

NOAA WORLD



Highlighting the achievements of NOAA people around the world

Groundbreaking Restoration Brings New Approach to Chesapeake Bay

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Report from Micronesia: NOAA Scientist On Human Factors Behind Reef Protection

Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, National Ocean Service

Christy Loper is, quite literally, a people person.

She knows that even the best policies aimed at preserving coral reefs can do very little without the support of the people who live and work in the very island communities that are economically dependent on them.

Loper, the social science coordinator for NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program, has been out in the field working with Pacific island governments and local community leaders to develop and adopt environmental

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John Griffin, secretary of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, presented NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco with a fine art print of Baltimore orioles during her visit to the national estuary in Jug Bay, Md., on Earth Day (April 22) in celebration of its restoration.

Photo credit: NOAA.

NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco visited the national estuary in Jug Bay, Md., on Earth Day (April 22) in celebration of its restoration. After a 10-year effort, nearly 80 percent of Jug Bay's once-decimated wild rice marshes has been restored.

NOAA, Chesapeake Bay Maryland Reserve managers, and state and local partners worked together on the massive restoration project.

"In the face of climate change, this highly successful collaboration brings home the strong need for innovative approaches to ecosystem management," said Dr. Lubchenco. "With America's estuaries at serious risk, Jug Bay provides a model for tackling fast accelerating water quality issues and concerns about filtering out pollution threatening to human and ecosystem health."

A National Estuarine Research Reserve, Jug Bay is part of a new national network of "sentinel sites" for climate change data-gathering that will help provide the scientific groundwork needed for optimal ecosystem restoration and management.

Jug Bay is situated near the Patuxent River in the Chesapeake Bay, the nation's largest estuary.

NOAA WORLD

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Micronesia

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Christy Loper (far right) with Vanessa Fread, local project coordinator in Yap (second from right), and the rest of her survey team in Yap, Micronesia.

Photo credit: Charles Chieng.

policies that incorporate human social factors. In fact, she has led several studies that have expanded the use of social science data in coral reef management worldwide. Loper was recently in Micronesia, where she worked with island leaders to look at the human factors involved in reef conservation. She spoke with NOAA World about her fieldwork with the local people in Yap and Saipan:

Q: Tell us about your research in Micronesia.

A: Micronesia is a beautiful and diverse area of the Pacific Ocean characterized by rich natural resources and strong cultural tradition. I'm working with local partners to develop surveys, interview key community members, collect and analyze survey data, and provide recommendations to improve management of coral reef areas. In Yap, I'm working with a local nongovernmental organization, Yap Cap, on an assessment for Ngulu Atoll, a remote coral island. I'm also working with the local government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands on an assessment for Laolao Bay, a picturesque dive and picnic spot on the island of Saipan. In both places, I'm fortunate to work with local project coordinators who received training in socioeconomic assessment last year: Vanessa Fread in Yap and Kathleen Herrmann, the NOAA Coral Reef Fellow in the Mariana Islands.

Q: What kinds of survey questions did you ask the residents?

A: We asked basic demographic questions and we also tried to gauge people's understanding of and support for existing marine resource management regulations. In Yap, the survey focused on alternative income generating opportunities for the people of Ngulu, while the Laolao Bay study focused on understanding the nature and driving forces behind activities that damage the reef. The survey results will assist us in developing a social marketing campaign.

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Micronesia

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Q: What was the most memorable event of this research trip?

A: In Yap, after the survey data was analyzed, we met with community members and the survey team to present the results. The Chief of Ngulu Atoll was pleasantly surprised by the survey results. He told me beforehand that he hoped that at least half of his people would support new management rules for their island. He was very happy to hear that 100 percent of survey respondents support the new rules and believe the rules will benefit them and their families.

Q: What do you like about your work in Micronesia?

A: I enjoy working on the ground with local communities and seeing these assessments developed and carried out from start to finish. Living in Washington, D.C., I find it both rewarding and educational to be able to do this kind of fieldwork.

Q: Have you been surprised by any cultural differences?

A: I continue to be surprised by the level of traditional ownership of land and marine resources in Yap. Management responsibility for coral reefs lies at the village level and permission is needed by outsiders wishing to fish or swim in coastal waters.

Q: What do you do in your free time?

A: I really haven't had as much free time as I had hoped. I did get to go on a few dives in Yap and was fortunate to view the elusive mandarin fish, as well as one manta ray and some spectacularly healthy coral.



A beachgoer is surveyed in Laolao Bay, Saipan, Mariana Islands. Photo credit: Christy Loper, NOAA.

Volunteer Now for NOAA Restoration Day - June 18, 2009

Ed Levy, NOAA Office of Communications

Are you interested in making a positive impact on our environment?

If so, please join hundreds of NOAA employees and partners on

Thursday, June 18, 2009, for the sixth annual **NOAA Restoration Day**, which is being held in two Chesapeake Bay locations in Maryland and Virginia.

Restoration Day is an opportunity for

those of you in the Mid-Atlantic area to improve the well-being of an endangered ecosystem, as well as to share in the camaraderie with your NOAA friends and colleagues.



This year, the Maryland event will take place at Otter Point Creek, about 18 miles north of Baltimore. The Virginia event will be held at First Landing State Park on Cape Henry in Virginia Beach.

Some of the volunteer activities include:

- Planting water grasses grown by NOAA employees.
- Removing trash and debris from the shoreline.
- Planting native trees and removing invasive plants.

To participate in the Maryland event, please contact Tonya Kane (Tonya.Kane@noaa.gov) by June 3. For the Virginia event, please contact Andrew Larkin (Andrew.W.Larkin@noaa.gov) also by June 3.

NOAA Honor Awards Recognize Leadership, Initiative, and Creativity

Genevieve Contey, NOAA Office of Communications



NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco and National Weather Service Director Jack Hayes congratulate NWS' Yan Xue, one of the NOAA Bronze Medal Award winners for 2008. Photo credit: NOAA.

Life-saving tornado warnings and wildfire forecasts. Pioneering studies of satellite imagery. Innovative solutions for restoring habitats at the Hudson River Superfund site. Advances in the protection of essential cod habitats, endangered sea turtles and dolphins.

These are just some of the diverse achievements recognized at the 2008 NOAA Honor Awards held April 7 at the Andrew Mellon Auditorium in Washington, D.C.

NOAA Director of Workforce Management Eddie Ribas officiated at the ceremony, which recognized more than 300 employees for their outstanding contributions to the agency. As the audience gathered, the names of 63 NOAA employees who earlier received 2008 Commerce Gold and Silver Awards were scrolled on projection screens flanking the stage.

NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco bestowed the Bronze Medal Award — the highest form of honorary recognition for exceptional service given by NOAA — to 231 staff members representing all line offices and a variety of grade levels and job functions. The under secretary also conferred 15 Distinguished Career Awards for long-term career achievements. In addition, the 12 most recent Employee/Team Members of the Month were honored for their contributions.

Dr. Lubchenco addressed the award recipients group, underscoring her appreciation for their exceptional service and stressing the need for all employees to continue to work together to deliver the agency's vital services.

"NOAA's greatest asset is its people," said Dr. Lubchenco. "The NOAA personnel we honor today understand [their] responsibility to the nation and have demonstrated their willingness and ability to go well beyond expectations in its service."

To view a descriptive listing of all the 2008 Honor Award recipients, check out the official Honor Awards program brochure at http://www.noaaworld.noaa.gov/corporate/images/april09_booklet.pdf.

NOAA Dedicates New Chesapeake Bay Research Vessel

Mary Glackin, deputy under secretary for oceans and atmosphere, helped dedicate NOAA's new state-of-the-art research vessel, the *R/V Bay Hydro II*, by breaking a champagne bottle over its bow during an April 15 ceremony in Baltimore, Md.'s Inner Harbor. The *Bay Hydro II* also received a cannon salute from a neighboring ship, the 18th century-era *USS Constellation*, also berthed in the harbor.

"*Bay Hydro II*'s dedication marks another step forward in NOAA's plans to modernize and improve its research and survey platforms," said Glackin. She also said, "With much improved speed and endurance over her predecessor and state-of-the-art hydrographic surveying instruments,

NOAA now has the ability to better meet the need for both routine and emergency response surveys of these waters."

The *Bay Hydro II* will collect essential oceanographic data to aid safe navigation and environmental protection in the Chesapeake Bay region — the nation's largest estuary and a major transportation artery. The vessel will also serve as an emergency response unit to assist when needed following Atlantic hurricanes or shipping-related accidents.

To view video clips of the dedication ceremony and learn more about the *Bay Hydro II*, visit:

<http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/news/weeklynews/apr09/bayhydro.html>.



NOAA Deputy Under Secretary Mary Glackin dedicates the new *R/V Bay Hydro II* with a bottle of champagne. Photo credit: Lorraine Robidoux, NOAA.

There's More on the Web!

Visit NOAA WORLD online at

www.noaaworld.noaa.gov for additional stories:

- New Ultralight Dropsondes Could See Unmanned Missions
- Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security Tours NOAA's National Hurricane Center
- "Citizen Scientists" in Delaware Sea Grant Program Work for Water Quality
- NOAA Takes Miami-Dade County Fair By Storm
- Forecasters Bring "Hurricane Hunter" and Awareness to Storm-Prone Regions



Give us your best shot...

NOAA WORLD Image of the Day

Email your photos to noaaworld@noaa.gov

NOAA Helps Public Get “SMART” About Wild Dolphins

Stacey Horstman, Cheryl Bonnes and Laura Engleby
NMFS Southeast Regional Office-Protected Resources Division

Wild dolphins in rehab?

If efforts to curb illegal feeding of dolphins in the southeastern U.S. don't work, it could just come to that.

NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Regional Office launched an innovative campaign in March to educate the public



A screenshot from a new, animated NOAA Fisheries public service announcement aimed at curbing the illegal practice of feeding wild dolphins.

Photo credit: NOAA.

about the danger of feeding wild bottlenose dolphins. Four years in the making, the PSA involved a coalition of NOAA partners to develop and distribute it.

For One Dolphin, Overeating Has Its Downside

In a new 30-second public service announcement, an animated dolphin participating in a group therapy session pleads with viewers to help him “kick the habit” of eating food from people. After confessing his weakness for human food handouts, the bottlenose dolphin says he could beat his addiction “if people would just stop feeding me.”

The novel campaign uses humor to engage the public on the serious and harmful practices of people feeding and interacting too closely with wild dolphins.

“Feeding wild dolphins triggers a domino effect of harmful behaviors as dolphins learn to associate people with food and free handouts,” said Stacey Horstman, bottlenose dolphin conservation coordinator for NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Regional Office. “We are at a point where we need to change our behavior so we don't change theirs, and we hope this video provides a compelling plea for the public's help.”

Human feeding also puts wild dolphins at risk for ingesting harmful or contaminated items and could result in

potentially lethal interactions with people's recreational gear, such as boats and fishing equipment. The practice is deemed illegal under the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

To get the word out, NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Regional Office is piloting new distribution strategies for the video, including social networking Web sites such as Facebook and YouTube, as well as traditional media outlets.

Public interest in the campaign has been strong: in just one month, there were 5,100 views on YouTube; more than 30 links from Web sites to the video site; and 15,290 hits to the video's own Web site. The PSA received media coverage in more than 25 newspaper and Web articles, and five news broadcasts.

You can watch the animated video at <http://www.dontfeedwilddolphins.org>, where you'll also find helpful information on dolphin conservation and guidelines for responsibly viewing wild dolphins.

Helping Coastal Businesses Become Dolphin-Savvy

Stay back 50 yards from dolphins. Refrain from feeding, touching or swimming with dolphins. Always put your engine in neutral when dolphins are near.

These are three of five helpful guidelines established by Dolphin SMART — another unique educational campaign from NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Regional Office, with collaboration from NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, and the Dolphin Ecology Project.

By becoming Dolphin SMART and maintaining active participation in the program, tour companies and other businesses can remain competitive by offering customers an enhanced tour experience that honors their commitment to dolphin conservation.

To date, there are five Dolphin SMART-designated businesses operating in Key West, Fla., and Orange Beach, Ala. The program has been so well-received that other states — including Hawaii, Georgia, and North Carolina — are considering implementing it in their own areas.

To learn more about Dolphin SMART and see a list of participating tour operators, visit <http://www.dolphinSMART.org>.



NOAA Celebrates New Gulf of Mexico Museum

Tim Osborn, NOAA Coastal Survey

Jack Dunnigan, assistant administrator for NOAA's Ocean Service, joined Alabama Governor Bob Riley, Sen. Richard Shelby, Rep. Jo Bonner and other state and local officials at an April 13 keel-laying ceremony for the new National Maritime Museum of the Gulf of Mexico in Mobile, Ala.

The new museum, known as GulfQuest, is projected to open in the spring of 2011 in downtown Mobile by the port and next to the cruise ship terminal. Supported by NOAA grants, GulfQuest will be the first museum dedicated to the Gulf Coast's rich maritime traditions — and only the third interactive maritime museum in the world. It will specifically feature exhibits on the nation's history and the Gulf of Mexico.

"The Gulf of Mexico has perhaps been somewhat overlooked by historians and researchers (although it is the ninth largest body of water in the world," Dunnigan told the crowd. He added that the Gulf "provides invaluable resources for our nation: essential fisheries and wildlife habitats, attractive beaches for maritime recreation, seven of the nation's top 10 shipping ports, four of the nation's top seven fishing ports, and 90 percent of the nation's offshore oil/gas production."

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From left: Mike Szabados (NOAA/NOS), Jimmy Lyons (executive director of the Port of Mobile), NOAA Assistant Administrator for NOS Jack Dunnigan, and E.B. Peebles (GulfQuest Museum board) with a historic copper chart plate NOAA contributed to the museum. The plate is hand-etched in a reverse (mirror) format.

Photo credit: Tim Osborn, NOAA NOS.

Deep-Sea Coral the Focus of New Research and Technology Program

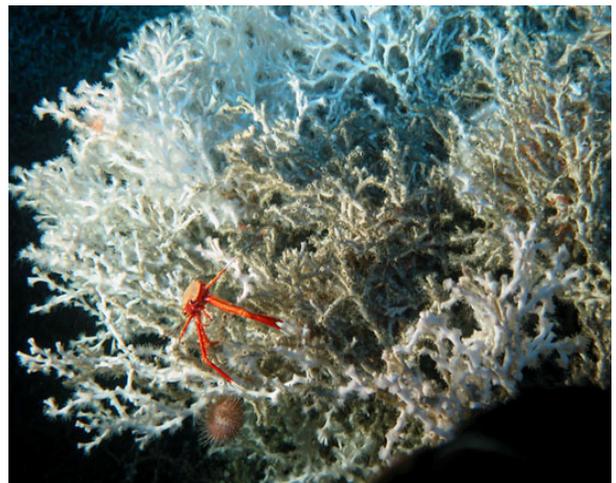
Jennifer Schull, NOAA's Southeast Fisheries Science Center

Deep-sea coral living quietly in the dark waters off the U.S. coast are now in the spotlight.

NOAA is launching a new Deep-Sea Coral Research and Technology Program to explore, characterize, research, and map deep-coral ecosystems to understand their ecology and linkages to federally managed species. The program is working to provide information that resource managers need to manage and conserve these unique ecosystems, bringing together expertise from NMFS, OAR, NOS, and NESDIS.

Also known as "cold-water" corals, deep-water corals are long-lived corals nestled on continental shelves, slopes, canyons and seamounts usually at depths between 50 and 3,000 meters where they support rich, biologically diverse ecosystems. Not surprisingly, fragile deep-sea coral reefs face constant danger from sophisticated deep-water fishing activities, coral harvesting, fossil fuel and mineral exploration and extraction, and submarine cables

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A deep-sea coral *Lophelia* reef off North Carolina. Photo credit: Steve W. Ross, University of North Carolina - Wilmington.

Deep-Sea Coral

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and pipelines. Invasive species, climate change, and ocean acidification also pose formidable threats.

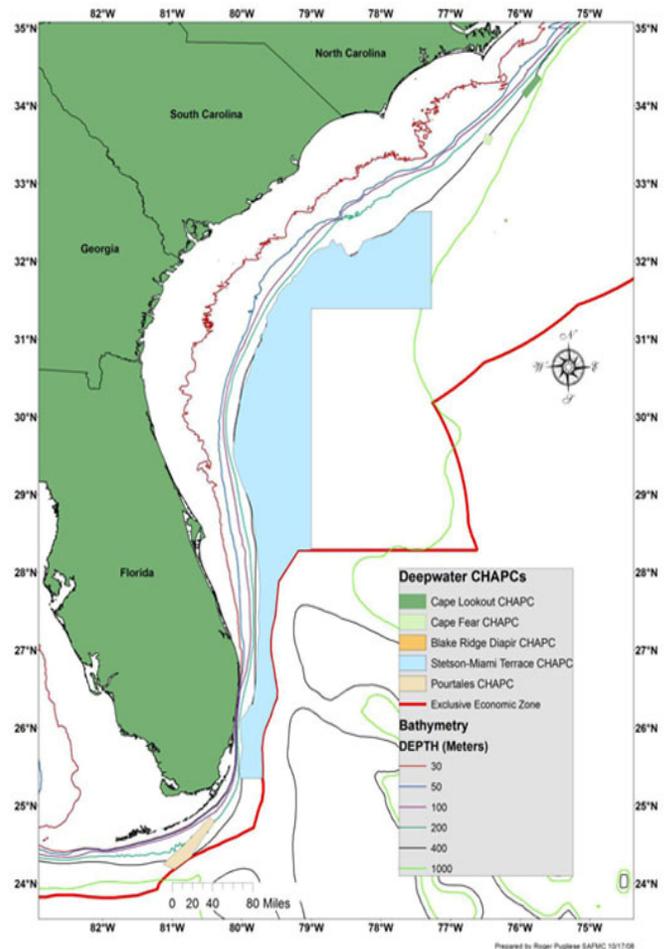
In its inaugural year, the deep-sea coral program will focus on deep coral areas off the southeastern U.S. that have yet to be fully explored, mapped, or characterized. This region has a long history of proactive conservation of deep-sea corals. The Oculina Habitat Area of Particular Concern (HAPC) off Florida's east coast — proposed by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and established by NOAA in 1984 — was the world's first marine protected area specifically designed to safeguard deep-sea corals.

The council is now proposing even more dramatic action by recommending establishment of the largest area of HAPCs in the U.S. Atlantic. The proposed area will protect deep-sea coral habitats covering approximately 23,000 square miles.

Principal investigator Andrew David from NOAA's Southeast Fisheries Science Center has established a "one-NOAA" team to develop this year's science plan. Members of the team include John Tomczuk (OAR), Andrew Shepard (NURC-OAR), George Sedberry (NOS), and Tim Battista (NOS), with input from agency and academic partners. The team plans three cruise-based expeditions during the next 18 months.

The deep coral program has a long-term plan to expand activities to other U.S. regions. The program has reached out beyond NOAA by working on joint initiatives with universities, nongovernmental organizations, state, and international partners, such as Canada and the European Union.

To learn more about deep-sea coral, read NOAA's *State of Deep Coral Ecosystems of the United States: 2007* at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/dce.html>.



Map of the southeastern U.S. region showing deep-sea coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern as of March 2009. Image credit: NOAA.

GulfQuest Museum

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One of NOAA's contributions to the new museum — placed on exhibit at both the museum reception and the keel laying ceremony — is a copper chart plate used by the agency in 1851 to print the navigational chart "Entrance to Mobile Bay." The copper plate, hand-etched in reverse (mirror) format, was one of the first plates used to print charts for navigation into the Port of Mobile.

As part of his remarks, Dunnigan emphasized NOAA's commitment to the museum. "NOAA is already a partner with the Maritime Museum, providing financial and technical support for the museum's interactive exhibits, many of which feature the same areas that dominate NOAA's scientific endeavors — marine archeology, oceanography, meteorology, marine ecology and coastal resource conservation," Dunnigan said.

NOAA is also developing a new Sea Grant Extension/Outreach/Education program to reside at GulfQuest. Several Sea Grant extension specialists will be onsite to engage the public on priority Gulf issues and to better communicate NOAA's scientific research initiatives.

Flying Pole to Pole to Capture Global Picture of Atmosphere

Katy Human, NOAA Research, Earth Systems Research Laboratory

NOAA scientists are going to new highs to measure greenhouse gases and other known atmospheric pollutants.

Two Earth System Research Laboratory scientists armed with five high-tech instruments took a roller-coaster tour of the planet in January, in a modified Gulfstream V jet known as HIAPER (High-performance Instrumented Airborne Platform for Environmental Research). The high-flying laboratory looped from the North Pole to the South Pole at speeds of more than 500 miles per hour.

The round-the-world flights are part of a new research program called HIPPO (short for HIAPER Pole-to-Pole Observation) — a multiagency, multiyear mission to paint a three-dimensional portrait of the atmosphere.

Detailed Data — From Very Thin Air

Initial results from HIPPO indicate that carbon dioxide and other pollutants are higher in concentration over the Arctic than many scientists expected, and more oxygen is piling up over the Southern Ocean.

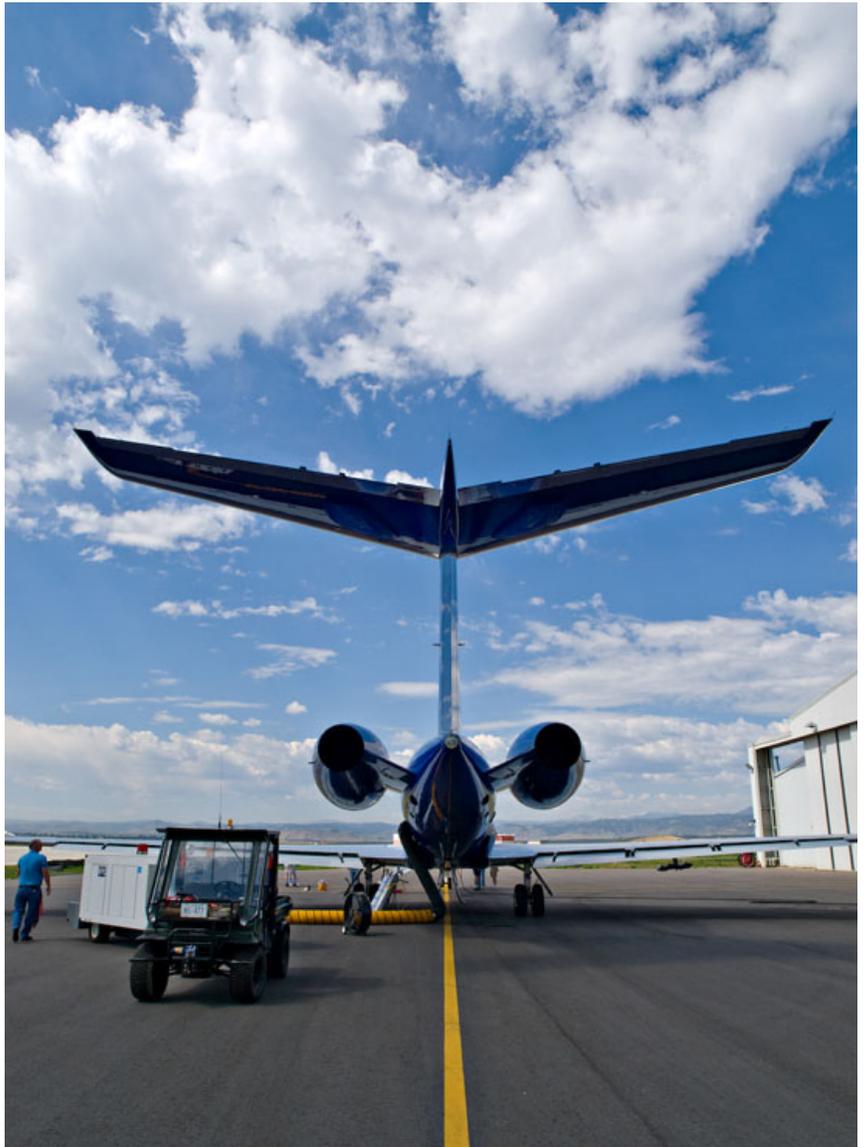
Data gathering from the first 11 flights captured the most detailed measurements yet of greenhouse gases, ozone, particles, and other atmospheric constituents. This information is critical to both climate modelers seeking to understand the Earth and policymakers who rely on sound science for decision-making.

During flight, HIAPER dipped within a few hundred feet of the ground and ocean, and then soared into the lower stratosphere, approximately 45,000 feet high. The January missions were spread out among seasons (winter in the Northern Hemisphere, summer in the south) and focused on areas that are not well sampled — especially the Southern Hemisphere and its oceans.

An early look at HIPPO data suggests great success, said Jim Elkins, a HIPPO co-investigator and scientist with ESRL's Global Monitoring Division. "We got a cross-section of the atmosphere, up and down, from pole to pole — we've never done this before."

Led by Harvard University's Steve Wofsy, HIPPO is a joint venture of the National Science Foundation, the National Center for Atmospheric Research and NOAA ESRL (including the Boulder, Colo.-based Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences).

The January mission — the first of five to take place over the next three years — was designed to research the relatively empty observation space between satellites and



The NCAR research jet HIAPER prepares to take off in a test flight for a pole-to-pole expedition to collect important atmospheric data. Photo credit: Will von Dauster, NOAA ESRL.

the ground-based instruments of ESRL's Global Monitoring Division and other networks.

"We're bridging that gap," Elkins said. "We've had some flights over parts of North America, and some satellites give broad coverage of the stratosphere, but they can have trouble getting down into the troposphere."

The *stratosphere* generally reaches from 5 or 10 miles above Earth's surface to about 30 miles high; the *troposphere* is lower and reaches only to about 5 or 10 miles altitude.

Fred Moore from ESRL's Global Monitoring Division

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HIPPO

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and Josh Schwarz from ESRL's Chemical Sciences Division both flew on HIPPO. Schwarz was responsible for a soot particle photometer (SP2), which measures black carbon particles that can absorb solar radiation and warm the surrounding atmosphere.

"The datasets are stunning," said David Fahey, a member of the HIPPO science team from ESRL's Chemical Sciences Division.

"We'd really like to know more about the budgets of greenhouse gases and black carbon particles, the sources and sinks of these materials on the surface of the Earth, how they get into the atmosphere, and how they get moved around," said Wofsy during a press conference.

A Lab With Quite a View

The scientists who flew on HIPPO said the first leg of the mission was challenging, as well as visually stunning.

"Flying in a small group of people to a string of remote locations gave me a strong sense of experiencing research as an explorer," said ESRL's Schwarz. "This was enhanced by the challenge of operating our instruments for many flights without a fixed base for repairs and supplies ... I also was surprised by how fascinating I found the contrasts in sea surface color and cloud formations. Looking out the window with the sense of the whole world at our feet was endlessly interesting."

'Secret' is Out for NWS' Corey Perrillioux

Julie Bedford, NOAA Office of Communications

By day, Corey Perrillioux works as a busy logistics management specialist with the NWS National Data Buoy Center at Stennis Space Center, Miss. He is responsible for overseeing property and supplies and acting as facility operations manager. He also manages a hurricane-evacuation shelter.

By night, Perrillioux — a singer, guitarist, drummer and accordionist — pursues his music passion playing songs influenced by an eclectic mix of Cajun, country, rhythm-and-blues, and contemporary rock genres. The Louisiana native has opened for national artists such as Martina McBride and Sammy Kershaw, and just released his debut CD, *Your Little Secret*.

Although the demands of working full time, and songwriting and performing might be vexing to some, Perrillioux sees music as a creative outlet that gives him balance.

"I don't consider music a job; it's more of a fun thing I do to blow off steam," says Perrillioux. "I welcome the time I have with music because it's my own escape from the regular stresses of life."



Corey Perrillioux, a logistics management specialist with the NWS, is enjoying rising success as a recording artist.

Photo credit: John Stricklin, South Mississippi Living magazine.

NOAA Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Celebrates Opening of New Learning Center

NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco joined Senators Daniel K. Inouye and Daniel K. Akaka, Hawaiian cultural practitioner Kimokeo Kapahulehua, and other state and local community leaders at the April 13 grand opening of the Sanctuary Learning Center for the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary in Kihei, Maui, Hawaii.

The new 4,600-square-foot, single-story learning center is located next to the sanctuary office building, adjacent to the historic Ko'ie'ie Hawaiian fishpond and sanctuary waters. The center provides facilities for research and classroom space for school groups and public awareness programs aimed at protecting Hawaii's humpback whales and ocean habitats.



From left, facing camera: Laura Thielen, director of Hawaii's Department of Land and Natural Resources, Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco, Sen. Daniel K. Akaka, and Hawaiian cultural practitioner Kimokeo Kapahulehua celebrate the grand opening of the Sanctuary Learning Center for the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary in Maui.

Photo credit: Fiona Langenberger, HIHWNMS.

Congratulations to May's Employee and Team Member of the Month



As the resident expert for strategic planning and performance measurement, **Liz Davenport (Employee of the Month, NOS)** keeps Ocean Service programs looking forward with a focus on measurable outcomes. Over the past year, offices across NOAA tapped Liz for her expertise. Liz helped fledgling and long-established programs develop and rethink strategic plans and establish solid performance measures, including measures to meet the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act. Liz supported the Marine Debris Program, the Coastal Strategy Core Team, the Coral Program, the Office of Coast Survey, the Integrated Ocean Observing System Program, PPI, and others. Most recently, she worked to ensure that stimulus funds were tied to strong performance outcomes. Liz looks forward to helping NOAA meet the President's goal "to give all Americans a voice in their government and ensure that they know exactly how we're spending their money and can hold us accountable for the results."



Ahmed Sharaf (Team Member of the Month, Office of the Chief Administrative Officer) has shown his programming expertise in helping NOAA's Personal Property Management Branch eliminate a seemingly insurmountable backlog in its asset database. In October 2008, there were a total of 3,803 assets not entered into the database, dating as far back as 2005. A massive effort was started to eliminate this backlog and Ahmed was very instrumental in helping to do so, within four months. Ahmed's technical knowledge and programming expertise allowed him to provide daily and sometimes hourly progress reports. He is an exemplary team player whose dedication and professionalism brings to NOAA and the branch many years of experience, which greatly enhances NOAA's mission.