

Scripps Marine Ecologist Named Pew Fellow in Marine Conservation

Eric Sala will conduct conservation study in Mediterranean rocky habitats

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Eric Sala, an associate professor of marine ecology at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California, San Diego, has been selected as a 2006 Pew Fellow in Marine Conservation.

Pew Marine Conservation Fellowships have been granted since 1990 to fund innovative work in marine ecosystems, fisheries management, coastal conservation and marine contamination. Each year, the Pew Fellows Program makes five major grants to exemplary individuals who undertake pioneering projects tackling urgent challenges in the ocean realm. The fellowships support implementation of innovative initiatives to help solve marine problems.

Considered to be the world's most prestigious award in marine conservation, the Pew Fellowship will grant Sala \$150,000 to conduct a three-year conservation project.

Sala is a founding member and deputy director of the Center for Marine Biodiversity and Conservation (CMBC) at Scripps, a research center dedicated to the understanding, conservation and management of global marine biodiversity. He has been associated with Scripps since 1997.

A marine ecologist and conservation biologist, Sala researches the impacts of human activities on coastal environments, the ecology of coastal fishes, interactions between species, the direct and indirect effects of fishing and the ecological processes critical for coastal fishes.

Sala has noted that marine reserves must be managed using an ecosystem-based approach but that there is almost no practical application of this approach at relevant spatial scales, and no systematic method to implement it. With the Pew Fellowship funds, he plans to develop a cost-effective method to determine the ecosystem status of marine reserves, to evaluate the efficacy of particular management measures and hence to determine the need for additional management to fulfill conservation goals at the ecosystem level. He also will use simulation models to forecast the ecological outcomes of alternative management measures, tools that could then be used by marine reserve managers and decision makers for establishing conservation priorities at different spatial scales, for supporting adaptive management to fulfill reserve goals and, most important, to accelerate the recovery and ensure the conservation of coastal ecosystems. His fieldwork will take place primarily in Mediterranean rocky habitats.

"Pew Fellowships are a great honor, which Eric Sala richly deserves," said Nancy Knowlton, a professor of marine biology at Scripps and director of CMBC. "He is one of the few people who successfully combines basic and applied research aimed at solving real-world problems in the oceans."

Sala is a member of the Marine Advisory Committee of the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation. In 2000 he was appointed a research fellow of the Wildlife Conservation Society and in 2005 he was elected an Aldo Leopold Leadership Fellow.

Two Scripps scientists have previously received Pew Fellowships: Paul Dayton (1995) and the late Mia Tegner (1998).

Pew Fellowships are awarded by the Pew Institute for Ocean Science, which is funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts and other philanthropic individuals and organizations, and is headquartered at the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science.

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