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**NOAA NAMES NANCY FOSTER AWARD RECIPIENT
FOR HABITAT CONSERVATION**

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has named Elliott A. Norse as the 2006 recipient of the Nancy Foster Award for Habitat Conservation. NOAA announced the award at the annual American Fisheries Society meeting in Lake Placid, N.Y., today.

The Nancy Foster Award is given for excellence in service to habitat conservation. The first award was presented to Foster, the renowned conservationist, in 1997 for her outstanding contributions to NOAA activities and her personal commitment to public and private programs to protect, conserve and restore coastal and marine habitats. The award has been presented six times since 1997.

Norse, who is president and chief executive officer of the Marine Conservation Biology Institute in Bellevue, Wash., received the award this year for his life-long dedication in the private sector and the federal government to marine ecology and biology habitat conservation. Norse's efforts have benefited the nation and the world. Dr. Norse was honored for his work in the sciences, his numerous technical publications and books, and his educational presentations to diverse audiences. He is known widely as an enthusiastic champion of the oceans, much like Foster herself.

"Dr. Norse's tireless efforts since the 1970s, including leadership roles with the Council on Environmental Quality and non-profit groups that are now represented by The Ocean Conservancy, offer an excellent model for challenging traditional approaches to resource management," said Dr. Bill Hogarth, director of NOAA Fisheries Service. "I am certain Dr. Norse's work on conservation biology will continue to spark productive debate for years to come."

Norse founded The Marine Conservation Biology Institute in 1996. MCBI is a non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to advancing the new science of marine conservation biology and to securing the protection, recovery and sustainable use of marine ecosystems. Among MCBI's interests are the effects of fishing on marine habitats, funding for federal ocean programs and expanded use of marine protected areas. Norse and his MCBI colleagues are heralded in the citation for the award as innovators, motivators, visionaries, critics and facilitators.

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In 2007 NOAA, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, celebrates 200 years of science and service to the nation. Starting with the establishment of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA. The agency is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitat through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service 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. To learn more about NOAA Fisheries Service, please visit: www.nmfs.noaa.gov.

On the Web:

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

Nancy Foster Award for Habitat Conservation:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/habitatconservation/nancyfoster/>