outlets).**

“HONOLULU – An alien seaweed introduced here 31 years ago has spread rapidly throughout Hawaii and has even reached the remote, unspoiled Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, which has scientists worried.”

<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/science/20050812-0926-wst-alienseaweed.html>

**“Mokumanamana may hold Hawaiian secrets” – August 15, 2005 (Honolulu Star-Bulletin).**

“Yesterday, participants in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s cruise for teachers to the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands had reached Mokumanamana. In addition to learning about the biology and natural resources of the area on this 10-day voyage, the group also is hearing about the role of the Northwestern Islands in Hawaiian history.”

<http://starbulletin.com/breaking/breaking.php?id=3705>

**“Absence of algae brings hope” – August 16, 2005 (Honolulu Star-Bulletin).**

“ABOARD THE HI’IALAKAI >>When Cindy Hunter went on an 85-foot dive near the Northwestern Hawaiian island of Mokumanamana on Sunday, the good news was that the algae wasn’t there.”

<http://starbulletin.com/2005/08/16/news/story6.html>

**“Keeping track of the Nassau Grouper” – August 16, 2005 (Cayman Net News, Cayman Islands).**

“... With the help of a grant from the NOAA International Coral Reef Conservation Program and additional funding from PADI Project AWARE, a multi-year acoustic tagging project on the Little Cayman aggregation has been initiated.”

<http://caymannetnews.com/2005/08/900/white.shtml>

**“Coral reef ecosystems declining in U.S. waters” – August 18, 2005 (Associated Press in USA Today and approx. 50 other outlets).**

“Coral reef ecosystems, among the oldest and most diverse forms of life, are declining in U.S. waters because of overfishing, climate change, marine diseases, land-based pollution, storms and grounded ships.”

[http://www.usatoday.com/tech/science/2005-08-18-coral-reefs-threatened\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/tech/science/2005-08-18-coral-reefs-threatened_x.htm)

**“NOAA Releases National Study of U.S. Coral Reef Ecosystems: New Report Makes Case for an Integrated Observing System” – August 18, 2005 (NOAA Magazine).**

“The nation's coral reef ecosystems continue to face numerous stressors from both natural and human sources, including overfishing, disease, pollution and climate change according to a new national assessment of the condition of U.S. shallow coral reef ecosystems.”

<http://www.noanews.noaa.gov/stories2005/s2490.htm>

**“NOAA Cites Threats to U.S., Pacific Coral Reefs” – August 19, 2005 (The Washington Post).**

“Coral reefs in U.S. waters and the Pacific are under stress from both humans and nature, according to a national assessment released yesterday by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.”

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp->

[dyn/content/article/2005/08/18/AR2005081801842.html](http://www.dyn/content/article/2005/08/18/AR2005081801842.html) (Free registration required)

**“Fishing, Climate Change, Development Jeopardize U.S. Coral Reefs” – August 19, 2005 (*Environment News Service*).** “Coral reef ecosystems of the United States and associated Pacific Islands are still under pressure from overfishing, disease, pollution, coastal development, and climate change finds a new national assessment of the condition of U.S. shallow coral reef ecosystems.”

<http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/aug2005/2005-08-19-01.asp>

**“Coral-reef study yields mixed results” – August 19, 2005 (*The Miami Herald*).** “A newly released report said Florida's coral reefs are still being affected by pollution, climate change and other factors.”

[http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/news/local/states/florida/counties/monroe\\_county/cities\\_neighborhoods/florida\\_keys/12424325.htm](http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/news/local/states/florida/counties/monroe_county/cities_neighborhoods/florida_keys/12424325.htm)

(Free registration required)

**“Unwelcome guest threatens coral reef: Foreign species making itself at home on nearby oil platforms has scientists worried” – August 19, 2005 (*The Houston Chronicle*).**

“The health of the Gulf of Mexico's only true coral reef could be compromised by an invasion of a non-native coral species colonizing nearby oil and gas platforms, a federal report released Thursday has concluded.”

<http://www.chron.com/cs/CDA/ssistory.mpl/metropolitan/3317028>

**“Report: Humans pose biggest danger to coral reefs” – August 19, 2005 (*Naples Daily News, FL*).** “Coral reef ecosystems around the country face stressors from a number of natural and human-related effects from overfishing, disease, climate change, pollution, and even the recent rash of hurricanes, says a report the National Oceanic and Atmospheric

Administration released Thursday.”

[http://www.naplesnews.com/npdn/news/article/0\\_2071,NPDN\\_14940\\_4013199,00.html](http://www.naplesnews.com/npdn/news/article/0_2071,NPDN_14940_4013199,00.html) (Free registration required)

**“Non-native coral may threaten Gulf reef” – August 20, 2005 (*Associated Press in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram*).** “HOUSTON - Oil and gas platforms in the Gulf of Mexico are providing homes for non-native coral that could threaten the area's only true coral reef, according to a federal report.”

<http://www.dfw.com/mld/startelegram/news/sta/te/12433409.htm>

**“NMI reefs ‘reasonably healthy’: Marine waters get highest possible rating” – August 21, 2005 (*Saipan Tribune, CNMI*).** “Coral reef ecosystems in the CNMI are, on the whole, reasonably healthy but those in the Northern Islands and more distant banks and reefs appear to be in better condition than those closer to population centers such as Saipan, according to a report released Friday by the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration.”

<http://www.saipantribune.com/newsstory.aspx?cat=1&newsID=49851>

**“Pulley Ridge coral reef off the Keys has scientists perplexed” – August 21, 2005 (*Associated Press in The Tallahassee Democrat and approx. 14 other outlets*).**

“OFF THE FLORIDA KEYS - A small craft hovers over a slimy purplish red creature feeding on small organisms as a diver combs the dark terrain, scooping up a spineless creature that looks so bizarre, it couldn't possibly be from Earth.”

<http://www.tallahassee.com/mld/tallahassee/12436102.htm>

**“Teachers return eager to share their encounter with Hawaii's remote islands” – August 22, 2005 (*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*).**

“While sitting on a jet boat waiting for others to finish snorkeling off the coast of

Mokumanamana last week, teacher Maggie Prevenas began composing a play about caring for the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, known to some as Hawaii's ancestor islands.”  
<http://starbulletin.com/2005/08/22/news/story1.html>

**“Case returns from NW islands trip” – August 22, 2005 (*The Garden Island, Kauai*).** “U.S. Rep. Ed Case, D-Neighbor Islands-rural O‘ahu, yesterday returned from a five-day trip to Northwestern Hawaiian Islands”  
<http://www.kauaiworld.com/articles/2005/08/22/news/news05.txt>

**“From pollution to diseases, coral reefs face array of problems” – August 22, 2005 (*The Virgin Islands Daily News*).** “ST. CROIX - The territory's coral reefs are under serious pressures including climate change, disease, tropical storms and coastal development and pollution, a study conducted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has concluded.”  
[http://www.virginislandsdailynews.com/index.pl/article\\_home?id=7846370](http://www.virginislandsdailynews.com/index.pl/article_home?id=7846370)

**“Proper management key to conserving Guam’s coral reefs” – August 28, 2005 (*KUAM News, Guam*).** “Among diving enthusiasts and tourists, our region is popular for its exotic underwater world. But appears that Guam's coral reefs are not in the precious minority of about 30% of the world's coral reefs that are healthy. The world’s coral reef ecosystems are facing both natural and manmade problems.”  
<http://www.kuam.com/news/14831.aspx>

**“Risk of bleaching lessened by storm” – August 30, 2005 (*Florida Keys News*).** “This weekend's rainy, windy weather was a downer for most, but good for at least one Keys inhabitant — the coral reef.”  
<http://keysnews.com/284114357209353.bsp.htm> (Free registration required)

### Other articles

**“World’s hot tourist spots show the effects of warming” – August 7, 2005 (*The New York Times in the Orlando Sentinel*).** “For decades, scientists have been warning the world about global warming. And while some observers call the increase in the Earth's temperature during the past century a natural evolution, the effects of that increase are beginning show in some of the world's most famous tourist destinations.”  
[http://www.orlandosentinel.com/travel/printedition/orl-travalaskaifyougo07080705aug07\\_0.1420111.story?coll=orl-travel-headlines-print](http://www.orlandosentinel.com/travel/printedition/orl-travalaskaifyougo07080705aug07_0.1420111.story?coll=orl-travel-headlines-print)

**“Passage of Dry Tortugas Plan Key to Protection, Management and Research of Remarkable Resource” – August 9, 2005 (*The Nature Conservancy Press Release*).** “ALTAMONTE SPRINGS, FL – The Nature Conservancy, World Wildlife Fund and The Ocean Conservancy together with interest groups that include commercial and recreational fishermen congratulate Gov. Jeb Bush and the Florida Cabinet on passage today of the Dry Tortugas National Park Management Agreement.”  
<http://nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/florida/press/press2040.html>

**“State pushes Keys to clean up sewage” – August 10, 2005 (*The News-Press, FL*).** “TALLAHASSEE — Gov. Jeb Bush and the Cabinet are losing patience with the tortoise pace at which the Florida Keys is cleaning up its tawdry, polluting ways.” <http://www.news-press.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050810/NEWS0105/508100425/1075>

**“GUAM: Coral Reefs Worth US\$140-million” – August 11, 2005 (*Pacific Magazine*).** “Guam’s coral reefs have a total economic value of \$140 million, accounting for 4 percent of the island’s national product, according to a draft report released yesterday

by an international team of specialists.”  
<http://www.pacificislands.cc/pina/pinadefault2.php?urlpinaid=16401>

**“Environmental lessons from tsunami as world's coastal population doubles” – August 11, 2005 (I-Newswire).** “Lessons from the tsunami: protect the coast and it will protect you. Coastal populations and ecosystems are more likely to bounce back from extreme coastal disasters by protecting local environments and building on local knowledge, according to a report published in Science.”  
<http://i-newswire.com/pr41634.html>

**“Sex returns to the reef” – August 12, 2005 (Florida Keys Keynoter).** “Coral spawn will arrive at month's end. The hard corals of the Florida Keys reefs have spent eons working out a simple system to perpetuate the species.”  
<http://www.keynoter.com/articles/2005/08/15/living/liv01.txt>

**“‘Coral spawning’ in Keys something to behold” – August 14, 2005 (Florida Today).** “ISLAMORADA - Divers will be flocking to the Florida Keys later this month to witness one of nature's most phenomenal nighttime extravaganzas.”  
<http://www.floridatoday.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050814/SPORTS05/508140319/102/SPORTS>

**“Illegal destruction of coral reefs worsened impact of tsunami” – August 15, 2005 (American Geophysical Union Press Release on EurekaAlert!).** “WASHINGTON - The illegal mining of corals off the southwest coast of Sri Lanka permitted far more onshore destruction from the 26 December 2004 tsunami than occurred in nearby areas whose coral reefs were intact.”  
[http://www.eurekaalert.org/pub\\_releases/2005-08/agu-ido081505.php](http://www.eurekaalert.org/pub_releases/2005-08/agu-ido081505.php)

**“Red Tide And Lack Of Oxygen Wipe Out Life Off Pinellas Coast” – August 16, 2005 (Tampa Tribune, FL).** “TAMPA - Scientists have confirmed what divers had been reporting for weeks: Large areas of the ocean floor off Pinellas County are devoid of life.”  
<http://news.tbo.com/news/MGB45B6MFCE.html>

**“Scientists: Red tide choked off oxygen to Gulf floor” – August 16, 2005 (The Associated Press in Dateline Alabama and approx. 50 other outlets).** “An unusually fierce red tide bloom this summer has choked off oxygen and killed undersea life in a large region of the Gulf of Mexico bottom about 10 miles offshore, scientists said.”  
<http://www.tuscaloosaneews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050816/APN/508160728&cache=3&template=dateline>

**“Laws to protect dwindling seagrass planned” – August 16, 2005 (The Royal Gazette, Bermuda).** “Up to one third of the Island’s vital seagrass fields have been lost since 1997 the Bermuda Biodiversity Project has found, scientists and government conservationists were told yesterday.”  
<http://www.theroyalgazette.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050816/NEWS/108160118>

**“Ingrid damaged 10pc of reef” – August 17, 2005 (Australian Associated Press in the Australian and approx. 25 other outlets).** “ONE of the most powerful cyclones to hit Australia in recent times damaged about 10 per cent of the Great Barrier Reef, scientists said today.”  
[http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/common/story\\_page/0,5744,16291623%255E1702,00.html](http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,5744,16291623%255E1702,00.html)

**“Bleaching emerges as major coral threat: Reefs changing colour in the Andaman Sea” – August 18, 2005 (Bangkok Post).** “The phenomenon of coral bleaching is emerging as

the leading threat to coral reefs in the Andaman Sea, just as they recovered from the effects of last December's tsunami, marine biologists warned yesterday."

[http://www.bangkokpost.com/News/18Aug2005\\_news05.php](http://www.bangkokpost.com/News/18Aug2005_news05.php)

**"Billion-dollar dive tourist industry under threat" – August 22, 2005 (*The Barbados Advocate*).** "THE CARIBBEAN'S billion-dollar dive tourism industry is under serious threat from coastal and marine pollution, according to latest reports released by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Resources Institute (WRI) and the Australian Institute of Marine Sciences (AIMS)."

<http://www.barbadosadvocate.com/NewViewNewsleft.cfm?Record=22513>

**"'Geology' September 05 cover story: Coral reef decline - not just overfishing" – August 24, 2005 (*EurekAlert!*).** "Unfortunately, reefs are now beset by problems ranging from local pollution and overfishing to outbreaks of coral disease and global warming."

[http://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2005-08/disl-s0082305.php](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2005-08/disl-s0082305.php)

**"University of Oregon scientists reveal how coral reefs got the blues" – August 25, 2005 (*EurekAlert!*).** "EUGENE -- University of Oregon scientists report their discovery of the basis for the blue coloration found in many coral reef formations in an article published this week by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences."

[http://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2005-08/uoo-uoo082505.php](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2005-08/uoo-uoo082505.php)

**"Community Structure of Corals and Reef Fishes at Multiple Scales" – August 26, 2005 (*Science*).** "Distributions of numerical abundance and resource use among species are fundamental aspects of community structure. Here we characterize these patterns for tropical reef fishes and corals across a 10,000-kilometer biodiversity gradient."

<http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/309/5739/1363?rss=1>

**"Lecture to examine decline of coral reefs" – August 29, 2005 (*South Florida Sun-Sentinel*).** "A scientist who explored the underwater world with Jacques Cousteau will introduce north-county residents to coral reefs that are different from those the dive pioneer showcased during televised expeditions aboard his Calypso." [http://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/local/broward/sfl-cpperry29aug29\\_0\\_3555397.story?coll=sfla-news-broward](http://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/local/broward/sfl-cpperry29aug29_0_3555397.story?coll=sfla-news-broward)

**"Thriving coral reef thrills marine research group" – August 29, 2005 (*San Francisco Chronicle*).** "Marine scientists sailing the central Pacific to study its remote coral reefs have reached an underwater Eden even more pristine than they had hoped for, according to e-mail dispatches they sent Sunday." <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2005/08/29/BAGB2EEO491.DTL>

**"Coral 'little damaged by tsunami'" – August 30, 2005 (*BBC News*).** "Almost 90% of coral reefs hit by the Indian Ocean tsunami escaped severe damage, according to research." <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/4196010.stm>

## UPCOMING EVENTS

If you have events you would like listed in future newsletters please contact [coralreef@noaa.gov](mailto:coralreef@noaa.gov).

### September 2005

16 – 18: **Marine Aquarium Conference of North America**. Washington, DC.

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

19 – 23: **Marine Technology Society and IEEE Oceanic Engineering Society Oceans Conference 2005**. Abstracts due Feb. 15, 2005. Washington, DC. <http://www.oceans2005.org/>

### October 2005

16 – 21: **24th International Submerged Lands Management Conference**. St. John, USVI.

<http://www.islc2005.org/>

18 – 19: **Conference on Coral Reef Restoration: Scientific Frameworks for Rehabilitation**. Miami, FL. [http://www.tfilearning.com/tfi/c/portal\\_public/layout?p\\_1\\_id=27.26](http://www.tfilearning.com/tfi/c/portal_public/layout?p_1_id=27.26)

23 – 28: **The First International Congress on Marine Protected Areas**. Geelong, Australia.

[www.impacongress.org](http://www.impacongress.org)

31 – Nov. 2: **Sustainable Beaches Conference 2005**. St. Petersburg, FL.

<http://www.cleanbeaches.org/events/summit/2005/>

31 – Nov. 2: **International Coral Reef Initiative General Meeting**. Koror, Palau.

<http://www.icriforum.org/secretariat.html>

### November 2005

4 – 7: **14<sup>th</sup> U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Meeting**. Koror, Palau.

<http://www.coralreef.gov/meetings/announcements.html>

7 – 11: **Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute Conference**. Note sessions relating to coral reef ecosystems (e.g. spawning aggregations, marine protected areas, etc.). San Andres Island, Colombia.

<http://www.gcfi.org/Conferences/58th/SanAndres58.htm>

28 – Dec. 2: **Third International Symposium on Deep-Sea Corals**. Miami, FL.

<http://www.conference.ifas.ufl.edu/coral>

### February 2006

16 – 20: **American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Annual Meeting**. St. Louis, MS. [http://www.aaas.org/meetings/Annual\\_Meeting/](http://www.aaas.org/meetings/Annual_Meeting/)

20 – 24: **13<sup>th</sup> Ocean Sciences Meeting**. Honolulu, HI. <http://www.agu.org/meetings/os06/>

### March 2006

1 – 2: **15<sup>th</sup> U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Meeting**. Dates tentative.

<http://www.coralreef.gov/meetings/announcements.html>

6 – 10: **World Maritime Technology Conference**. London, England. Note Technical Programme on Reefs of the World. <http://www.wmtc2006.com/technical/rw/>

### April 2006

19 – 21: **First International Symposium on Mangroves as Fish Habitat**. Miami, FL.

<http://www.rsmas.miami.edu/conference/mangrove-fish-habitat/>

**Questions, comments?**

Contact [coralreef@noaa.gov](mailto: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>.

