

Environment of the Sea Notes

Spring 2009

1. NOAA Brings Great Lakes To Google Earth. Of particular interest to members of the Great Lakes Station, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced on April 23 that its Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory has teamed with the National Geophysical Data Center in Boulder, Colorado to produce a Google Earth tour of some of the interesting coastal and subsurface features of the Great Lakes.
2. Subscribe to NOAA News. It is now simple to keep up with developments at NOAA. Go to www.noaa.gov and click on “Subscribe to NOAA News.”
3. Impressive Numbers From 2008 International Coastal Cleanup. During the September, 2008 International Coastal Cleanup some 400,000 volunteers at 6,485 sites in 104 countries picked up more than 6.8 million pounds of trash. A report on the cleanup, entitled “A Rising Tide of Ocean Debris” has been prepared by the Ocean Conservancy and can be found at www.oceanconservancy.org.
4. 2009 Clean Regattas. Sailors For The Sea has compiled a list of 2009 “clean” regattas on its website www.sailorsforthesea.org . Check out the list to see which regattas are on it and if you know of a regatta which you think should be on the list, but it not, learn what you can do to help it meet the certification process. The Clean Regatta home page on the Sailors For The Sea website also contains a useful list of green cleaning products for the marine environment.
5. Books of Interest. 2008 was a good year for books about the environment of the sea. Here is a list of a few which are worth a look.
 1. Dan Bortolotti, Wild Blue: A Natural History of the World’s Largest Animal (Thomas Dunne Books 2008)
 2. Sylvia Earle and Linda Glover, Ocean: An Illustrated Atlas (National Geographic 2008)
 3. Steven Kazlowski, The Last Polar Bear: Facing The Truth of a Warming World (Braided River 2008) (A photographic journey)
 4. David Doubilet, Water, Light, Time (Phaidon 2008) (Photographs by one of the world’s leading underwater photographers)

5. Deborah Cramer, Smithsonian Ocean: Our Water, Our World (Smithsonian 2008) (Focuses on the meaning of the sea in our lives and suggests an ocean ethic.)
 6. Stephen Hutchinson and Lawrence E. Hawkins, Oceans: A Visual Guide (Firefly Books, Limited, 2008) (Stunning photographs of the world's oceans, the life they support, their value to humans and the threats they face.)
 7. Richard Ellis, Tuna: A Love Story (Knopf 2008) (An impassioned plea to save and protect one of the deep oceans loveliest creatures)
 8. Roger Steene, Oceanic Wilderness (Firefly Books, Limited, 2008) (Photographs which capture the beauty of the marine environment)
 9. Stan Ulanski, The Gulf Stream (University of North Carolina Press Chapel Hill 2008) (An exploration of the fascinating history and science of a sea "highway")
 10. J.E.N. Veron, A Reef In Time: The Great Barrier Reef From Beginning To End (Belknap Harvard 2008) (A former Chief Scientist with the Australian Institute of Marine Sciences argues that the Great Barrier Reef and most coral reefs will be dead from bleaching and irreversible acidification within this century unless greenhouse gas emissions are curbed.)
 11. Taras Grescoe, Bottomfeeder : How To Eat Ethically In a World of Vanishing Seafood (Bloomsbury Publishing PLC 2008)
6. Right Whales on the Increase. According to an article which appeared in the New York Times on March 17, 2009, extensive monitoring of North Atlantic right whales conducted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Georgia Wildlife Trust suggests that there is hope that for the first time in centuries things are looking up for the right whale, which had been driven to the edge of extinction. Researchers see this as proof that simple conservation efforts can have a big impact. Right whales benefited from changes in shipping lanes, reduction in ship speeds and restrictions on fishing gear intended to reduce the incidence of entangling whales. 2008 was likely the first time since the 1600s that not a single right whale was killed by humans.
 7. Establishment of Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument. On January 7, 2008 President Bush established the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument. The newly protected area, which encompasses nearly 200,000 square miles, includes part of the Mariana Trench and many atolls and reefs near the equator.
 8. "Troubled Waters". The January 3, 2009 issue of The Economist contained a special report of the sea entitled "Troubled Waters". It consists of nine articles on a variety of environmental issues related to the oceans. It is well worth reading.
 9. Eco-Friendly Products and Practices For Belowdecks. The May, 2009 issue of Practical Sailor contains a Special Report entitled "Practically Green: Engines, Bilges and Interiors – Eco-Friendly Products and Practices For Belowdecks". The

article discusses products, such as absorbent pads and oil changing systems, which deal with engine fluids, descaling heat exchangers, bilge cleaners and soaps and detergents. It also contains a helpful list of contact information for companies which market eco-friendly products for boats. The article is a follow-up to one appearing in the May, 2008 issue of the magazine dealing with eco-friendly products for the outside of the hull.

10. Generating Energy From The Deep. The New York Times reported on page F2 of the April 30, 2009 edition, that Lockheed Martin and other companies are working on capturing ocean thermal energy to generate electricity. The technique uses the difference in temperature between relatively warm water on the ocean's surface and colder water found deep in the ocean. The U.S. Navy is also interested in this technology and plans to award a contract in the near future to explore it. At this point, the technology is expensive and it cannot be utilized in many places because it requires a large difference in water temperatures between the oceans layers.