



# NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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## Research Scientists Return to San Diego After Extensive Ocean Survey

SAN DIEGO — Scientists onboard NOAA Research Vessels *David Starr Jordan* and the *McArthur II* returned to the Southwest Fisheries Science Center in La Jolla, Calif., today after spending a combined 240 days at sea gathering scientific information on marine life.

“This was a Herculean research project that represents a true ecosystem-based approach to management,” said Dr. Lisa Ballance, Chief Scientist for the survey. “We surveyed almost 100,000 kilometers of ocean in one of the most remote areas of the Pacific Ocean, studying marine mammals, seabirds, marine turtles, squids and fishes, marine debris and oceanography.”

The research is part of the *Stenella* Abundance Research Project (STAR), a multi-year cetacean and ecosystem assessment study designed to assess the status of *Stenella* dolphin stocks which have been incidentally affected by the yellowfin tuna purse-seine fishery in the eastern tropical Pacific. The project consists of a series of research vessel cruises that are repeated periodically.

During the course of the expedition, the researchers were exceptionally pleased to see large numbers of blue whales.

“Blue whales are listed as an endangered species and we were very happy to see an unexpectedly large number of them on this trip,” said Dr. Ballance. “And it was especially gratifying to see so many of them with small calves.”

Scientists were also able to catch and attach a temporary electronic tag to three olive ridley turtles for monitoring by satellite. The turtles’ position can be monitored on the internet at the STAR web site listed below.

In 2007 the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, celebrates 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

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NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

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**Websites:**

NOAA's *Stenella* Abundance Research (STAR): <http://swfsc.noaa.gov/prd-star.aspx>

NOAA's Southwest Fisheries Science Center: <http://swfsc.noaa.gov/default.aspx>

NOAA Ship David Starr Jordan: <http://www.moc.noaa.gov/ds/>

NOAA Ship McArthur II: <http://www.moc.noaa.gov/mt/index.html>

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA): <http://www.noaa.gov>

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