

NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SEAFOOD WATCH, MONTEREY BAY WATERS FEATURED WITH LAUNCH OF ‘OCEAN IN GOOGLE EARTH’

Starting today, users of Google Earth can dive into the ocean, explore marine habitats including Monterey Bay and get the latest information about how to make ocean-friendly seafood choices.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium, the aquarium’s Seafood Watch program and scientists at the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute (MBARI) and Stanford University made important contributions to the newest version of Google Earth that was released today by the Mountain View (Calif.) company.

Monterey Bay – including its undersea geography and marine life – is one of 11 regions around the world that are focal areas in the launch of the new Google Earth.

“Oceans cover 71 percent of the surface of our planet and provide 98 percent of the living space for life on Earth,” said Monterey Bay Aquarium Executive Director Julie Packard. “Ocean in Google Earth is a great tool to help people understand this vast habitat so we can protect the oceans for future generations.”

“The Grand Canyon has always been one of America’s most beloved tourist attractions, and yet how many people know that a canyon every bit as long, steep, and magnificent lies beneath the waters of Monterey Bay?” said Dr. Marcia K. McNutt, president and CEO of the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute. “With the new capabilities of Ocean in Google Earth, it will now be possible to take a virtual tour of this and other equally exotic undersea marvels and meet their bizarre inhabitants—without having to hold your breath or hitch a ride on a dolphin!”

Detailed sea floor terrain of Monterey Bay and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary will appear when users download the newest version of Google Earth. Much

like the terrestrial icons seen on Google Earth, the ocean will now have its own icons that users can click in order to explore – through text, images and video – the hidden world of the oceans.

It will be possible, for example, to zoom in on the Pacific Ocean, then Monterey Bay, and from there take a virtual dive under the bay's surface to explore the Monterey submarine canyon and the sea life that lives there. Bathymetric data provided by MBARI and others were used to create a detailed, three-dimensional view of the seafloor, allowing users to “fly” through the canyon and stop to explore various animals and topics they encounter along the way.

Many of the images of deep sea animals also come from MBARI's archive, created over the past two decades during dives by remotely operated vehicles the Institute uses to explore and document deep-sea marine life and habitats in Monterey Bay and beyond.

Using Stanford's animal tracking layer – Global Tagging of Pelagic Predators – (www.gtopp.org) users can explore the large-scale migrations of tunas, sharks, whales, seals, sea turtles and seabirds – seeing where they go through time, and even swimming along with them in special “fly-through” animations, which provide an “animal's eye view” of the open ocean seascape.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch layer allows the user to click on a particular species at a location somewhere on the globe, then learn more about that species, whether it's overfished, and what you should do as an educated consumer. Users can turn on the layer by going to the left-side “Layers” panel in Google Earth, opening the Ocean folder, then clicking on the “State of the Ocean” folder, then “MBA: Seafood Watch.”

To learn more about Ocean in Google Earth, visit <http://earth.google.com/>.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute is a nonprofit research institution where scientists and engineers work together to explore and study the sea. Located in Moss Landing, California, MBARI is supported primarily by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. For more information, please visit the MBARI web site at www.mbari.org.

In 2009, the nonprofit Monterey Bay Aquarium celebrates 25 years of inspiring ocean conservation. To learn more, visit www.montereybayaquarium.org.