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NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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NOAA ANNOUNCES RECIPIENTS OF 2006 MARINE STEWARDSHIP AWARDS **National Award Program Launched to Honor Excellence in Sustainable Use of Ocean Resources**

Today NOAA announced the recipients of the first-annual marine Stewardship and Sustainability Awards. This national award program was developed by NOAA Fisheries Service to honor innovation and excellence in marine stewardship by recognizing organizations and individuals who have advanced conservation and sustainable use of U.S. marine resources.

“The marine Stewardship and Sustainability Awards demonstrate our appreciation of marine resource stakeholders whose accomplishments have enhanced NOAA’s scientific understanding of the oceans and advanced the nation’s resource management programs,” said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr., Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator.

The recipients of this year’s awards are: Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska; the Pollock Conservation Cooperative of Alaska; Holland America Line of Seattle; Ed Melvin of Washington Sea Grant in Seattle; the Gulf of Mexico Foundation of Corpus Christi, Texas; and SeaShare of Bainbridge Island, Wash.

“It is my privilege to recognize these organizations and individuals for fostering broader adoption of a stewardship ethic among marine resource users,” said Bill Hogarth, director of NOAA Fisheries Service. “I’m pleased to acknowledge NOAA’s partners for their contributions to fulfilling our stewardship goals.”

The recipients of the 2006 Stewardship and Sustainability Awards were selected from 48 nominations for awards in six categories of achievement. For more information about each award category, visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ocs/mafac/award_description.htm.

The recipients are being honored for the following achievements:

- **Senator Ted Stevens** has received the Special Recognition Award for working tirelessly throughout his long and successful career to win the support of the United States Congress for the laws that form the basis of U.S. federal fisheries management and marine conservation programs. Senator Stevens has consistently advocated for science-based management of living marine resources, keeping the sustainable use of these resources at the forefront of the nation's agenda.
- **The Pollock Conservation Cooperative**, made up of catcher/processors in the Alaska pollock fishery, has received the Stewardship and Sustainability Award for voluntarily dividing up the overall annual harvest quota among participating fishing companies. This unique arrangement has ended the often wasteful "race for fish" and led to significant reductions in fishing capacity. It also resulted in a 50 percent increase in the amount of Alaska pollock products made from each pound of harvested fish, as well as voluntary bycatch reduction efforts that complement federal fishery management measures.

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- **Holland America Line** has received the Conservation Partnership Award for taking the initiative to develop and promote the adoption of whale avoidance measures as the international cruise industry standard. The company's dedication to protect whales, regardless of its affect on the financial bottom line, is at the forefront of marine mammal conservation.
- **Ed Melvin of the Washington Sea Grant Program** has received the Science, Research and Technology Award for his cooperative scientific research with industry to develop innovative methods for seabird avoidance in Alaska's commercial longline fisheries. Melvin's research has helped reduce seabird bycatch by at least 80 percent in Alaska fisheries and is inspiring the global adoption of seabird avoidance methods and the innovative cooperative approaches with industry.
- **The Gulf of Mexico Foundation** has received the Coastal Habitat Restoration Award for its successful development and implementation of 33 coastal habitat restoration projects in five Gulf States. These projects are expected to restore nearly 14,000 acres of valuable coastal habitat that is important for the long-term health of marine resources. The Foundation manages a coastal partnership made up of volunteers who work on habitat restoration projects, fostering civic service, public education, and local ownership in these important coastal resources.
- **SeaShare** has received the Public Education, Community Service & Media Award for working with the fishing industry to develop an innovative hunger relief program. SeaShare works with fishing communities and hunger relief agencies throughout the country to feed hungry Americans with fish that otherwise would have been thrown back to the sea dead due to regulation. Since 1994, SeaShare has partnered with 60 companies to donate 20 million pounds of food to 96 locations in 31 states. SeaShare's program has allowed the fishing industry to put its bycatch to good use, thereby reducing waste and increasing a conservation ethic without compromising fisheries management goals.

The awards will be presented at an awards dinner in Washington, D.C., on June 5.

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitats through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

NOAA, an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of the nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, 61 countries and the European Commission to develop a global network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

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On the Web:

Stewardship and Sustainability Awards: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ocs/mafac/award.htm>

NOAA Fisheries Service: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>

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