

COASTAL COMMUNICATORS

A newsletter for the nation's coastal management and research reserve programs.

In This Issue

COMMUNICATION INSIGHTS

Turn to Science Media for a Triple Scoop of Inspiration

COMMUNICATION PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

Regional Ocean Data Portals

FROM US TO YOU

Outreach Tool Spotlight – Neighborhoods at Risk Tool

Upcoming Social Media Campaigns

Research Reserve Impact Stories

Fast Facts – Climate Change Predictions

IF YOU CAN'T EXPLAIN
IT SIMPLY, YOU DON'T
UNDERSTAND IT
WELL ENOUGH.

– Albert Einstein



September 2022, Issue 46

COMMUNICATION INSIGHTS

TURN TO SCIENCE MEDIA FOR A TRIPLE SCOOP OF INSPIRATION

Crafting science-related articles that are both lively and lay friendly is one of the most difficult professional writing gigs out there. In other mediums—say, ad copy, feature articles, or business profiles—a writer sometimes can make it halfway to the article word limit by serving up a full-fat intro, sprinkling in delicious asides, and topping it all off with a cherry of hyperbole. (Speaking from experience here!) Not so with science writing, where (with apologies for the extended metaphor) absolute precision is the ice cream base and the “wow” factor is the hot fudge, working its way through the sundae glass as best it can.

Is it any wonder that science writers need some refreshment and inspiration from time to time? When searching for reader-friendly ways to write headlines, lead paragraphs, and complex descriptions, I turn to science blogs and websites. Here are a few of the best.

Headline Writing Is an Art

IFL Science – This blog aims to provide “the amazing world of science straight to your newsfeed in an amusing and accessible way,” and does it ever deliver. The articles are fascinating and cover humans, nature, health and medicine, and science and physics. But what really stands out are headlines that paint vivid pictures while daring us find out more.

- “Megalodon Could Eat an Orca in Just a Few Bites, 3D Scan Shows”
– The image of this massive, extinct shark snacking on one of today’s apex predators is not one that fades quickly.
- “‘Magical’ Quartz Buried in ‘Halls of the Dead’ Finally Explained”
– Most of the time, headlines should not leave us thinking, “Huh?” But exceptional writers can sometimes break the rules. Curiosity drove me to find out what was magical about the quartz (in a word, luminescence) and the location of these halls (funerary sites going back to Stone Age Britain and Ireland).

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Opening Sentences Set the Tone

CSIROscope – This blog is produced by Australia’s national science agency, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation. The pieces here remind us that, no matter how technical or high-flown the topic, anchoring the first few article sentences in sensory details or essential human concerns is a surefire way to attract readers. In an era of remote work locations, this lesson can be easy to forget. Let’s see how it’s done.

- From “Indigenous Science Solutions for Tomorrow” – “For tens of thousands of years Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have developed deep knowledge, understanding, care and respect for the lands and waters of this country. This makes Indigenous scientists Australia’s first scientists.”
- From “Five Reasons Flies Are Awesome (Despite Being Really Annoying)” – “It’s a warm summer afternoon and you have everything set-up for a lovely afternoon in the great outdoors. You’ve got a cold drink in hand and the smell of sausages sizzling away is making you hungry. You fold out the camp chair and dust off the cobwebs, ready to chill out. Just then, the all too familiar buzz of a fly echoes in your ear.”

Sophisticated Content Can Be Easy to Understand

ScienceDaily – This site features breaking science news from hundreds of contributors worldwide. The writers distill descriptions of intricate scientific processes into clean, crisp sentences. But it’s not easy. The following writer probably suffered through multiple drafts to come up with this crystal-clear description.

From “Hydrogen Production Method Opens up Clean Energy Possibilities” – “The electrochemical system the team developed uses less than half the electricity of pure water splitting, another method that researchers have studied for de-carbonized hydrogen production. Instead of working hard to compress the hydrogen gas later in the process, the researchers used less energy by instead compressing the liquid ethanol mixture, thereby directly producing an already compressed hydrogen gas.”

Crafting dynamic, science-related articles can be a challenge, but remember the basics and you will draw enthusiastic readers to your work. Happy writing!

Kitty Fahey
Senior Writer and Editor
CSS on contract with NOAA’s
Office for Coastal Management
Kitty.Fahey@noaa.gov



COMMUNICATION PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

Featured products: Three regional ocean data portals

- For the Mid-Atlantic: portal.midatlanticocean.org
- For the Northeast: northeastoceandata.org
- For the West Coast: portal.westcoastoceans.org

Source: The Northeast Regional Ocean Council, Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean, West Coast Governors Alliance on Ocean Health, and many contributors that include NOAA

Submitted by: Kitty Fahey, CSS, Inc. in support of NOAA's Office for Coastal Management

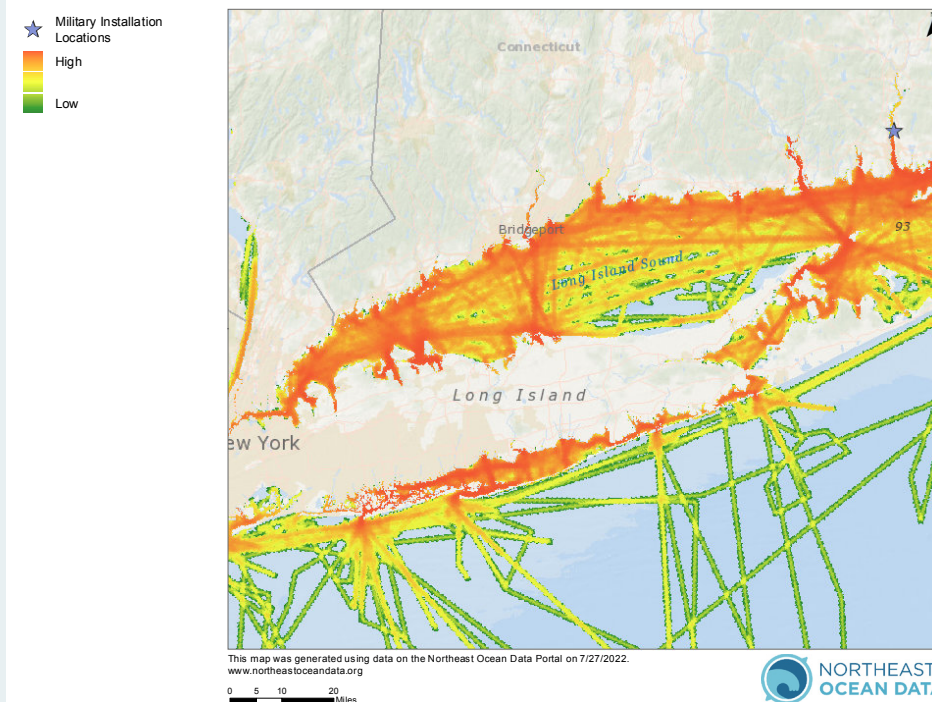
What they are: Ocean data portals feature interactive and expert-reviewed maps, data, stories, case studies, and more that provide detailed information on ocean uses.

Why we chose them: Ocean spaces can be busy places. Just a few of the sectors with a big stake in ocean plans and decisions include offshore wind energy partners, ecotourists, marine conservationists and scientists, commercial fishing operators, and local coastal businesses. The mapped data and information found on these ocean portals help shed light on potential ocean-use conflicts; better inform the public and encourage

feedback; and aid partners in coordinating ocean-use plans or decisions across sectors and organizations.

Portal users are able to “zoom in” and “zoom out” on the maps and data sets of their choice. They are also able to download and share these high-resolution maps with others, enhancing project knowledge that can lead to better outcomes. Fishing grounds, national historic sites, marine life habitats, socioeconomic information, recreation spots, shipping activity, and many additional data sets are featured on one or more of these portals.

For instance, the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal was used to track a resurgence of the humpback whale and to gain scientific insights on the region's deep-sea corals. The Northeast Ocean Data Portal was used by the U.S. Navy to select a test site for an unmanned underwater vehicle that would not interfere with other vessel traffic. (In the map below, the traffic is indicated in bright colors.) And developers of the West Coast Ocean Data Portal are populating their map with data on ocean surface currents, sea surface temperatures, and wave resources for potential energy development, with many more data layers to come.



(Please note: this is not an endorsement of the designers, websites, or any proprietary tools, but simply this writer's opinion on a good communication product.)

FROM US TO YOU

OUTREACH TOOL SPOTLIGHT – NEIGHBORHOODS AT RISK TOOL

Information about the effects of climate change can often be equal parts crucial and difficult to communicate. This web-based tool helps visualize climate and socioeconomic risks at the neighborhood scale, offers projections based on emissions scenarios, and allows users to download their findings. It's an easy way to share the important facts with your audience. Find it here: coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/neighborhoods-risk.html.

UPCOMING SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Join us in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Coastal Zone Management Act all year long. Use #OceanandCoasts50 and get social each week with the following themes:

- August 29 to September 2: Teach your kids to love their ocean and coasts
- September 5 to 9: Learn about NOAA careers

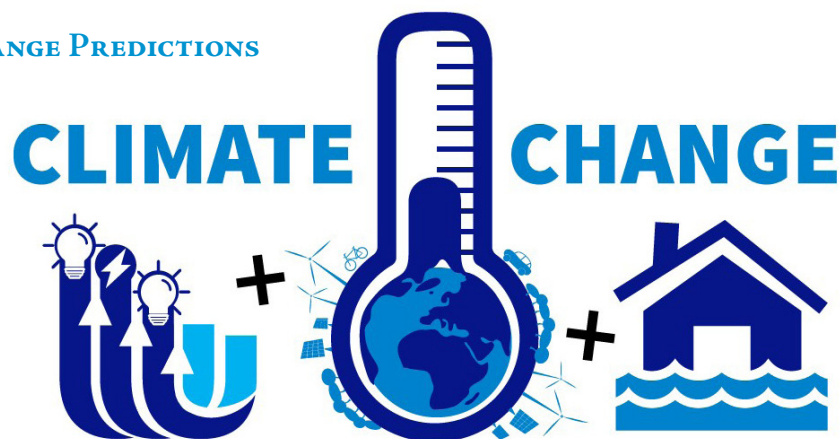
- September 12 to 16: Consider an internship or fellowship
- September 17 to 24: National Estuaries Week – celebrate estuaries and their benefits using #EstuariesWeek and #WadeIn
- September 19 to 23: Get up to speed on the health of your local waterways
- September 26 to 30: Learn about endangered species

RESEARCH RESERVE IMPACT STORIES

As we celebrate National Estuaries Week (September 17 to September 24), we all know how important these waterways are, and what the National Estuarine Research Reserve System does to protect them. But a great way to share this message with others is through our collection of short, compelling stories highlighting the incredible work being done at all of the reserves, and the impact that work is having. Find them here: coast.noaa.gov/states/stories/?prog-filter=National%20Estuarine%20Research%20Reserves.

FAST FACTS – CLIMATE CHANGE PREDICTIONS

This is one of the many graphics and facts available for your use in presentations and handouts. Grab this one at coast.noaa.gov/states/fast-facts/climate-change.html. If you have an idea for a new group of fast facts or illustrations, please let us know.



Temperatures Rise + Property Losses Increase +
Power Costs Rise + Crop Yields Decrease *



**If we continue on this path!*

Coastal Communicators is published by the NOAA Office for Coastal Management.

To subscribe to this newsletter, visit coast.noaa.gov/contactform.

Send questions or suggestions to coastal.info@noaa.gov.

View past issues at coast.noaa.gov/gallery/newsletter.html.

Editor: Pamela Jacobs | Communications Director: Donna McCaskill | Graphic Designer: Daniella Fishburne

coast.noaa.gov | facebook.com/NOAADigitalCoast | twitter.com/NOAADigCoast | instagram.com/NOAADigitalCoast