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NATIONAL  
OCEANIC AND  
ATMOSPHERIC  
ADMINISTRATION

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**NOAA RECOGNIZES SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
ATLAS OF THE OCEANS**

Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr., U.S. Navy (Ret.), Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, joined United Nations agencies today in celebrating the second anniversary of the United Nations Atlas of the Oceans, a major new tool to aid in sustainable development of the oceans.

The Internet-based Atlas of the Oceans contains information relevant to sustainable development of the oceans and to the advancement of ocean science. It offers policymakers familiarity with ocean issues and scientists and resource managers access to databases and approaches to sustainability.

“The success of this UN project is very important to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the United States,” Lautenbacher said. “A common database of scientific knowledge and successful approaches to sustainability issues – such as coastal zone management, fisheries, ocean mining, and pollution – will serve as a unifying foundation for many ocean-related discussions and negotiations in the future.”

The Atlas includes background on the oceans, from how they were formed to their physiology, biology, and climatology; the uses of the oceans, from food to shipping, mining, and energy; and other ocean issues, such as sustainability, food security and global change. It also includes a geographic dimension to enable users to explore materials for their own region of interest.

There will be an increased ability to form partnerships among all global regions, greatly benefiting all nations concerned about ocean health, impacts of climate and global change, effects of pollution and ecosystem interactions. The Atlas highlights a greater awareness of the need to work together. About half the users of the Atlas are from the United States.

Dr. John Everett manages the project for the U.S. and coordinates inputs from NOAA into the Atlas.

“The task of building a globally relevant and comprehensive resource demanded a decentralized, collaborative approach,” he said. “Seven UN agencies and 17 non-UN organizations collaborate on this important project, representing a considerable amount of knowledge freely available to all.”

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Under development for several years, the site was opened to scientists, government officials and the public in June 2002. It currently hosts about 15,000 pages and serves 2,000 users per day.

NOAA Fisheries is dedicated to providing and preserving the nation's living marine resources and their habitat through scientific research, management, and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

The Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources.

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On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA Fisheries: [www.nmfs.noaa.gov](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov)

UN Atlas of the Oceans: [www.oceansatlas.org](http://www.oceansatlas.org)