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Secretary of the Interior Salazar Highlights Administration Plans to Help Protect Coral Reefs

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, co-chair of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force, today told task force members that the Obama Administration is committed to quick action on global warming—a key threat to coral reefs—and that the economic stimulus package, clean energy and community service programs and ethic of preserving natural treasures add up to good news for coral reef conservation.

“We will move ahead with a new energy frontier for the United States of America and for the world that will feature clean energy and address climate change,” said Salazar. “Addressing climate change is a critical aspect of protecting coral reefs across the world and I know it will be high on the agenda of this task force,” he told a meeting of officials at Interior Department headquarters. Nancy Sutley, the new chair of the President’s Council on Environmental Quality, also stressed the Secretary Salazar noted that the U.S. Department of the Interior manages 5 million acres of coral reefs.

The Coral Reef Task Force



was established in 1998 to lead U.S. efforts to preserve and protect coral reef ecosystems. It includes leaders of 12 Federal agencies, seven U.S. States, Territories, Commonwealths, and three Freely Associated States.

The Secretary expressed support for the service of the task force, which he noted was started by President Clinton and continued to Nik Pula, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Insular Affairs, co-chaired the meeting along with Mary Glacken, Acting NOAA Administrator. Pula also testified this afternoon for the Department of the Interior on reauthorization of the Coral Reef Conservation Act.

The testimony before the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Insular

Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife conveyed the Secretary’s appreciation for the fact that the bill includes statutory authorization for Department of the Interior coral reef conservation programs, and a damage assessment and compensatory recovery process for all of the coral reefs.

Secretary Salazar also extended particular appreciation to the governors of U.S. territories, which contain world-class coral reefs. Key participants in the meeting today were American Samoa Governor Togiola Tulafono; CNMI Governor Ben Fitial and Guam Governor Felix Camacho.

MARINE MONUMENTS EXPAND NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM BY 57%

On January 6, 2009 former President Bush issued a Presidential Proclamation establishing the Pacific Remote Islands, Rose Atoll, and the Marianas Trench Marine National Monuments. The Proclamation designated the Secretary of Interior as the primary management authority, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce. On January 19, former Interior Secretary Kempthorne issued Secretarial Order 3284 delegating this authority to the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Secretarial Order also extended the boundaries of the National Wildlife Refuges within the Pacific Remote Islands MNM to 12 nm, where they did not already extend that far.

Wake Atoll was added as a new unit of the Refuge System with a 12 nm marine boundary and the lands to be transferred pending termination of the Air Force activities.

The boundaries at Rose Atoll NWR, within the Rose Atoll MNM, will remain the mean low water line of the surrounding reef. The Trench and Volcanic Units of the Marianas Trench MNM will become new units of the Refuge System. As a result of these actions, the Refuge System was increased in size by approximately 53 million acres or 57%. For more details on these new Monuments visit:

<http://www.fws.gov/pacific/news/2009/Monuments>



Left: A diverse community of soft corals and tropical fish inhabit the volcanic seamounts of the "volcanic unit" of the Mariana Trench MNM. (Credit: NOAA, Submarine Ring of Fire 2004 Exploration)



Above: Blue plate coral at Jarvis Island National Wildlife Refuge part of the new Remote Pacific Islands MNM. (Credit: J. Maragos/FWS)



Below: Rose Atoll National Wildlife Refuge now part of the Rose Atoll MNM. (Credit: FWS)

NATIONAL OCEAN SCIENCE BOWL FINALS TO BE HELD IN DC

The Consortium for Ocean Leadership, representing leading oceanographic institutions universities and aquaria, manages a national academic competition for high schools on topics related to the study of the oceans - the National Ocean Sciences Bowl (NOSB®).

The NOSB is a nationally recognized and highly acclaimed high school academic competition that provides a forum for talented students to test their knowledge of the marine sciences including

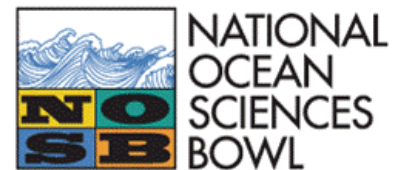
biology, chemistry, physics, and geology.

The NOSB was created in 1998 in honor of the International Year of the Ocean and since its inception, the competition has grown to include 25 regional competition locations with 300 schools and over 2,000 students participating annually. DOI has been a long time supporter of the NOSB.

The local regional competition is called the Chesapeake Bay Bowl and

was held February 21st at American University in Washington, D.C. This year the Finals Competition will be held at the Smithsonian's new Sant Ocean Hall and the National 4H Youth Conference Center.

The theme for the 2009 NOSB Finals Competition is "Biodiversity." NOSB collaborates with the [Census of Marine Life](#) to write the competition questions. If you are interested in volunteering for the 2009 Finals Competition.



Sample NOSB Question:
"Our Nation and the Sea" was the final report of what influential commission on U.S. ocean policy?

Correct Answer:
The Stratton Commission

To learn more about the NOSB and for information on volunteer opportunities visit:
<http://www.oceanleadership.org/link/nosb/about>

SECRETARY SALAZAR DETAILS STRATEGY FOR A COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY PLAN ON U.S. OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF

From DOI News Release —

Saying he needed to restore order to a broken process, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today announced his strategy for developing an offshore energy plan that includes both conventional and renewable resources.

His strategy calls for extending the public comment period on a proposed 5-year plan for oil and gas development on the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf by 180 days, assembling a detailed report from Interior agencies on conventional and renewable offshore energy resources, holding four regional conferences to review these findings,

and expediting renewable energy rulemaking for the Outer Continental Shelf.

“To establish an orderly process that allows us to make wise decisions based on sound information, we need to set aside the Bush Administration’s midnight timetable for its OCS drilling plan and create our own timeline,” Salazar said.

On Friday, January 16, its last business day in office, the Bush Administration proposed a new five year plan for offshore oil and gas leasing. The proposal was actually published in the *Federal Register* on January 21, the day after the new Administration took office.

The deadline for public comment that the Bush Administration established - March 23, 2009 – does not provide enough time for public review or for wise decisions on behalf of taxpayers, the Secretary said. “The additional time we are providing will give states, stakeholders, and affected communities the opportunity to provide input on the future of our offshore areas,” he said. “The additional time will allow us to restore an orderly process to our offshore energy planning.”

LINK:
http://www.doi.gov/news/09_News_Releases/021009.html



In a news conference at Interior Headquarters, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar unveils his strategy for a proposed 5-year plan for oil and gas development on the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf. [Photo Credit: Tami Heilemann, DOI-NBC]

Ocean Quote of the Month

“How inappropriate to call this planet Earth when it is quite clearly Ocean.”

Arthur C. Clarke

NEWEST VERSION OF GOOGLE EARTH INCLUDES OCEANS

From [IUCN Press Release](#):

Very little is known about oceans. That’s why very little - less than one percent - of the Earth’s oceans are protected, compared to 12 percent of the land surface. ‘Ocean in Google Earth’, launching today, lets virtual voyagers find out what marine species live where and discover marine protected areas, one of the best tools for protecting our oceans.

Internet users can now travel in 3D through the vast and largely unknown underwater world of the planet’s oceans, allowing visitors to fly over and

around underwater seamounts or follow scientific research expeditions as they mine the depths of the oceans for new species and discoveries.

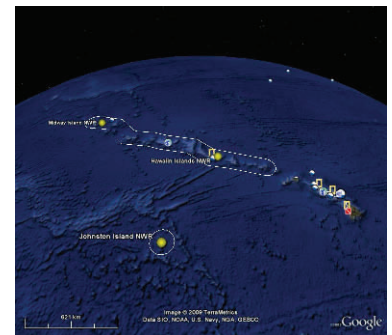
For ‘Ocean in Google Earth’, IUCN, one of the key collaborators in this Google project, created the marine protected area layer, which contains information on over 4,500 protected sites spread around the globe. Be it the Great Barrier Reef, the three recently established US Marine National Monuments in the Pacific, or Galapagos World Heritage site – anybody

can now dive in and explore the natural beauty, learn what threats these protected areas face and find out what they can do to help.

View the full story with instruction on how to load the new ocean layers:
<http://www.iucn.org/?2612/Dive-into-the-oceans-with-Google-Earth>

The addition of the marine protected area layers to ‘Ocean in Google Earth’ was supported by the National System of Marine Protected Areas.

www.mpa.gov



MPA OF THE MONTH—

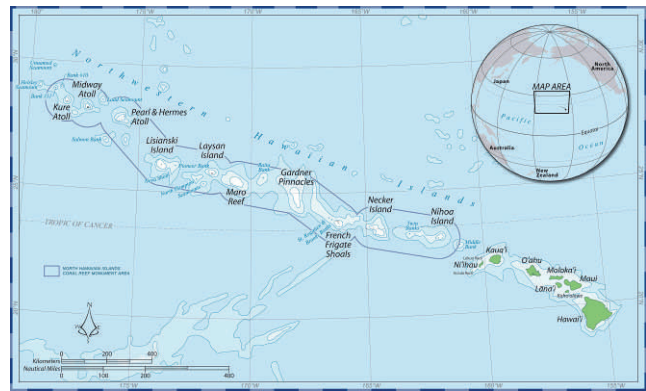
Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge Celebrates 100th Anniversary

February 3, 2009 marked the 100th anniversary of the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The refuge, one of the first created by President Teddy Roosevelt, consists of a chain of islands, reefs, and atolls, extending 800 miles northwest from the main Hawaiian Islands. The islands include Nihoa, Mokumanamana (also known as Necker Island), French Frigate Shoals, Gardner Pinnacles, Maro Reef, Laysan Island, Lisianski Island, and Pearl and Hermes Reef.

The refuge, comprised of 1,766 acres of emerged lands and 610,148 acres of marine area, provides breeding and nesting habitat for over 30 species and 14 million breeding

sea birds, wintering shorebirds, and endangered endemic songbirds and waterfowl. More than 90% of the population of the threatened green sea turtles in the Hawaiian chain nest on the beaches of French Frigate Shoals. The refuge is also the primary home to the critically endangered Hawaiian monk seal.

Besides the natural resources, Nihoa and Mokumanamana contain significant archeological and historical sites. Except for the field stations on Tern Island at French Frigate Shoals and Laysan Islands and periodic visits by scientists to other islands, the only access to the refuge allowed by the



FWS is to native Hawaiian groups for cultural practice at these sites.

In 2006, the Hawaiian Islands NWR became part of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.

Local News Link:

[Hawaii's oldest national wildlife refuge celebrates 100 years \(Hawaii Magazine-2/3/09\)](#)



Hawaiian monk seal with green turtle at French Frigate Shoals in the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge (George Balazs, NOAA Fisheries).



Clockwise from top left: Nihoa Island; Laysan Island; Pearl and Hermes (All photos courtesy FWS); some of the 33 shrines or marae found at Mokumanamana, the purpose of which is still unknown (Photo: Andy Collins).

We Need DOI Ocean Images

The DOI Ocean and Coastal Team needs photos for use in education/outreach materials. If you have photos that effectively communicate your bureau's or office's role in ocean and coastal regions please send

Please feel free to suggest or submit a story about an MPA for next month.

For more information about ocean and coastal activities at DOI please contact:

Terry Holman, Coordinator
DOI Ocean and Coastal Activities
Mail Stop 5120
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240
Telephone: 202-208-1944
Fax: 202-208-1067
E-mail: Terry_Holman@ios.doi.gov

*** DOI Ocean and Coastal Button Contest ***

Want a great surfing buffalo button? All you have to do is correctly answer the question below and we'll send one to you. Submit your answer to Terry_Holman@ios.doi.gov and be sure to include the mailing address where you'd like your prize sent.



What is the world's largest fully-protected marine protected area? And for a bonus, learn to pronounce it correctly.

Visit the DOI Ocean and Coastal Activities website at:

www.doi.gov/initiatives/ocean.html

Upcoming Meeting and Events of Interest

The Blue Vision Summit: March 7-10, 2009, Washington, D.C. The Summit will bring a wide range of people engaged in ocean conservation and its sustainable use. The Summit will include a night with top ocean explorers, two days of meetings and discussions, two evening celebrations and a Capitol Hill Day that will provide an opportunity for people to meet with their elected congressional representatives. For more information about the Blue Vision Summit log on to <http://www.bluefront.org/bluevision/>.

World Ocean Conference 2009: May 11-15, 2009, Manado, North Sulawesi, Indonesia. The World Ocean Conference (WOC) 2009 is a forum for the world community to discuss current issues in the marine field particularly those related to climate change. For more information visit the conference website: <http://www.woc2009.org>

Coastal Zone '09: July 19-23, 2009, Boston, MA. Our coastal and ocean landscape is changing, whether it's the climate, shoreline, habitat, or even the people setting and implementing policy. The attendees of Coastal Zone 09 will explore the many facets of change and share tools and information to help in managing our changing coastal and ocean resources. For more information visit the conference website: <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/cz/abstracts.html>.



To access the DOI Ocean and Coastal calendar, click the attachments tab on the left. If you have events to add to the calendar, send them to Sarah_Bobbe@doi.gov



Click on the links above to learn more about the ocean and coastal activities at DOI bureaus.