

**Upcoming US National Committee Events**

- 11 - 13 September – USNC Biodiversity Workshop, Washington, DC
- 14 - 16 November - USNC Annual Meeting, Corpus Christi, TX

**US CoML Newsletter Volume 1, Issue 1 (of many more to come) – Suggestions**

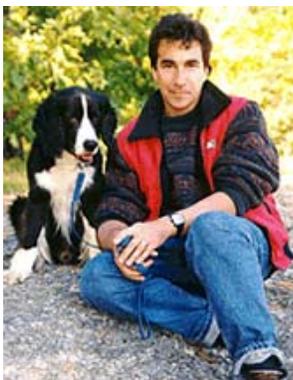
**Welcome**

This is the inaugural issue of the U.S. CoML program newsletter. It is the goal of the U.S. CoML program office to keep its constituents up-to-date by providing this brief quarterly update. We are happy to receive suggestions for the newsletter, or if you would like to include a quick update about work you have been doing, meetings you have attended, and any items of interest please contact [CoML@coreocean.org](mailto:CoML@coreocean.org). Additionally, please pass on any/all names of people whom you think might also enjoy this quarterly update. The next issue will go out in November.

**Overview of Last Meeting (March 2006)**

The U.S. National Committee (USNC) of the Census of Marine Life (CoML) held its biannual meeting March 21-22, 2006 at the Consortium for Oceanographic Research and Education (CORE) in Washington, DC. The principal goals of the meeting were 1) to define and adopt a 2006-2007 outreach strategy for engaging stakeholder groups, and 2) identify and adopt strategies to support the full implementation of a sustained U.S. Regional Node of the Ocean Biogeographical Information System (OBIS). Members of the USNC were joined in their discussions by representatives of the Gulf of Maine project, OBIS-SEAMAP project, US Regional OBIS Node, Sloan Foundation, NOAA's Office of Ocean Exploration, Ocean.US, Centers for Ocean Science Education Excellence (COSEE) Network Coordination Office, and CoML Secretariat.

**New US National Committee Chair**



Dr. Andy Rosenberg, an HMAP project leader will become the next USNC chair, and will replace Dr. Daphne Fautin at the next USNC meeting in Corpus Christi in November. Dr. Fautin has been of the USNC chair, since the inception of the US Program in 2002. Fortunately for us, Dr. Fautin has agreed to stay on with the US National Committee to impart more of her dedication, knowledge, and enthusiasm to the US program. Dr. Rosenberg hails from the University of New Hampshire where he serves as Professor in the Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space at the University of New Hampshire. Currently, Dr. Rosenberg is Principle Investigator of the History of Marine Animal Populations (HMAP) project. His prior activities include

serving as Dean of the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture at the University of New Hampshire, member of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, Deputy Director of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Northeast Regional Administrator for NMFS for four years.

### **Biodiversity Workshop**

The US National Committee is organizing and sponsoring a workshop entitled “*Approaches for Researching the Roles of Marine and Coastal Biodiversity in Maintaining Ecosystem Services*,” in Washington, DC on September 11-13, 2006. The Biodiversity Workshop will attempt to improve understanding of marine and coastal biodiversity and the application of this knowledge to support sustainable and adaptive ecosystem-based management of living and non-living resources. The ultimate product will be a report to sponsoring entities and to the Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology (JSOST) and Subcommittee on Integrated Management of Ocean Resources (SIMOR) for their consideration in advancing the research priorities and potential applications identified by participants. In addition, the co-chairs and steering committee will seek to publish key findings and related materials in scientific journals.



Funding organizations for this workshop include the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Oceans and Human Health (OHH), and the Consortium for Oceanographic Research and Education (CORE).

For more information, please visit our [workshop website](#), or contact the US National Committee Program Office at [coml@coreocean.org](mailto:coml@coreocean.org), or (202) 332-0063.

### **CoML's ICOMM Project Honored as No. 1 Paper in Biology**

A paper published by the proceedings of the National Academies of Sciences journal (July 31 online early edition) entitled *Microbial diversity in the deep sea and the underexplored "rare biosphere."* was ranked last week as the number one biology story by the Faculty of 1000 Biology Current Top 10 List. Faculty of 1000 Biology is a new online research service that comprehensively and systematically highlights and evaluates the most interesting papers published in the biological sciences, based on the recommendations of a faculty of over 2000 of the world's top researchers. The paper was written by scientists from CoML's International Census of Marine Microbes (ICOMM) project with US scientist Mitch Sogin as the Primary Investigator. The number-one ranked story received a rating last week of 9.8 out of possible score of 10. You can view the current Top 10 List here: <http://www.f1000biology.com/top10> or read the full paper at the [PNAS website](#).

### **Capitol Hill Oceans Week 2006**

Dr. Andy Rosenberg led a discussion panel at the 2006 Capitol Hill Oceans Week (CHOW) on June 13-14, 2006 hosted by the National Marine Sanctuaries Foundation. The discussion focused on various approaches to visualization demonstrated by CoML scientists, Drs. Russell Hopcroft, Patrick Halpin and Nicholas Makris. Dr. Russ Hopcroft of the University of Alaska,

Fairbanks shared eight minutes of high-definition video recorded by the ROV Global Explorer II. His recent series of dives in July 2005 in the Arctic Ocean revealed 5 new species of comb jellyfish, which doubled the previously known number of species in that ocean. Dr. Pat Halpin of Duke University focused his talk on the OBIS-SEAMAP project. The audience was extremely impressed with the potential of this biogeographic visualization program and the feasibility of alternate interfaces with Google Earth. MIT's Dr. Nick Makris presented new "audio tracking technology" as highlighted in the February 3, 2006 issue of *Science* magazine. The new technology has been explained as Doppler weather radar for schools of fish and will be valuable in many fisheries operations. Their presentations can be viewed online at <http://www.nmsfocean.org/chow2006>.

The Census of Marine Life speakers and many CoML staff members attended the National Marine Sanctuaries Foundation awards dinner on June 13, 2006, along with other USNC members (Paul Sandifer, Terry Garcia, Tom Fry and Sylvia Earle). The 2006 Lifetime Achievement awards were given to Admiral James D. Watkins and the Honorable Leon E. Panetta. This year's Leadership Awards went to Senator Judd Gregg of New Hampshire and Congressman Norm Dicks of Washington State.

## **OBIS Update**

### **BACKGROUND:**

The original goal of the Ocean Biogeographical Information System (OBIS) effort was to develop a pilot node that would demonstrate the feasibility and advantages of combining US efforts related to US National Committee on the Census for Marine Life (USNC) and the National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII)\*. The demonstration was successful. Efforts are now underway to transition from a "pilot node" to a fully operational node.



### **STATUS:**

- Initial data sets have been loaded into the US Regional OBIS Node (US RON)
  - Gulf of Maine CoML Project and
  - Hawaii Marine Data (Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum).
- Funding has been secured for transition phase (permanent funding source is needed) and support procured to begin work on a permanent RON
- Immediate focus will be on developing and implementing:
  - A work plan that would move existing US data from IOBIS into the US RON;
  - Developing decision criteria for prioritizing data sets to add to OBIS;
  - Identifying and loading priority data sets,
  - Developing a US RON website that integrates with the NBII\* Marine Theme and provides access to US RON, NBII and IOBIS data; and
  - Developing applications using OBIS data
  - Establishing a US RON team that includes a US RON manager, and NBII, USNC, IOBIS members

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\* The National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII) is a national network of biodiversity nodes that provide access to data and other information products over the World Wide Web. NBII is national partnership that includes federal, state and local agencies as well as educational institutions and other organizations concerned with biodiversity management.

## **Personnel Changes at Program Office**

With the recent departure of Mr. Peter Fippinger who accepted a position with NOAA's Office of Policy Planning and Integration, Mr. Michael Feldman has been selected to coordinate the duties of the US Census of Marine Life. Michael has previously worked with the International Secretariat of Census of Marine Life and the National Ocean Partnership Program. He will be supported by senior level, External Affairs staff, Ms. Nina Young and Mr. Kevin Wheeler as well as Research Assistants, Ms. Kelly Droney and Mr. Colin Reed. During this transition, the team will focus its efforts on successfully organizing and implementing the US CoML's outreach strategy, Biodiversity Workshop (September 2006) and USNC Meeting in Corpus Christi, TX (November 2006).

The U.S. Program Office is also happy to welcome Heather Mannix to the team as Research Assistant. She joins our office from the Audubon Naturalist Society in Chevy Chase, MD, where she provided assistance with field and education programs.

## **Relevant Links**

Biodiversity Workshop: [http://www.coml.us/dev2go.web?anchor=2006\\_biodiversity\\_workshop](http://www.coml.us/dev2go.web?anchor=2006_biodiversity_workshop)

Capitol Hill Oceans Week CoML presentations: <http://www.nmsfocean.org/chow2006>

If you would like more information regarding community-wide updates, please visit the CORE Weekly Newsletter at <http://www.coreocean.org/?anchor=newsletter>.

For more information about CoML projects, please visit, <http://www.coml.org/>

For updates on the International CoML program, please visit the International Secretariat Newsletter at: <http://www.comlsecretariat.org/Dev2Go.web?id=235835>



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