

## Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution Ocean Life Institute

The ocean is the largest habitat for living things in our solar system. Almost certainly it was the ancient cauldron where life developed from complex chemistry, and today it is home to the greatest diversity of major plant, animal, and microbial groups on Earth.

Biological productivity of the oceans plays a vital role in the global climate and carbon cycle, and provides nearly 50 percent of Earth's oxygen and 20 percent of the world's protein supply.

But at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we realize that the ocean is at once overexploited and underexplored. Even as most of the world's fisheries face declining catches and many marine habitats are degraded by pollution and development, the vast majority of the ocean is *aqua incognita*, concealing undiscovered environments and unknown life forms.

The Ocean Life Institute (OLI) explores the oceans' extraordinary diversity of life—from microbes to whales—to identify ways to sustain healthy marine environments and to learn about the origin and evolution of life on Earth and perhaps other planetary bodies. Institute activities emphasize biological questions that affect natural ecosystems and/or human society. Its objectives are to advance the study of marine organisms and biological processes with new technologies and approaches, to develop new opportunities for research, to convene local and national discussions on important ocean life questions, and to communicate scientific results in a timely, objective, and effective manner to other segments of society.



[Enlarge Image](#)

A DIVE TO SURVIVE—A North Atlantic right whale dives in search of food near Grand Manan Island in the Bay of Fundy, Canada. (Photo by Michael Moore, WHOI)

### Support the Ocean Life Institute

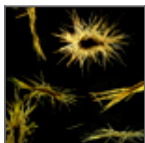


#### Support the Ocean Life Institute

The Ocean Life Institute supports studies of the biology and ecology of this incredibly diverse, vital environment to answer such fundamental scientific questions as how life evolved, how species are adapted to their environment, and how organisms participate in the flow of energy and resources through ocean habitats. Learn how you can support its research.

» [Visit Web site](#)

### Recent Research Highlights [\[more highlights\]](#)



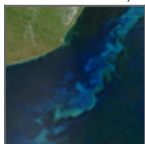
November 4, 2009

#### [Having Their Phosphorus and Eating It Too](#)

Scientists discover a marine species with remarkable talents that help it corner the market on a scarce but critical nutrient in the oceans.

Source: Oceanus Magazine

November 13, 2007



#### [Fertilizing the Ocean with Iron](#)

Scientists, policymakers, economists, and environmental advocates gathered at a symposium at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution to iron out the uncertainties of fertilizing the oceans with iron as a means to mediate global warming.

Source: Oceanus Magazine

July 25, 2006



#### [Ocean Microscope Reveals Surprising Abundance of Life](#)

Using a new automated digital underwater microscope called a Video Plankton Recorder, scientists can observe and count bacteria and other tiny organisms over wide stretches of the ocean depths.

Source: Oceanus Magazine

April 10, 2006



#### [Live From the Tropics, It's an Ocean Network](#)

WHOI scientists have installed PLUTO (the Panama Liquid Jungle Lab Underwater Tropical Observatory)—the latest in a series of cabled "undersea laboratories" that can continuously track conditions in coastal waters and transmit live images and data back to scientists worldwide.

Source: Oceanus Magazine

## Recent Podcasts [[more podcasts](#)]



### **The North Atlantic Right Whale**

Dr. Michael Moore talks about the North Atlantic Right Whale and what the future may hold for this endangered charismatic species.

» [iPod compatible](#)

» [MP3 \(audio\)](#)

» [View Video \(Quicktime\)](#)

» [View Video \(Media Player\)](#)

*Last updated: November 9, 2009*

Copyright ©2007 Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, All Rights Reserved.

Mail: Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, 266 Woods Hole Road, Woods Hole, MA 02543, USA.

E-Contact: [info@whoi.edu](mailto:info@whoi.edu); press relations: [media@whoi.edu](mailto:media@whoi.edu), tel. (508) 457-2000

Problems or questions about the site, please contact [webdev@whoi.edu](mailto:webdev@whoi.edu)