

SANCTUARY WATCH

President Creates Vast Reserve to Protect Coral Reefs

With a photo montage of endangered monk seals, brightly colored fish, and mottled sea turtles as a changing backdrop behind him, President Clinton announced the creation of a coral reef preserve that will stretch 84 million acres around the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. The President made the announcement at an event hosted by National Geographic Society in Washington, D.C. on December 4. Joining the President at the ceremony were Secretary of Commerce Norm Mineta, NOAA Undersecretary D. James Baker, author Peter Benchley and staff members from the National Marine Sanctuary System. President Clinton extolled the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem as “a special place where the sea is a living rainbow” and noted that coral reefs support thousands of species of fish and sea life, generate millions of dollars from fishing and tourism, protect shoreline communities from destructive waves, and offer the potential for disease-fighting medicines.



President Bill Clinton, speaking from the stage of the National Geographic Society, announces new protections for Hawaii's coral reef ecosystem.

“However, the world’s reefs are in peril,” the president said, and pointed to the threats of pollution, coral poaching, careless coastal development, and global warming. “In some areas, like the Central Indian Ocean, 90 percent of the coral reefs have died, bleached as white as dead bone.”

The 99,500 square nautical mile Hawaiian reserve is equal in size to the combined states of Florida and Georgia and contains 70 percent of U.S. coral reefs. Twenty-two species of hard coral and two species of soft coral can be found in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. The shoals, atolls, and islands are home to nearly the entire world population of endangered Hawaiian monk seals. The islands are also home to the threatened green sea turtle as well as various transient marine mammals.

With Clinton’s Executive Order, the area receives protections from oil and gas exploration, the dumping of material, and any alterations to the seabed or the

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The National Marine Sanctuaries Act Reauthorized

On November 13, 2000, President Bill Clinton reauthorized the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA) ensuring that America’s unique system of marine protected areas can continue its work in promoting and preserving vulnerable ocean and freshwater environments. Under this reauthorization, President Clinton was authorized to designate any Northwestern Hawaiian Islands coral reef or coral reef ecosystem a reserve. Current sanctuary habitats range in size from less than one square mile to over 5,300 square miles.

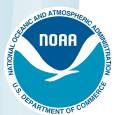
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Marine Sanctuaries Celebrating Their Anniversaries...

Channel Islands Marine Sanctuary Celebrates 20th Anniversary

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary mixed science and art while celebrating their 20th anniversary during the weekend of September 23.

The festivities, held at the new Santa Barbara Maritime Museum, coincided with NOAA's 30th anniversary and featured a special exhibit by world-renowned marine artist Robert Lyn Nelson.

Nelson soon begins a tour of the system's 13 marine sanctuaries and plans to create a painting for each. The first in the sanctuary series, "The Arch at Anacapa," was unveiled during the weekend.

On Saturday, Nelson joined young visitors to paint a children's "marine masterpiece" art mural. Education exhibits were provided by the Marine Educator's Regional Alliance, The Sea Center, Marine Science Institute, Creek Watchers, Channel Islands National Park, Cabrillo High School Aquarium, Ocean Futures, SBCC Marine Diving Technology, and the Regional Alliance Information Network.

Special guests included Dan Basta, Acting Director of the National Marine Sanctuary System; Captain Ted Lillestolen, National Ocean Service Deputy Assistant Administrator; Evelyn Fields, NOAA Corps. Rear Admiral; and Congresswoman Lois Capps, Hannah-Beth Jackson, California Assembly member; and representatives from Senator Jack O'Connell's office. Learn more about the anniversary celebrations at <http://www.cinms.cinms.nos.noaa.gov>.

—Shauna Bingham

Gulf of the Farallones 20 in 2001

Throughout 2001, The Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary will be celebrating its 20th anniversary with a variety of events in the San Francisco Bay Area. A lecture series launches the year on January 18th with shark researcher Peter Pyle, who studies white sharks, seabirds and pinnipeds on the Farallon Islands. To learn more about the yearlong celebrations, visit <http://www.gfnms.nos.noaa.gov/>.

—Paul B. Wong

Florida Keys Sanctuary Reflects on a Decade of Ocean Protections

The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary looked back on a decade-long list of accomplishments in a recent 10th anniversary celebration held in Key West.

President George Bush signed the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and Protection Act into law in November 1990, launching a new era of protection for the beautiful but fragile coral reef ecosystem of the Florida Keys.

"We're proud of what the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary has accomplished in only ten years, and we look forward to working with our partners to continue our progress," said Sanctuary Superintendent Billy Causey.

Since 1990, the Florida Keys Sanctuary has established an Area to be Avoided (ATBA) that prevents ships greater than 50 meters (164') from entering sanctuary waters, permanently banned oil drilling and exploration, implemented a ground-breaking network of 23 no-take areas that protect shallow coral reef habitat, and established 27 Wildlife Management Areas to protect sensitive bird nesting, roosting, and foraging areas, turtle nesting beaches, and American crocodile habitat.

In recent years, the sanctuary conducted state-of-the-art restoration projects including Looe Key, site of the *R/V Columbus Iselin* grounding, and placed RACON beacons on navigational aids along the reef tract, warning ships away. Looking to the past, the sanctuary helped to create a Shipwreck Trail to encourage Keys residents and visitors to learn about maritime history and draw dive pressure away from the natural reef.

To learn more, go to its homepage at <http://www.fknms.nos.noaa.gov>.

—Cheva Heck

National Marine Sanctuary Newsmakers...



Bronze Medal winners are congratulated by NOAA's Undersecretary D. James Baker (left) and CDR Craig McLean, Sanctuaries Deputy Director (right).

(L-R) Dr. Baker, LCDR Pickett, Symons, Dr. Broadwater, Brody, and CDR McLean.

NOAA's Bronze Medal Awarded to Five In Marine Sanctuary System

Five National Marine Sanctuary System staff members are recipients of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Bronze Medal 2000. The Bronze Medal recognizes significant contributions to the Department of Commerce.

Monitor Marine Sanctuary Manager **Dr. John Broadwater** and Sanctuary Education Coordinator **Dina Hill** were recognized for their exemplary leadership in developing and implementing the USS *Monitor* stabilization and recovery effort. The ironclad *Monitor*, most famous for battling the CSS *Virginia* (ex-USS *Merrimack*) to a draw on March 1862, sank in a storm off the coast of Cape Hatteras on New Year's Eve 1862. The Civil War ironclad is rapidly deteriorating on the ocean floor.

Ellen Brody, Acting Manager for Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary, the nation's 13th sanctuary and first in the Great Lakes, was honored for her outstanding work that furthered the designation. The sanctuary is the first in 25 years dedicated solely to protecting submerged cultural resources.

LCDR Matthew Pickett and **Lisa Symons** received the Bronze Medal for their superior public service in directing NOAA's response to the crash of Alaska Airlines Flight 261 in January. Pickett, Manager of the Channel Islands Sanctuary, handled the on-site response; Symons, a National Marine Sanctuary Resource Protection and Damage Assessment Coordinator, provided the response from the national headquarters.

NOAA's Undersecretary Dr. D. James Baker presented the Bronze Medals at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. on October 19.

From Ocean to Badland Promoting Conservation and Education

Bob Steelquist, Educator Coordinator for the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, Washington State, was recently riding horseback in search of North American bison on *Adventure TV's "Anything Wild."*

Steelquist, a naturalist and author of 13 books, was filmed travelling through Teddy Roosevelt National Park in the Badlands of North Dakota where he discussed the legacy of President Roosevelt and his efforts to preserve the bison and this nation's wilderness. The Olympic Coast Sanctuary website can be found at <http://www.ocnms.nos.noaa.gov/>.

Massachusetts Sanctuary Launches New Shipwreck Inventory

Shipwrecks, some dating back centuries, have yet to be identified within the boundaries of Gerry E. Studds Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary.

A recent research cruise may aid scientists in learning more about our nation's maritime history.

Sanctuary Science Coordinator and Chief Scientist **Dr. James Lindholm** joined researchers aboard NOAA's ship *Ferrel* to inventory the sanctuary's submerged cultural resources. The October 23-28 cruise was a joint operation between the sanctuary and the US Geological Survey, Woods Hole, MA. Sanctuary staff joined with Dr. Page Valentine (USGS) to use the sanctuary's Integrated Seafloor Imaging System (ISIS) to collect video and still photographic images of three shipwrecks in the sanctuary's southern portion. These data will be combined with sidescan sonar records of the wrecks and the ISIS' navigation data to plot the position of particular features, e.g., anchors and life boat davits on a chart, to assist scientists in future cruises.

Each of the three inventoried wrecks rest in shallow waters on sandy bottoms. Fish from species normally associated with hard bottom habitats, e.g., cunner and longhorn sculpin, were found on and surrounding one wreck in numbers previously unseen in this part of the sanctuary. To learn more, visit the sanctuary at <http://vineyard.er.usgs.gov/>.



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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.

December/January Calendar

Natural events Look for the blows of gray whales migrating south through the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary in December and January. On the East Coast in mid January, Northern right whales return to Cape Cod Bay and the southern end of the Stellwagen Bank Sanctuary to feed on early bloom of copepods. Schooling scalloped hammerhead sharks and spotted eagle rays fill the waters of the Flower Garden Banks Sanctuary during these two months.

December 18 • The Monterey Bay Sanctuary will host the California Seabird Coordination meeting in Moss Landing. For more information, contact Erica Burton at 831.647.4246.

January 8-12, 2001 • National Marine Sanctuary System and Aquarius Education Team Meeting, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. Throughout January the Gulf of the Farallones Marine Sanctuary celebrates its 20th Anniversary with a series of events. For details, see <http://sanctuaries.nos.noaa.gov/news/calendar/newscalendar.html>.

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Northwestern Hawaiian Islands *(Con'td from pg. 1)*

coral in the preserve. The Executive Order caps fishing at recent or current levels and also preserves Native Hawaiian subsistence and cultural uses. In addition, it designates 15 “reserve preservation areas”—encompassing roughly 5 percent of the reserve—where activities such as anchoring, collecting or touching coral, and recreational and commercial fishing (with the exception of some commercial bottom fishing) will be prohibited. Finally, it directs the Secretary of Commerce to begin the process of sanctuary designation and to develop a Reserve Operations Plan, in consultation with the Secretary of the Department of the Interior and the Governor of Hawaii.

Author Peter Benchley, who explored marine life in writing his novel, *Jaws* and now advocates on behalf of marine conservation issues, addressed the audience with an excerpt from a poem by Lord Byron, “Roll on, thou deep and dark ocean roll!...Man marks the earth with ruin, his control/Stops with the shore.”

“Lovely words. If only they were true,” added Benchley. “We--man and his technology--have so much more power than we could ever have dreamed. In our uncertain hands, we wield the power to alter and damage the fundamental mechanisms that sustain life on earth.”

For more information on the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve, visit <http://hawaiiireef.noaa.gov>.

Marine Sanctuary Program Reauthorized *(Con'td from pg.1)*

Within their protected waters, giant humpback whales breed and calve their young, coral colonies flourish, and historic shipwrecks find their final resting places.

In signing the legislation, President Clinton increases appropriations to \$32 million in fiscal year 2001, with levels increasing by \$2 million increments to \$40 million in fiscal year 2005. An additional \$6 million is authorized in fiscal years 2001 through 2005 to provide facilities needed to manage these special places.

The 2000 NMSA (S 1482) also reauthorizes the national sanctuary system for an additional five years, increases funding, and establishes the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program. The Scholarship Program will recognize outstanding scholarship in oceanography, marine biology, or maritime archaeology, encouraging especially women and members of minority groups. The scholarships were created as a memorial to Dr. Foster, a valued 23-year NOAA employee who directed NOAA's ocean service to expand and strengthen marine sanctuaries.

Sanctuary Watch is a publication of NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary System, Communications and Development Branch.

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