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Other ocean and coastal newsletters of interest:

[USGS SoundWaves](#)

[BLM Frontiers](#)

[MMS Ocean Science](#)

PRESIDENT OBAMA FORMS INTERAGENCY TASKFORCE TO RECOMMEND NATIONAL OCEAN POLICY

On June 12, President Obama released a memorandum directing the heads of executive departments and agencies to develop a national policy for the oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes. Stating that we have a stewardship responsibility to maintain healthy, resilient, and sustainable oceans and coasts for the benefit of current and future generations of Americans, the memo calls for the formation of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force. The Task Force will be led by the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality and will include the senior policy-level officials from executive departments, agencies, and offices represented on the Committee on Ocean Policy.

The memo requires that within 90 days the Task Force will:

- Recommend a national ocean policy that ensures the protection, maintenance, and restoration of the health of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems and resources, enhances the sustainability of ocean and coastal economies, preserves our maritime heritage, provides for adaptive management to enhance our understanding of and capacity to respond to climate change, and is coordinated with our national security and foreign policy interests.
- Develop a collaborative framework for coordinating efforts to improve stewardship of the oceans, coasts, and the Great Lakes.

- Review the Federal Government's existing policy coordination framework to ensure integration and collaboration across jurisdictional lines in meeting the objectives of a national ocean policy
- Identify a set of objectives and develop a strategy that the U.S. should pursue to meet the national ocean policy

Also, within 180 days the Task Force will recommend a framework for effective coastal and marine spatial planning. The Task Force will terminate with the completion of these tasks.

The President also issued a Proclamation declaring June 2009 National Oceans Month and calls for Americans to learn more about the oceans and what citizens can do to conserve them. The proclamation stated: "During National Oceans Month, we celebrate these vast spaces and the myriad ways they sustain life. We also pledge to preserve them and commend all those who are engaged in efforts to meet this end."

To view the memo and proclamation go to:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Presidential-Proclamation-National-Oceans-Month-and-Memorandum-regarding-national-policy-for-the-oceans/

SEC. SALAZAR ANNOUNCES 21ST CENTURY YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS

On June 8, using the setting of the Take a Kids' Fishing Day on the National Mall, Secretary Salazar signed a Secretarial Order establishing the Office of Youth in Natural Resources at DOI. The Secretary, joined by Senior White House Advisor Valerie Jarrett and several hundred school children from throughout the DC metro area noted, "President Obama and I believe that during tough economic times, a new national youth program is needed to provide jobs, outdoor experiences and career opportunities for young people—especially women, minorities, tribal and other underserved youth." It is hoped the youth initiatives will provide career pathways for employment in natural resources.

The Office of Youth in Natural Resources will coordinate present and future youth initiatives, the signature program of which will be a

21st Century Youth Conservation Corps. The new Youth Office will be led by the new Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy Management and Budget, Robert Stanton, a former Director of the National Park Service. Three career jobs to staff the new office are currently listed on USAJOBS.gov. The order also establishes a Youth Conservation Coordinating Council, consisting of a senior representative designated by the head of each participating bureau and office.

100 employees from DOI bureaus and other government agencies volunteered at Kids' Fishing Day. The volunteers assisted the kids in learning fishing techniques, angler ethics and safety and aquatic conservation. This popular event, sponsored by the FWS, also served to celebrate National Fishing and Boating Week.



To read the DOI press release go to: [http://www.doi.gov/news/09 News Releases/060809a.html](http://www.doi.gov/news/09%20News%20Releases/060809a.html)

USGS STUDY CONNECTS MERCURY CONTAMINATION OF SEAFOOD IN THE NORTH PACIFIC TO ATMOSPHERIC EMISSIONS

A landmark USGS study has documented for the first time the process in which mercury emissions from human sources make their way into the North Pacific Ocean and as a result contaminates tuna and other seafood. Water sampling cited in the study shows that mercury levels in 2006 were approximately 30 percent higher than those measured in the mid-1990s. Scientists have predicted an additional 50 percent increase in mercury in the Pacific by 2050, if mercury emission rates continue as projected.

Methylmercury is a highly toxic form of mercury that rapidly accumulates

in the food chain to levels that can cause serious health concerns for those who consume the seafood. Pregnant women who consume mercury can pass on life-long developmental effects to their children. In the United States, about 40 percent of all human exposure to mercury is from tuna harvested in the Pacific Ocean, according to Elsie Sunderland, a coauthor of the study.

"This unprecedented USGS study is critically important to the health and safety of the American people and our wildlife because it helps us understand the relationship between atmospheric emissions of mercury

and concentrations of mercury in marine fish," said Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. He added, "We have always known that mercury can pose a risk, now we need to reduce the mercury emissions so that we can reduce the ocean mercury levels."

The paper, "Mercury sources, distribution and bioavailability in the North Pacific Ocean--Insights from data and models" was published in the journal *Global Biogeochemical Cycles*. To read the paper and learn about other USGS mercury research visit: <http://toxics.usgs.gov/investigations/mercury.html>.

NUTRIENT DELIVERY TO GULF OF MEXICO AMONG HIGHEST MEASURED

From June 16, USGS Press Release-

Spring nutrient delivery to the northern Gulf of Mexico is among the highest measured by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in thirty years. Excessive nutrients can be harmful by decreasing the amount of oxygen in the water, also known as hypoxia. This can result in an area experiencing stress or death of near or bottom dwelling organisms called a hypoxic zone, or “dead zone.”

Hypoxia, along with overfishing, habitat loss and toxic contamination, can significantly impact the Gulf of Mexico coastal region, an important resource for the Nation providing about 1.2 billion pounds of fresh

seafood every year.

The amount of nutrients transported from the Mississippi River Basin to the Gulf during the spring is a major factor controlling the size of the hypoxic zone. The northern Gulf of Mexico hypoxic zone is the second largest in the world, and threatens the economic and ecological health of one of the nation's largest and most productive fisheries.

USGS releases [estimates of nutrients](#) from the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers to the Gulf of Mexico in early June each year. The estimates are used by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Louisiana Universities Marine



Muddy sediment plumes in northern Gulf of Mexico (NASA Earth Observatory)

Consortium, and other researchers to predict the areal extent of the hypoxic zone.

To read the full press release go to: <http://www.usgs.gov/newsroom/article.asp?ID=2240>

FWS AND NOAA PROTECT MORE GULF OF MAINE ATLANTIC SALMON TO RECOVER IMPERILED STOCKS

The FWS and NOAA's Fisheries Service extended Endangered Species Act protection to more Atlantic salmon by adding fish in the Penobscot, Kennebec, and Androscoggin rivers and their tributaries to the endangered Gulf of Maine population first listed in 2000. Endangered status under the ESA will now apply to all anadromous (sea-run) Atlantic salmon whose freshwater range covers these watersheds. The status will also apply to fish that occur in estuaries and marine environment and to hatchery fish that are used to supplement the natural populations. The decision is part of the ongoing effort to recover the imperiled fish, which once returned by the hundreds of thousands to most major rivers along the Northeastern U.S. and now returns in small numbers only to rivers in Maine.

In 2000, NOAA and FWS listed as endangered all naturally reproducing wild Atlantic salmon as well as river-specific hatchery populations returning to small coastal Maine rivers and their tributaries. As a group, these were called the Gulf of Maine population. A biological review team composed of Federal and state agency biologists and a biologist from the Penobscot Indian Nation has since showed that salmon in the Androscoggin, Penobscot, and Kennebec rivers are also part of the same Gulf of Maine population.

The fish's critical habitat includes about 12,000 miles of river, stream and estuary habitat and about 300 square miles of lake habitat in Maine. In 2008, approximately 2,300 adult fish from the newly listed endangered population returned to spawn. This is an increase over recent years, but less than 10 percent of the number



Photo credit: William W. Hartley / USFWS

required before spawning stocks are thought to be in good condition.

To read the full press release go to: <http://www.fws.gov/news/NewsReleases/showNews.cfm?newsId=E4E8B812-F9BE-7A7D-65CB6A34CCFC6A0C>

To learn more about the endangered Atlantic salmon population visit: <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/i/E51.html>

OCEAN AND COASTAL LEGISLATION UPDATE

Senate Holds Subcommittee Hearing on the Blue Economy

On June 9, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation hosted an Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard Subcommittee hearing entitled, *The Blue Economy: The Role of the Oceans in our Nation's Economic Future*. To read testimony from the hearing go to: <http://commerce.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?>

House Natural Resource Committee Clears Three Marine Wildlife Bills

- Southern Sea Otter Recovery and Research Act (H.R.556). This act will establish a program of research, recovery, and other activities to provide for the recovery of the southern sea otter, which has been listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act since 1977.
- Marine Turtle Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2009 (H.R.509). Will reauthorize the Marine Turtle Conservation Act (MTCA), passed in 2004. The MTCA has contributed to the protection and preservation of thousands of turtle hatchlings.
- Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing Enforcement Act of 2009 (H.R.1080). Will strengthen enforcement mechanisms to stop illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, and for other purposes.

Ocean Related Hearings at the House Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans, and Wildlife

- June 18 on H.R. 21, the Ocean Conservation, Education, and National Strategy for the 21st Century Act, which has become known as "Oceans 21". The purpose of this act is to establish a national ocean policy, to function as a NOAA Organic Act, and to establish a national and regional ocean governance structure. Link to testimony: http://resourcescommittee.house.gov/index.php?option=com_jcalpro&Itemid=27&extmode=view&extid=266
- June 16 on H.R. 2565, the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act and H.R. 2055, the Pacific Salmon Stronghold Conservation Act of 2009. The DOI witness was Gary Frazer, Assistant Director of Fisheries and Habitat Conservation for the USFWS. Link to testimony: http://resourcescommittee.house.gov/index.php?option=com_jcalpro&Itemid=27&extmode=view&extid=265

Markups at the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

- S. 787, the Clean Water Restoration Act (amended),
- S. 878, Clean Coastal Environment and Public Health Act of 2009 (formerly the Beach Protection Act) (amended)
- S. 937, Sewage Overflow Community Right-to-Know Act
- S. 479, Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network Continuing Authorization Act

NOPP FUNDS RESEARCH INTO DEEP-WATER CORALS IN THE GULF OF MEXICO

The MMS and the NOAA's Office of Exploration and Research will co-support a \$3.7 million four-year research project awarded to TDI Brooks International, Inc. for the study of deep-water corals in the Gulf of Mexico. Preliminary research has demonstrated that deepwater coral habitats are important biodiversity hotspots with intrinsic and socio-economic value. This interdisciplinary study will focus on exploration and investigation of deepwater communities that have developed on both natural and artificial hard substrates, including platforms and shipwrecks, with emphasis on deepwater coral habitats. An exploratory component of the study

will also investigate unidentified shipwrecks.

The funding was granted through the [National Oceanographic Partnership Program](#) (NOPP), a collaboration of Federal agencies providing leadership and coordination on national oceanographic research and education initiatives. NOPP helps to coordinate research across the broader oceanographic community allowing for rapid and efficient advancement toward appropriate stewardship for the oceans and associated societal gains. USGS will conduct companion studies to improve data exchange and enhance the overall success of the project.

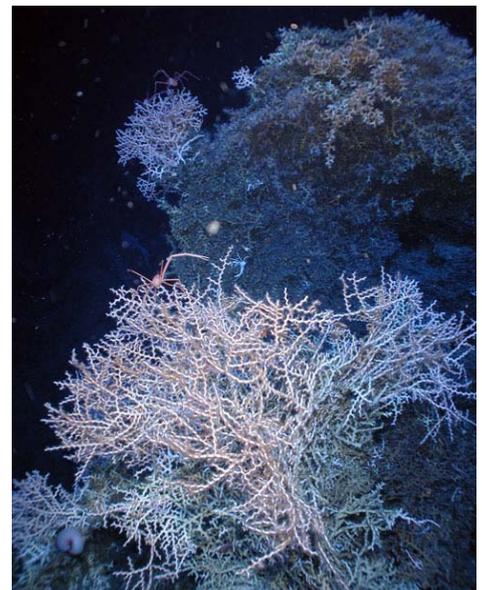


Photo credit: Expedition to the Deep Slope 2007, NOAA Ocean Explorer.

MPA of the Month—Golden Gate National Recreation Area

NPS and USGS - Partners in Mapping the Ocean Parks

A partnership created in 2007 between the National Park Service and U.S. Geological Survey to develop the NPS National Benthic Habitat Mapping Program is already producing maps of coastal parks. The NPS goal is to produce high-quality, standardized, user-friendly maps of marine benthic habitats in a GIS format for the 40 or more ocean and Great Lakes park units that contain submerged lands (approximately three million acres of coastal, shelf, and deep-water environments). These mapping products will enable NPS to understand, manage and restore marine habitats and aquatic plant and animal communities in park ecosystems working with state and federal partners.

One of the pilot mapping projects supports completion of offshore habitat and geologic maps at Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA), which is listed on the national inventory of marine protected areas. GGNRA is a biologically diverse park (designated a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO) with windswept beaches, dramatic cliffs, coastal chaparral, low mountains, swaths of prairie, live oak woodlands, salt marshes, freshwater wetlands and creeks, and redwood



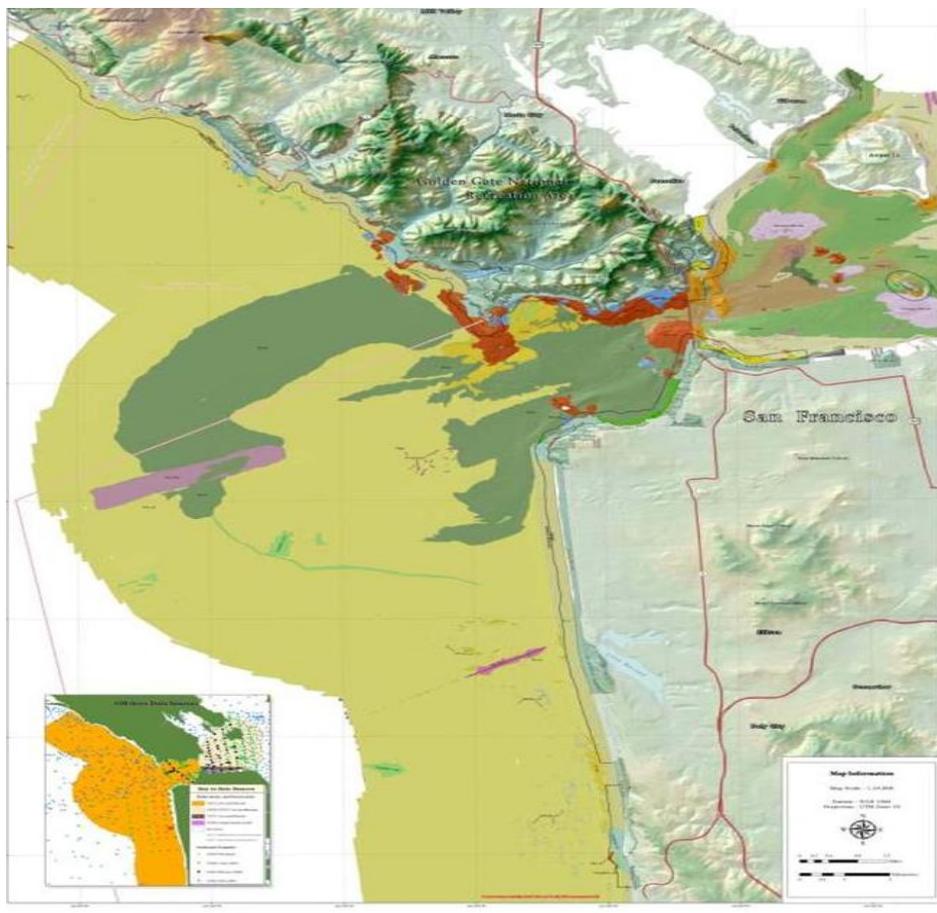
GGNRA is one of the most visited National Parks in the US and home to a USGS-NPS benthic mapping pilot project

forests. However, not as much is known about submerged habitats in and adjacent to GGNRA or the marine species that utilize these habitats. The NPS contribution supported USGS and Moss Landing Marine Laboratory in collecting data for remaining, unmapped areas of GGNRA. NPS will continue to collaborate with USGS and other entities (e.g., NOAA, MMS, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, FWS, NASA, state agencies, and

universities) to obtain and interpret mapping data and produce submerged habitat maps that support DOI and NPS goals for coastal resource stewardship in parks.

To learn more about GGNRA, please visit www.nps.gov/goga.

If you have any questions about the NPS National Benthic Habitat Mapping Program, contact Cliff McCreedy at Cliff_McCreedy@nps.gov.



Ocean Quote of the Month

“Even the upper end of the river believes in the ocean.”

William Stafford

Submerged habitat mapping at GGNRA.

For more information about ocean and coastal activities at DOI contact:

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Please submit articles featuring DOI bureau ocean and coastal activities to [Bret Wolfe@fws.gov](mailto:Bret.Wolfe@fws.gov) by the third Friday of the month.

DOI Ocean and Coastal Button Contest

Answer the question below to receive a prize. Submit your answer to sarah_bobbe@ios.doi.gov and be sure to include the mailing address where you'd like your prize sent.



This Month's Question.

An EEZ is a seazone over which a country has special rights over the exploration and use of marine resources. It stretches from the edge of the country's territorial sea out to 200 nautical miles from its coast. The United States has the world's largest Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

Which country claims the world's second largest EEZ?

Answer to last month's question:

Indian Ocean. Thought to have gone extinct around the same time as the dinosaurs, the first modern specimen of a coelacanth was caught off the SE coast of South Africa in 1938. Since then over 200 have been caught around the Comoros Islands NW of Madagascar. In 1997, a new species was discovered in Indonesia.

Announcements and Upcoming Meetings of Interest:

Marine Technology for Offshore Wind Power Workshop: June 29-30, Arlington, VA. The first technology-focused wind energy workshop in the U.S., this two-day program will examine real-world installations from Europe, address-specific industry issues and provide unparalleled education of technology applications for siting, installation and maintenance of offshore projects. Speakers include Dr. Walter Cruikshank, Acting Director of MMS. For more information visit the conference website: <https://www.mtsociety.org/conferences/windworkshop.aspx>.

Coastal Zone '09: July 19-23, 2009, Boston, MA. Our coastal and ocean landscape is changing, whether it's the climate, shoreline, habitat, or even the people setting and implementing policy. The attendees of Coastal Zone 09 will explore the many facets of change and share tools and information to help in managing our changing coastal and ocean resources. For more information visit the conference website: <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/cz/abstracts.html>.

Coastal America Award Nominations: Coastal America is now accepting nominations for the 2009 Partnership, Spirit, and Special Recognition Awards. All 2009 nominations must be submitted to the Coastal America National Coordinating Office by July 31 2009. Winners will be selected and awardees will be notified throughout the remainder of the year. For more information visit the webpage at www.coastalamerica.gov.

Smithsonian Accepting Proposals for Ocean Kiosk: The Smithsonian is currently accepting story proposals for the Ocean Today Kiosk, a highly visual, educational, and interactive exhibit. The deadline is July 31, 2009. Contributor Kits can be found at http://www2.nos.noaa.gov/oceannewskiosk/outside_contributor.html. For specific questions, email oceankiosk@noaa.gov.

2009 International Coastal Cleanup, Sept. 19 at a beach near you. Last year, nearly 400,000 volunteers collected more than 6.8 million pounds of trash in 104 countries and 42 U.S. states. For more info visit: www.oceanconservancy.org.



To access the DOI Ocean and Coastal calendar, click the attachments tab at the left of the Adobe pdf. If you have events to add to the calendar, send them to [Bret Wolfe@fws.gov](mailto:Bret.Wolfe@fws.gov).



Click on the links above to learn more about the ocean and coastal activities at DOI bureaus.