

SANCTUARY WATCH

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NATIONAL MARINE
SANCTUARIES



**A Monument Like No Other in the
Northwestern Hawaiian Islands**

Endangered Hawaiian monk seal. Photo: James Watt



Letter from the Director

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Sanctuary Watch is a publication of the Communications Branch of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Sanctuary Program. NOAA is an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

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Cover: Bluefin trevally at Maro Reef in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Photo: James Watt, www.oceanstock.com

On June 15, President Bush made history when he proclaimed the waters surrounding the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands a marine national monument, permanently protecting the region's coral reefs and unique marine species.

This new marine national monument is more than a spot outlined on a map in the Pacific Ocean, but rather a national wonder for us to conserve for all generations to come. I have had the pleasure of visiting this area and participating in several dives where I saw first hand the beauty of the corals and the unique wealth of this ecosystem that exists despite the devastating amount of marine debris that makes its way to this remote landscape from the far corners of the Pacific.

I was fortunate to be a witness to the president's personal investment in learning about this special place and an eyewitness to his announcement setting this area aside for permanent conservation in an unprecedented way. The president's senior environmental policy advisor, James L. Connaughton, discusses the monument designation in this issue of *Sanctuary Watch*.

We remain committed to working with the public and our federal, state and local partners to ensure that the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands remain healthy and diverse forever. Public involvement is, in fact, at the core of everything the NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program does.

I am pleased to announce that all 14 of our sites now have advisory councils made up of more than 350 individuals vested in the future management of these special treasures. Community-based sanctuary advisory councils provide advice regarding sanctuary resource management; volunteers donate their time, skills and abilities to enhance sanctuary research, education and outreach capabilities; and others with an interest in the marine environment offer valuable input and ideas. Visit any of our discovery centers or our Web site, sanctuaries.noaa.gov, and you'll see what we are achieving together. Read about how you can experience these special places at our Discovery Centers without getting wet on page 7.

On September 20th and 27th, be sure to watch the new two-part PBS series airing this fall by our "Star of the Sea," Jean-Michel Cousteau, highlighting national marine sanctuaries. Called *America's Underwater Treasures*, the program is a follow-up to his recent film about the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, *Voyage to Kure*, which aired in April and was screened at the White House earlier this year.

As always, I encourage you to share with us your vision for national marine sanctuaries by attending a sanctuary advisory council meeting, commenting on a sanctuary management plan, or writing to us at sanctuaries@noaa.gov. Remember: "National marine sanctuaries are what you make them."

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Basta, Director
NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program

Learn more about your national marine sanctuaries at sanctuaries.noaa.gov

Newsplash

New Cousteau Film Highlights National Marine Sanctuaries

Jean-Michel Cousteau returns to PBS Sept. 20 and Sept. 27 at 8 p.m. with a two-part special, *America's Underwater Treasures*, highlighting America's 13 national marine sanctuaries. While discovering what makes each of them unique, the team explores what threatens these sites and what is being done to protect them. Traversing thousands of miles, Cousteau's team goes below and above the sea off the coasts of Michigan, Texas, Florida, North Carolina, Georgia, Massachusetts, California, Oregon, Hawaii and American Samoa in a quest to introduce the public to these vibrant but fragile marine communities. The series was funded in part by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. Check local listings for details.

High-quality Photo Prints Now Available from Sanctuaries Media

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation has teamed with Marine Sanctuaries Media to offer colorful, high quality photographic prints and video about marine sanctuary habitats, wildlife and shipwrecks. These and other products may be purchased at www.marinesanctuariesmedia.com. A portion of the revenues generated from the online store will be returned to the foundation to support educational programs, conservation, exploration and ongoing research at national marine sanctuaries nationwide.



High-quality prints of this and other spectacular images from national marine sanctuaries are available for purchase from Marine Sanctuaries Media. Photo: Michael Carver

Humpback Whale Freed from Marine Debris off Massachusetts

While tagging and tracking humpback whales in Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, crew and scientists aboard the NOAA research vessel *Nancy Foster* helped the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies disentangle a humpback whale off the coast of Massachusetts on July 9. After receiving a report from

a local whale watching vessel about the entangled humpback, the *Nancy Foster* located the animal and assessed the severity of the entanglement. Scientists were already familiar with this particular whale. Years ago they named it "Sockeye," after the type of salmon, due to a deformity of its lower jaw.

Researchers Return to USS Monitor Wreck Site

On July 15-20, a team of researchers from the NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program and the Institute for Exploration returned to *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary off Cape Hatteras, N.C., to conduct a comprehensive photographic survey of the wreck of the famed Civil War ironclad USS *Monitor*. High-resolution images made during the survey will be pieced together to create digital photomosaics of the ship's hull and surrounding wreckage.



Researchers deploy a remotely operated vehicle during *Monitor* Expedition 2006. Photo: David Alberg

The expedition team also enabled Internet surfers everywhere to view portions of the expedition and pose questions to *Monitor* experts via the new OceansLive.org portal.

Public Gets Close Look at New England Shipwreck

Internet users and audiences across the nation got a live look at a historic New England shipwreck on July 15 as researchers from the NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program and the National Undersea Research Center at the University of Connecticut studied the sunken vessel with a robot sub and used special technology to broadcast video of their exploration over the World Wide Web. The focus of the expedition was the *Frank A. Palmer*, which sank in 1902 after colliding with another ship. The wreck lies within Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary. The broadcasts were part of the Fifth Annual Stellwagen Bank Sanctuary Celebration, held at the Gloucester Maritime Heritage Center in Gloucester, Mass. Video of the expedition may be viewed at www.nurc.uconn.edu.

New England Divers Support Worldwide Fish Study

More than 80 scuba divers hit the waters off Cape Ann, Mass., and York, Maine, on July 15 during the New England portion of the Reef Environmental Education Foundation's (REEF) Great

(Cont'd on pg. 9)

Protected: One of the Last Wild Places on Earth

On June 15, President George W. Bush, flanked by members of the Hawaii congressional delegation, the governor of Hawaii, and ocean explorers Dr. Sylvia Earle and Jean-Michel Cousteau, signed a proclamation creating the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) Marine National Monument.

One hundred times larger than Yellowstone National Park, the monument encompasses more than 140,000 square miles of ocean and coral reef habitat. It's the single largest fully protected marine conservation area in the world.

"This is a landmark achievement for conservation, protection and enhancement of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands," said Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez. "Approximately one quarter of the species here are found nowhere else in the world and a marine national monument will provide comprehensive, permanent protection to this region."

The president's action resulted in immediate protection for the island chain, and the immediate implementation of some of the management measures developed during a public national marine sanctuary designation process that began in 2000, when President William J. Clinton established the NWHI Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve.

During that process, conducted under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act, NOAA, working with the community-based NWHI Reserve Advisory Council, State of Hawaii, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, engaged the active participation of the public and stakeholder constituencies in considering how best to protect and manage the archipelago's ecological and cultural resources.

In all, there were more than 100 public meetings and working group sessions – including 22 formal public hearings – generating over 52,000 comments, most supporting strong, seamless protection for the region. President Bush cited this broad-based consensus as a major factor in his decision to establish a marine national monument there.



The abundance of marine life in the NWHI can be seen in this school of Hawaiian squirrelfish at French Frigate Shoals. Photo: James Watt

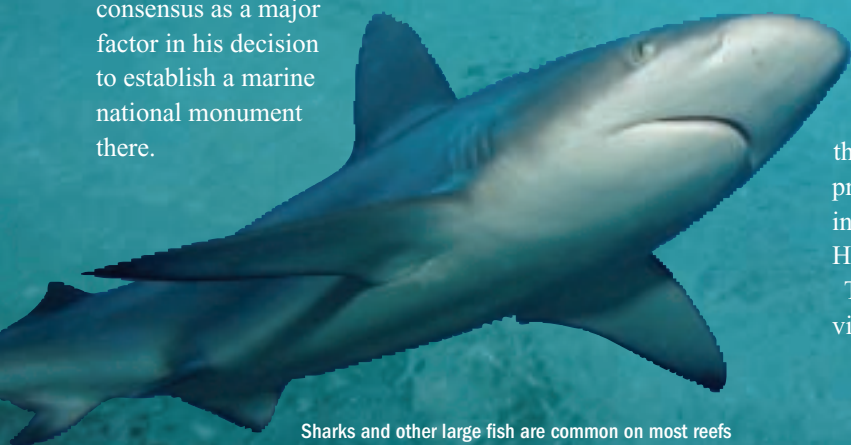
"The marine monument designation is the capstone of good public process and decisive leadership," said NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program Director Daniel J. Basta. "The president's intent is really quite simple: implement now what we have spent five years building."

To ensure maximum protection for the NWHI, monument regulations prohibit unauthorized recreational or commercial activity, the extraction of coral, wildlife, cultural artifacts and other resources without a permit, and restrict unauthorized passage of ships. Commercial fishing within the monument will be phased out over a five-year period. Oil, gas and mineral exploration and extraction is not allowed anywhere in the monument.

The NOAA sanctuary program manages the monument's marine areas, working in close cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the State of Hawaii.

"Establishing this monument now is a bold stroke, and one that is a victory for all who have gone through the sound, public process that led to the president's decision," Basta said. "Public input and support will be key to ensuring that the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands remain healthy and diverse forever."

To learn more about the NWHI Marine National Monument, visit hawaiiireef.noaa.gov.

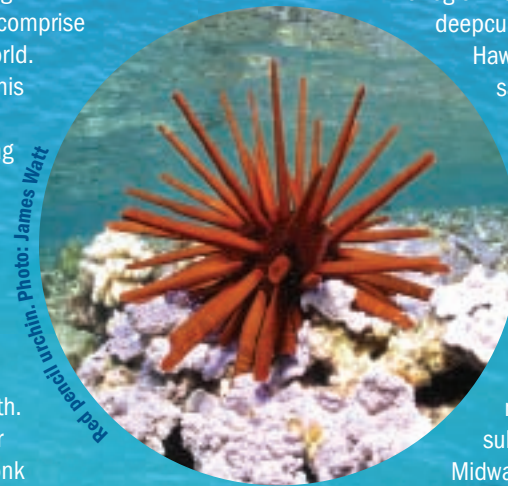


Sharks and other large fish are common on most reefs throughout the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, one of the few marine ecosystems remaining on the planet still dominated by apex predators. Photo: James Watt

The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands at a Glance

The undersea forests and mountain ranges of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) comprise the largest remote reef system in the world. In the sub-tropical waters surrounding this archipelago, there are more than 4,500 square miles of coral-reef habitat thriving under the surface. The region holds the largest, healthiest and least disturbed coral-reef system in the United States.

The NWHI archipelago is home to more than 7,000 marine species – a quarter of which are found nowhere else on Earth. The NWHI are also the primary home for the nearly 1,400 surviving Hawaiian monk seals – virtually the entire population of this critically endangered species. They are also the breeding grounds for approximately 90 percent of the threatened Hawaiian green sea turtle population.



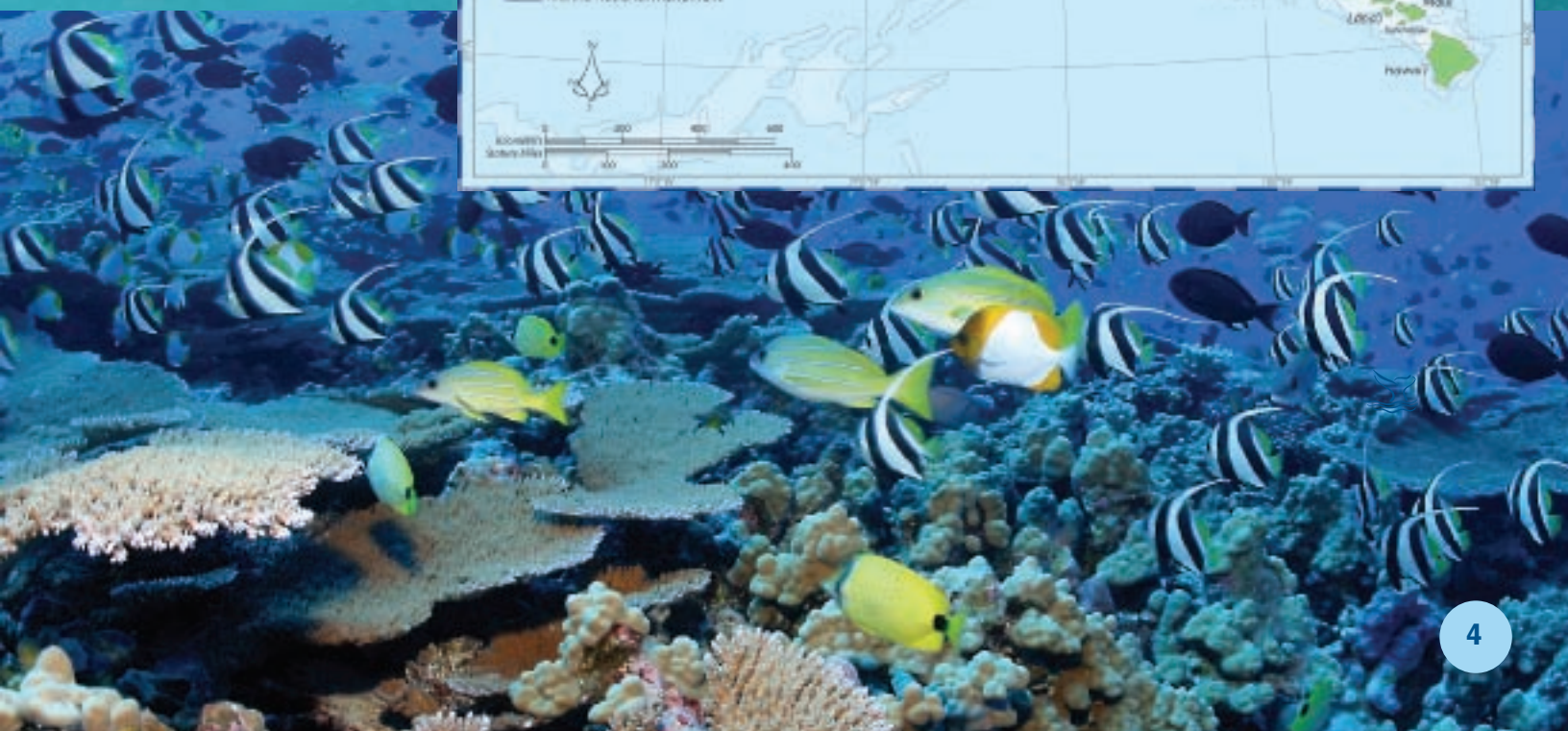
Red pencil urchin. Photo: James Watt

The region has a rich cultural legacy and is a place of deep cultural significance for Native Hawaiians. In Hawaiian traditions, the NWHI are considered a sacred place, as documented in Hawaiian oral and written histories, mythologies, genealogies, proverbs, songs and dances.

The Hawaiian archipelago as a whole has a long and continuous maritime history, beginning with the original Polynesian discovery of the islands more than a thousand years ago. The NWHI Marine National Monument encompasses many historic shipwrecks and other types of submerged archaeological sites. The NWHI's Midway Islands and the surrounding water were the site of the 1942 Battle of Midway, which was a decisive U.S. victory and turning point of World War II in the Pacific.



Colorful reef fish - Pennantfish, Pyramid and Milletseed butterflyfish - school in great numbers at Rapture Reef, French Frigate Shoals. Photo: James Watt



Colorful Corals Found in Deep, Cold Pacific Waters

During an expedition in Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary off the coast of Washington state May 23-June 5, NOAA scientists found coral colonies in waters once thought too deep or cold for them to thrive. For the first time, scientists documented significant patches of corals and sponges in an area where less than five percent of the sanctuary's 3,300-square-mile seafloor has ever been seen by human eyes.

Fourteen scientists, working from the NOAA ship *McArthur II*, conducted 11 dives with a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) during a 12-day scientific research mission in late May and early June off the Olympic Peninsula.

Results from the surveys were dramatic. At least 14 species of corals were observed, including three species of stony corals. In some areas scientists encountered fields of soft corals, known as gorgonians, and in other areas individual colonies as high as three feet. Corals observed included giant cup corals, branching soft corals such as bubblegum coral and red tree coral, and the stony reef-building coral *Lophelia*, discovered during an earlier cruise in 2004.

"These are amazing discoveries because coral communities are usually associated in the public mind with warm, tropical waters," says Ed Bowlby, research coordinator for Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary.

The discovery of these corals "is like discovering never-before mapped valleys in a national forest," says Timothy Keeney, deputy assistant secretary for oceans and atmosphere, and co-chair of the United States Coral Reef Task Force.

During the mission, scientists used an ROV that traveled to depths of 300 to 2,000 feet to photograph and videotape coral and sponge communities at more than 15 sites while also collecting specimens with the vehicle's manipulator arms.

"What we found within the headlight of our ROV confirmed that these coral communities are an important part of the ecosystem in the sanctuary," Bowlby says. "What lies beyond that headlight is intriguing, and makes us eager to return."

This cruise followed up on earlier explorations, including an initial pilot survey in June 2004. During that effort, NOAA scientists found small samples of a stony coral, *Lophelia pertusa*, the most important reef-building deepwater coral in the Atlantic Ocean but rarely recorded off the Pacific Northwest coast or elsewhere in the North Pacific.



Red gorgonian coral branch supporting attachments of a whitish basket star, crinoids and several shark egg cases. Photo: NOAA

The news wasn't all good, however. Several of the areas observed included dead corals and many showed signs of human impact. Lost fishing gear, trawl tracks in sediment, and disturbed habitat were common within the study area. In some cases, once-living coral communities appeared as fields of skeletal fragments, though exact causes of their demise are unknown.

The healthier sites appeared to be teeming with life. Scientists observed pregnant organisms including rockfish, shrimp, and shark egg cases.

Very little is known about deep-water corals other than they are an important part of the ocean ecosystem. Says Keeney, "Further study of this area shows promise in expanding our understanding of the ecological role of deep coral habitats."



California Seabirds

Get A Helping Hand



The NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program and other federal agencies aim to protect and rebuild populations of seabirds along the Central California coast, like these common murrens, whose numbers dwindled dramatically in the 1980s. Photo: NOAA

Seabirds. They are as much a symbol of the ocean as ships, sailors and sandy beaches, and are featured in countless photographs, paintings, films, books and even songs about the sea. But along California's central coast, their numbers have been nothing to sing about.

Over the past century, seabird populations in the region have been on a downward slide, and humans have been a big part of the problem. By the late 1980s, tens of thousands of birds had been killed by gill nets, spill incidents and other human activities, leaving once thriving nesting grounds virtually barren. In 1986, more than 6,000 murrens were killed by a single tanker spill off San Francisco.

One of the most significant threats that humans pose to seabirds, say scientists, comes from disturbing the birds where they nest and breed.

"Too often, when people get too close to the bird colonies, whether by aircraft or by boat, the birds scatter en masse," says Jennifer Boyce, a restoration ecologist with NOAA's Restoration Center. "When this happens, nests, eggs and chicks are abandoned, leaving them vulnerable to the elements and exposed to predators like gulls and ravens. Repeated disturbances can result in birds abandoning their colonies forever."

But help is on the way. To put seabird colonies on California's central coast back on the road to health, NOAA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and several California state and non-governmental agencies have created the Seabird Colony Protection Program, an innovative outreach and monitoring effort that enlists the help of those who use and enjoy the sea, shore and sky to minimize their impact on seabird nesting and breeding grounds.

"We are excited about developing this program," says Karen Reyna, a resource protection specialist with Gulf of Farallones National Marine Sanctuary. Reyna coordinates the effort for the NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program. "It is a chance to address human disturbances through an organized, monitoring and management system, and restore once thriving seabird populations."

Nesting seabird populations are significant living resources of Gulf of the Farallones sanctuary and its surrounding waters, with the Farallon Islands supporting one of the largest concentrations of breeding seabirds in the contiguous United States.

To get the bird numbers healthy again, the seabird program team will apply creative outreach efforts and rely on proven

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monitoring methods. To reach out to ocean users like kayakers, boaters and fishermen, the team will place buoys in sensitive areas, reminding people to keep a safe distance.

The team will also send special maps to airports to make pilots aware of flying restrictions near bird breeding grounds. Then colonies will be monitored to see how many planes scatter birds and disturb their nests. If disturbances don't decrease, then additional pilot outreach materials will be developed.

Boyce has high hopes for the project, and sees it as an excellent tool in the ongoing seabird protection efforts throughout California. "What we hope to see from this project is a reduction in human disturbance to the colonies," she says. "To do that, we want to educate the public in how to safely view wildlife."

Efforts like the Seabird Colony Protection Program are another example of how the NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program, working with numerous partners, uses science and education to managing living resources.



Explore Your National Marine Sanctuaries!

Have you ever wanted to explore a national marine sanctuary without getting your feet wet? Now you can.

Whether you find yourself in the Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, Southwest, Midwest or Pacific Islands, the thrill of discovery awaits you at a national marine sanctuary discovery center, museum or aquarium.

Making your way to Massachusetts? Be sure to include a stop at the Gloucester Maritime Heritage Center, which features a dynamic new exhibit highlighting the marine life, habitats and shipwrecks of Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary.

Planning a Pacific Northwest visit? Check out the Olympic Coast Discovery Center in Port Angeles, Wash., and learn about Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary and the area's rich cultural and maritime heritage.

Touring Tennessee? Visit the Tennessee Aquarium's "Secret Reef" exhibit inspired by Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary in the Gulf of Mexico.

Ambling to Atlanta? Learn about the habitats and marine life of Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary, located off the Georgia coast, at the Georgia Aquarium.

Heading to Hawaii? The *Mokupapapa* Discovery Center, located in Hilo, is a must-see with interactive displays that enable visitors to experience the majesty of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

Shipping out to the Great Lakes? Drop by the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center in Alpena, Mich. The headquarters for Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary, this 20,000-square-foot facility focuses on the shipwrecks and region's maritime history.

Cruising the California coast? Stop into the new Coastal Discovery Center at San Simeon Bay. Located 90 miles south of Monterey, the facility highlights Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and the Central Coast.

Visiting the Nation's Capital? Colorful exhibits at the National Aquarium, located at the Commerce Department in Washington, D.C., offer information about the marine life and habitats of sanctuaries nationwide.



Artist's rendering of the Florida Keys Eco-Discovery Center by Doug Jamison.



Visitors to the Olympic Coast Discovery Center in Port Angeles, Wash., check out a mini-sub used to explore the watery world of national marine sanctuaries. Photo: Sarah Marquis

Beginning in January 2007, visitors to the Florida Keys will have the opportunity to learn more about Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and surrounding ecosystem at the Florida Keys Eco-Discovery Center in Key West. The center is a cooperative effort of NOAA, the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, with support from the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, Monroe County Tourist Development Council, South Florida Water Management District, Royal Caribbean's

Ocean Fund, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Comcast. You, too, can support the Florida Keys Eco-Discovery Center by becoming a "Sea Star." Visit www.nmsfocean.org for details.

Critter Files: Dumbo Octopus

Many creatures of the deep look like they were conjured up by a Hollywood animator or special effects lab. This critter is certainly no exception.

Researcher's Notebook

Common name: Dumbo Octopus

Scientific name: *Grimpoteuthis*

Max length: Up to 7.8 inches
(20 centimeters)

Max lifespan: Unknown

Distribution: Atlantic and Pacific oceans

Diet: Crustaceans

Status: Unknown

If you think it looks like a certain Disney cartoon character, with its protruding earlike fins, the researchers who dubbed it the “Dumbo octopus” would agree.

Found in the cold waters of the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, this rarely seen cephalopod navigates gracefully through the sea by moving its fins, winging its webbed arms, and by forcing water in jet-like fashion through its funnel.

A Dumbo octopus was spotted during a recent NOAA research cruise in Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, where scientists discovered vast tracts of deep water corals. The deep sea realm never disappoints in the strange and unusual, and the Dumbo octopus fits nicely with other oddities of the deep.



Photos: NOAA

Photo: © Tom Ordway, Ocean Futures Society



Star of the Sea

Jean-Michel Cousteau

Jean-Michel Cousteau has traveled the world raising ocean awareness.

Carrying on the legacy established by his father, Jacques, Jean-Michel has touched millions through his films, lectures, guest columns in numerous ocean-related publications, and through his innovative, non-profit group Ocean Futures.

His latest plunge into our ocean world is a two-part series for PBS highlighting national marine sanctuaries. Airing in September, *America's Underwater Treasures* is the final segment of Jean-Michel Cousteau's Ocean Adventures, a six-part series that aired over the spring and summer.

The series illuminates the great need for better understanding and sustainable management of the oceans' rich natural treasures.

"Yosemite. Yellowstone. The Everglades. The Grand Canyon. Everyone knows these gems of America's national parks," notes Cousteau. "But how many are familiar with the Flower Garden Banks, Fagatelle Bay, Gray's Reef, Thunder Bay or the Gulf of the Farallones? We have them, but few know where they are, or that they are national marine sanctuaries."

So, in a partnership with KQED, Northern California's public broadcasting station, Cousteau set out to film the 13 national marine sanctuaries. Coming on the heels of his documentary *Voyage to Kure*, the film that in part inspired President Bush to proclaim the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands a marine national monument, the series explores the many reef formations, historic wrecks and unique marine ecosystems in the sanctuaries.

"In part at risk and in part still pristine, the national marine sanctuaries are their own proof that they must be guarded for future generations," Cousteau says.

NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program Director Daniel J. Basta notes that Cousteau's "tireless efforts to raise ocean awareness stand as a crowning example of the best in public service. He is the world's most significant ambassador for our water environment who continually pushes all of us to take an active role in ocean conservation."

At last year's Capitol Hill Ocean Week, a forum to raise ocean awareness organized by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, Cousteau, who serves on the foundation's board, expressed concern about the state of the ocean's health. But he feels they can become healthy and thriving again "if we all take responsibility."



Newsplash

(Cont'd from pg. 2)

Annual Fish Count. During the effort, volunteer divers recorded the types and numbers of fish and invertebrates they spotted. The information they gathered will be added to an international database maintained by REEF. "This is a fun, safe way to get involved and help your local marine environment and become invested in your local marine community," said Bob Michelson, fish and invertebrate identification program coordinator for Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, who organized the New England fish count. "This is a great way for divers to apply their skills."

Hawaii Resident Named Sanctuary Volunteer of the Year

At a special event in Washington, D.C., on June 13, the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation presented its Volunteer of the Year Award to Hawaii resident Linda Paul in recognition of her leadership and exhaustive efforts to protect the coral reef ecosystems of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Paul is the



The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation honored Linda Paul for her work to protect the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Photo: Juan Trioche

Hawaii Audubon Society's executive director for aquatics and serves as the vice-chair of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve Advisory Council. The foundation also recognized volunteers from each of the 13 sanctuaries within the National Marine Sanctuary System for their dedication and commitment to protecting and preserving sanctuary resources.



Beginning in November, you can renew your National Marine Sanctuary Foundation membership at www.nmsfocean.org!

Sanctuary Voices

A Special Designation for a Special Place



Photo courtesy CEQ

By James L. Connaughton
Chairman, White House Council on Environmental Quality

On June 15, President Bush signed a proclamation establishing the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument. By doing so, the president created the largest protected marine area in the world, representing the single largest act of conservation in our nation's history. During the designation, the president said, "To put this area in context, this national monument is more than 100 times larger than Yosemite National Park, larger than 46 of our 50 states, and more than seven times larger than all our national marine sanctuaries combined. This is a big deal." This is indeed a "big deal," and something from which our entire nation, and the world, will benefit.

The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands are a chain of small islands, atolls, submerged banks and reefs that arc over 1,200 nautical miles northwest of the main Hawaiian islands to form the world's most remote archipelago. The islands are virtually uninhabited, but are notable for their importance to Native Hawaiians for sacred sites and archeological remains. They are home to extraordinary marine and bird wildlife, including the rare Hawaiian monk seal, most of Hawaii's green sea turtles, and more than 7,000 other marine species. The islands include Midway Atoll, the scene of one of the world's most important naval battles during World War II.

Because of the unique nature of this area, protection in its highest form is key. For example, unauthorized passage of ships and unauthorized recreational or commercial activity is prohibited. Any resource extraction or dumping of waste is also prohibited. Commercial fishing will be phased out over the next five years. Midway will become a special access area, so people can pay homage to those who sacrificed for our freedom and can experience through carefully controlled eco-tourism the vibrancy of this huge resource without impacting most of it. We will also work on innovative ways to bring the resource to people, without harming it.

The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument will serve as a living laboratory and offer unique opportunities to discover new life and allow us to pursue advances in science to help us better manage our ocean ecosystems. It is also critical to preserve the historical and cultural significance of this area. This national monument will maintain access for Native Hawaiian cultural activities, and the Administration will consult with Native Hawaiian leaders to give this monument a Native Hawaiian name.

Protection of these islands and atolls has been the subject of presidential attention for nearly a century. Theodore Roosevelt first designated the islands and the immediate surrounding waters as the

Hawaiian Islands Reservation in 1909 after a Navy commander reported that native birds were being slaughtered in great numbers. President Clinton established the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve in the area in December 2000. Most recently, Hawaiian Governor Linda Lingle designated all the state waters in the area as a marine refuge with limited access, and promulgated rules that prohibit all extractive uses.

Starting in 2001, this Administration collected 52,000 public comments, and held more than 100 meetings to gain a strong consensus on what the people of Hawaii and our nation wanted to do with this historically significant area. Tireless work on the part of NOAA, the State of Hawaii, Native Hawaiians, other agencies and organizations, and the public enabled us to achieve a level of consensus that makes this marine national monument designation one of the strongest and widely-supported marine conservation initiatives in our nation's history. And the results and progress achieved through the hard work of past, present and future will be the heart and soul of the national monument. What is a significant achievement for this Administration and this country is just as consequential for NOAA itself – for NOAA will now be managing its first national monument!

Certainly this act is important on its own. However, it is also a significant symbol of progress on the road to our overall ocean conservation efforts. The protection of this important area was a top priority in the President's Ocean Action Plan of Dec. 17, 2004. The designation of the marine national monument, together with the many other actions being carried out by the federal agencies, represents aggressive and responsible action to make our nation's oceans, coasts and Great Lakes cleaner, healthier and more productive.

In many ways our journey has just begun. Building on the Memorandum of Agreement signed between NOAA, the Department of Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service, and the State of Hawaii, we all need to work together more closely than ever to ensure that this magnificent natural resource receives the level of protection that was intended and that it needs. What we do now and over the course of the next several months and years in taking appropriate management steps in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument will demonstrate to our nation and the world how big of a deal this really is.





NATIONAL MARINE
SANCTUARIES

The National Marine Sanctuary
Program is part of the NOAA
National Ocean Service

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SANCTUARY
WATOH

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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National Marine Sanctuary System



The National Marine Sanctuary Program serves as the trustee for a system of 14 marine protected areas, encompassing more than 150,000 square miles of ocean and Great Lakes waters. The system includes 13 national marine sanctuaries and the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument. The sanctuary program 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. The program works to enhance public awareness of our marine resources and maritime heritage through scientific research, monitoring, exploration, educational programs and outreach.