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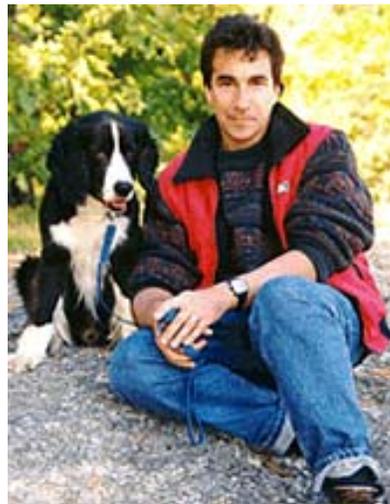
A Word From the US National Committee Chair

Upcoming Events/Meetings:

USNC Spring Meeting
May 9-10
Washington, DC

Capitol Hill Oceans Week
June 5-7
Washington, DC

CoML All-Program
Meeting
November 11-18
**Auckland,
New Zealand**



I have had the pleasure of taking over the Chair of the U.S. National Committee for the Census of Marine Life beginning with our meeting in Corpus Christi late last year. Daphne Fautin has done an extraordinary job of chairing the group in it's first years, and though I for one tried to make it a lifetime appointment for Daphne, I did not succeed. The role of the Committee is an important one if the Census is to take on the profile and status it deserves in the U.S. ocean science community. To this end, the USNC is now focusing on crafting a distinct set of goals or "legacies" that we think will carry the Census forward into the future. We need to ensure

that there is a clear benefit for scientists affiliating with the census, beyond just funding concerns. We need the recognition of the importance of the program to national efforts and ensure that the Census leverages other ocean activities and vice versa. We need to use the Census as a basis for expanding national efforts to understand life in the oceans: what did live in the oceans, what does live in the oceans, and what will live in the oceans.

The Census can serve as a means of bringing together the ocean science community around common themes in a way that has never been done before. We

have already made significant strides in that direction and I think have been recognized for it. We need to redouble our efforts and make sure that we achieve the programmatic recognition as the place to go for biodiversity studies in the ocean. This is a big challenge not only for the USNC but for the community including the government agencies. I look forward to our next meeting this spring as we continue to work on crafting our legacy goals.

- Andrew A. Rosenberg, Ph.D.

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"WE NEED TO USE THE CENSUS AS A BASIS FOR EXPANDING NATIONAL EFFORTS TO UNDERSTAND LIFE IN THE OCEANS: WHAT DID LIVE IN THE OCEANS, WHAT DOES LIVE IN THE OCEANS, AND WHAT WILL LIVE IN THE OCEANS. "
-A. ROSENBERG

USNC Welcomes New Members; Says “Thank-you” to its Retiring Members

The winds of change blew through the USNC meeting in November as the committee said farewell to two of its long time members, Tom Fry and Jerry Schubel. Both were original members of the USNC when it was established in 2002. Their contributions and efforts were greatly appreciated by the entire CoML community and will be missed.

Also at this meeting, four new experts were elected to the committee. These new additions bring the overall committee size to 17 members, involving the largest and most diverse collection of experts the USNC has comprised of since its inception five years ago. These new members will begin in May, at the next USNC meeting, to be held in Washington, D.C.

The USNC is proud to welcome:



Dr. Judith Connor, Director of the Information and Technology Dissemination Division at Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute (MBARI).



Dr. Judith Kildow, the Director and Principal Investigator for the National Ocean Economics Program, and the first Social Scientist at MBARI.



Mr. Paul Kelly, a Energy and Ocean Policy Consultant who has previously served on the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy.



Dr. George Sedberry, a Senior Marine Scientist and Assistant Director at the Marine Resources Research Institute at the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources to the committee.

For more detailed biographies about all the U.S National Committee members, please see http://coml.us/anchor=coml_us_leadership.

2006 CoML Highlights Report Now Available



A new species of squid, *Pro-machoteuthis sloani*, found along the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. Credit: MAR-ECO/R. Young © 2006

Recently, the annual Census of Marine Life Highlights report was made available. The report, produced by the CoML Education and Outreach team at the University of Rhode Island, highlights the scientific findings and accomplishments of the global Census of Marine Program over the past year. This year's report generated more worldwide press coverage and public interest than ever before. The report includes many remarkable images captured by the individual projects. If you have not received a copy, and would like one, please contact the Census of Marine Life Program Office at coml@coreocean.org.



Kiwa hirsuta, the Yeti crab, a new species found near Easter Island. Credit: Ifremer/A. Fifis © 2006.

USNC Sponsors AIFRB 50th Anniversary Symposium



In the middle of February the United States National Committee of the Census of Marine Life co-sponsored the American Institute of Fishery Research Biologists (AIFRB) Symposium in Seattle, Washington. The Sym-

posium ran from February 12 – 14th and was a celebration of the organization's 50th Anniversary. Through a series of presentations and discussion panels, the symposium examined the current state of fisheries, in particular, the research opportunities and challenges for the next decade. Several Census of Marine Life scientists participated, includ-

ing Van Holliday, a member of the SCOR panel, Kenneth Foote from Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and Olav Rune Godø, a former member of the International Scientific Steering Committee. For more information about the symposium please see:

www.aifrb.org/symposium_home.htm.

Jim Ammerman Joins OBIS Staff



Dr. Jim Ammerman

The Ocean Biogeographical Information Systems Project (OBIS) recently welcomed Dr. Jim Ammerman, from Rutgers University to its staff. Dr. Ammerman will work out of the Ocean.US offices while he attempts to improve OBIS as a tool that meets societal needs, and to better integrate

OBIS into the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS). This effort will include the development of Pilot Projects to demonstrate the use of OBIS in this capacity. Capitol Hill Oceans Week (June 2007) and the next USNC workshop (Fall 2007) will also feature this topic.

International Polar Year Begins March 1



Antarctic Icebergs
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The International Polar Year (IPY), a large scientific program focused on the Arctic and the Antarctic from March 2007 to March 2009, will officially kick off on March 1 in Paris, France. As part of this program, the CoML project Census of Antarctic Marine Life (CAML) recently completed the first comprehensive biological survey of a 10,000 square kilometer portion of the Antarctic seabed during a 10-week expedition aboard the German research vessel *Polarstern*. This voyage was one of 14 planned by CAML as a part of IPY.

According to a recent CoML press release, CAML leader Michael Stoddart of Australia says "What we learned from the *Polarstern* expedition is the tip of an iceberg, so to speak. Insights from this and CAML's upcoming International Polar Year voyages will shed light on how climate variations affect ice-affiliated species living in this region." IPY 2007-8 covers two full annual cycles from March 2007 to March 2009 and will involve over 200 projects, with thousands of scientists from over 60 nations. For more information on CoML and IPY, please visit www.coml.org.

United States Federal Budget Update

The last few months have been busy in the United States with regard to funding for ocean research. The President released his \$2.9 trillion budget request for FY2008 - a mixed bag for the ocean research and education community. The good news is that innovation initiatives continue to be fruitful and resulted in another good request for NSF including funding for the Ocean Observatories Initiative and the Alaskan Regional-Research Vessel. Funding for NOAA's Ocean

Exploration program is optimistic for FY08 as the President's FY08 request of \$27.7 million represents a slight increase from FY06 and 07. The \$27.7 million includes approximately \$8 million for the National Undersea Research Program. However, this amount falls short of the authorization levels of \$48 million currently being considered by Congress in the Ocean Exploration authorization legislation. Other ocean issues appear to have some traction in the Ad-

ministration as it has significantly increased its request for NOAA, including, for the first time, money for an Integrated Ocean Observing System. The bad news is that the request for NOAA still falls below what Congress has appropriated for NOAA since FY05. So, while the Administration is moving in the right direction, it is still falling short of what is needed for quality ocean research in the United States. *Submitted by ADM Richard West, President of CORE*



Seven Questions with Kirsten Martin

A regular feature of the US CoML Newsletter, we will ask Seven Questions. This edition features the National Regional Implementation Committee (NRIC) Coordinator, Kirsten Martin.



HM: Tell me about your role in the Census of Marine Life and some of your goals for the program.

KM: My task with the CoML is to draw together a roadmap of activities for regional CoML implementation - in collaboration with the national and regional implementation committees (NRICs) in the Caribbean, China, the Indian Ocean, Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa. During the initial phase much of this has to do with screening of initiatives already underway; how they fit with the projects' objectives and how they contribute to the CoML bigger picture. The aim is to focus coordination efforts in those regions to most usefully assist the Census in achieving its goals, which include globally spanning marine biodiversity research programs beyond 2010, and availability of biodiversity data for decision-making and further use.

HM: What brought you to the position of NRIC coordinator?

KM: A good portion of luck above all. After finishing a contract with The World Conservation Union (IUCN) I applied for this position.

I have been very impressed with CoML's research findings and media outreach in past years, kept hearing about Census projects via former university colleagues, and finally had a chance to learn more about it when participating in the 2005 CoML All Program meeting [in Frankfurt, Germany].

HM: What is your favorite part of the job so far?

KM: I feel privileged to be working with such a smart and engaged group of people - the most crucial part of the job. A motivating factor about the CoML program is that a diverse array of cutting-edge marine science is done in the context of a bigger picture. Big steps are taken in terms of species discoveries, while considering cross-cutting issues (history, future, data mining) and thinking about important applications. These three aspects together make for me the major strength of the Census. By working with the regions I learn a lot about how science is done in different parts of the world, and about respective challenges. It sometimes sounds like great music coming together from a hierarchically organized classical concert: a very inspiring mix!

HM: If someone gave you a million dollars to use in your budget, what would you put it towards?

KM: Although this is hard to generalize, among the most pressing needs for the development of sustainable marine biodiversity research programs in the five regions is taxonomic and technological expertise. I would likely use the million to strengthen linkages with Census projects and initiatives - with tailored training in a clear thematic context that benefits both. I would focus on those areas with the highest "application value" to people in the countries involved, i.e. Census information that they want to see and are ready to access and use.

HM: What has been your most challenging part of the job to date?

KM: To keep abreast with the developments in all the regions, and to help assure a regular information flow between the regions, with the SSC, its executive committee, and ideally the projects. As a newcomer, it seems to me that this can be improved and will help the regions to draw from the wealth of experiences elsewhere in the Census. I believe clear communication channels are a shared responsibility for all of us.

HM: What is the best way for an NRIC to help you with your job?

KM: It would be good if the NRICs clearly articulated their agreed needs and priorities (structural, geographical, thematic). This already works well for some but not for others. I can lock myself to a desk and come up with a plan or theoretical framework, and it's almost sure to be meaningless since these things need continuous interaction, feedback and team elaboration - whether in condensed interactive workshop format or over email.

HM: And lastly, tell me about your doctorate work with the penguins, do you have any good stories?

KM: I think anyone who does regular field research has some stories about things that work and those that did not work. My work focused mainly on sampling methodologies for Magellanic penguins, and I was just happy that they choose themselves the most remote and beautiful places along the Patagonian coastline. And that penguins are charismatic enough to prompt research sponsorship. My work was centered around their distribution (spatial aspects to breeding success, foraging strategies) and I was glad to see that some of the data found application in a the context of conservation area planning.

