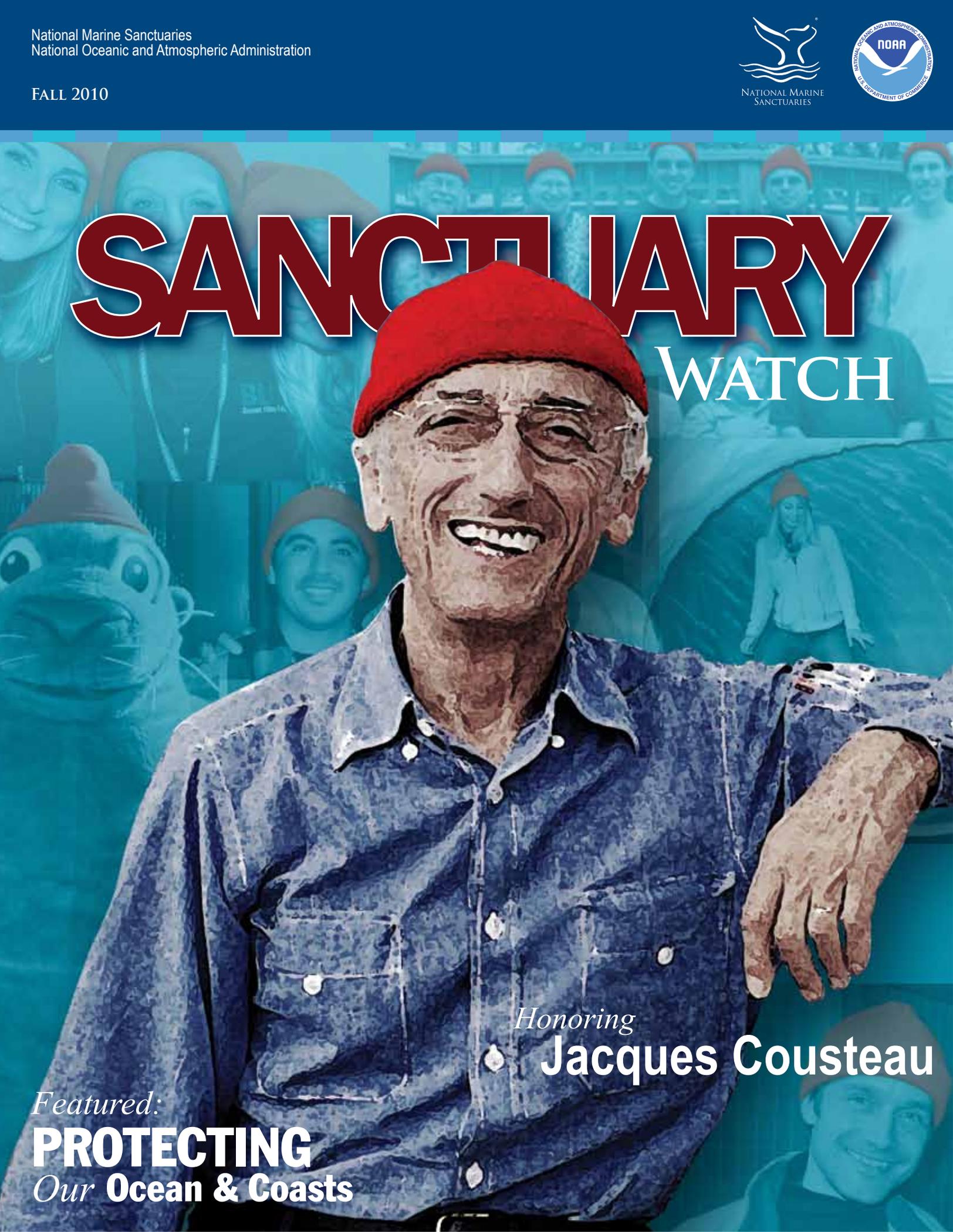


FALL 2010



SANCTUARY

WATCH

Honoring
Jacques Cousteau

Featured:
PROTECTING
Our Ocean & Coasts

In This Issue



PROTECTING OUR OCEAN & COASTS

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Cover Art: NOAA/Matt McIntosh (2010), based on an original photograph ©Tim Trabon; used with permission of photographer

SANCTUARY WATCH is a publication of the Communications, Outreach and Education Division of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. NOAA is an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

What would Jacques Cousteau say?

If the legendary explorer, innovator, filmmaker, author and environmentalist were alive today, what would he think of our treatment of the ocean? In the 13 years since Captain Cousteau passed away, we have seen coral reefs decline worldwide, trash accumulate in the sea, and one of the largest oil spills in history in the Gulf of Mexico.

I think the Captain would be angered and saddened by the state of his beloved underwater world. But his vision and determination to defend it reminds us of our responsibility: to continue to fight passionately to ensure the future of our fragile coastal and ocean places, using all means at our disposal. We have a large challenge ahead of us to convey that a healthy ocean is *really* important to a healthy economy, nation, and world.

With that charge in mind, on June 25, 2010 — 100 years after Captain Cousteau's birth — the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries celebrated "Cousteau Day" to honor the life and legacy of the man who inspired a generation of ocean leaders, scientists and conservationists. Staff at every site in the National Marine Sanctuary System donned Cousteau's signature red watch cap and paid tribute to him in their own way; some organized beach clean-up activities, while others hosted public events or screenings of his classic films. It showed everyone how the Captain's spirit is still alive and how he continues to stir our imagination, push our limits, and encourage our dreams.

The impact of our Cousteau celebrations reverberated beyond our sites. It was felt at Capitol Hill Ocean Week 2010, where scientists and conservation advocates, legislators and energy industry representatives met in Washington, D.C., to discuss the challenges and opportunities we all face in working toward a healthy ocean and a clean energy future. It was felt at the BLUE Ocean Film Festival in Monterey, California, which brought together thousands of people from around the world to watch inspiring ocean films and generate renewed enthusiasm for ocean conservation.

We are committed to celebrating Cousteau Day annually and carrying his spirit daily to remind ourselves and others of the enduring relevance of his work and teachings. Through the efforts described in this magazine, including oil spill response, scientific expeditions, the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program and many others, we strive to protect our underwater treasures and to honor Cousteau's legacy. And through special places, like our national marine sanctuaries, we can inspire everyone everywhere to follow the Captain's lead — I think he would be proud.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Basta, Director
 Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

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Papahānaumokuākea Added to World Heritage List

U.N. RECOGNIZES MONUMENT'S NATURAL, CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE



Photo: Claire Fackler

Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, a string of remote reefs and atolls in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in July. Part of the National Marine Sanctuary System, it covers nearly 140,000 square miles and protects more than 7,000 species. Papahānaumokuākea is the first U.S. site designated for both its natural and cultural heritage. World Heritage listing recognizes the value of the monument's resources, as well as the nation's commitment to long-term protection and management of the site.

NOAA STRENGTHENS EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP, CELEBRATES CULTURE IN AMERICAN SAMOA

A team of 19 educators representing NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries connected with more than 100 K-12 teachers during a "Dive into Education" workshop on Tutuila Island in American Samoa in July. The two-day ocean science workshop provided the teachers with meaningful expertise, resources and training that they will be able to use to educate their students about our ocean, climate, and the marine ecosystems of American Samoa.

Dive into Education, which included 29 sessions on ocean-related topics like coral reef ecology, coincided with the designation of American Samoa as a Preserve America Community, the first such designation for a U.S. territory.

Through Dive into Education and the Preserve America Community designation, NOAA is working to develop a strong, cooperative relationship with American Samoa that embraces the mutually beneficial goals of protecting ocean ecosystems and preserving cultural history.



Photo: Michiko Martin

New Exploration Center Breaks Ground in Santa Cruz

FACILITY TO EXPAND OUTREACH FOR MONTEREY BAY SANCTUARY



Photo: NOAA

Officials from Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and the city of Santa Cruz broke ground July 12 on the Sanctuary Exploration Center. Located in Santa Cruz one block from the beach, the 12,000-square-foot center will feature exhibits funded by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation and will function as the sanctuary's premier interactive interpretive facility. Construction will begin in fall 2010 and is projected to finish winter 2011.

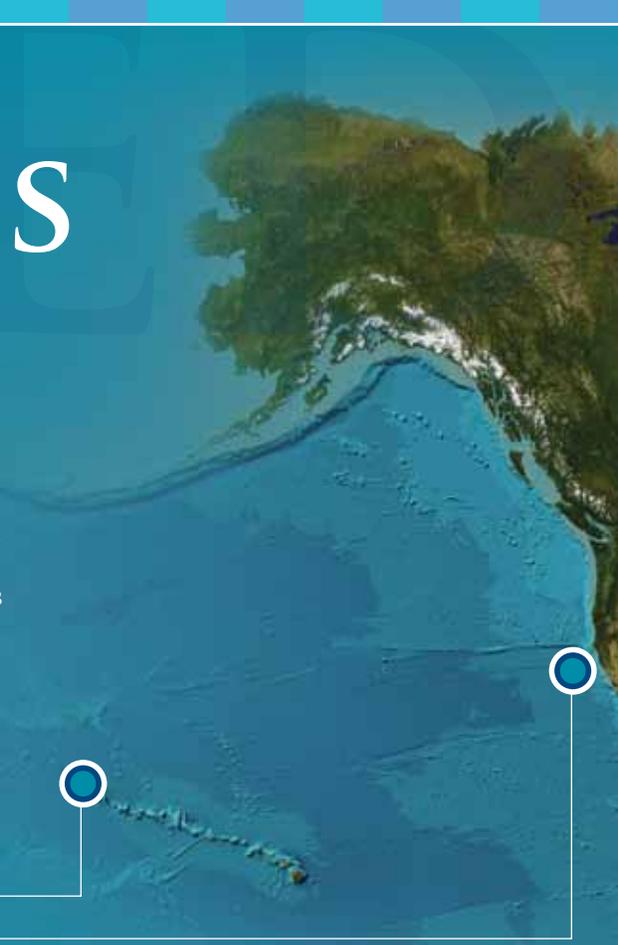
STELLWAGEN BANK SANCTUARY RELEASES NEW MANAGEMENT PLAN

NOAA released the final management plan for Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary that will guide the sanctuary's resource protection and conservation efforts over the next five years. Based on several years of scientific study, and developed with extensive public input, the new management plan focuses on key issues affecting the sanctuary, including ecosystem alteration, wildlife disturbance, vessel traffic, water quality and invasive species.

EXPEDITIONS

Scientists Dive into Research across the Sanctuary System

Protecting our nation's special underwater places is an important part of the mission of NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. But the locations covered by the National Marine Sanctuary System vary widely, ranging from the shallow coral reefs of the Florida Keys to Washington's rugged Olympic Coast. Each of these unique places contains different habitats and marine life, and each faces a different set of challenges. Understanding these resources and threats is critical to the protection of our fragile ocean environment. That's why sanctuary staff and partners conduct expeditions like the ones listed below: to explore, document and monitor the diverse ecosystems of the sanctuary system, providing a sound scientific basis for effective ocean management decisions.



Papahānaumokuākea Exploration



Photo: NOAA

On May 10, 2010, a team of 15 scientists departed Pearl Harbor in Honolulu, Hawaii, for a 25-day research expedition to the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. The multidisciplinary expedition team mapped underwater shipwrecks, studied the movements of sharks and conducted an inventory of non-native species. This expedition to the remote Northwestern Hawaiian Islands will yield new information that will help to better understand and manage this special place.

Exploring Deep Sea Coral: West Coast



Photo: NOAA

In July 2010, three teams of researchers explored deep-sea coral habitats from Washington's Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary to the deep-water regions of California between Cordell Bank, Gulf of the Farallones, and Channel Islands national marine sanctuaries. They located and studied deep-sea corals and sponges using underwater remotely operated vehicles and a manned submersible, helping build a stronger understanding of the importance of these remote habitats.

Thunder Bay Montana Live Dive



Photo: NOAA

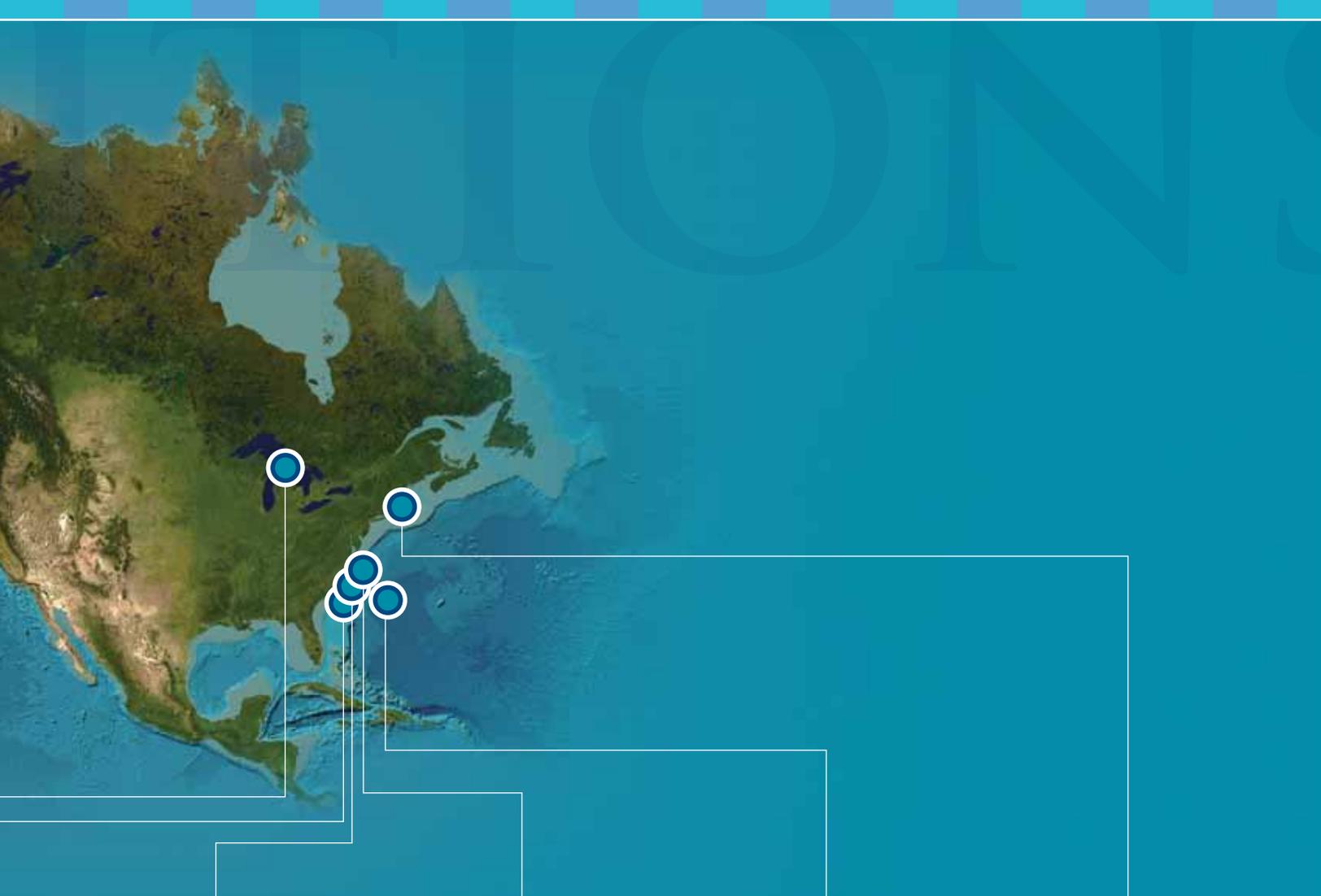
Thanks to a grant from NOAA's Preserve America Initiative, sanctuary archeologists invited the public along as they explored the shipwreck of the *Montana*, a wooden freighter that burned and sank in Thunder Bay in the late 1800s. Today, the *Montana* is one of more than 200 well-preserved historical sites in Lake Huron's "Shipwreck Alley," an area known for its extreme weather and dangerous shoals. Viewers were able to interact with divers 70 feet below the surface in real time via e-mail.

Gray's Reef Expedition



Photo: Scott Noakes

Kicking off in May 2010, scientists from NOAA's Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary set out to cover a diverse range of research, including tagging and tracking reef fish, mapping underwater habitats, and studying invertebrate communities. The research team, which consisted of more than 20 scientists, staff and volunteers from universities and state and federal agencies, also conducted monitoring of various important topics such as marine debris, carbon dioxide levels, and fish predation behavior.



East Carolina University Nearshore Expedition



Photo: East Carolina University
Program in Maritime Studies

With turbulent seas and dangerous shorelines, the North Carolina coast along the Outer Banks has seen more than its share of shipwrecks. Researchers from NOAA's Monitor National Marine Sanctuary and East Carolina University's Program in Maritime Studies spent summer 2010 documenting and preserving some of these historical sites, including the USS *Huron*, one of the nation's last ships to combine steam and sail, and the *Corolla/George Brown*, a wreck thought to date back to the 1600s.

Exploring Deep Sea Coral: East Coast



Photo: NOAA

Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary researchers had planned to explore deep-sea coral habitats during their April 2010 expedition. Unfortunately, the Gulf Stream current was particularly strong at all of the research sites, preventing them from lowering the ROV to the bottom. The team adjusted its plan, instead collecting samples at a site where deep corals are known to occur and conducting split-beam surveys, which will allow them to document the distribution of living matter in the water column.

Battle of the Atlantic III



Photo: Steve Sellers,
East Carolina University

This June 2010 expedition was the third part of a multi-year project to document historically significant shipwrecks lost off the East Coast in the Battle of the Atlantic during World War II. Using non-invasive methods, NOAA divers and partners surveyed and photographed sections of several vessels, helping scientists determine the structural integrity of the remains and potential management options. The project is dedicated to preserving and educating people about these important pieces of our maritime history.

Stellwagen Bank Maritime Heritage Cruise



Photo: Deborah Marx/SBNMS

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary researchers headed out in August 2010 on two missions to explore underwater historical resources. On the first mission, scientists used sonar to map more than 100 square kilometers of the sanctuary seafloor and located a dozen potential shipwreck sites. Later in the month, staff partnered with the University of Connecticut to investigate what may be the sanctuary's oldest known shipwrecks using an ROV equipped with high-definition video cameras.

A TEAM EFFORT

Sanctuary Staff Lend a Hand in the Gulf Coast Oil Spill Response

When Steve Gittings first stepped into the Incident Command Post in Houma, La., on June 21, the whirlwind of activity was almost overwhelming. All around him, people darted through a maze of desks and huddled around computer screens and whiteboards. The massive space buzzed with ringing phones and the drone of hundreds of simultaneous conversations.

"I felt like a squirrel in traffic," he said. "I thought, what do I do next? Who do I talk to?"

He wasn't alone. Gittings, the national science coordinator for the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, is one of the many NOAA personnel who traveled to the Gulf Coast to help out with the oil spill response following the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill in April. He and more than 50 colleagues from the National Marine Sanctuary System have provided wide-ranging support for NOAA's role as the lead scientific agency for the response effort, both in Houma and at other locations around the country.

The initial shock of plunging into the busy hub of the oil spill response command wore off quickly for Gittings. He linked up with the team responsible for advising the scientific support coordinator — NOAA's lead representative at the Incident Command Post — and over the course of three two-week rotations he worked 12- to 16-hour shifts studying the spill's impacts on marine life, flying over the Gulf Coast on helicopter surveys, analyzing data and briefing leadership on the latest reports.

Some days, Gittings would leave Houma in the afternoon and drive up to four hours through the blazing Louisiana heat and humidity to represent NOAA at community "open house" events. Held in civic centers and high school gymnasiums in towns throughout the region, the events invited local residents to ask questions and discuss their concerns about the spill with experts working directly on the response effort. Gittings and his colleagues spent hours at these open houses talking to worried citizens, fishermen, business owners and countless others, taking time to listen to their fears and to answer their questions on an individual basis.

"I think it made a huge difference for them to have someone to talk to, instead of hearing rumors and speculation on the news," Gittings said.

Tony Reyer, another sanctuary staffer deployed to Houma, brought his knowledge of geographic information systems (GIS) to the command center. Reyer helped operate the Environmental Response Management Application, or ERMA, an online mapping tool that has made it possible to organize massive amounts of information collected by thousands of oil spill response workers into one central system.



Photos: NOAA

National marine sanctuary staff assisted with NOAA's response efforts in a variety of ways following the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill, providing scientific knowledge, communications support, technical expertise and more.

ERMA has played a major role in the spill response efforts, Reyer said, allowing leadership to see everything from the location of the oil to wildlife sightings to ocean current predictions, all on a single map created using up-to-the-minute data.

"It would be much more difficult to make informed decisions without ERMA," he said. "Everyone from private citizens to the president can look at the ERMA website and see what's going on in the Gulf right now."

Reyer said he worked 15-hour days on average, with the longest shift stretching to 17.5 hours, but there was little time to stop and think about anything beyond the task at hand.

"It was stressful at times when you've got a deadline looming, but the long days went by fast," he said. "You really feel like you're doing something meaningful."

Elsewhere around the country, sanctuary personnel pitched in to support the oil spill response however they could. The staff of Florida Keys and Flower Garden Banks national marine sanctuaries in the Gulf of Mexico worked quickly to gather environmental data in case oil damaged resources in either sanctuary, but fortunately, neither site has yet shown evidence of impacts from the spill.

Lisa Symons, who coordinated the spill response efforts for the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, said sanctuary communications staff also fielded calls and responded to requests from reporters, while others assisted with shoreline cleanup and damage assessment.

"One of strongest things the national marine sanctuaries bring to the table is experience dealing with complex science and resource management issues, and translating them for leadership and the public," Symons said.

With oil no longer flowing into the Gulf, Symons said the focus of the spill command is shifting from emergency response to evaluation of the spill's impacts and restoration of damaged areas. Sanctuary staff in the Gulf of Mexico will continue to be engaged in these efforts in the months to come, supporting NOAA's mission to protect our ocean and coasts through ongoing damage assessment and monitoring. 

“I think it made a huge difference for [people] to have someone to talk to, instead of hearing rumors and speculation on the news.”
— Steve Gittings



A National Geographic videographer films at the site of the Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Photo: NOAA

Fostering a

NEW GENERATION

of Ocean Scientists



Ask any child who loves the ocean, aquariums, and "Finding Nemo", and chances are marine biologist will be high on his or her list of "what I want to be when I grow up." The future of our ocean depends on young people with this kind of passion for the underwater world — a new generation of marine scientists to study the sea and remind us about the importance of protecting it.

To encourage more students to pursue their dreams of studying ocean science, NOAA created the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program, which awards more than \$600,000 every year in tuition support and funding for graduate students to conduct research projects in NOAA's national marine sanctuaries. Dedicated to the late Dr. Foster, a marine scientist and former assistant administrator of the National Ocean Service, the program promotes diversity and recognizes outstanding scholarship in oceanography, marine biology and maritime archaeology.

MEET THE 2010 FOSTER SCHOLARS

JULIA BURROWS Role of Apex Predators



Julia is pursuing a Ph.D. in marine science and conservation at Duke University.

She will explore the foraging behavior of whales, and hopes to improve ocean conservation efforts by gaining a better understanding of the role apex predators play in marine ecosystems.

MELINDA CONNERS Tracking the Albatross



Melinda, a doctoral candidate in ocean sciences at UC Santa Cruz, is interested in how

marine species respond to changing environments. Her research is part of a tracking study of Laysan and black-footed albatrosses conducted since 2002 in Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.

SHERRI ELDRIDGE Sensitivity of Baleen Whales



Sherri is pursuing a Ph.D. in living marine resources science and management at the Univer-

sity of Massachusetts, Dartmouth. She is investigating how baleen whales receive low-frequency communications, focusing on receptors in their dermal tissue that detect changes in pressure.

CORINNE GIBBLE Holistic Ecosystem Analysis



Corinne, who is pursuing a Ph.D. in ocean sciences at UC Santa Cruz, is passionate about wildlife health,

ocean water quality, and human impacts on marine systems. Her academic work takes a holistic ecosystem approach to understanding marine mammal foraging ecology and seabird health.

JESSICA JOYNER Sponges as an Early Indicator



Jessica is a doctoral candidate in ecology at the University of Georgia. For her dissertation, her

research focuses on how sewage contamination affects reef ecosystems, and how sponges could potentially provide early warning of the presence of sewage in the marine environment.

JESSICA LOPEZ Contaminants in Monk Seals



Jessica is working on her M.S. at Hawaii Pacific University. Her project involves studying

contaminants in Hawaiian monk seal tissue from the main Hawaiian Islands, an area where potential environmental contamination could impact monk seal breeding and population health.

MICHELLE MEADOWS Snapper Spawning



Michelle is pursuing a master's degree in marine biology at the Florida Institute of Technology.

Michelle's research compares the spawning of snapper species along the Florida coast, and her goal is to inform sustainable fishery management decisions using current and historical data.

Ongoing Foster scholar research projects, which run up to four years, include diverse topics like deep-sea coral ecology, marine conservation policy, coastal pollution, and toxins in sea turtles.

**FOR MORE
INFORMATION, VISIT**
<http://fosterscholars.noaa.gov>



LTJG IAN GROOM | Aviator, U.S. Coast Guard

Coast Guard Pilots Help Sanctuaries Step Up Enforcement

Guard surveys the Pacific Ocean from the cockpit of his bright orange-and-white MH-65C Dolphin helicopter.

Behind him, observers from NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries peer out the windows of the aircraft through high-powered binoculars. One of the observers shouts a few words over the noise of the helicopter's four whirling rotor blades, and Groom banks sharply toward the distant shape of a vessel on the horizon.

This isn't a typical Coast Guard search-and-rescue operation. Groom's helicopter is on patrol. His civilian passengers are on a mission to find and document boaters, fishermen and other ocean users who — intentionally or otherwise — violate the regulations that protect marine life and habitats in the region's state and federal waters.

Groom, who grew up in northwestern Illinois, joined the Army out of high school. He attended flight school in 2001, and spent several years piloting helicopters for the Army before joining the Coast Guard in 2008.

"Flying is what I wanted to do from the beginning, for as long as I can remember," Groom said. Today, he is one of 22 aviators based at Air Station San Francisco who conduct search-and-rescue, training and enforcement operations in the air station's four Dolphin helicopters.

The Coast Guard and NOAA have forged a strong partnership here in central

California, where pilots like Groom fly maritime enforcement missions with NOAA personnel over national marine sanctuaries and other significant ocean places as often as twice a month. "I think it's a great partnership," Groom said. "One of the components of both [agencies'] missions is to enforce maritime law and protect marine resources."

Air Station San Francisco is located near three marine sanctuaries — Monterey Bay, Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank — but it isn't the only one working with NOAA to patrol California's waters for lawbreakers. The men and women of Coast Guard Air Stations in Sacramento, L.A./Long Beach, Astoria, and Port Angeles have been instrumental in providing regular aerial coverage of sanctuaries and other marine areas up and down the West Coast using helicopters and C-130 aircraft.

Aircraft are emerging as the most efficient and cost-effective way to patrol large marine areas, collect visitor and vessel use data, provide presence, and enforce specific zones. Sanctuary staff have also provided the crews with patrol guides for each sanctuary with maps, regulations, and points of contacts to aid in the enforcement of sanctuary regulations.

Groom, married with a young daughter, said the opportunity to cooperate with NOAA staff to protect our ocean and coasts is a rewarding one — with the added bonus of flying over California's breathtaking coastline.

"The days you have good sun and you get to help people, it's absolutely gorgeous," he said. "I love my job."

“Flying is what I wanted to do from the beginning, for as long as I can remember.”

U.S. Coast Guard aviators flying aircraft like this MH-65C Dolphin helicopter provide valuable support for enforcement of sanctuary regulations.



Photo: U.S. Coast Guard



Photos: Ecdyle Arrossi

Speakers including scientists, legislators and industry leaders discussed ocean energy at Capitol Hill Ocean Week.

CLEAN ENERGY, CLEAN SEAS

Ocean Leaders Gather in Washington for Capitol Hill Ocean Week 2010

In June, with a backdrop of concern and uncertainty surrounding the oil spill unfolding in the Gulf of Mexico, the 10th Annual Capitol Hill Ocean Week symposium provided a forum for timely, relevant conversations centered on the theme of “Clean Energy and a Healthy Ocean.”

Presented by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, the symposium’s diverse panels explored how ocean energy choices can help create a secure future for coastal communities and the marine resources they depend on. Attendees included environmental legislators, non-profits, academics and experts in environmental and marine science.

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries kicked off the week with “Sanctuaries 2025: The Promise of America’s Underwater Treasures,” a briefing that set out to define a common vision for our ocean’s future, and to spark discussion on the role of sanctuaries in realizing that vision over the next 15 years.

The briefing featured a range of national marine sanctuary constituents including Jerry Schubel, president of the Aquarium of

the Pacific; conservationist and author Carl Safina; marine biologist Dan Laffoley; and Eric Kett, a sportfishing charter boat captain and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council member. Setting the tone for the rest of the week, the overarching theme of the session centered on change, collaboration and progress in our efforts to save our ailing ocean ecosystems.

Highlights of Capitol Hill Ocean Week included panels on the current state of energy in the U.S., advances in offshore energy technology, impacts on coastal and ocean resources, and the changing landscape of renewable energy production. Members of Congress, industry representatives, scientific experts and conservationists all contributed to the week’s frank and productive discussions of energy use and sustainable solutions.

Our ocean faces great threats, but the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries is committed to working with diverse partners through venues like Capitol Hill Ocean Week to find solutions that help strengthen our energy future and protect the precious resources of our underwater ecosystems. 🐟



Honoring Ocean LEADERS

At the annual Leadership Awards Dinner hosted by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, prominent dignitaries and ocean advocates honored Rep. Lois Capps and Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen for their strong leadership on ocean issues. The foundation also presented Monterey Bay Aquarium Executive Director Julie Packard with a lifetime achievement award for her dedication to ocean education.

Steve Kroll, a Michigan dive charter operator and longtime volunteer with Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary, was also announced as the 2010 Volunteer of the Year for the National Marine Sanctuary System for his outstanding work educating the public about the shipwrecks of the Great Lakes and the importance of conserving these sunken pieces of history.



Photo: Jaime Windon



CRITTERFILES: MANTA RAY



Soaring gracefully beneath the surface on massive "wings," few creatures in the sea appear as free and as effortless as the manta ray. These elegant and mysterious creatures can be found in warm ocean waters around the world, and yet we know incredibly little about them.

Like all sharks and rays, mantas are fish with skeletons of flexible cartilage, rather than hard bone. But unlike many of their close cousins in the ray family, such as stingrays, mantas don't hang out on the seafloor. They're much more at home gliding through the water column, where they scoop up seawater and filter out tiny animals called zooplankton.

Mantas can live for more than 20 years, and grow to a "wingspan" of more than 20 feet from fin tip to fin tip. These docile creatures are generally easy-going and content to mingle with scuba divers, although they have been known to perform acrobatic leaps on occasion, propelling themselves entirely out of the water!

In the Gulf of Mexico, manta rays are regular visitors to the rich ecosystems of Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, where coral reefs sit atop underwater mountains. Researchers at the sanctuary are working to tag and track the mantas that frequent the area, which is helping us learn more about how these remarkable creatures spend their lives.



COMMON NAME:Manta Ray
SCIENTIFIC NAME:*Manta birostris*
DISTRIBUTION: Tropical and temperate seas worldwide (see map above)
MAX. LENGTH: 22 feet
MAX. WEIGHT: 5,000 lbs.
DIET: Zooplankton
STATUS: Near threatened

Photo Credit: Ed Lyman

Lights, Camera, OCEAN

BLUE Ocean Film Festival
Makes a Splash in Monterey



Featuring more than 120 eye-opening ocean films and fascinating discussions with ocean conservation icons like Jean-Michel Cousteau and Dr. Sylvia Earle, the 2010 BLUE Ocean Film Festival burst onto the scene this summer in Monterey, Calif.

Bright California sunshine and the picturesque coastline of Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary provided the backdrop for BLUE's first-ever festival in California, held Aug. 24-29 at Monterey's Portola Hotel. Event organizers screened 128 films ranging from shorts like "The Krill Is Gone" to full-length features such as "Disneynature Oceans" at five theaters throughout the Monterey area, including the Monterey Bay Aquarium, Golden State Theater and Cannery Row IMAX Theater.

The movies weren't the only draw at BLUE, however — the event also boasted a fully-fledged conservation summit and filmmaking industry conference, which drew crowds of scientists, conservationists, filmmakers, photographers and ocean enthusiasts from around the world. BLUE Executive Director Debbie Kinder estimated that nearly 9,000 people showed up for the festival's diverse films, panel discussions, ocean-themed activities and gala events. "We're really pleased with the turnout," she said. I think it's a little more than double what we saw last year."

Kinder, who founded the BLUE Ocean Film Festival with her husband Charlie in Savannah, Ga., in 2009, said moving the event from its original location in Georgia to California was challenging, but the new venue exceeded even her high expectations.

"Overall, in every aspect it was a fabulous transition," Kinder

said. "It was a bit of a challenge, but we had a great support group here — everyone was fantastic about making us feel welcome and supporting us."

Kinder explained the decision to move the festival across the country, calling Monterey an "ocean epicenter" with a strong connection between the local community and the sea, in addition to its high concentration of ocean-focused organizations like the Monterey Bay Aquarium. She said she believes Monterey's Central California location also makes it ideal for drawing people from outside the local area.

Highlights from the festival included a remarkable 14-hour swim across Monterey Bay by marathon swimmer Bruckner Chase (see sidebar), a gallery of stunning photography by National Geographic photographer David Doubilet, panel discussions with industry experts on cutting-edge technologies like 3D filmmaking, and a touching tribute by ocean advocate Jean-Michel Cousteau to his father, Jacques Cousteau, one of the great heroes of ocean conservation.

"I was very, very pleased and gratified about how the event turned out," Kinder said. "It was all about bringing people together to energize one another, and I think everyone genuinely came away empowered and inspired and more knowledgeable."

Wrapping up the festival was the BLUE Carpet Awards Ceremony, a Hollywood-style awards show where the film "Bag It" took home the Best of Festival honor. "Bag It," a humorous take on one man's struggle against the ever-present plastic in our lives, was selected for both the quality of the film and the power

“It was all about bringing people together to energize one another ... everyone genuinely came away empowered and inspired.”

—Debbie Kinder



Photos: Amy Schwab, Tectonic Productions

The 2010 BLUE Ocean Film Festival in Monterey, California, combined more than 120 fascinating ocean films with a marine conservation summit and filmmaking industry conference, drawing thousands of attendees from all over the world.

SWIMMER COMPLETES EPIC 14-HOUR BAY CROSSING

Setting out before sunrise at 4:30 a.m. on Aug. 24, marathon swimmer Bruckner Chase kicked off the 2010 BLUE Ocean Film Festival with a courageous 28-mile swim through Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary from Santa Cruz to Monterey, braving the stings of thousands of jellyfish along the way. Nearly 14 hours after he set out, Chase paddled the final mile into San Carlos Beach, where he was greeted by TV cameras and a throng of cheering supporters. Back on dry land, he called the swim “the hardest thing I’ve ever done,” but said it was worth it to draw attention to the ocean and the BLUE film festival. Chase plans to attempt future swims at other sites throughout the National Marine Sanctuary System.



Photo: Jim Gateley

of its message. Other notable winners included the documentary “In the Wake of Giants,” which followed a team working to free whales from marine debris in Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary, and “Willem and the Whales,” a short film featuring a precocious young boy arguing for the end of whaling.

“There were so many moments,” Kinder said, when asked about her favorite part of the festival. “Willem and the Whales’ was one that really touched me. Hearing that raw honesty from a child — that touched my heart.”

Events like the BLUE Ocean Film Festival play an important role in the ocean conservation efforts of the National Marine Sanctuary System, which contributed staff and financial support to the festival. Dan Basta, director of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, said the event showcased the power of film in educating people about the importance of protecting our ocean ecosystems.

“I think film really speaks to people in a way that is immediate and powerful, and it lets you expose them to places and experiences that they might never see otherwise,” Basta said. “It’s one of the most powerful tools we have to reach people and help make the connection between them and our special ocean places.”

While Kinder said she plans to hold a smaller BLUE event in Monterey next year, the full film festival will take place every two years going forward. In the meantime, the winning films from BLUE 2010 will tour the world, with screenings scheduled at several U.S. locations and as many as five around Australia.

“The potential is huge,” Kinder said. “We could reach millions of people with these wonderful films and conservation information.”



Photo: Amy Schwab, Tectonic Productions



CARL SAFINA

President, Blue Ocean Institute

Sanctuary Voices is a guest column featuring views and opinions from the national marine sanctuary community.

The state of our ocean demands we change course and begin to manage our activities so the ocean realm can continue to sustain us.

Most Americans know the already-degraded Gulf of Mexico's waters and wetlands are now affected by oil and other toxins. The Gulf's problems will affect people for generations. Our children will, throughout their entire lives, know a Gulf struggling to recover. We need to heal the Gulf, true enough. We also need to heal the rest of the ocean.

Growing up in Brooklyn, I was drawn to the coastline from an early age. Mine is a life spent on and in the ocean that sustains us all. I remember going out with my dad on the boats of Sheepshead Bay, catching snappers or nighttime crabbing, or surfcasting at dawn. So the ocean is the heart of my work, and you might say I've got saltwater in my veins.

I have ventured into any and all ways of communicating the science and issues relating the ocean to the world. Through books, films, blogs, speeches and even hand-to-hand outreach and fact-driven combat, I will try any and all tools to get the message out about the need to increase the conservation of the ocean, to protect the wildlife and "resources" I've grown up enjoying. I travel extensively to help highlight and ex-

plain how the ocean is changing and what that means for wildlife and for people. Now, more than ever, we are aware of the ocean's problems. And that means we must apply solutions that are likely to help us to recover the sea's living abundance.

Covering two-thirds of the globe, the ocean is vast. When we talk about ocean governance and conservation, it is difficult getting our minds wrapped around those concepts across a scale that immense. But if we can't grasp and explain what's needed, how can we expect the rest of Americans to understand?

To bring conservation to a scale we all can comprehend, we need to focus on discrete areas of our ocean that represent larger ecosystems and important geographies, and conserve and protect these areas.

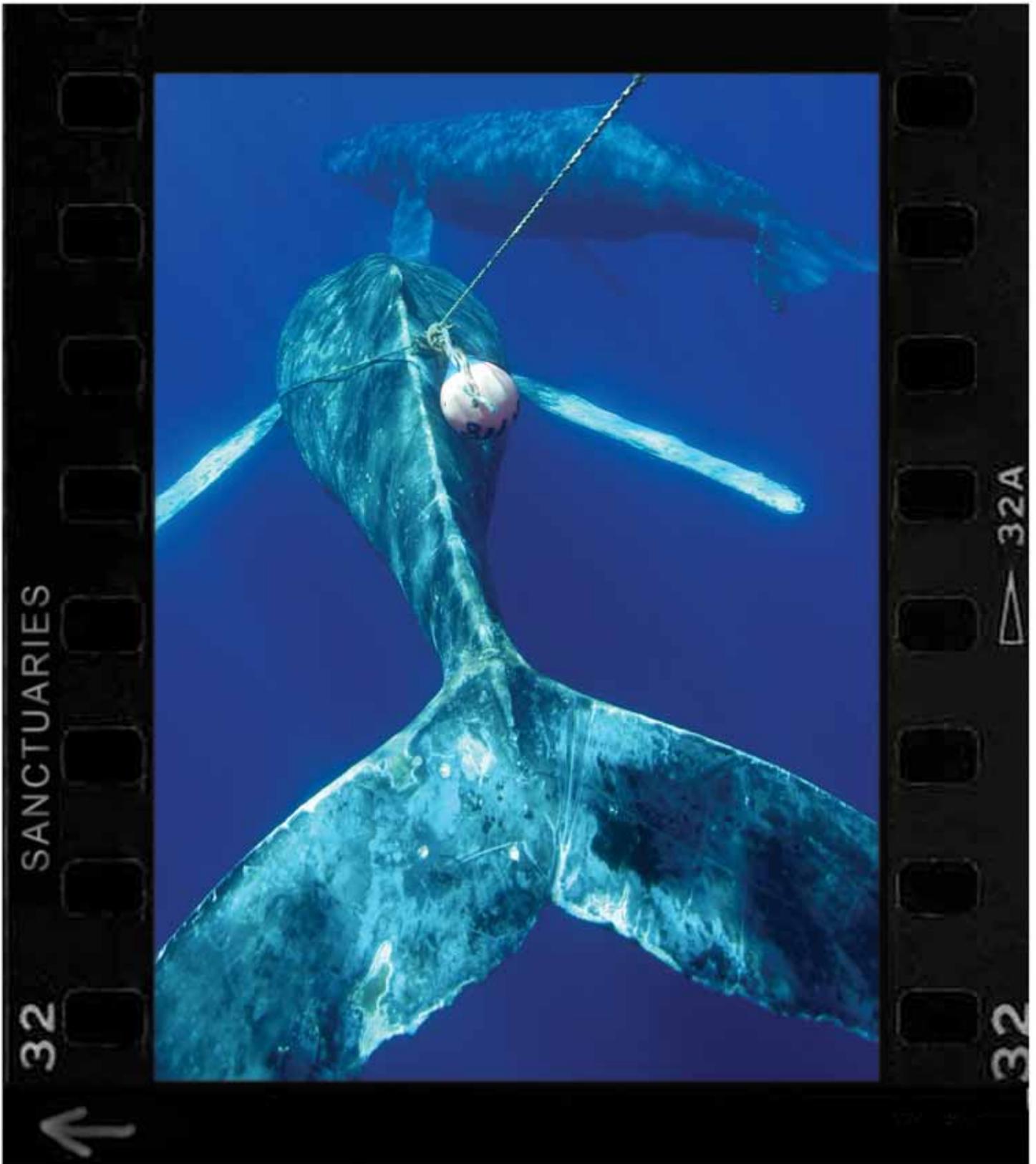
The National Marine Sanctuary System does just this. In many ways it's the most underutilized and promising federal program to manage areas of the ocean for sustained conservation. Today sanctuaries account for less than 1 percent of the U.S. waters. We need to learn from the disasters of this time and protect against repeating our failures. We need to set more areas aside for focused conservation as a next step.

Marine sanctuaries have the promise of enlarging our vistas, teaching our history, restoring our souls and conserving discrete areas of the enormity of the ocean. Each sanctuary must be a living research laboratory, where we probe the secrets of the universe and learn how the oceans might play a larger role in supporting human life.

In this generation, let us release our best new idea and increase protections against future degradation and overuse. Let us find new areas for conservation and set them aside for the generations that follow.



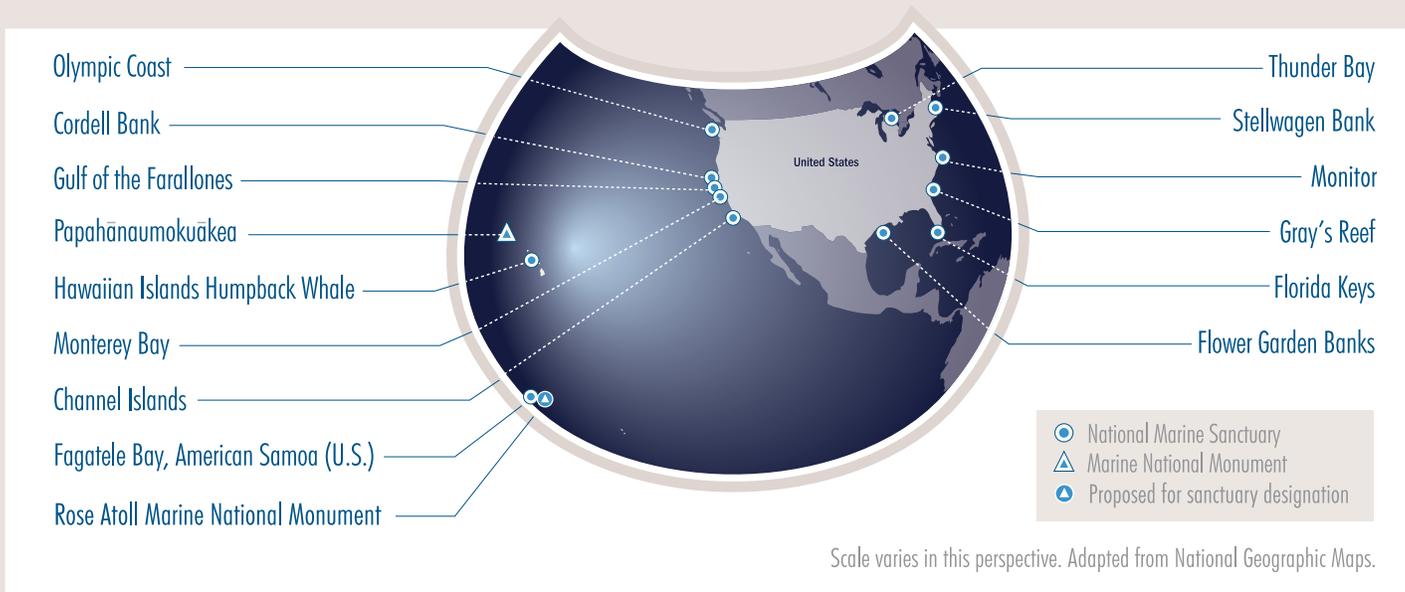
Carl Safina is a prominent marine scientist, conservationist and award-winning author.



SANCTUARY SNAPSHOT This photo of two humpback whales, one tangled in discarded line, was taken from a small inflatable raft as sanctuary staff attempt to free the entangled whale in Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary. Daring rescues like this one were featured in the film “In the Wake of Giants,” winner of the Best Sanctuary Film award at the 2010 BLUE Ocean Film Festival.

SANCTUARY SYSTEM

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries serves as the trustee for a system of 14 special ocean areas, encompassing more than 150,000 square miles of ocean and Great Lakes waters. The system includes 13 national marine sanctuaries and the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. The sanctuary system is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which manages sanctuaries by working cooperatively with the public to protect sanctuaries while maintaining compatible recreational and commercial activities. Sanctuary staff work to enhance public awareness of our nation's marine resources and maritime heritage through scientific research, monitoring, exploration, educational programs and outreach.



The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries is part of NOAA's National Ocean Service.

VISION - People value marine sanctuaries as treasured places protected for future generations.

MISSION - To serve as the trustee for the nation's system of marine protected areas to conserve, protect and enhance their biodiversity, ecological integrity and cultural legacy.



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