NOAA REPORT

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Winokur Feted: NESDIS assistant administrator Robert Winokur was awarded the 1999 National Public Service Award, which is sponsored by the American Society for Public Administration and the National Academy of Public Administration. He was nominated for the award for the work he and NESDIS have done with programs such as National Polar-orbiting Operational Environmental Satellite System (NPOESS), the Defense Meteorological Satellite Program, the Geostationary Observing Environmental Satellite program (GOES), and other vital accomplishments. The award to Winokur and four other state, local and national government officials, will be presented formally at the 1999 National Public Administration Conference in Orlando on April 12.

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Hurricane Hunter Checks Out Noreaster: A NOAA "hurricane hunter" aircraft that was winding up a research project in Newfoundland flew directly into the massive snow storm that hit New England yesterday, to study its structure and extreme winds.

During the flight, several significant meteorological observations were taken by GPS-dropwindsondes, which were deployed from the aircraft. These devices continuously radio back measurements of pressure, humidity, temperature, and wind direction and speed as they fall toward the Earth, providing a detailed look

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Many of the buildings in downtown Tegucigalpa, Honduras were destroyed by Hurricane Mitch. A Commerce team went to the Central American city to help with the rebuilding.

Joint NOAA/ITA Trip to Central America

Commerce Team Views Hurricane Mitch Damage

In January, as the people and governments of Central American began to transition from emergency relief to long-term reconstruction in the wake of Hurricane Mitch, an interdisciplinary team of Department of Commerce staffers took a trip to Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua to assess the role of the Department and the private sector in helping to rebuild Central America.

The team was comprised of representatives from two agencies within Commerce—NOAA and the International Trade Administration (ITA)—and was led by David Festa, Senior Advisor to Secretary Daley. Staff persons who represented NOAA on the trip were Israel Matos, Meteorologist-In-Charge at the Puerto Rico Weather Forecast Office, and Valerie Blatnik-Sigel, Senior Advisor in NOAA's Office of Sustainable Development and Intergovernmental Affairs.

During their eight-day trip, the Commerce team met with senior government officials, local and U.S. business leaders, and non-governmental organizations to discuss a

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AMS Annual Meeting Draws 3,000

Record Global Temperatures Announced at Meteorological Society in Dallas

Record global temperatures announced by NOAA gained a large share of public attention during the American Meteorological Society's 79th Annual Meeting in Dallas January 10th through 15th.

Global temperatures in 1998 were the warmest in the past 119 years, since reliable instrument records began.

Global temperatures in 1998 were the warmest in the past 119 years, since reliable instrument records began. The global mean temperature in 1998 was 1.20°F (0.66°C) above the long-term average value of 56.9°F (13.8°C). This was the 20th consecutive year with an annual global mean surface temperature exceeding the long-term average.

NOAA Corps pilots and crew of the agency's Gulfstream IV research aircraft had the jet on display at Dallas Love Airport. The crew stopped in Dallas en route to a research mission in the Pacific Ocean, where the highly-sophisticated reconnaissance aircraft was set to drop instruments over portions of the ocean to improve forecasts of weather systems and provide insight into turbulence, an extreme hazard to aircraft.

NOAA Administrator D. James Baker gave a presentation on lessons learned during the 1997-98 El Nino episode, and updated attendees on the status of NPOESS, the effort to merge the Nation's military and civil operational meteorological satellite systems into a single, national system capable of satisfying both civil and national security requirements for space-based remotely sensed environmental data.

Baker also announced the selection of new directors for the National Weather Service's Western Regional Headquarters and for the NWS' National Centers for Environmental Prediction. Vickie Nadolski, who formerly headed the NWS Automated Surface Observing System was named to the Western Region post, and Dr. Louis Uccellini, formerly head of the NWS Headquarters Office of Meteorology, was named to the NCEP post.

NOAA experts, including NWS Director Jack Kelly, presented dozens of papers in fields of study such as aviation meteorology, global climate change, hurricane and tropical meteorology, hydrology and integrated observing systems.

Several NOAA people were presented awards by the AMS during the annual meeting. Awardees included:

Cleveland Abbe Award: J. Michael Hall, NOAA's Office of Global Programs, "for visionary programmatic leadership fostering the development of predictive capability for climate fluctuations and their societal impacts."

Special Award: Michael J. McPhaden, NOAA/PMEL, "for contributions to monitoring of El Niño through completion and maintenance of the equatorial Pacific Ocean moored buoy network."

Special Award: Ants Leetmaa NOAA/NWS, Climate Prediction Center, "for outstanding leadership in

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New Public Affairs Director Named

Barbara Semedo, a broadcaster with extensive government experience, has been named Director of the NOAA Office of Public and Constituent Affairs.

Semedo comes to NOAA with 20 years of broadcast journalism experience and most recently worked at the White House as the Deputy Director of Communications on the President's Initiative on Race. Prior to that appointment, she was the Division Chief of Press Relations at the U.S. Agency for International Development, Press Secretary for the U.S. Department of Energy, and a distinguished news reporter and producer. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Communications from Simmons College in Boston, Massachusetts.

"Her extensive career in communications and management make her an outstanding addition to the NOAA team," said NOAA Administrator D. James Baker on her announcement.

Gudes Visits Installations, Tampa School

A Busy Day With Fisheries' Southeast Regional Staff

Shortly after taking office, Deputy Under Secretary Scott Gudes requested that NMFS' Southeast Regional staff coordinate a visit to familiarize him with the region's missions and constituencies. Last December 7, the region accommodated Gudes' request by arranging for him to spend a very full and informative day in and around St. Petersburg, Fla.

The day began about 7:30 a.m. with an informal breakfast that enabled Gudes to interact directly with most regional staff members to learn about how they contributed to the incredible effectiveness for which the region is renown. During the all hands meeting that followed, Gudes helped Southeastern Regional Director Andrew Kemmerer present several awards, observed a presentation about the most challenging issues the region is facing, and fielded many questions from the staff about the agency's priorities and budget.

Gudes was then whisked off to Madeira Beach Seafood Company in southern Pinellas County where he, Regional Administrator Andrew Kemmerer and Acting Deputy Regional Administrator Carol Ballew, met with the firm's owner Bob Spaeth and several commercial fishermen. The fishermen made it clear that they perceive a recent increase in regulatory measures that hamper their ability to sustain their lifestyles by harvesting fish from the seas. Gudes made it clear that the Magnuson-Stevens Act requires that NMFS manage fisheries in a way that will restore depleted stocks so that future generations can continue to enjoy the benefits of the seas' bounty. He emphasized that it would not be possible to accomplish that goal without the continuing cooperation of the commercial fishing industry. Following the meeting, Gudes and company were given a tour of a commercial fishing vessel to learn how fish are harvested and the conditions under which fishermen pursue their trade.

NOAA Deputy Under Secretary Scott Gudes (right) and Acting Deputy Regional Administrator Carol Ballew (left) embark on a fishery enforcement patrol. At the helm of the NMFS Protected Resources Enforcement Team's patrol boat is Enforcement Agent Gino Freselli. Behind Gudes is Special Agent Mike Dellarosa.

Visit to Tampa Middle School

The next stop was Madeira Beach Middle School, a Marine Environmental Science theme school. Principal Brenda Poff personally conducted a tour of the facilities that make this school truly unique including a series of artificial reefs, a boardwalk that winds through a portion of Tampa Bay's remaining pristine wetlands, a sea grass nursery, and several saltwater fish tanks. Using NOAA's Internet site as a training aid, Gudes capped his visit by explaining to a fifth grade science class the critical contributions that NOAA makes to everyone's health and safety.

Following a cruise across Boca Ciega Bay, courtesy of Hubbard's Marine Sea

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Verlaque Assumes Command of *Rude*

NOAA Corps Lt. Cmdr. James S. Verlaque has taken command of the NOAA hydrographic survey ship *Rude*, relieving Lt. Cmdr. David A. Cole, who has commanded the vessel since May 1997.

Rude is the ship that found, with its sonar survey equipment, the wreckage of TWA Flight 800 after its tragic crash in July 1996.

Focus On...

NOAA's Sanctuary Divers Jump In to Study Elusive Hammerheads

Nobody knows where they're coming from or where they're going. But, come March, the waters of NOAA's Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary are aswirl with schools of scalloped hammerhead sharks, numbering in the hundreds.

In the middle of this swirling mass of nomadic sharks, some measuring eight to 10 feet long, will be NOAA sanctuary staff and researchers, who depend on the theory that schooling sub-adult and adult hammerheads are not interested in feeding.

"About the most we know is the sex of the sharks. The male's *claspers*, or dual penises, are very obvious in the adult animals," says Emma Hickerson, research coordinator for the sanctuary.

Divers in this annual study have yet to observe females or feeding or mating activity.

Discovering why the hammerheads return year after year to the underwater gardens 100 miles off the coasts of Louisiana and Texas may entail fitting several with radio transmitters or even "critter cams."

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The hammerhead's distinctive shape (the ampullae of Lorenzini) on his head, may help him capture one of his favorite meals, the stingray.

NOAA Begins Radio Tracking of Endangered Right Whales

The Northern Right Whale may be huge, but so is the Atlantic Ocean.

Despite this challenge, a team of scientists from NOAA and New England Aquarium, aboard a 65-foot converted Navy transport vessel, are determined to learn more about the behavior of these endangered animals through the first VHF-Radio Telemetry tagging effort in the southeastern U.S. coastal waters.

The right whale, nearly decimated by 19th century whalers, today are threatened by ship strikes, fishing nets, and habitat loss.

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Right Whales Tracked by Radio

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This vital scientific cruise, launched on January 6 from Fernandina Beach, Florida joins together:

- NOAA's Fisheries Service
- Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary
- The New England Aquarium's Southeast/NEW Early Warning System, and
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

This collaborative effort, headed by the Fisheries Service, makes use of the sanctuary vessel R/V Jane Yarn and aerial surveys conducted by the New England Aquarium and Florida's Department of Environmental Protection.

Several thousand right whales (*Eubalaena glacialis*) once existed in the North Atlantic Ocean. Years of commercial hunting at the turn of the century severely depleted the stocks.

Whalers considered the animals the "right whale" to hunt because they were slow-moving, migrated close to shore, and stayed afloat after being killed.

Today, despite more than 60 years of protection, the Northern Atlantic right whales have not recovered. Scientists estimate that more rapid signs of recovery have failed for a variety of factors, including the effects of human activity. There are only 300 or so Northern Atlantic right whales left, and ship strikes account or 50 percent of their known deaths.

Scientists estimate that more rapid signs of recovery have failed because of variety of factors, including the effects of human activity on mortality rates. Ship collisions kill more right whales than do any other documented causes of mortality.

Along with plans to observe and document the behavior and movements of mother-calf pairs, the scientists will use the VHF-Radio Telemetry tagging to follow their path in real time, 24-hours a day, for the next six weeks. The public will soon be able to follow the mission on a NOAA Webpage (www.rightwhale.noaa.gov), which includes a weekly mission log and photographs.

-N.O'D.

Divers Jump at Chance to Work with Hammerhead Sharks in Sanctuary

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Nonetheless, Hickerson and other divers, include a diver from National Geographic Television, plan to swim even closer to photograph them, within 20 feet of these graceful but powerful sharks.

In some locations where hammerheads are known to school, divers have resorted to breathing equipment that does not produce bubbles since, Hickerson notes, "Sharks do not seem to like the bubbles."

In addition to hammerheads, the sanctuary staff hopes to observe other species seen during the winter months—tiger sharks, sand bar sharks, spinner sharks and schooling spotted eagle rays.

Emerging from the depths of the Gulf of Mexico like oases in the desert, these northernmost coral reefs of the Flower Garden Banks are home to 200 species of fish and 400 varieties of invertebrates.

The sanctuary is now a premier dive destination.

Scuba Diving Magazine, in a recent issue, writes that "for recreational divers, the Flower Garden Banks has it all," ranking The Banks among the top 10 overall dive destinations in North America.

—Nancy O'Donnell

Stubblefield Retires as Corps Director

Rear Admiral William L. Stubblefield retired (date?) as director of the NOAA Commissioned Corps and Office of NOAA Corps Operations, after a distinguished career in uniformed service that spanned 35 years, 29 with NOAA.

Director since 1995, Stubblefield shepherded the NOAA Corps through challenging times, when it faced a four-year recruitment freeze and possible disestablishment. Under his leadership, the NOAA Corps was streamlined to become more cost efficient while increasing program support.

Stubblefield was commissioned a lieutenant in the NOAA Corps in 1971, following a six-year stint in the U.S. Navy and graduate school at the University of Iowa, where he received a master's degree in geology. Early duty aboard the NOAA Ship *Pathfinder* and ashore at the Environmental Research Laboratories were followed by assignments as chief scientist for the National Undersea Research Program, technical specialist for the National Sea Grant College Program, and commanding officer of the NOAA Ship *Surveyor*, which conducted oceanographic research from the Arctic to the Antarctic. In 1979, he received his Ph.D. in geological oceanography from Texas A&M University. Stubblefield was coordinator of NOAA's fleet modernization study, receiving the Department of Commerce Silver Medal for his work. He was named executive director for the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research in 1990 and was promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral (lower half) in 1992, serving as deputy director of the Office of NOAA Corps Operations before being promoted to Rear Admiral (upper half).

Former NOAA Corps director Rear Admiral William L. Stubblefield

Record Temperatures Announced at Meteorological Society Meeting in Dallas

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promoting public awareness of El Niño and his contributions to making ENSO predictions practical."

Exceptional Specific Prediction: Anthony J. Cristaldi, Bartlett Hagemeyer, David W. Sharp, and Scott M. Spratt, NOAA/NWSFO, Melbourne, Fla., "for their extremely accurate prediction of the devastating tornado outbreak in Florida on 22-23 February 1998."

The Editor's Award/*Weather and Forecasting*: Warren Blier, NWS/WASC, Monterey, Calif., "for exhaustive, prompt, scholarly reviews and a commitment to mentor operational meteorologists in their efforts to publish in the refereed literature."

Special Award: Douglas H. Sargeant, and Louis J. Boezi, NWS Retired, "for their superb leadership and contributions to modernizing the National Weather Service."

Charles L. Mitchell Award: Robert W. Burpee, NWS Retired, "for the advancement of hurricane track forecasting through both research and administrative leadership."

—Barry Reichenbaugh

New Digs for 1,000 Boulder Researchers

There's a flurry of activity among NOAA employees in Boulder, Colo., as everyone prepares to move into a new facility. Named after the former Boulder Congressman, the David Skaggs Research Center (*above*) will house over a thousand NOAA employees from the Environmental Research Laboratories, the National Geophysical Data Center, the Mountain Administrative Support Center, and the National Weather Service. The move began in mid-February and will continue until the first week in May.

Joint NOAA, ITA Survey Hurricane Mitch Damage in Central American Tour

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host of issues. These issues focussed mostly on how the U.S. government and private sector can work cooperatively with the people and governments of Central America to build better, more disaster resilient communities and economies.

In addition to these meetings, team members had the opportunity to view firsthand the destruction wrought by Mitch. Damage from Mitch was most evident in a cross-country car trip from Guatemala City to the northern Honduran city of San Pedro Sula. Major roads, although passable, were significantly damaged. In some areas, remnants of houses still clung to hillsides that had been washed away by Mitch's torrential rains. In many areas, locals had already begun to rebuild their homes in the same river beds and flood zones where their family members and friends perished.

Honduran Buildings Destroyed

In Tegucigalpa, Honduras, one of the cities hardest hit by Mitch, many downtown buildings were completely destroyed. The major of Tegucigalpa, who suffered who own personal tragedy when her husband (and then mayor) died in a helicopter crash while surveying Mitch's damage, recounted how the surge of water from nearby mountains swept away virtually everything in its path — trucks, livestock, roads, houses, and people.

Given the unimaginable losses of these countries, what surprised the Commerce team the most was how well the people of Central America are coping. Most of the major roads and bridges have been reopened. Telecommunications and city water and power services have been restored in most areas. The vital maquila and tourism industries are beginning to rebound. Still, much work remains to be done. Mitch undid in several days what took years to develop.

With the help of the international community, including the United States government, the Central American countries have started the arduous task of rebuilding—and in many cases, transforming—their economies and infrastructure to better withstand natural disasters.

Gudes held these fifth grade science students' rapt attention for nearly 40 minutes.

Gudes Visits SE Fisheries Sites

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Adventures, Gudes spent a working lunch with Mark Hubbard, the owner of Hubbard Marine's head boat and charter fleet, and Captain Ed Thompson, one of America's premier recreational deep sea fishing skippers. The conversation centered around the health of the Gulf of Mexico's fish stocks and the impact that NMFS' regulatory measures have on recreational fishermen. After lunch, the group toured a recreational deep sea fishing vessel docked at John's Pass in Madeira Beach.

The action-packed day concluded with Gudes and Ballew participating in an actual patrol aboard a NMFS Southeast Protected Resources Enforcement Team's law enforcement boat. While there were no boardings conducted during the routine 90-minute offshore patrol, the seasoned crew headed by Enforcement Officer Gino Freselli, imparted Gudes and Ballew with invaluable knowledge about the rigors and hazards that NMFS' law enforcement personnel endure.

—Chris Smith

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at the structure of the storm and its intensity. Measurements showed winds of 60 mph at the surface while flight level winds at 10,000 feet were calm. The aircraft flew through the center of the storm and recorded a surface pressure reading of 988 millibars. The data collected was transmitted in real-time to the National Weather to aid meteorologists forecasting the final phases of the storm.

Staffer a Role Model: Eveline Cropper-Conquest, a secretary at NOAA's Command and Data Acquisition Station in Wallops, Va., has been chosen as an African American role model by a national public service sorority.

Cropper-Conquest was selected by the Accomack-Northampton Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority as their

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representative for the sorority's African American Women Role Models in Education project. She coordinates a group of volunteers who assist students with their homework and provide tutoring in various subjects, and was the subject of a February 1998 *NOAA Report* article.

Global Pact Reduces Excess Fishing Capacity: The United States has successfully negotiated final agreements with the world's fishing nations that will tackle the difficult problems of excess fishing fleet capacity and improve international conservation and management of sharks and seabirds.

"We now have solid agreement on global plans of action for all three measures that will help us to begin the process of conserving and protecting the world's ocean resources," said chief U.S. negotiator Terry D. Garcia, NOAA's deputy administrator.

Ingrid Amberger and Gary Conte from the Upton, NY NWS Forecast Office staffed the Weather Service booth at the New York Boast Show earlier this year.

NWS Forecast Office Educates Mariners at New York City Boat Show

The National Weather Service Forecast Office in Upton, NY participated in 89" annual New York National Boat Show in January at the Jacob Javits Convention Center in mid-town Manhattan.

Around 90,000 people are estimated to have attended for this year's Boat Show. The Upton/New York City office has participated in this show for more than three decades.

The office had a booth in the main show area and gave out thousands of educational pamphlets on safe boating, and on thunderstorms and hurricanes, which was the most popular. Many attendees searched out the NWS booth to discuss the severe thunderstorms they were caught in during a major Labor Day 1998 outbreak. These storms scared many boaters, and this chance for one-on-one education of the boating community made the event worthwhile.

New Editor in April

Beginning next month, long-time NOAA Report editor Jerry Slaff will give up the reins of the employee newsletter to Dane Konop. Dane can be reached at 301-713-2483, and by e-mail at *dane.konop@noaa.gov*.

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