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Coral Reef News



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The Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) is a partnership between the NOAA Line Offices working on coral reef issues, including the National Ocean Service (NOS), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) and the National Environmental Satellites, Data and Information Service (NESDIS). From mapping and monitoring to managing reef resources and removing harmful debris, the CRCP addresses the priorities laid out in both the [National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs](#) and the [National Coral Reef Action Strategy](#).

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Special Feature

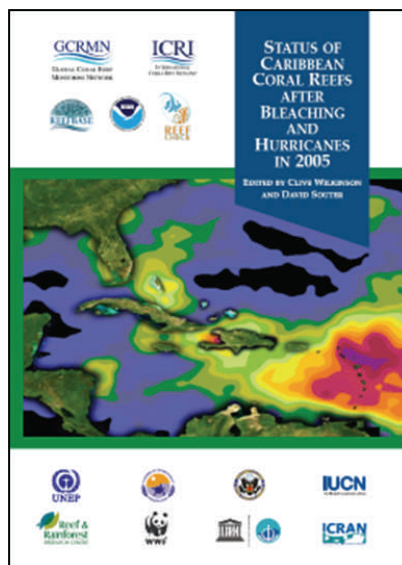
Launch of Caribbean Reef Status Report and IYOR 2008 to be Held in D.C. Next Week. A report entitled 'Status of Caribbean Coral Reefs After Bleaching and Hurricanes in 2005' and the [International Year of the Reef 2008](#) (IYOR 2008) will be launched in a series of events in association with the first general meeting of the [International Coral Reef Initiative](#) (ICRI) U.S./Mexico Co-Secretariat next week.

by NOAA's [Coral Reef Conservation Program](#) (CRCP).



The IYOR 2008 launch will include a press briefing and an official launch reception on January

24th, and a half-day symposium on January 25th. The press conference will feature leaders from NOAA, the U.S. State Department, as well as representatives from France, Mexico, and the [World Wildlife Fund](#). It will also feature a real-time link with a coral expedition in Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles sponsored by NOAA's [Office of Ocean Exploration](#). The symposium will celebrate IYOR 2008 through a showcase of IYOR activities taking place around the world, and will allow ICRI participants to meet, share, brainstorm and coordinate their IYOR plans. The symposium is open to ICRI Members, participating organizations, the D.C.-based marine community, the public and the press.



The front cover of the 2005 Caribbean report showing a smoothed map of the highest level of accumulated thermal stress observed across the Caribbean during 2005, using NOAA Coral Reef Watch's (CRW) Degree Heating Weeks. Courtesy: the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network and NOAA Coral Reef Watch

The report on impacts to Caribbean reefs due to temperature stress and hurricanes will be launched on January 24 at the [World Bank](#) Headquarters in Washington, D.C. NOAA is one of the major financial supporters of the report, which was published by the [Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network](#). Contributions were made

The launch of IYOR 2008 marks the beginning of a year-long campaign of events and activities hosted by a wide range of governments and nongovernmental organizations around the world. The purpose of IYOR is to raise awareness of the importance of coral reef ecosystems, the threats they face, the important activities that are underway and additional actions that are still needed. IYOR 2008 will be modeled after the successful IYOR 1997 campaign. Planned highlights include the [11th International Coral Reef Symposium](#), hosted by the U.S., the release of the global and U.S. reports on the condition of coral reef ecosystems, the 10th anniversary of the [U.S. Coral Reef Task Force](#), as well as many other high-visibility international, national, regional and local events.

Everyone is encouraged to participate in IYOR 2008; we welcome you to learn more about the international efforts for [IYOR 2008](#).

See Announcements for more on IYOR 2008 activities.

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 2008

22 – 24:

[International Coral Reef Initiative General Meeting](#).

Washington, DC

24 – 25: Launch of International Year of the Reef.

Washington, DC

28 – 31: Coral Reef Management Fellowship Orientation.
Honolulu, HI

February 2008

6 – 8: Cyanide Detection Workshop.

Orlando, FL

27 – 29: 19th U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Meeting,
Washington, DC

Even if you don't live near a reef, you can [help protect coral reefs](#) in the U.S.A. and around the world.

Announcements

Public Invited to Sign Pledge to Help Coral Reefs. In recognition of the [International Year of the Reef 2008](#) (IYOR 2008), members of the public can now sign a pledge promising to take actions in their daily lives to positively impact the environment and corals. The [U.S. Coral Reef Task Force](#) Education and Outreach Working Group, chaired by NOAA's [Coral Reef Conservation Program](#), partnered with [Care2](#) to launch a year-long online campaign to build awareness of IYOR 2008 and encourage people to help protect threatened reefs. The Care2 online community has more than eight million civically-minded members who will be targeted through this campaign. The online pledge encourages signers to change to compact florescent light bulbs, not buy coral jewelry and use biodegradable cleaners. These messages were taken from the U.S. IYOR messaging campaign, which involved more than 100 organizations. Click [here](#) to view and sign the pledge. The Care2 Web site will also be featuring free IYOR 2008- themed E-cards.

Monument Web Site Improvements. The [Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument](#) (Monument) now has a reformatted home page; this is just one of many transformations that will occur over the next few months. Currently, the Monument's Maritime Heritage pages are being updated to reflect the most current information from this year's research cruises. The Research pages are also being built up to include more information about the many amazing findings that have been made this year. Among other things, the featured information will help people understand how important a role the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands could play in the health of the reefs and waters of the Main Hawaiian Islands.

Coral Reef Management Fellowship Selects New Fellows. New Coral Reef Management fellows were selected to support island coral reef management efforts in American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Guam and Puerto Rico. The [Coral Reef Management Fellowship](#) program provides technically proficient fellows who have the necessary experience to provide specialized support to jurisdictions in their coral reef conservation efforts. Simultaneously, the fellowship provides fellows with professional training in coastal and coral reef resource management.

The new fellows bring with them a diverse set of skills and knowledge, such as experience in wa-

tershed and MPA management, education and outreach experience, and technical expertise that will be utilized in their respective positions. Alyssa Edwards will be working with the American Samoa Coastal Management Program; Kathleen Herrmann will be working with the Division of Environmental Quality in CNMI; Elaina Todd will be working for Guam's Division of Marine and Wildlife Resources, and Raimundo Espinoza will be working for the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources in Puerto Rico. Their fellowships will begin January 28 – 31 with an orientation program in HI. Learn more about the new fellows in the first issue of the quarterly *Coral Fellowship Newsletter*, soon to be posted in the news section of the Fellowship's [Web page](#).

The new fellows will join current fellows Karlyn Langjahr, who has been working for the Coastal Zone Management Program in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Petra MacGowan, who works with the Division of Aquatic Resources in Hawaii. Both Karlyn and Petra have been in place for one year.

The CRCP extends a fond farewell to departing fellows Sharon Gulick, Lihla Noori, Romina King, and Maria del Mar Lopez and wishes them well in their future endeavors. Click [here](#) to learn more about the activities of the current class of fellows; information on the new fellows will be available in February.

Workshop Aims to Create Cyanide Detection Test for Live Fish Trade Enforcement. From February 6 – 8, NOAA will be convening an international workshop to advance cyanide detection methods for the live reef fish trade. The use of cyanide to capture live reef fish for both the food industry and the aquarium trade is wide spread in the Asia-Pacific region and not only leads to high mortality rates of the captured fish, but also damages and kills corals and other organisms on the reefs. The use of cyanide is illegal in all countries where it is used, but enforcement is difficult. The objectives of the workshop are to: (1) review the state of testing methods and their potential application to marine fishes, (2) determine what is needed in tests that would be applied at different points along the supply chain, and (3) how best the United States can partner with countries to enforce laws against the use of cyanide in fish collection.

(continued on page 3)

Announcements continued...

Monument Permitting Information Made Accessible to the Public. Refining the permit process for the [Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument](#) (Monument) has been filled with many challenges; staff from all the Co-trustee agencies have worked hard to streamline the process and make it more accessible to the public. To this end, permit summaries for all applications submitted by the October 1, 2007 deadline have been posted for the public on the Monument Web site.

Measurement Guide Released for Near-shore Fishes of Hawai'i. Hawai'i's Fishery Extension Agent contracted to the Habitat Conservation Division of the [Pacific Islands Regional Office](#) designed the recently-released [Fish Measuring Guide](#). Supporting the distribution of this product, which was partially funded by the [Coral Reef Conservation Program](#), 40 guides were sent to 59 local fishing supply stores state-wide. The January issue of [Hawaii Fishing News](#), a popular local fishing magazine with an estimated monthly distribution of 9,500, published an arti-

cle entitled 'NOAA and DLNR Produce Fish Guide, describing the Agent's position and the new Guide. The article encouraged fishers, clubs and organizations to [contact the Agent](#) with any questions or concerns they may have



The Fish Measuring Guide is demonstrated in the image above.
Courtesy: NOAA Pacific Islands Regional Office

about recreational shoreline fishing, or if they would like Fish Measuring Guides for tournaments and other organized fishing activities. A list of the stores distributing the Guide was also included in the article. Click [here](#) for more information about the guide.



The [International Year of the Reef \(IYOR\) 2008](#) is a worldwide campaign to raise awareness about the value and importance of coral reefs and threats to their sustainability, and to motivate people to take action to protect them.

Updates from the Atlantic/Caribbean Region

Collaborative Effort to Characterize Coral Reef Ecosystem to Help Develop Regulatory Biocriteria for Water Quality in U.S. Caribbean. A team of scientists from the [National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science](#) (NCCOS) joined the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA) to assist EPA's development of biocriteria for evaluating the condition of Caribbean corals. EPA's goal is to develop acceptable thresholds of biological condition for corals that exist in water bodies subjected to varying levels of stress in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin

Islands. These thresholds will be used as a tool for regulating uses of coastal waters under the [Clean Water Act](#) by comparing coral metrics across study areas and geographic regions, and relating the measures to water quality and human influences. During the week-long cruise from December 1-8, NCCOS scientists trained their EPA counterparts in conducting visual reef fish surveys, compared benthic assessment methods, and provided information on characterizing contaminants in coral reef ecosystems.

Updates from the Pacific Region

Research Cruise Departs for American Samoa and Pacific Remote Island Areas.

The biennial Pacific Reef Assessment and Monitoring Program (RAMP) cruise sequence to the Territory of American Samoa and the Pacific Remote Island Areas is scheduled to depart Honolulu on January 20. Over 50 scientists and managers from the [Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center's Coral Reef Ecosystem Division](#) (PIFSC-CRED), the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Ser-](#)

[vice](#), and American Samoa will collectively be participating in three cruise legs that will visit Johnston Atoll, Howland, and Baker Islands (Leg 1), all islands and atolls of American Samoa (Leg 2), and Jarvis Island, and Kingman and Palmyra Atolls (Leg 3). Monitoring protocols on all legs of the cruise include [Rapid Ecological Assessments](#) for coral, algae, fish, and invertebrates, benthic and fish [towed-diver surveys](#), and oceanographic and water (continued on page 4)

"There is truly no other job out there like the Coral Management Fellowship....I have the luxury of working directly with both people and the natural resources themselves. To me the Coral Fellowship is a proverbial 'dream job.'"
—Karlyn Langhjahr
(USVI 06-09)

Public Comment Opportunity

Do you have comments on the Endangered Species Act 4d rule proposal for threatened elkhorn and staghorn coral? Click [here](#) to learn more or to learn how to submit your comments.



The **11th ICRS**, with the theme of **Reefs for the Future**, will be held in Ft. Lauderdale, FL, July 7-11, 2008. The 11th ICRS is also a key-stone event within the **International Year of the Reef (IYOR) 2008**.

Pacific continued...

quality observations. In addition to the normal suite of oceanographic observations, seawater samples will be collected to examine carbonic chemistry associated with ocean acidification.

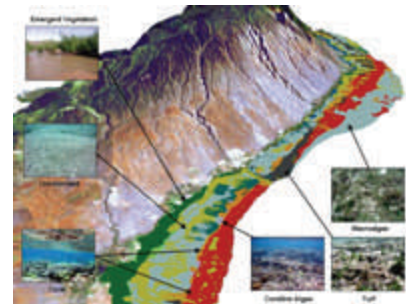
Hi'ialakai Cruise to American Samoa.

Planning is well underway for the NOAA Ship *Hi'ialakai's* research cruise to American Samoa. The ship's crew will not only complete a number of research dives into Fagatele Bay, but on February 21-22, staff from the [Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary](#) (HIHWNMS) will lead two days of students-at-sea activities on board. Governor Lingle and other dignitaries are also expected to participate in this education cruise. NOAA's [Pacific Islands Regional Office](#), HIHWNMS and the State of Hawai'i are all assisting to make sure that over fifty select high school students from around American Samoa get to experience the various types of research activities that take place on board the *Hi'ialakai*.

Benthic Habitat Maps Support Development of Biological Monitoring in Hawai'i.

Digital maps and an atlas of the seafloor and coral reef habitats for the main Hawaiian Islands were recently completed by [National Centers](#)

[for Coastal Ocean Science](#) researchers. These products will serve as a key piece to support local monitoring strategies across the islands and ultimately assess the effectiveness of marine protected areas in Hawai'i. The maps and geo-spatial data were developed in cooperation with NOAA's [Coral Reef Conservation Program](#) and several partners in Hawai'i. The study reveals that the percentage of live coral cover is greatest on the island of Hawai'i, at 57 percent, and lowest surrounding Niihau and Kaula, at only 4 percent. The maps, data, and associated information are available online for [download](#). For more information, read the NOAA [press release](#).

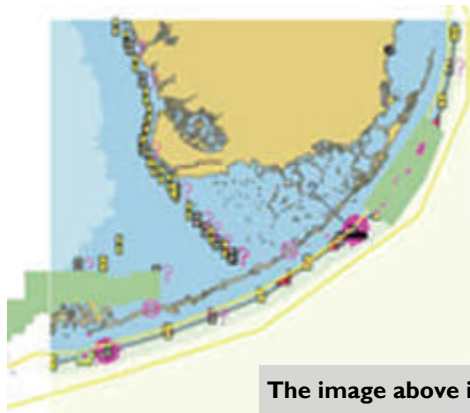


Example of Molokai island habitats.
Courtesy: NOAA

International Updates

Development of International Standard for Coral Reefs and MPAs on Electronic Navigational Charts Moves Forward.

To address the need to provide more accessible information on environmental regulations and features to mariners, the U.S. (NOAA) has proposed an international standard for displaying environmental information on electronic navigational charts. The international body responsible for developing these standards, the [International Hydrographic Organization's Committee on Hydrographic Requirements for Information Systems](#) (IHO/CHRIS), agreed to work on such a standard over the coming year. A working group is being formed to develop a proposal for the IHO/



CHRIS, and will include hydrographic and environmental experts. Initial work will focus on standard approaches for displaying coral reefs and marine protected areas. Once implemented, this standard will greatly increase the accessibility of environmental information to the global shipping industry. This proposal is part of the [Protecting Coral, Saving Ships](#) project, funded by the [Coral Reef Conservation Program](#).

The image above is a sample display showing areas of Florida Keys coral reefs depicted by Coral Reef marine information objects (MIOs). The right portion of the display shows the MIOs layered over an ENC. Courtesy: NOAA

New Products in CoRIS

CoRIS now has 1,894 metadata records providing access to 19,907 data products via the CoRIS web site portal. The CoRIS Library provides access to 1611 coral publications, reports, and other items.

Product Name	Description
NOS/NCCOS Seafloor Characterization of the Caribbean 2006 Link to sample metadata for this product	Bathymetry, Backscatter, Rugosity and Slope Products
CRED Oceanographic Moorings Wake Island (STR) 20005-2007 Link to sample metadata for this product	Subsurface Temperature Recorders (STR) provide a time series of water temperature at reef sites. Data is typically collected at 1200 second or 1800 second intervals using a SBE Model 39 from Seabird Electronics Inc. these data were collected for coral reef ecosystem research. They are collected concurrently with ecological/biological reef assessments.
CRED Oceanographic Moorings American Samoa 2002-2006 (CREWS, RCM9, ODP, ADP, EDL) Link to sample metadata for this product	CREWS buoys telemeter hourly data in near-real-time (NRT). Data telemetry serves to alert researchers to the potential of imminent or ongoing coral reef bleaching or other natural events (hurricanes, storm damage, cooling, etc.) so that additional field observations and data collection efforts can be initiated, if warranted. Sensor packages may include Ocean Data Platform (ODP), Temperature/Conductivity Sensor, Environmental Data Logger (EDL), and Recording Current Meter.
CRED SVP Drifters American Samoa 2002-2004 Link to sample metadata for this product	SVP Drifter are used to assess ocean currents and sea surface temperature. SVP drifters are drogued and transmit position and sea surface temperature.
CRED APEX Drifter Northwestern Hawaiian Islands 2001-2004, and CRED SVP Drifters Northwestern Hawaiian Islands 2001-2005 Link to sample metadata for this product	APEX drifters mimic the diurnal migration of zooplankton and transmit the position and water column temperature. SVP drifters are drogued and transmit position and sea surface temperature. Both drifters are used to assess ocean currents and sea surface temperature.
CRED REA Algal Assessments Main Hawaiian Islands 2005 Link to sample metadata for this product	Raw survey data included genus presence and relative abundance, and voucher specimens. Detailed taxonomic analyses of voucher specimens are presented.
Also, in support of the CoRIS Web Site Regional Portal Implementation, CoRIS staff modified 500 metadata records for the U. S. Virgin Islands and Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.	

Protect Reefs

Hire local guides when visiting coral reef ecosystems. Not only do you learn about the local resources, but you will be protecting the future of the reef by supporting a non-consumptive economy around the reef.



Coral Reefs support more species per unit area than any other marine environment. Courtesy: Dave Burdick

Publications

Two New CRCP Technical Memorandums Available from CoRIS. Both the [Coral Disease and Health Workshop: Coral Histopathology II](#) and [The State of Deep Coral Ecosystems of the United States](#) are available from the Activities pages of the [Coral Reef Information System](#). The full reports may be downloaded, as well as individual chapters or sections.

Workshop Report on Monitoring Strategy for Apra Harbor, Guam Released. A new report, *Monitoring Strategy and Preliminary Survey Design for Guam/CNMI Coral Reef Ecosystem Studies with a Focus on Apra Harbor and Kilo Wharf based upon Results from Guam/CNMI Marine Natural Resources Monitoring Protocols Workshop, December 7-10, 2007, Honolulu, Hawaii*, is available upon request from the [Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center's Coral Reef Ecosystem Division](#) (PIFSC-CRED). Scientists from PIFSC-CRED convened the workshop at the request of the [Naval Facilities Engineering Command](#); this workshop also included scientists and managers from the [University of Guam](#), the [Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science](#), the [University of Hawaii](#), the [Pacific Islands Regional Office](#), and the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#). The resulting report presents a general

monitoring strategy for Apra Harbor, with a focus on the Kilo Wharf area, but the strategy can be applied to other sites. The strategy is based upon a combination of the random stratified sampling design approach and a subset of permanent benthic, fish, and oceanographic stations in the region.

New Addition to NMSP Conservation Series. The National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP) is pleased to announce a new addition to the NMSP Conservation Series. The paper, [M/V ALEC OWEN MAITLAND Coral Reef Restoration Monitoring Report Monitoring Events 2004-2007 Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Monroe County, Florida](#) by Harold Hudson, et al, presents the results of the first three monitoring events to track the recovery of a repaired coral reef injured by the M/V *Alec Owen Maitland* vessel grounding incident of October 25, 1989.

We value your feedback. Feel free to email us comments on the new format.

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The CRCP supports effective management and sound science to preserve, sustain and restore valuable coral reef ecosystems.

