



Peter
Benchley™
Ocean
Awards
Honorees

10th Anniversary Edition

About the Benchley Awards

The Peter Benchley Ocean Awards are the world's preeminent ocean awards and are unique in acknowledging outstanding achievement across many sectors of society leading to the protection of our ocean, coasts and the communities that depend on them. Co-founded by Wendy Benchley and David Helvarg, and named in honor of Peter Benchley, author of *Jaws*, this Award celebrates the life and legacy of a man who spent more than 40 years educating the public and expanding awareness of the importance of protecting sharks and ocean ecosystems.

about





The phenomenon of *Jaws* changed ocean awareness and put Peter Benchley on a 30-year journey to help educate the public about the importance of protecting sharks and our seas.

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Celebrating the Benchley Honorees

The honorees showcased in this book are the best of the best in their unique fields. Each one has made an extraordinary contribution in safeguarding and revitalizing our seas. The collective impact of innovative ideas, breakthrough research, and new solutions put forward by all the honoree's efforts has been transformational for marine conservation and span a wide array of expertise, including: overfishing, habitat destruction, species extinction, climate change, acidification, pollution, dead zones, shark finning, marine protected areas, marine spatial planning, smart coastal development, fisheries reform, revoking foreign fishing licenses, rigorous regulatory enforcement, coral reef restoration, reverse fishing licenses, molecular forensics, deep-sea exploration, transformational port management, coastal clean-ups, recycling programs, ocean economic development, green jobs, inspirational journalism, photography, and films along with powerful grass roots activism.

These individuals are an inspiration to their peers and to all of us who care about protecting our blue planet.

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Categories of Excellence

Peter Benchley Ocean Award recipients are chosen annually from among hundreds of global nominations submitted by respected marine organizations and individuals. The selection committee is focused on recognizing truly exceptional efforts, therefore not all categories are awarded each year.

Excellence in [National Stewardship](#)

Excellence in [Science](#)

Excellence in [Policy](#)

Excellence in [Media](#)

Excellence in [Solutions](#)

Excellence in [Marine Exploration](#)

[Ocean Spirit Foundation Award](#)

[Christopher Benchley Youth Award](#)

[Hero of the Seas Award](#)

excellence



A diver is silhouetted against a vast, swirling school of fish in deep blue water. The fish form a large, circular pattern around the diver, creating a tunnel-like effect. The scene is captured from an underwater perspective, looking up towards the surface where light rays are visible.

“The efforts of individuals who have committed their lives to researching, protecting, and restoring our oceans too often go unrecognized.”

Peter Benchley

national stewardship of the ocean

Awarded to the representative of a nation that has made a unique and exceptional contribution to the protection, restoration and appreciation of our global oceans.



National Stewardship, 2011

Laura Chinchilla, President of Costa Rica

President Chinchilla took courageous action to protect the ocean and support her nation's economy by signing an executive decree establishing a new 2,900 square mile marine reserve around the world-famous Cocos Island National Park, renowned as home for many kinds of sharks. This created the second largest marine protected area in the eastern Pacific after the Galapagos Islands.



National Stewardship, 2012

Anote Tong, President of Kiribati

President Tong was instrumental in creating one of the world's largest and most biologically rich marine protected areas, the Phoenix Islands Protected Area. Speaking out forcefully against the threat of climate change and sea level rise, he led a group of 15 Island nations to come together to form the Pacific "Oceanscape," a staggeringly large space that covers more than ten percent of the world's ocean area and is the largest conservation declaration in history.





National Stewardship, 2013

Macky Sall, President of Senegal

As one of his first acts after his election in 2012, President Sall rescinded the licenses of 29 pelagic fishing vessels belonging to foreign countries in Senegal's Exclusive Economic Zone. Within months of his action thousands of local fishermen were seeing their catches dramatically increased and their families and communities food supply and livelihoods restored. President Sall is moving forward with plans to ensure a sustainable domestic fishery free of foreign exploitation, which will serve as a model for other West African nations whose fisheries have also been ravaged.



National Stewardship, 2014

Maria Damanaki, EU Commissioner

Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries for the European Union, Greek politician and author, Maria Damanaki has initiated and enforced groundbreaking policies to end illegal fishing practices across the EU and around the globe. She has guided the creation of a new fisheries management model to transform the recovery of the bluefin tuna—a highly endangered and prized apex predator—through improved scientific data monitoring, boosting compliance, improving recovery plans, and enforcing tough decisions. She has also led ambitious efforts to reduce by-catch, promote sustainable fishing practices, and shape policies to encourage a vibrant ‘Blue Economy’ across the EU and Europe.





National Stewardship, 2015

HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco

Prince Albert II of Monaco is a fourth generation ocean champion, who has followed in the footsteps of his great great-grandfather Prince Albert I and his father Prince Rainier III—both strong proponents of environmental protection. Like his ancestors, he is an intrepid voyager who frequently takes part in marine scientific expeditions to directly observe the ocean’s most pressing threats—notably he is the only Head of State ever to travel to both poles. Prince Albert II was among the first to bring focus to the alarming state of Mediterranean blue-fin tuna stocks due to uncontrolled overfishing. He has sounded a loud warning about the threats posed by ocean acidification, including the destruction of coral reefs and marine food webs, which will threaten food security for millions. Widely respected for his ocean conservation commitment, Prince Albert II led the preparation of the “Oceans” component of the Rio +20 conference. His Foundation is dedicated to the protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development on a global scale across three geographical zones: the Mediterranean basin (home of the Principality of Monaco), the Polar regions, and the least developed countries, which are severely impacted by the effects of climate change and the loss of marine biodiversity.



National Stewardship, 2016

President Tommy Remengesau Jr.

President Remengesau Jr., the eighth President of the Republic of Palau, is the first Palauan to be elected as President three times. Over the past 2 decades in office, he has consistently demonstrated visionary leadership in protecting his nation's unique marine environment, which is often referred to as one of the seven underwater wonders of the world. On Oct. 28, 2015, President Tommy E. Remengesau Jr. took bold action and signed into law the Palau National Marine Sanctuary Act, covering 193,000 square miles—an area bigger than California. The sanctuary will 'fully protect' about 80 percent of Palau's maritime territory, a higher percentage than in any other country, where no extractive activities, such as fishing or mining, can take place. Fully protected marine areas provide a broad range of benefits by safeguarding biodiversity, protecting top predators, and maintaining ecosystem balance. And, the sanctuary also will help protect Palau's waters from illegal fishing. A separate zone reserved for local fishermen and small-scale commercial fisheries with limited exports will cover the remainder of Palau's waters.





National Stewardship, 2017

Susi Pudjiastuti

Susi Pudjiastuti, the Republic of Indonesia's Minister of Marine Affairs, was appointed by President Joko Widodo in 2014. Minister Susi has aggressively protected her nation's economic and environmental interests by targeting the multi-billion dollar pirate fishing operations of foreign fleets. She has courageously and audaciously led the blowing up and sinking of more than 350 illegal fishing boats caught poaching—a strong deterrent to organized crime efforts that have invaded and overfished Indonesia's biologically rich waters for years. She has been instrumental in the freeing of slave crews held on many of these foreign vessels, and she's led the freeing of illegally trapped whale sharks. Her work has proved vital to protecting Indonesia's unique and world-famous marine ecosystem while also providing important economic benefits and sustaining the livelihoods of tens of thousands of domestic fishermen, their families and their communities.







excellence in science

Awarded to an individual or individuals who have provided cutting edge marine science either through his or her efforts or as leader(s) of a team that has advanced the cause of understanding ocean processes, marine ecology and conservation biology.



Excellence in Science, 2004

Dr. Ransom “Ram” Myers

Dr. Myers was an eminent fisheries biologist who first sounded the alarm about the damage we were doing to global fisheries with research that showed the number of large fish in the world’s oceans had dropped by 90 percent in the past 50 years. An expert on wildlife extinctions and historic changes to populations, he stunned the world with revelations about dramatic changes in recent decades to the size of large fish—tuna used to be twice as big and marlins were once as large as killer whales. He was an influential leader in the call for policies to save fish species and reform global fisheries.





Excellence in Science, 2009

Dr. Jeremy Jackson and Dr. Nancy Knowlton

Two extraordinary leaders in the field of marine ecology and conservation—Dr. Jackson is a distinguished marine ecologist and paleontologist and Dr. Knowlton is an acclaimed coral reef biologist. Working separately and together, they have done extensive research on the impact humans are having to the health, diversity, and abundance of today's ocean and, in particular, its vital coral reefs, compared to pristine marine ecosystems. Dr. Jackson is a professor at the Scripps Institution for Oceanography, and Dr. Knowlton is Smithsonian Institution's Sant Chair for Marine Science.





Excellence in Science, 2010

Jesse H. Ausubel

Jesse Ausubel is an environmental scientist and ecology researcher who played a major role in the formulation of the U.S. and world climate research programs. He was instrumental in organizing the first UN World Climate Conference, which elevated the global warming issue on both scientific and political agendas. He helped initiate the Census of Marine Life, an international observation program to assess and explain the diversity and abundance of life in the oceans. Jesse also helped found the Barcode of Life initiative, which aims to provide short DNA sequences that identify all animal and plant species.

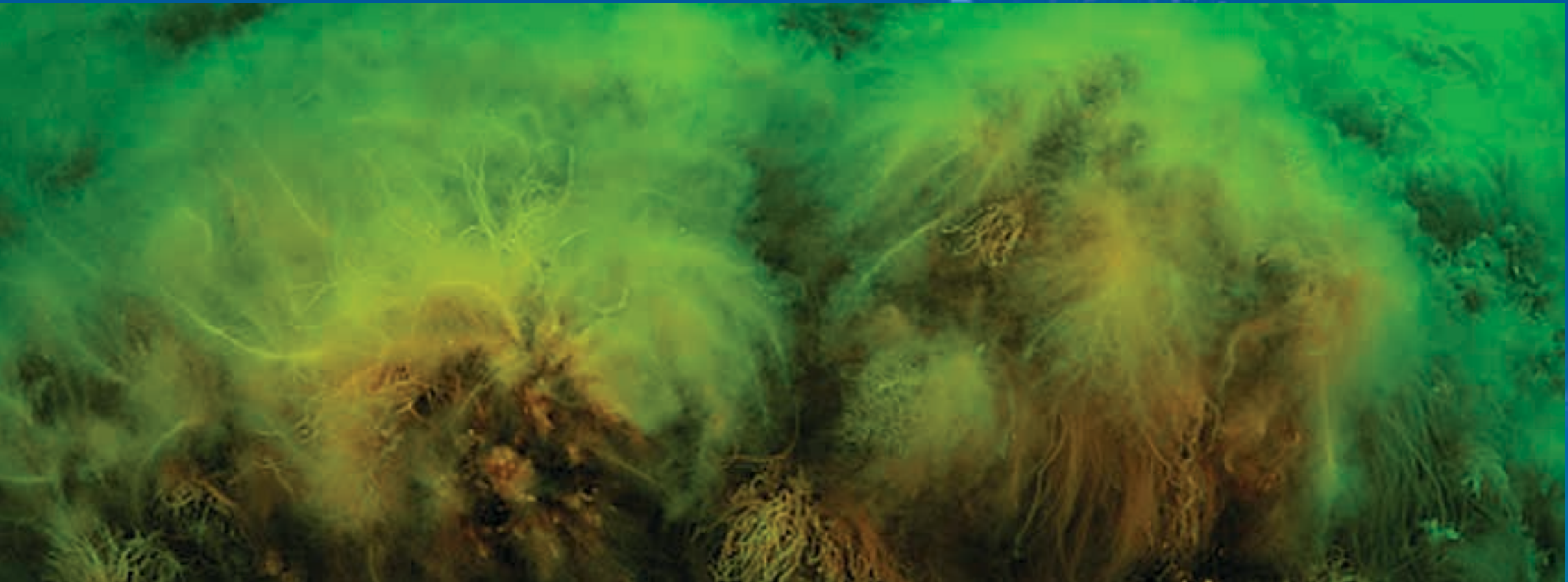


Excellence in Science, 2011

Dr. Stephen Palumbi

Dr. Palumbi is a marine biologist at Stanford University and the director of the Hopkins Marine Station. He pioneered using genetic technologies to better understand marine species and ecosystems. Using molecular forensics, he uncovered the sale of illegal wildlife and has tested the veracity of seafood labels globally at venues ranging from grocery stores to high-end sushi restaurants. He is using these innovative genetic technologies to help design more effective marine parks for conservation.





Excellence in Science, 2012

Dr. Nancy Rabalais

Called the “Mother of Dead Zones,” Dr. Rabalais helped to discover and define the Gulf of Mexico’s oxygen depleted dead zone that has grown to the size of New Jersey. While advancing the science on hypoxia for nearly three decades, she has also worked tirelessly to find ways to reduce the surplus fertilizer from agriculture that runs down the Mississippi river into the Gulf of Mexico causing dead zones.

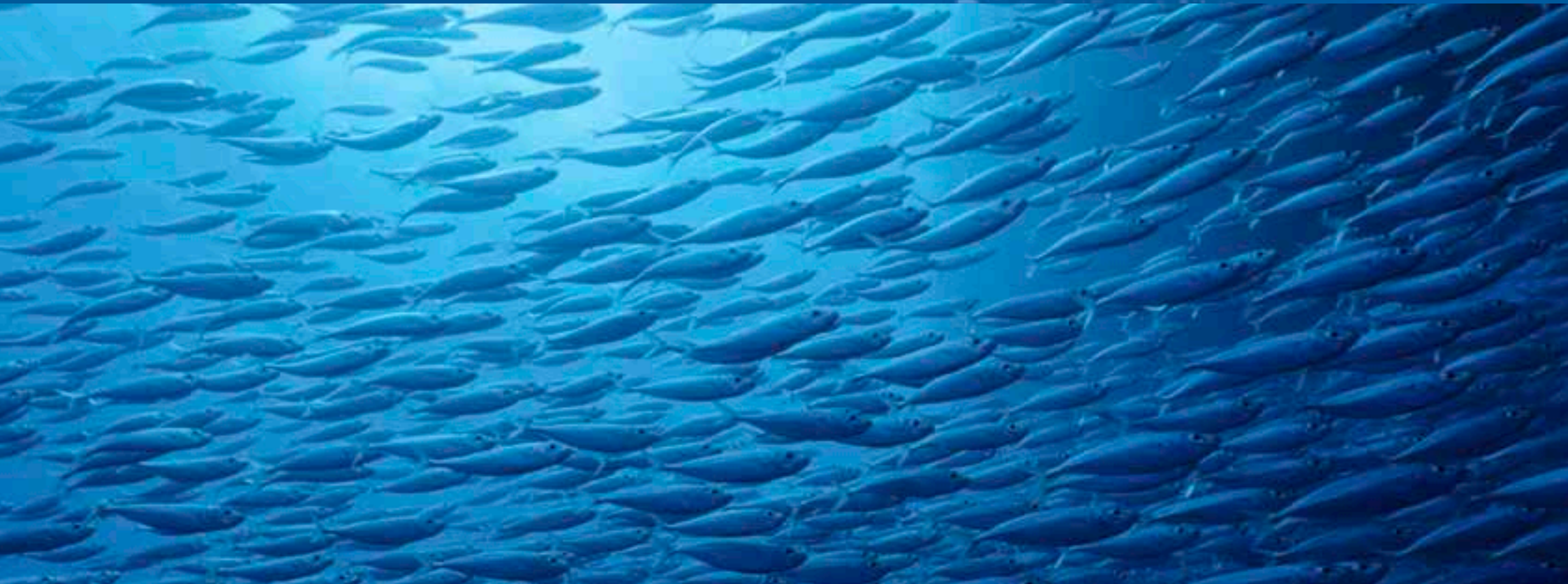


Excellence in Science, 2013

Dr. Boris Worm and Dr. Heike Lotze

Working both separately and in collaboration, this husband and wife team of scientists from Dalhousie University in Canada, have significantly increased the world's knowledge about the changing abundance and diversity of the planet's fish and marine wildlife populations. Their research is focused on how human activities—fishing and hunting, habitat transformation, and nutrient loading—have strongly accelerated over the centuries and moved from inshore regions to the open ocean and deep sea, causing large-scale patterns of change. Their research has tremendous value for marine conservation initiatives.





Excellence in Science, 2014

Dr. Steve Gaines

Steve Gaines is Dean at the Bren School of Environmental Science and Management at UC Santa Barbara. Steve is a pioneer in the field of sustainable fisheries management, where he has led research efforts to do what's considered impossible – improve both the ecological and economic performance of fisheries. His work in building effective marine reserves, addressing the challenges of exotic species, and analyzing climate change impacts have proven vitally important to the health of our blue planet. Equally valuable is his work building scalable solutions through partnerships among researchers, industry, non-profit groups and governments and the role he's played in mentoring the next generation of marine scientists.

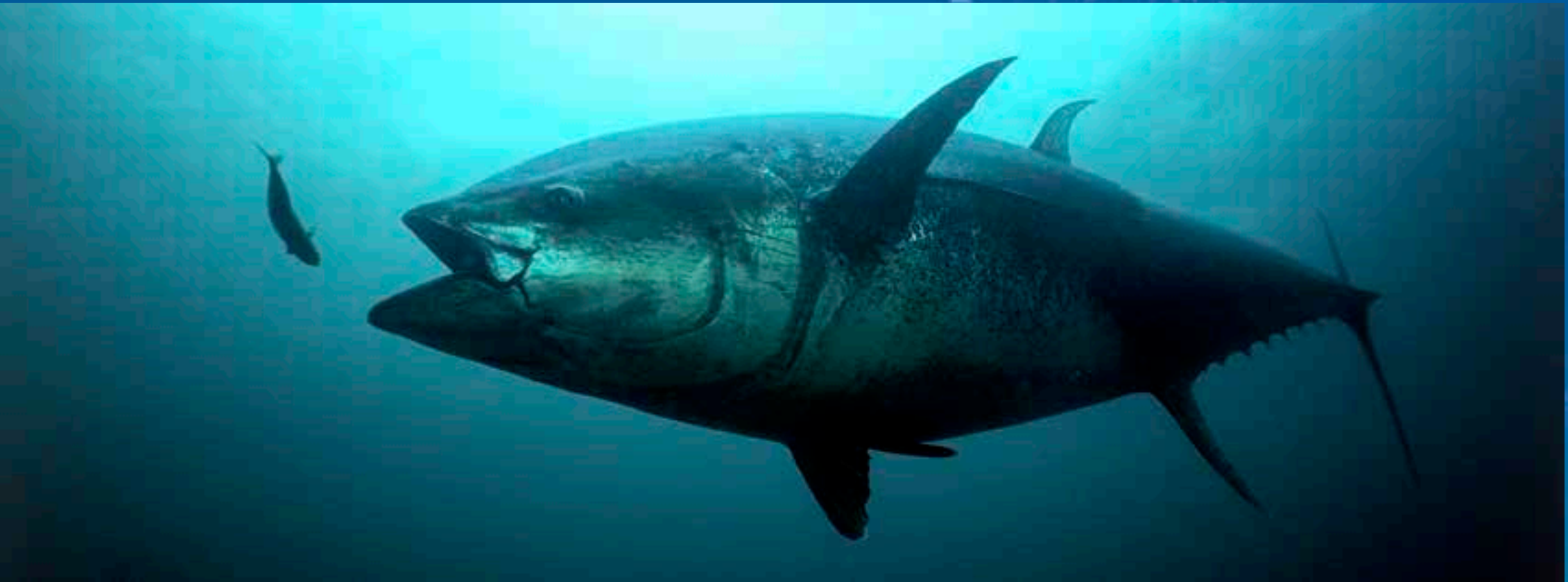


Excellence in Science, 2015

Dr. Daniel Pauly

Dr. Daniel Pauly is a preeminent authority on global fisheries and has identified overfishing as a major threat to global food security. He is the founder and principal investigator at the “Sea Around Us Project” at the University of British Columbia, which analyzes the impact of the world’s fisheries on marine ecosystems. He is renowned for developing the concept of “Shifting Baselines”, which refers to a shift over time in the expectation of how abundant a fish species population was before human exploitation. He is also credited with defining the theory of “fishing down the food web”—a process whereby fisheries having fished out large predatory fish at the top of the food chain must turn to increasingly smaller species and invertebrates. He has vigorously denounced the damage done by heavily subsidized industrial fishing fleets and their use of technology such as bottom trawling. He is also a leading voice for establishing and enforcing marine protected areas that allow fisheries and ecosystems to recover. A prolific writer and communicator with more than 500 peer-reviewed publications, several books and years of research based out of Germany, the Philippines and Canada, Dr. Pauly is widely respected by policymakers, the media, and his fellow scientists.





Excellence in Science, 2016

Dr. Barbara Block



Barbara Block is the Charles & Elizabeth Prothro Professor in Marine Sciences Evolutionary, Cellular and Molecular Physiology at Stanford University. She received her PhD from Duke University. Driven by a lifelong awe of the sea and a fascination with its amazing creatures, she's a renowned marine scientist and a pioneer of the technology used for open ocean observation. Her lab is based at Stanford's Hopkins Marine Station, where her research focuses on how large pelagic fish utilize the open ocean environment. Her research of tunas, billfish, sharks, and other migratory marine animals using satellite tagging and innovative tracking techniques has greatly expanded our knowledge of highly migratory fish behavior, physiology, ecology and how fishes interact. Among her most remarkable discoveries are three prodigious seasonal 'hot spots' off the California coast that draw sea life—mostly predators—from across the Pacific by the thousands. Block calls this region the 'Blue Serengeti' for its resemblance to the great game reserves of Africa where predators still range free. Block believes that allowing the public to share in the wonder of discovering the life of the ocean will, in time, help build a social consensus for the creation of a UNESCO World Heritage along the California coast, and support global moves to conserve ocean wildlife.



Excellence in Science, 2017

Dr. Ben Halpern

Dr. Benjamin Halpern is a Professor of Marine Ecology and Conservation Planning at UC Santa Barbara. He also serves as part-time chair in marine conservation at Imperial College in London and as Executive Director of the National Center for Ecological Analysis & Synthesis (NCEAS) director of the Center for Marine Assessment and Planning (CMAP) at UCSB. He earned his PhD, in Ecology, Evolution, and Marine Biology at UCSB and his BA in Biology at Carleton College.

He is renowned for research that analyzes a broad range of complex questions spanning local to global scales, spatial population dynamics, food web interactions, and conservation planning for ocean and freshwater ecosystems, with the primary goal of informing and facilitating effective ocean conservation and resource management. Specifically, he has led and participated in several groundbreaking research projects that have advanced our understanding of the state of the world's oceans and the potential for marine reserves to improve ocean condition, including the development and mapping of cumulative impact assessments and as the lead scientist for the Ocean Health Index project.





Excellence in Science, 2017

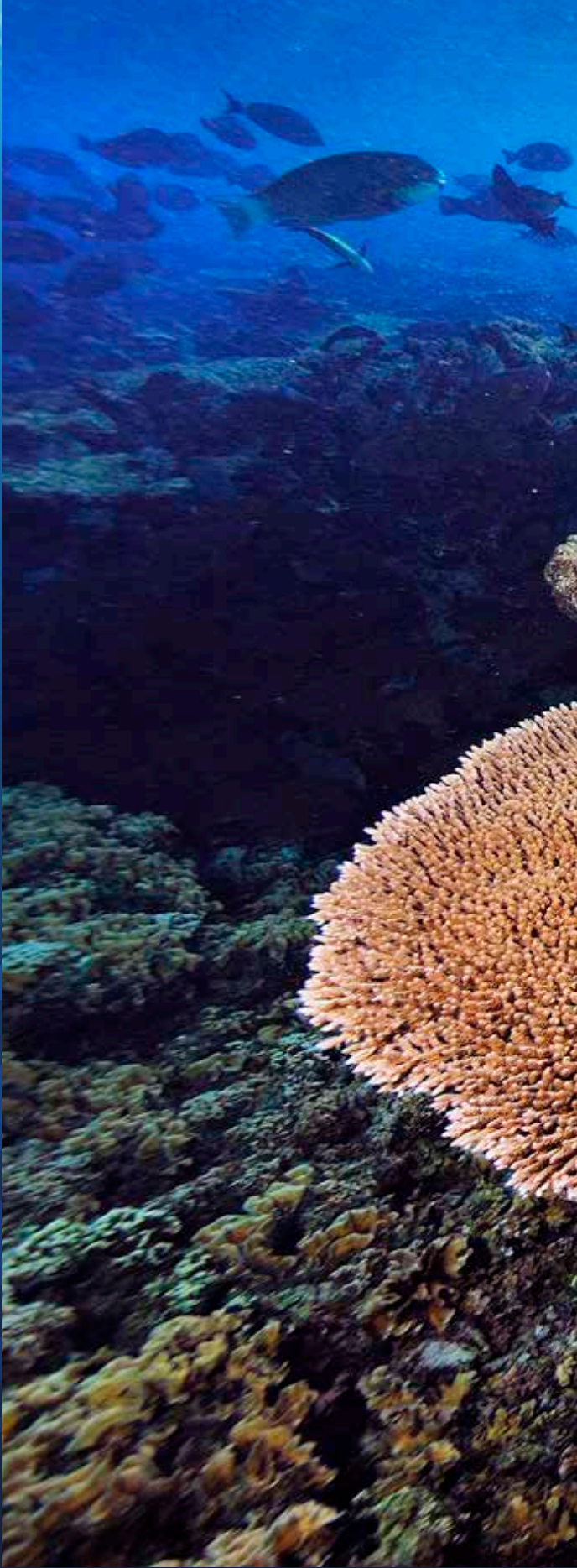
Dr. Ussif Rashid Sumaila

Dr. Ussif Rashid Sumaila is Professor and Director of the Fisheries Economics Research Unit at the University of British Columbia. He received his Ph.D. from Bergen University, Norway, and holds a B.Sc. with honors from Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria. Professor Sumaila is deeply interested in how economics, through integration with ecology and other disciplines, can be used to help ensure that fisheries and ocean resources are sustainably managed for the benefit of both current and future generations.

Today he specializes in bioeconomics (the study of the dynamics of fisheries and living resources using economic models), marine ecosystem valuation and the analysis of global fisheries subsidies, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and the economics of high and deep seas fisheries. Professor Sumaila's work in global fishing economics has influenced World Trade Organization policy concerning subsidies and countervailing measures and his advice has been sought by policy makers at the highest levels, resulting in invitations to give talks at the United Nations, the White House, the U.S. Congress, the European Parliament, the African Union, the British House of Lords, and the Canadian Parliament.







An underwater photograph of a coral reef. In the foreground, there are large, flat, table coral structures in shades of brown and yellow. The background shows a diverse reef with various other coral species and many small fish swimming in the clear blue water. A larger, light-colored fish is visible in the middle ground.

“The ways that we are nourished by the sea, the ways our lives benefit from the sea—materially as well as spiritually—are nearly infinite.”

Peter Benchley

excellence in policy

Awarded to an individual who contributes to advancing the cause of sustainable ocean use and protection based on the best available science and through the establishment of effective and enforceable laws and regulations.



Excellence in Policy, 2004

U.S. Senator Ernest (Fritz) Hollings



Often called “The Father of NOAA,” Senator Hollings has been an incredible supporter of our seas. In 1969, he led the way in creating the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which guides the use and protection of U.S. ocean and coastal resources, the national weather service and hurricane center, and directs the establishment of marine sanctuaries. Throughout his distinguished career, he championed marine science research and other vital ocean initiatives including the introduction of the National Ocean Policy and Leadership Act in 2004.



Excellence in Policy, 2009

U.S. Representative Sam Farr

Congressman Sam Farr is a fifth-generation Californian who is the founder and the co-chair of the House Oceans Caucus. He has consistently fought successful battles to fund a wide range of ocean programs and legislation that address marine debris, prevention of off-shore oil drilling, coral reef conservation, and banning genetically engineered salmon.



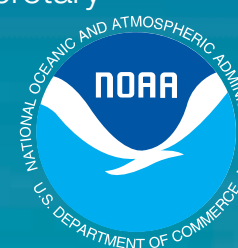


Excellence in Policy, 2010

Dr. Jane Lubchenco



Dr. Lubchenco was appointed by President Obama to be the Under Secretary of Commerce and the Administrator of NOAA, The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, where she was an exceptional leader and visible public voice for the oceans with policy makers. She is a marine ecologist and environmental scientist by training, with expertise in oceans, climate change, and the complex interactions between the marine environment and humanity.





Excellence in Policy, 2011

Admiral Thad Allen, USCG Retired

Admiral Allen was instrumental in leading efforts to address significant sea ice melting in the Arctic, and to convey urgency around the need for policies to address the issue of climate change. He was widely praised for his outstanding performance directing the federal response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and for his work as National Incident Commander of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

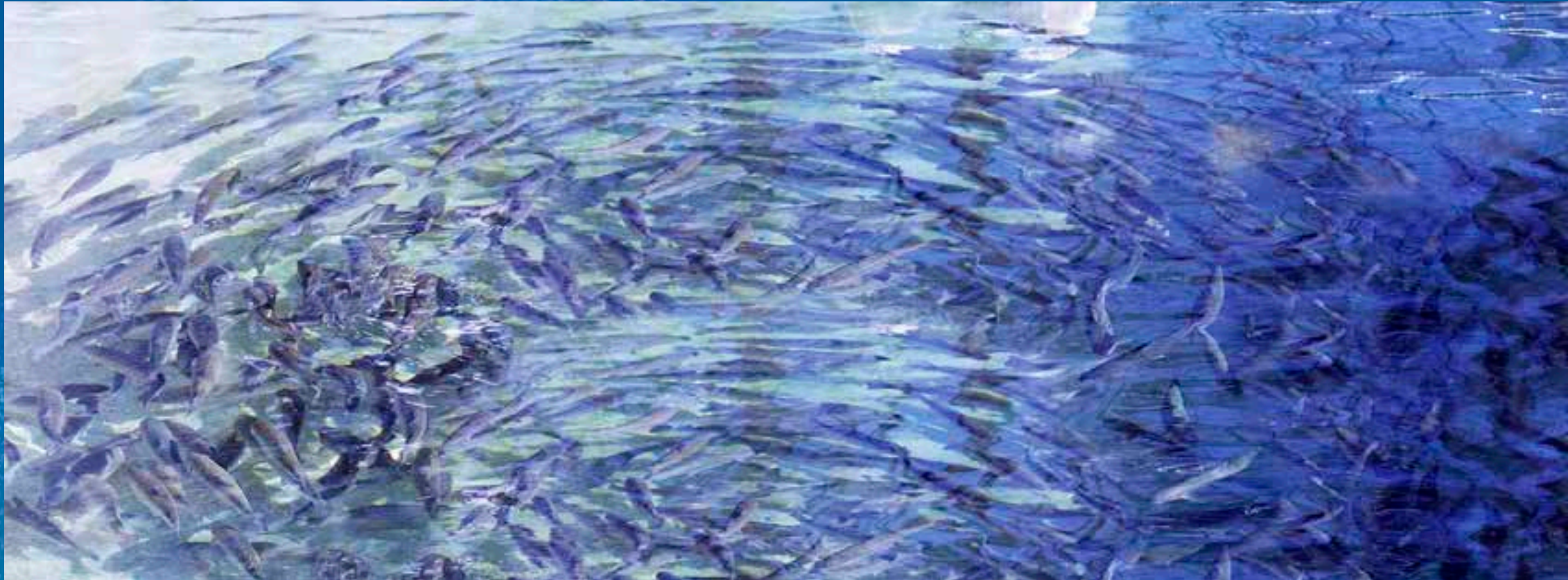




Excellence in Policy, 2012

U.S. Senator, Sheldon Whitehouse

With America's oceans and coasts under increasing pressure from pollution, acidification, and severe storms, Senator Whitehouse is a staunch ocean champion who is fighting to understand, preserve and safeguard the oceans. He helped establish the Senate Oceans Caucus and continues to lead the Senate effort to establish a National Endowment for the Oceans.



Excellence in Policy, 2013

U.S. Representative, Ed Markey

Representative (now Senator) Ed Markey has a powerful record of support for the oceans including as an outspoken critic of offshore drilling and of BP's handling of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010. He has promoted legislation to address climate change and ocean acidification, supports sustainable fishing policies and, as the ranking member of the House Natural Resources Committee, he was a strong defender of the U.S. National Ocean Policy, the Clean Water Act and other environmental protections.



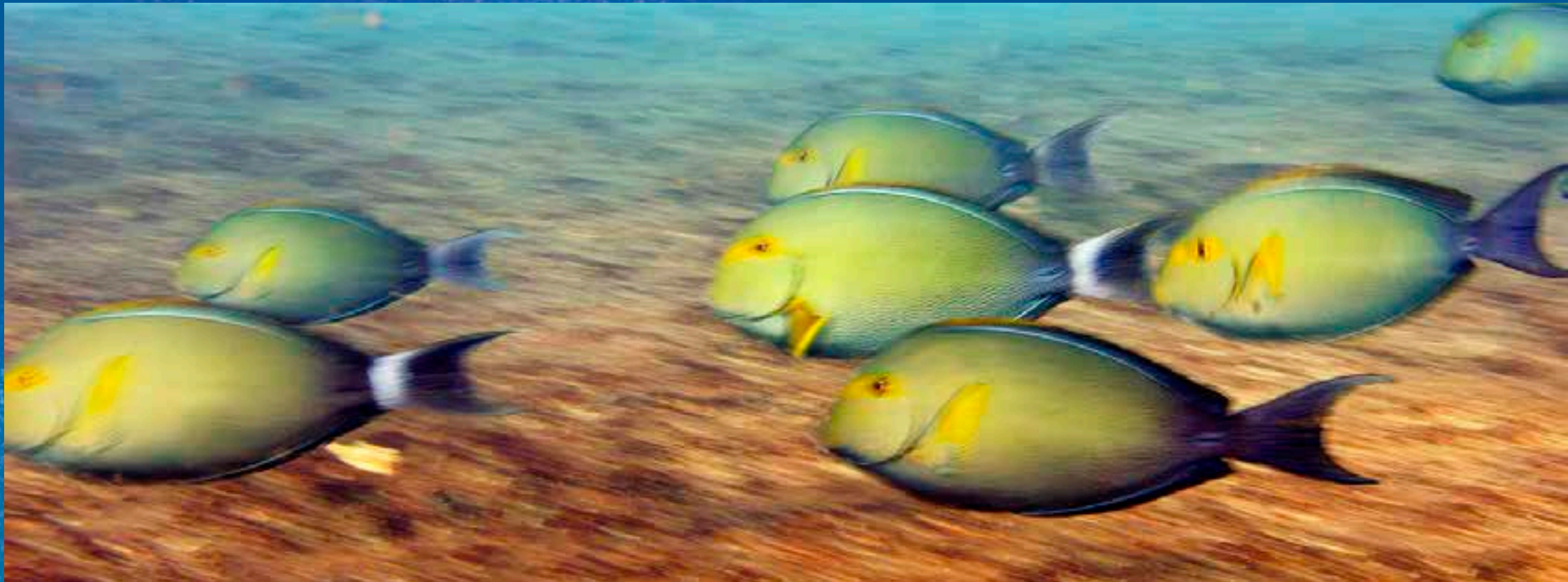


Excellence in Policy, 2014

Secretary Leon Panetta



Leon Panetta was born and raised on the scenic Monterey Bay coastline of California, an area he later served as a Member of Congress before becoming White House Chief of Staff, Director of Central Intelligence Agency, and U.S. Secretary of Defense. He led the prestigious Pew Ocean Commission, a blue-ribbon panel that examined the health of our public seas and sounded the alarm on overfishing, pollution, and climate change (among other marine threats). This noteworthy report was a wake-up call for our nation and ushered in formation of the U.S. National Ocean Policy now being implemented. He also played a central role in the establishment of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary in his home waters.



Excellence in Policy, 2015

Secretary of State, John F. Kerry

Few policy makers are able to make a difference at every scale, but Secretary Kerry has done so as a staunch ocean supporter for more than four decades. His love and respect of the ocean was instilled at an early age—clamming, fishing, and sailing in Massachusetts (in Buzzard’s Bay and on the Cape) and serving in the Navy spending time on many Pacific Islands. As a U.S. Senator for 28 years, he worked hard to restore the health of Boston Harbor and to shape legislation that would encourage coastal states to implement strong coastal zone management plans. He served as chairman of the Senate Oceans and Fisheries Subcommittee where he updated the landmark Magnuson-Stevens fishery laws to include important provisions for sustainable fisheries and to bolster ocean conservation. As Secretary of State, he has integrated oceans, climate, energy, and other critical global environmental issues into the mainstream of U.S. foreign policy. He has advanced efforts to end illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, and encouraged President Obama and other world leaders to expand marine protected areas such as the U.S. He initiated and hosted the first “Our Ocean” global leadership conference in June 2014 to discuss the threats facing our ocean and catalyze innovative marine conservation ideas across all sectors of society. As chair of the eight-nation Arctic Council, Secretary Kerry will bring an appreciation for this fragile climate-impacted region to the important deliberations on its future.





Excellence in Policy, 2016

David Wilmot and Ocean Champions

Dr. David Wilmot has over 30 years of experience in ocean science and policy and is co-founder of Ocean Champions, a highly respected organization dedicated to making the health of our public seas a nonpartisan priority. Ocean Champions is the first national organization of its kind focused exclusively on the ocean and ocean wildlife policy. They are developing a broad, bi-partisan base of supporters from which to cultivate political champions who will actively push ocean conservation ideas and legislation forward in the U.S. Congress and in key states. Their mission is to create a political environment where protecting and restoring the ocean is a priority of our federal and state governments. Over the past decade Ocean Champions has helped elect more than 100 different Congressional members, senior leaders and first time candidates.



Excellence in Policy, 2017

US Senator, Richard Blumenthal

Connecticut Senator Richard Blumenthal is a lifelong law enforcement leader and strong proponent for consumer protections, environmental stewardship, and labor rights. He was an early and outspoken voice in calling for the designation of the New England Coral Canyons and Seamounts area as a permanently protected marine national monument—the first ever in the Atlantic Ocean. In 2013, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration sent a deep-sea submersible vehicle down to probe the region and discovered a wide diversity of seafloor features and stunning communities of marine life nestled in-between three, deep sea canyons and four underwater mountains. On September 15, 2016, President Obama designated the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument, which protects 4,913 square miles of ocean (beginning 150 miles southeast of Cape Cod), phases out all commercial fishing over time, and prohibits other extractive activities such as mining and oil drilling. Senator Blumenthal sits of the Senate Committee for Commerce, Science, and Transportation, which has jurisdiction over a wide-ranging portfolio and plays a pivotal role in American business and in addressing the important issue of climate change.





Excellence in Policy, 2017

US Senator, Brian Schatz

U.S. Senator Brian Schatz has been a strong advocate for the ocean, renewable energy, public education, and protecting our civil rights. Upon taking his Senate seat in 2012, he made protecting the ocean one of his top priorities. In June 2016, he sent a draft proposal to President Barack Obama to expand Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument ten years after President George W. Bush signed the executive order establishing its original boundaries. This expansion is the largest ecologically protected wilderness on the planet—more than four times the size of California and home to over 70 percent of U.S. coral reefs. As an active member of two Senate committees with primary jurisdiction over the oceans, Senator Schatz through the Commerce Committee has helped develop and pass legislation to address toxic algae and dead zones, pirate fishing, coral reef conservation and seafood fraud. Through the Senate Appropriations Committee, he has fought to ensure funding for important initiatives to study, protect, and restore the ocean, coasts and communities that depend on them. He has also been an outspoken advocate for Climate action. The State of Hawaii has committed to having 100 percent renewable energy by 2045.







An underwater photograph showing a fishing net with a chain and various marine life, including several large rays and many smaller fish, swimming in clear blue water. The scene is illuminated by natural light from above, creating a bright and clear environment.

“The sea is worthy more of respect and protection than of fear and exploitation.”

Peter Benchley

excellence in media

Awarded to an individual or media outlet that shows exceptional ability in communicating ocean issues of concern to the public in ways that inform and/or inspire people to act as engaged citizens.



Excellence in Media, 2004

Naples Daily News

The Naples Daily News was recognized as a recipient in our inaugural awards for the outstanding news coverage they have continuously given to the Gulf of Mexico, specifically a 15-part series called “*Deep Trouble: The Gulf in Peril*” about the region’s extensive environmental challenges.





Excellence in Media, 2009

Mark Shelly

Mark Shelley is Founder and the Executive Director of Sea Studios Foundation, a non-profit team of filmmakers, scientists, and social entrepreneurs, united by a common passion to inspire a healthy and sustainable future and a deeper understanding of the vital role the ocean plays in Earth's life support system. A producer of many award-winning films, Sea Studios Foundation is best known for its award-winning National Geographic prime-time series, "*Shape of Life*" and "*Strange Days on Planet Earth*" hosted by Edward Norton.



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
STRANGEDAYS
ON PLANET EARTH



Excellence in Media, 2010

Louie Psihoyos



Academy Award winning director, Louie Psihoyos, who is Executive Director of the Oceanic Preservation Society, shocked the world with a breakthrough environmental documentary, *The Cove*. Using hidden cameras and microphones, he uncovered the savagery and environmental horrors taking place inside a hidden cove in Taiji, Japan. Psihoyos' movie paints a clear analogy with this small seaside village serving as a microcosm of massive ecological crimes happening worldwide.



Excellence in Media, 2011

Juliet Eilperin

As newspapers drastically downsized environmental and marine science coverage, Juliet Eilperin's continuous and informed environmental reporting stayed front and center at *The Washington Post*. As part of covering the "global blue beat" she also penned an outstanding book about sharks called *Demon Fish: Travels Through the Hidden World of Sharks*, an eye-opening adventure investigating the fascinating ways that different individuals and cultures relate to the ocean's top predator.





Excellence in Media, 2012

Brian Skerry



A veteran National Geographic underwater photo-journalist and visual storyteller, Brian Skerry uses the power of his lens to give voice to the world's oceans and to connect people emotionally to its incredible beauty and destruction. Most people will never get a chance to dive in the oceans, but everyone on Earth depends upon them, so Brian uses his photography to create urgency and to compel the world to take action.



Excellence in Media, 2013

Nancy Baron and COMPASS

Trained as a zoologist and science writer, Nancy Baron is the longtime Ocean Science Outreach Director for the Communications Partnership for Science and the Seas, known as COMPASS. She is renowned for training marine scientists in communications skills necessary to talk to the media, policymakers, and the public about their findings in a relevant, understandable way. She has played a pivotal role in establishing strong links between thousands of scientists and journalists, ensuring that critical changes and discoveries about our oceans become news and information that the world can benefit from and use.





Excellence in Media, 2014

Gabriela Cowperthwaite

First time documentary director, Gabriela Cowperthwaite, created a powerful work of investigative reporting in her widely seen *Blackfish*. The film takes a close look at important issues of worker safety, corporate duplicity and the treatment of captive whales, following the death of a SeaWorld trainer in 2010, killed by an aggressive bull orca that had been held in captivity for 30 years. Gabriela's work has led to protests and boycotts over concerns about the treatment of whales, dolphins, and other marine wildlife that are used for shows and exhibitions.



Excellence in Media, 2015

The *Economist*

The *Economist* has been an influential weekly news publication since 1843 with a contemporary circulation of some 1.5 million highly educated readers. Unlike many news outlets where environmental journalism has receded, The *Economist* has dedicated a significant amount of its news coverage to the growing and varied challenges facing the world's ocean and provided thoughtful analysis on their impacts on the global economy. Along with superior and consistent coverage of crucial marine issues ranging from the Arctic to the high seas to ports, over-fishing and climate change, The *Economist* has also distinguished itself by establishing a superb high-level "World Ocean Summit". This annual Summit brings together world leaders, policymakers, innovators, businesses, scientists and journalists to talk about the ocean in new way—igniting an informed dialog about what the world needs to do to create a "blue economy" where economic opportunity and growth are balanced by responsible investment in a sustainable ocean. The interest and enthusiasm that the "World Ocean Summit" has created for ocean has broadened the blue community well beyond the confines of traditional marine conservation and encourages scalable, economically viable, and environmentally sustainable innovations that contribute to the long-term health of the oceans.

**The
Economist**



Excellence in Media, 2016

Ian Urbina

Ian Urbina is an award winning investigative journalist for The New York Times. Based in the Washington Bureau, Urbina has reported on many high-profile issues, producing exposés covering a wide range of worker safety and environment issues. In 2015 Urbina penned a gripping and highly acclaimed six part series called, “The Outlaw Ocean,” which revealed the shockingly lawless state of the world’s ocean, especially the high seas. To gather his stories Urbina traveled through Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, where he spent much of his time on fishing ships, chronicling a diversity of offshore crimes including the killing of stowaways, sea slavery, intentional dumping, illegal fishing, the stealing of ships, gun running, stranding of crews, and murder with impunity.





Excellence in Media, 2017

One World One Ocean

Educating the public to the challenges our ocean planet faces is a daunting task. That is why the One World One Ocean media campaign was launched in 2011 to bring even greater focus and advocacy on behalf of the ocean through the IMAX films that MacGillivray Freeman Films has been making for over 40 years. One World One Ocean has been dedicated to supporting and extending the reach and messaging of the Ocean based IMAX documentaries and their accompanying educational programming utilized in more than 200 IMAX Science Museum Theaters and aquariums in over 30 countries. The IMAX film experience is a powerful platform for larger than life storytelling, and for many of the more than 20 million people worldwide who experience them, it is the most visceral underwater ocean experience they may ever have. One World One Ocean is committed to the long-term release of its films and outreach programming across every platform including social media. With an overarching goal of continually reminding the public that healthy oceans are essential for life on earth, their campaign goals are focused on building public awareness around three key ocean issues including getting people to eat sustainable seafood, reducing plastic pollution, and expanding ocean protected areas to at least 10 percent of the ocean.







“Save the sharks, and we can save the oceans.”

Peter Benchley

excellence in solutions

Awarded to an individual who helps find or create a practical solution to one of the many environmental challenges confronting our seas.



Excellence in Solutions, 2011

Dr. Greg Stone

Dr. Stone is one of the world's leading authorities on marine conservation policy and ocean health issues. A lifelong scientific explorer and prolific diver with more than 8,000 dives to date, he led a decade long effort to create the world's second largest marine protected area (an area about the size of California) around the Phoenix Islands in the country of Kiribati, which was later designated a World Heritage Site.



Excellence in Solutions, 2012

Dr. Geraldine Knatz

As Executive Director of the Port of Los Angeles—America's Port—Dr. Knatz was the first woman and first marine biologist to run a major port. She led the clean-up of the largest port complex in the Western Hemisphere, where a billion dollars of goods is moved daily. She greatly improved air quality (over 75 percent) and water quality to the extent that sea lions and sharks now visit a harbor whose waters were once black and full of garbage.





Excellence in Solutions, 2016

Dr. Chris Costello

Dr. Costello is a professor of Environmental and Resource Economics at the University of California Santa Barbara's Bren School. Upon receiving his Ph.D. from UC Berkeley in 2000, Costello went on to focus on the economics of environmental regulation and natural resource management under conditions of uncertainty. He is a ground breaking environmental economist and co-founder of the 'Sustainable Fisheries Group', whose practical purpose is to combine economics and ecology to inform sustainable and prosperous solutions in the oceans.







Excellence in Solutions, 2017

Rhode Island Ocean Special Area Management Planning Team & The Mid-Atlantic and Northeast Regional Planning Bodies

Great Urban planning for cities dates back to the ancient Greeks. Great ocean and coastal planning is only now coming into its own. The goal of the ocean planning process sounds simple: to support ocean ecosystem health and ensure the most sustainable use of our marine ocean resources for which we have an ever-growing number of demands. However, until the U.S. National Ocean Policy was created with an Executive Order by President Obama in 2010—and called for regional ocean planning bodies to be formally created—there were only sporadic efforts attempting to tackle this enormously complicated task. Ocean jurisdiction has historically been distributed among numerous agencies at every level of government and include thousands of domestic policies, laws, and regulations.

Carefully applying the best available scientific and human use data to coastal marine ecosystems to better understand how they function and applying this shared knowledge to the permitting and planning processes allows not only for more proactive and effective planning, but reduces conflicts between different users in fisheries, shipping and ports, offshore renewable energy, aquaculture, tourism, scientific research, mineral exploration, national defense, and ocean wildlife and habitat needs. Each of these three planning teams has produced landmark ocean plans that will benefit all users and provide excellent models for other states and regions to mirror in smart ocean planning.



Rhode Island Special Area Management Plan

One of the few states that has taken a proactive and comprehensive approach to ocean management—going back to 1983—is Rhode Island. In 2010 they completed the Rhode Island Ocean Special Area Management Plan, or Ocean SAMP, using the best available science to provide a balanced approach to the development and protection of Rhode Island's ocean-based resources. Updated in 2015, this plan is now being implemented and used to empower economic growth including a pilot wind turbine project that has reduced conflicts among uses and minimized environmental impacts. The Ocean SAMP saved years of permitting time and is enabling offshore wind, one of the nation's newest industries, to coexist with commercial fishing, one of the oldest.



Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan charts the course toward a more integrated approach to managing the region's shared ocean resources and is grounded in robust and on-going stakeholder engagement. The development of this first plan of its kind in the Mid-Atlantic provides the opportunity to advance shared economic, environmental, and cultural interests covering the waters from New York to the Virginia/North Carolina border, and extending seaward out to 200 nautical miles.

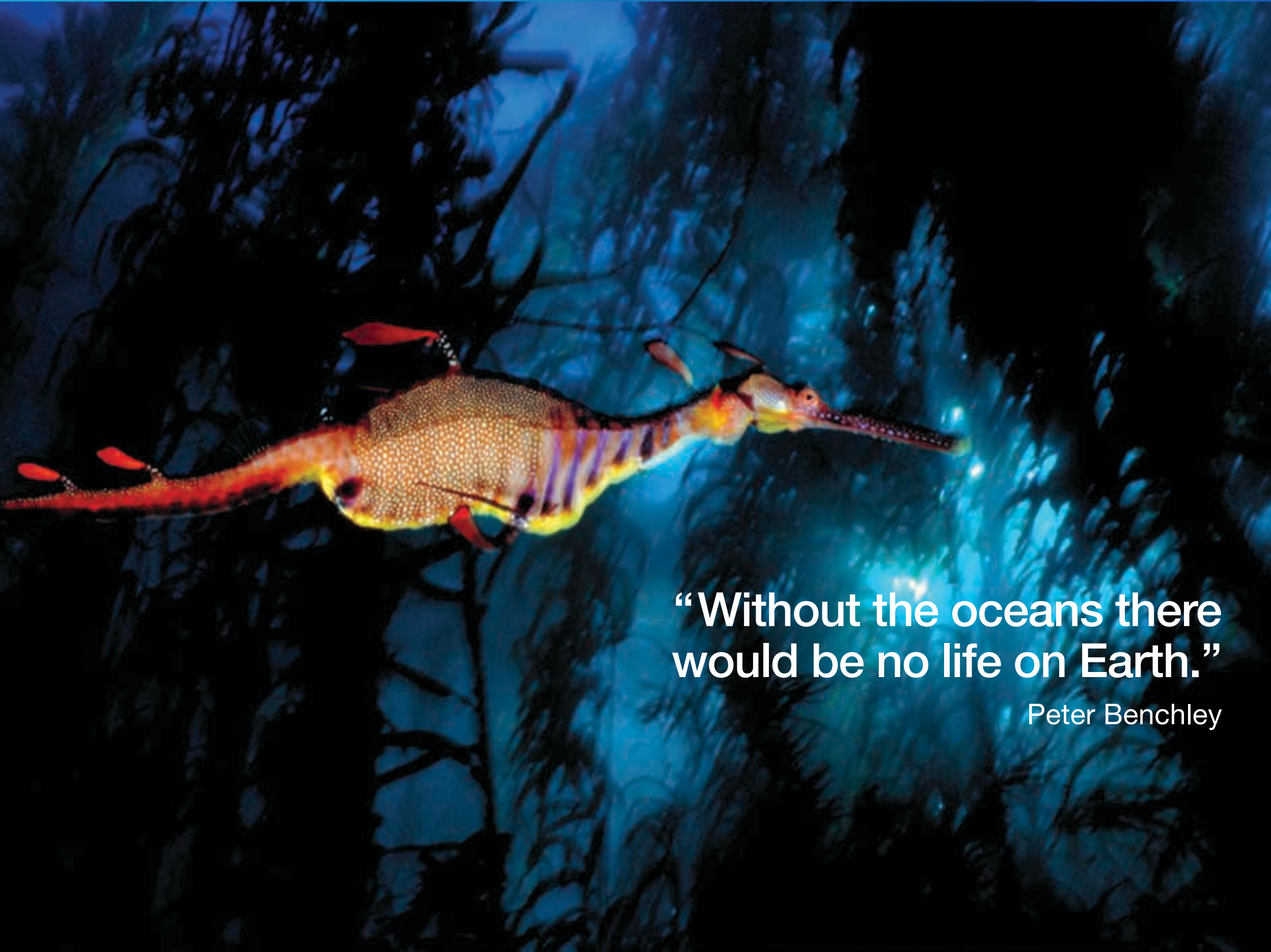
Complementing the plan is an outstanding high tech Data Portal that provides a centralized, public location for interactive ocean mapping and information focused on the Mid-Atlantic region, enabling Federal, State, Tribal, and local decision makers, as well as the general public, to visualize and analyze ocean resources and human use information such as fishing grounds, recreational areas, shipping lanes, habitat areas, and energy sites.



Northeast Regional Planning Body

The Northeast Ocean Plan is a trailblazing effort, being the first-in-the-nation regional ocean plan, covering six New England states, ten federally recognized tribes, ten federal agencies, and the New England Fishery Management Council. The Plan advances three goals: healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems; effective decision-making; and compatibility among past, current, and future ocean uses. It is a blueprint to protect and manage New England's public ocean treasure, reflecting its rich maritime history and the promise of a sustainable, healthy ocean future for all its citizens.





**“Without the oceans there
would be no life on Earth.”**

Peter Benchley

excellence in exploration

Awarded to an individual or group that contributes to our understanding of the seas through bold exploring and courageous efforts to uncover new and different aspects of our ocean planet.



Excellence in Exploration, 2010

Don Walsh

Oceanographer, explorer, and marine engineer, Don Walsh and Jacques Piccard were the first explorers to descend to the deepest point of the world's oceans, the Mariana Trench. Designated the U.S. Navy's first submersible pilot, for 50 years he has spearheaded bold engineering projects including the design, manufacture, and operations of world-class undersea systems.



Excellence in Exploration, 2012

Ocean in Google Earth

Inspired by a challenge from ocean explorer Dr. Sylvia Earle, Ocean in Google Earth has revolutionized ocean access by offering a below-the-surface portal to anyone with a computer to virtually explore the wonders of our vast oceans in ways that previously could only be experienced by a handful of highly experienced divers.





Excellence in Exploration, 2014

Prince Khaled bin Sultan & Living Oceans Foundation

An avid scuba diver and conservationist, his Royal Highness Prince Khaled bin Sultan of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, established a visionary ocean research and expeditionary non-profit in 2000, the KBS Living Oceans Foundation, around the concept of "Science Without Borders." Its major research vessel, The Golden Shadow, has explored many of Earth's coral rich seas, producing new and detailed maps of reef ecosystems, creating valuable new databases for science, promoting a new generation of coral researchers as well as new sensing and mapping technology.



Excellence in Exploration, 2015

Nainoa Thompson

Charles Nainoa Thompson is a native Hawaiian navigator and the president of the Polynesian Voyaging Society. He is best known as the first Hawaiian in seven centuries to practice the ancient Polynesian art of long-distance navigation known as “wayfinding,” a practice which relies on navigational clues using the sun and stars, winds and clouds, seas and swells, and birds and fish—but no western instruments. Nainoa’s successful launch and navigation of Hōkūleʻa, a traditional double-hulled voyaging canoe to Tahiti in 1976, proved the efficacy of this non-instrument navigational system to the world and inspired a revival of Hawaiian knowledge and culture. For decades, he has dedicated himself to teaching the skills and values of wayfinding to generations of navigators throughout the Pacific Islands. Nainoa has sailed the Hōkūleʻa over 145,000 nautical miles throughout the Pacific and is currently on a journey around the world to grow the traditional knowledge movement and ensure a more sustainable future for Earth’s ocean.





Excellence in Exploration, 2016

Tara Expeditions Foundation

Tara Expeditions Foundation, is a French, ship-based non-profit established in 2003 by Agnès Troublé, founder and inspiration for the agnès b. brand and her son Étienne Bourgois, to celebrate their passion for the sea and their vision to see humanity live sustainably with our global ocean.

For more than 12 years Tara, the legendarily tough, 36-meter aluminum hulled schooner, has been constantly on the move, traveling 300,000 kilometers across the world's ocean basins —from Arctic and Antarctic ice to tropical and temperate seas across the globe using sophisticated marine science, education, conservation, and exploration. Tara has completed ten highly productive expeditions studying the impact of climate change and various ecological challenges from plastic pollution to coral reef destruction.







**“Sea creatures are exotic, complex
and more intriguing than anything ever
imagined by the mind of man.”**

Peter Benchley



ocean spirit foundation

The Ocean Spirit Foundation Award went to a charitable foundation whose work provided measurable and enduring benefit to the cause of ocean and coastal protection and restoration. This prize category has been discontinued.



Ocean Spirit Foundation, 2010

Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

GORDON AND BETTY
MOORE
FOUNDATION

The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, established by Intel co-founder Gordon Moore and his wife Betty, develops large-scale projects in the areas of environmental conservation and scientific research that will improve the quality of life for future generations. Their ocean focus is on reforming fisheries, implementing marine spatial planning, and supporting national ocean policy in British Columbia, the U.S. West Coast, and New England.



christopher benchley youth award

Awarded to a young person who early in life has already made a significant contribution to marine conservation and public education about our seas.



Christopher Benchley Youth Award, 2009

Zander Srodes

Zander Srodes is passionate about sea turtle conservation—creating an interactive sea turtle seminar for children called “Turtle Talks” at age eleven, writing a children’s activity book that has been distributed for free to more than 250,000 students in six languages, and participating in TEDxTeen talks. Zander is busy traveling the world promoting marine conservation and eco-tourism, and hosting college students on two-week volunteer service trips to Costa Rica, where they work with other NGOs to preserve Leatherback turtle nesting sites.



Christopher Benchley Youth Award, 2010

Kyle Thiermann

Kyle Thiermann is a pro surfer with a passion for systemically affecting change. Combining surfing great waves globally with making short films about current affairs & environmental issues, he focuses on the power we all have to create a better world through everyday actions. He uses the support from his sponsors to generate publicity that encourages people to take action to transform and protect our oceans.

As the founder of Surfing for Change, Kyle's voice has been heard by thousands of young people at universities, high schools, and elementary schools throughout California.



RE-USE
ME



Christopher Benchley Youth Award, 2011

Rudy Sanchez

Rudy Sanchez believes in the power of positive change and found his calling in tackling the enormous challenge of plastic pollution in our oceans. He helped start and lead the Rise Above Plastics Youth Speaker Program—a partnership between Green Ambassadors and Surfrider Foundation. He has helped train hundreds of young volunteers to spread the message that everyone can be responsible for changing how they use plastic in their daily lives—especially parents.



Christopher Benchley Youth Award, 2012

Ta’Kaiya Blaney

Ta’Kaiya Blaney was a ten year-old first-nations Canadian activist and singer who in 2011 courageously fought a proposed tar-sands oil pipeline and tanker terminal planned for British Columbia’s coastal waters. When she learned oil kills sea otters, her favorite animals, she became an activist with Greenpeace and others. Her beautifully sung emotional protest song “Shallow Waters” became a YouTube sensation that touched children and adults alike.





Christopher Benchley Youth Award, 2013

Sean Russell

Twenty-year-old Sean Russell became aware of the tremendous harm that discarded plastic fishing-line was inflicting on marine wildlife as a high school intern at Mote Marine Laboratory in Florida. In response, he founded the “Stow It—Don’t Throw It” project, a statewide monofilament fishing line recycling program that has since gone national. Sean helped lead the first Youth Ocean Conservation Summit, which inspired the creation of the activist Youth Ocean Conservation Team. He has also given countless hours to community service projects while serving as a member of the Florida 4-H Program. Sean is now a senior at the University of Florida.





Christopher Benchley Youth Award, 2014

Casey Sokolovic

16-year-old Casey Sokolovic is a native of North Carolina and the founder of L.A.S.T. (Love A Sea Turtle) whose motto is "Let's Help Them LAST." She began supporting sea turtles at the age eight following a third-grade field trip to the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue Center in North Carolina. She has grown and evolved her advocacy efforts from baking and selling turtle-shaped sugar cookies into an educational outreach program and outdoor environmental summer science camp that helps students trace the path of fresh water to the ocean's coastline. She works with other activists and speaks about sea turtles to young people and adults across the U.S.A.





Christopher Benchley Youth Award, 2015

Madison 'Pip' Stewart

"I work for sharks, they are everything to me," says Madison Stewart. The 21-year-old Australian underwater filmmaker has been swimming with sharks for over a decade and has made it her life's mission to halt the decimation of a species she considers her family. Madison Stewart, to friends 'Pip' — her dad was a pirate, her mum was a hippy, and so she became 'Pippy' — is best known as 'shark girl'. She began scuba diving at age 12, and turned to home schooling at age 14 so she could focus more of her time on diving and filming tiger sharks and other endangered apex predators on the Great Barrier Reef. Over the last seven years, she's campaigned against the shark meat and shark finning trade in Australia, Mexico, Fiji, Palau and in other locales. She was the subject of an award-winning Smithsonian documentary, "Shark Girl," and believes that the most important career she can be involved in is the protection of the planet—and thus her own future.



Christopher Benchley Youth Award, 2016

Daniela Fernandez

21-year-old Daniela Fernandez, born in Ecuador, became passionate about climate change after watching Al Gore's 'An Inconvenient Truth' when she was in elementary school. She currently is a government and economics major in her Junior Year at Georgetown University and the Founder and Chair of the Sustainable Oceans Alliance' (SOA), a student led organization that empowers Millennials to become leaders in preserving the health and sustainability of the oceans. During a trip to the United Nations in 2013 Fernandez learned that the world's fisheries could collapse by 2050 affecting the global economy, food chains, and tourism. She understood that the world's ocean – its temperature, chemistry, currents and wild life – make Earth habitable for everyone, everywhere. She was deeply concerned about the repercussions and felt that her generation was key to bringing more attention to the problem of ocean sustainability.



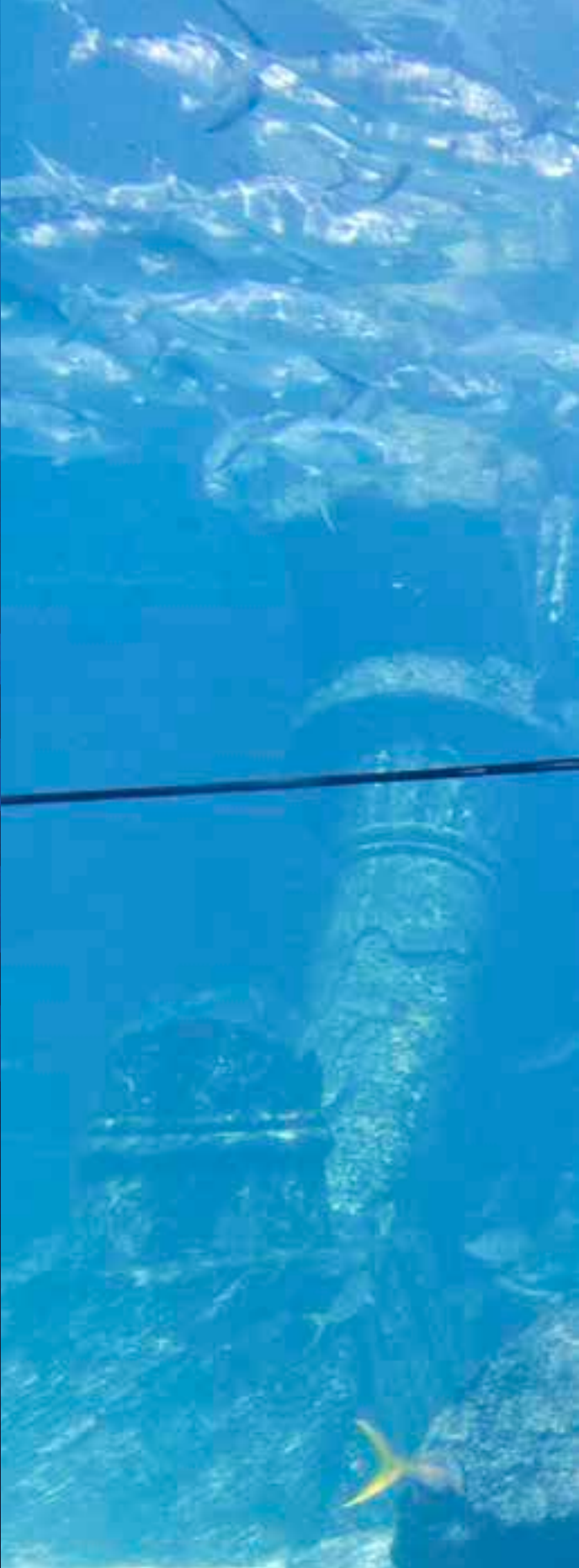


Christopher Benchley Youth Award, 2017

Carter and Olivia Ries

At the very young age of 7 and 8, this Georgia based brother and sister duo were motivated to start a ‘company’ that could help protect endangered species. The sight of sea turtles covered in oil and suffering due to the BP spill drove them to tears and into action—collecting and delivering much needed supplies to animal cleaning stations down in the Gulf. It was during this ocean clean-up adventure that they learned about the devastating impacts of plastic on ocean wildlife. This inspired them to create an award winning plastic pollution curriculum that is has been adopted nationwide and is currently being tested for distribution in the UK, Australia, and South Africa. Each time Olivia and Carter learned about the fate of threatened animals they were moved by despair and dreams of keeping them safe, so the emotional response ‘OMG’ seemed to be the perfect battle cry and foundation for their organization. ‘One More Generation,’ (OMG) is a 501 c3 they formed with their dad to help protect endangered species for the next generation of children to experience. Now 14 and 16, these young activists have spent more than half their lives committed to raising awareness and making big waves of change for ocean conservation.







“We know now that if we don’t stop the decline we may damage our planet irreparably—economically, environmentally, even existentially.”

Peter Benchley



hero of the seas

Awarded to a marine grassroots activist or activists who have made a major and long-term commitment to improving the quality of our seas and the communities that depend on them.



Hero of the Seas, 2004

Derickson “Dery” W. Bennett

Dery Bennett was a coastal conservation trailblazer who found his life’s calling when he joined a fledgling nonprofit, the American Littoral Society, which was dedicated to the preservation of coastal habitats and wildlife. He fought to end dumping of sewage sludge, stop dredging/filling of coastal wetlands for development, and to protect public access to the beach. He saved many natural coastal lands from development and mentored an entire new generation of coastal advocates.



Hero of the Seas, 2009

Richard Charter

Richard Charter has worked for three decades with local, state, and federal officials to ensure continued protection of coastlines threatened by offshore oil and gas drilling, to restore coastal ecosystems, and to create new marine protected areas. He led the 27-year bipartisan Congressional moratorium on offshore oil and gas leasing which, until 2009, had prevented new drilling along the U.S. West Coast, the East Coast, and in Southwest Florida.





Hero of the Seas, 2010

Cynthia “Cyn” M. Sarthou

Cynthia Sarthou has been Executive Director of the Gulf Restoration Network, headquartered in New Orleans, Louisiana since 1995. The GRN is a diverse network committed to uniting and empowering people to protect and restore the dwindling resources of the Gulf Region. She works to coordinate among and build the capacity of the grassroots groups across the Gulf, and pursues regional campaigns on priority issues that include: monitoring the BP oil spill aftermath, water pollution, wetlands protection, sustainable fisheries, and species at risk. She elevates regional issues to a national level and monitors federal agency actions that affect the Gulf States.



Hero of the Seas, 2011

Kathy Fletcher

A fifth generation Washingtonian, Kathy committed her career to restoring and healing the Pacific Northwest's coastline from the impacts of industrial abuse and aggressive development. In 1991 she founded and led a citizens organization, People for Puget Sound, which fostered hands-on restoration work and educated tens of thousands of "Sound Stewards." She has been exceptional in eliminating coastal contamination, halting the destruction of natural habitats, enforcing regulations, and holding public officials accountable.





Hero of the Seas, 2012

Peter Douglas

Called the “Sentry of California’s Coast,” Peter Douglas, fought for decades to preserve the California coast’s vast stretches of pristine beaches, jagged cliffs and delicate wetlands. For 26 years, he was the Executive Director of the California Coastal Commission, the powerful state agency that he helped create, with a mandate to keep the coast open to the public by limiting coastal construction, ensuring public access to beaches and advocating for regulation of offshore drilling. He helped create thousands of acres of parklands and public trails, secured more than 1,300 easements for paths to the shore through private property, and led the preservation of Highway 1 as a two-lane road weaving through farmland, cliffs and dunes.



Hero of the Seas, 2013

Karen Garrison and Kaitilin Gaffney

For more than a decade, Karen Garrison and Kaitilin Gaffney have worked tirelessly to ensure effective design and implementation of California's Marine Life Protection Act, resulting in a landmark network of ocean wilderness parks that now cover 16 percent of California state waters. While working for the Natural Resources Defense Council and Ocean Conservancy, Karen and Kaitilin built important relationships with scientists, conservationists, and policy-makers, but kept a keen focus on grassroots organizing, which allowed them to listen to people's concerns and work to find solutions that met everyone's needs.



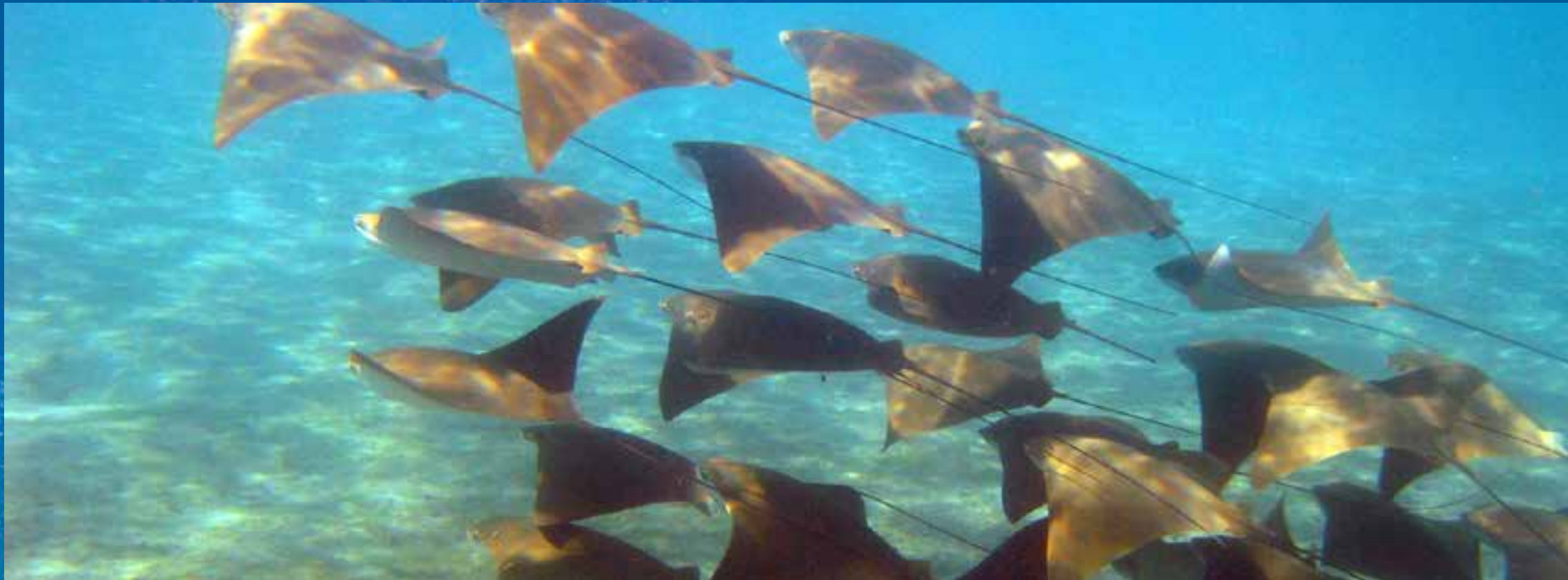


Hero of the Seas, 2014

Captain Charles Moore

Captain Charles Moore grew up on the Pacific Ocean, sailing from a young age. He founded the Algalita Marine Research Institute in 1994 “to protect and restore the marine environment.” In 1997 he charted an ocean course through the North Pacific Gyre and discovered “The Great Pacific Garbage Patch”—an enormous floating vortex of plastic debris and trash. Despite its size and density, this patch is not visible by satellite photography or as a continuous debris field to the human eye. Algalita helped develop protocols for monitoring marine and beach micro-plastics that are now in use worldwide. His research voyages and the media attention that his published papers generated have helped us better understand the magnitude of our plastic “footprint” and its dangerous impacts to fish and human health.





Hero of the Seas, 2015

Todd Miller

Coastal North Carolinian native Todd Miller was raised fittingly in the community of “Ocean” where he and his sisters spent endless joyful hours swimming, sailing, fishing, shrimping, and exploring the natural habitats of Bogue Sound. In 1982 he founded the North Carolina Coastal Federation to empower coastal residents and ordinary citizens to protect and restore the water quality and important natural marine habitats in North Carolina.

Under Miller’s guidance, the federation has actively campaigned in the face of excessive coastal development pressure for restoration programs encompassing over 40,000 acres of estuaries and 8,500 acres of land acquired for preservation. These efforts have rejuvenated oyster reefs, salt marshes, local wildlife and other key components of North Carolina’s uniquely beautiful coast.





Hero of the Seas, 2015

Dana Beach



Protecting the air, water and landscape that make South Carolina a special place has been Dana Beach's life's work. He was twenty-eight when he quit his job as a New York investment banker, got married and went on his honeymoon to Rwanda, where he and his wife were transformed by the gentle touch of a young gorilla. He returned from this experience and founded the South Carolina Coastal Conservation League. Today, the Columbia S.C. native is his state's most prominent and influential environmentalist. Dana has systematically built an eco-political powerhouse that dwarfs other environmental groups in the state. Along with successfully fighting industrial hog farms, coal plants and other unsound development, his group and its partners have protected over one million acres of South Carolina's spectacular coastline.



Hero of the Seas, 2016

Mayor Serge Dedina

Bilingual, bicoastal, and bilateral—Serge Dedina has spent his entire life focused on protecting both sides of the California and Baja California marine coasts. An avid surfer and swimmer who grew up in Imperial Beach, California, he has fond childhood memories of helping to preserve the Tijuana Estuary as a National Wildlife Refuge. As a teenager, he learned to surf in Imperial Beach, which led to thrilling surfing trips in Baja. These marine adventures eventually morphed into a doctoral dissertation on gray whale conservation in Mexico. Today he is Mayor of Imperial Beach and Executive Director and co-founder of WILDCOAST/COSTASALVAJE, an international grassroots organization dedicated to protecting some of the most beautiful and biologically significant coastal and marine ecosystem areas in southern California and Latin America.





Hero of the Seas, 2017

Robin Alden, Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries

Robin Alden, is the Founding Executive Director of Maine's Center for Coastal Fisheries based in Stonington, Maine. She co-founded the organization in 2003 with a vision of collaboration—doing the education, collaborative research and policy to bring together the knowledge and expertise of fishermen, scientists, and policy makers in the shared management of Maine's coastal fisheries. MCCF's focus is the most fishery dependent area of New England - the 150 miles of Maine coast from the Penobscot Estuary, east to the Canada's Maritime Provinces and it works at state, regional and national levels to achieve its goals. Robin credits the urgent threat of climate change as an ironic motivator for spurring local, state and federal regulators to adopt new, more collaborative approaches to managing fisheries that include local fisherman and their unique knowledge in making tough, informed decisions. Under Robin's direction, MCCF's innovative approach is internationally recognized as a model for sustainable fisheries. Robin has pursued this vision throughout her career: founding a regional fisheries newspaper, founding and running Maine Fishermen's Forum, and as Maine Commissioner of Marine Resources. She is a recipient of the White House Champion of Change for Sustainable Fisheries.





sustained ocean achievement

A special recognition award, selectively granted by the Peter Benchley Ocean Awards Selection Committee, to an individual who has made a long-standing commitment towards achieving lasting ocean conservation success.



Sustained Ocean Achievement, 2017

Joshua S. Reichert and the Pew Charitable Trusts' Ocean Group Honored for Sustained Ocean Achievement

For almost three decades, Dr. Reichert, and the Oceans Group of the Pew Charitable Trusts, have relentlessly focused their attention on pushing decision-makers to protect the world's oceans. Since taking the helm of Pew's Environment Program in 1990, he has designed and led a diverse array of ocean conservation initiatives in the United States and elsewhere in the world. He is known for his willingness to tackle large problems, incur significant risk, and pursue bold strategies in search of solutions to some of the most urgent problems facing life in the sea. These include overfishing, the absence of adequate enforcement systems needed to deter illegal fishing, and the continued use of dirty gear, such as bottom trawls and pelagic longlines that result in the catch of fish, seabirds, turtles, marine mammals, and other ocean life that are unwanted by fishermen and often thrown back into the sea either dead or dying.







Peter
Benchley
Ocean
Awards

Geology, Gems
& Minerals
www...

Elephant Discovery Station

10 Years of Benchley Awards Celebrations

2017 marked the 10th anniversary year for the Peter Benchley Ocean Awards. We were thrilled and honored to celebrate our 10th Anniversary at the storied Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History and Sant Ocean Hall in Washington, D.C. on May 11, 2017.

The following pages showcase our Peter Benchley Ocean Award winners from our 10th Anniversary celebration as well as from our previous events hosted biennially on the east and west coast throughout the past decade at other wonderful venues, including the renowned Monterey Bay Aquarium (Monterey), California Academy of Sciences (San Francisco), The Carnegie Institution for Science (Washington D.C.), and National Geographic's Headquarters (Washington D.C.).



Minister Susi Pudjastuti, 2017 National Stewardship Award winner, speaking at 'The Ocean of Tomorrow' Leadership Symposium



U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, 2012 Policy Award winner and Benchley Award Co-Founder, Wendy Benchley with 2017 Policy Award winner, U. S. Senator Brian Schatz during the VIP Reception



2017 Christopher Benchley Youth Award winners, Olivia and Carter Ries accepting their awards in the Smithsonian's Baird Auditorium



Award Co-Founder, David Helvarg with Benchley Awards Selection Committee Member, "Her Deepness" Dr. Sylvia Earle and Vicki Nichols Goldstein, Founder and Executive Director, Colorado Ocean Coalition in the Grand Rotunda



Mrs. Wendy Luers with Wendy Benchley and Ambassador William Luers in Baird Auditorium



2017 Benchley Awards Ceremony Masters of Ceremonies, David Helvarg and Wendy Benchley welcoming ceremony sponsors and guests



2017 Solutions Award winners from Rhode Island Ocean Special Area Management Planning Team and The Mid-Atlantic and Northeast Regional Planning Bodies with Grover Fugate speaking at podium



From left, Wendy Benchley with Awards Sponsors, Roger Sant and Shari Sant Plummer during the VIP Reception



Dr. Ussif Rashid Sumaila 2017 Science Award winner speaking at 'The Ocean of Tomorrow' Leadership Symposium



Wendy Benchley, U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, David Helvarg, U.S. Senator Brian Schatz, and Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Benchley Awards Selection Committee Member



Dr. Benjamin Halpern, 2017 Science Award winner, speaking at 'The Ocean of Tomorrow' Leadership Symposium



Senator John Warner speaking with Wendy Benchley following the Benchley Award ceremony



Wendy Benchley, 2017 Sustained Ocean Achievement Honor recipient, Josh Reichert, Dr. Benjamin Halpern, Sylvia Earle, and Dr. Benjamin Halpern



Co-founders of One World One Ocean, Greg and Barbara MacGillivray, 2017 Media Award winners, and Danni Washington



Robin Alden, 2017 Hero of the Seas winner delivering her Award acceptance remarks



Dr. Greg Stone, 2011 Solutions Award winner and Benchley Selection Committee Member, moderating 'The Ocean of Tomorrow' Leadership Symposium



View from above of the gala in the Smithsonian's Grand Rotunda



Kelsey Leonard, 2017 Solutions winner, Tribal Co-Lead, Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body, Shinnecock Indian Nation, giving her team's Award acceptance remarks



Benchley Awards guests mingling in front of the spectacular 'Open Ocean' Exhibit at Monterey Bay Aquarium following the 2016 Awards ceremony



Wendy Benchley with H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco, 2015 National Stewardship Award winner, and Ambassador Maguy Maccario-Doyle prior to 2015 Award ceremony at Carnegie



Anoto Tong, Kiribati President and 2012 National Stewardship Award Winner with Secretary of State, John F. Kerry, 2015 Policy Award winner



Dr. Enrico Sala, Dr. Sylvia Earle, H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco, and Admiral Charles Michel Vice Commandant, kicking off the 2015 'The Ocean in 2050' Leadership Symposium at National Geographic's Grosvenor Auditorium in D.C.



Romain Troublé, General Director of Tara Expeditions Foundation, 2016 Exploration Award winner with Dr. Chris Costello, 2016 Solutions Award winner at the awards ceremony in Monterey Bay Aquarium theater



View from above the 2015 Benchley Awards celebration at Carnegie



Dr. Barbara Block 2016 Science Award winner giving her acceptance remarks during the Awards ceremony at Monterey Bay Aquarium



Secretary Leon Panetta 2014 Policy Award winner holding his Benchley manta statue, which was designed by renowned ocean artist and activist, Wyland



Senator Ed Markey, 2013 Policy Award winner with Wendy Benchley and Senator Sheldon Whitehouse following the 2013 ceremony at Carnegie



Dr. Sylvia Earle, as 2011 Master of Ceremonies speaking to the audience about knowing and traveling with Peter Benchley with National Geographic



Rudy Sanchez, 2011 Christopher Benchley Youth Award winner introduced Sean Russell, 2013 Christopher Benchley Youth Award winner at the 2013 Awards ceremony in D.C.



Philippe Cousteau Jr., Co-Founder of EarthEco International, as Master of Ceremonies in 2010 at California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco



John Hanke, Google's Geo Division Leader, accepting the 2012 Exploration Award on behalf of Ocean in Google Earth



2012 Peter Benchley Ocean Award Winners. From left, Wendy Benchley, John Hanke, Brian Skerry, Geraldine Knatz, President Tong, Ta'Kaiya Blaney, Nancy Rabalais, U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, John Laird and David Helvarg



U.S. Representative Sam Farr 2009 Policy Award winner introducing Senator Whitehouse as the Policy Award winner during the 2012 ceremony in San Francisco



President of Senegal, Macky Sall, 2013 National Stewardship Award winner with Wendy Benchley at a private Benchley Awards reception hosted to honor him in April 2013 in Washington, D.C.

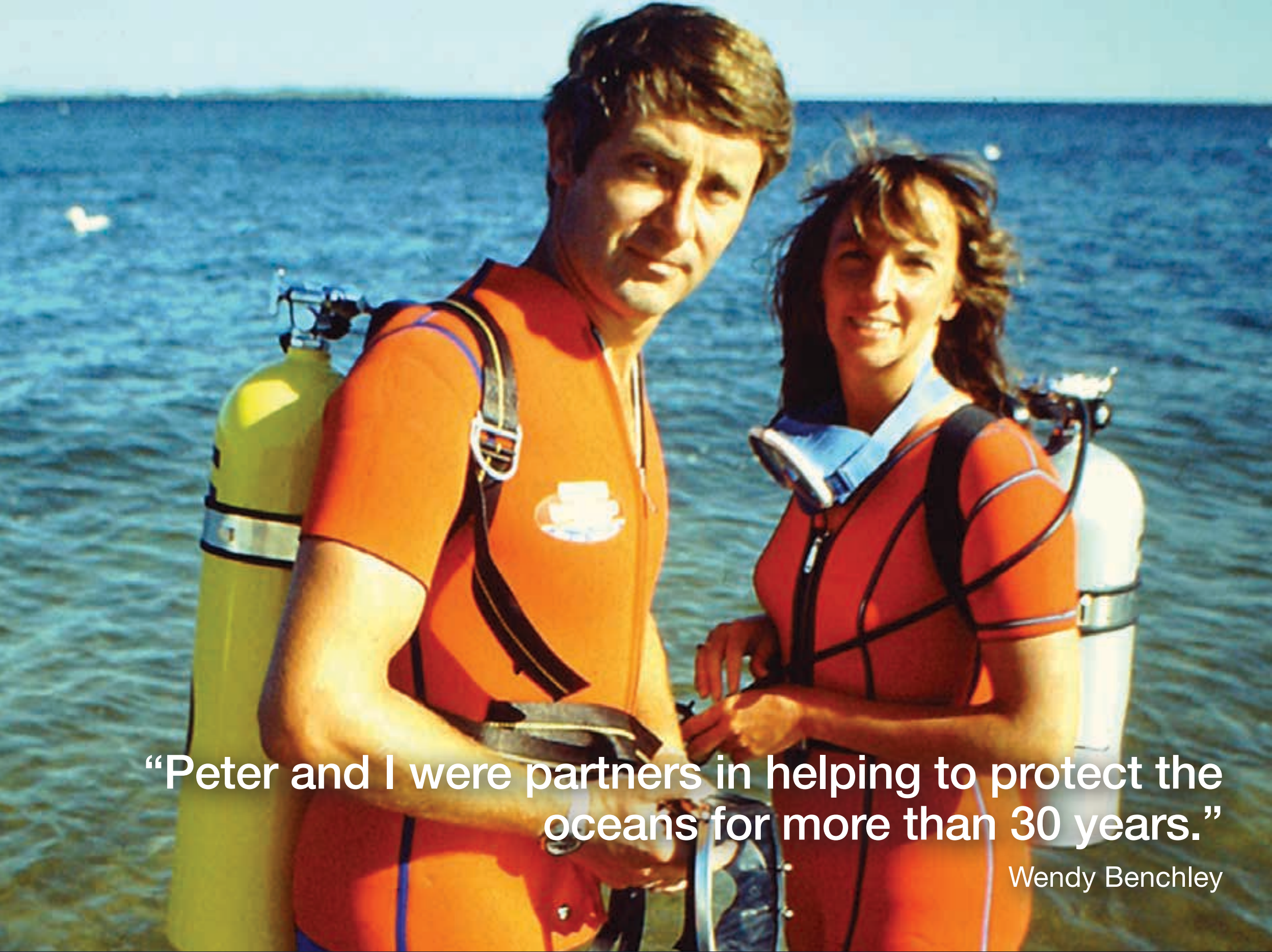


Dr. Jeremy Jackson 2009 Science Award winner, speaking with Dr. Steve Palumbi 2011 Science Award winner and Juliet Eilperin 2011 Media Award winner during the 2011 Awards Ceremony



David Helvarg, President of Costa Rica, Laura Chinchilla, the 2011 National Stewardship Award winner, and Wendy Benchley at a private Awards ceremony at Inter-American Development Bank in Washington, D.C.





“Peter and I were partners in helping to protect the oceans for more than 30 years.”

Wendy Benchley

award co-founders

Celebrating The Seventh Annual Benchley Awards



Wendy Benchley

Award Co-Founder

Wendy Benchley has enjoyed a long career as an environmental activist, elected government office-holder, and strong voice for supporting environmental initiatives at the local, regional and national levels. Wendy and her husband Peter Benchley, spent more than 30 years as committed conservation partners collaborating and convening with those who could most impact ocean protection—leading marine scientists and non-profits, influential policy makers, business leaders, and the media. As an avid scuba diver and global citizen who enjoys “field visits with sharks”, Wendy is a tireless champion of raising awareness and educating the public about the importance of protecting sharks and essential marine ecosystems.

Her environmental life began in the ‘70’s as a co-founder and Trustee of the New Jersey Environmental Federation, where she fought against hazardous substances in the home, developing award-winning educational campaigns to encourage people to stop using toxic products. For more than 25 years, Wendy was actively engaged in addressing national environmental issues with the Environmental Defense Fund and served as a member of their National Board of Trustees. Today, Wendy serves as an Advisory Trustee for The Environmental Defense Fund, on the International Board of WildAid, and serves on the Boards of Shark Savers and The Blue Frontier Campaign.

David Helvarg

Award Co-Founder

David Helvarg is co-founder of the Peter Benchley Ocean Awards, Executive Director of Blue Frontier Campaign, and an author. He is editor of the *Ocean and Coastal Conservation Guide* and the Executive Producer of the *Blue Vision Summit*, a high-level gathering of ocean activists, marine scientists and policy-makers held biennially in Washington, D.C. He is an award-winning journalist, who worked as a war correspondent in Northern Ireland and Central America, covered a range of issues from military science to the AIDS epidemic, and reported from every continent including Antarctica.

David has produced more than forty broadcast documentaries for PBS, The Discovery Channel, and others. His print work has appeared in publications and online including *The New York Times*, *the Los Angeles Times*, *National Geographic*, *Smithsonian*, *Popular Science*, *Sierra*, *Parade* magazine; his reporting has taken him to every continent including Antarctica. His books include: *Blue Frontier*, *The War Against the Greens*, *50 Ways to Save the Ocean*, *Rescue Warriors*, *Saved by the Sea*, and his latest, *The Golden Shore—California's Love Affair with the Sea*. The updated paperback of his memoir, *Saved by the Sea* will be out with New World Library in April 2015. David is a licensed Private Investigator, avid body-surfer, and accomplished scuba diver.



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Wendy Benchley & David Helvarg

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