

Book Authored by Scripps Scientist Honored with Science Literary Award

Tony Koslow's examination of the mysteries and challenges of the deep sea awarded Australian prize for science writing

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"The Silent Deep" author Tony Koslow

"The Silent Deep: The Discovery, Ecology and Conservation of the Deep Sea," authored by Tony Koslow at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego, has been awarded the Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Science Writing. Koslow received the honor Sept. 3 in Melbourne, Australia.

"The Silent Deep," released in 2007, delves into the history of the exploration of the deep sea and reviews the ecology of its major environments, most of which have only been discovered within the past 50 years. Considered lifeless only 150 years ago, the deep sea is today known to harbor some of the most diverse ecosystems on the planet, including hot vents, cold seeps and deep coral reefs. Deep-sea sediments are one of Earth's greatest reservoirs of species diversity, says Koslow, a deep-sea ecologist. His book also addresses threats to the deep ocean, including destructive seafloor trawling, mining, climate change and ocean acidification.

The Victorian Premier's Literary Awards are intended to recognize excellence in Australian writing. The science writing prize, awarded biennially, honors popular science books for non-specialist readers.

Earlier this year, Koslow was named a finalist for Australia's Sherman Eureka Prize for Environmental Research, based on his work on deep-sea fisheries and seamount ecology and conservation.

A native of the United States, Koslow recently joined Scripps after spending 17 years conducting research in Australia. He was named director of the California Cooperative Oceanic Fisheries Investigations (CalCOFI) and a research oceanographer in the Integrative Oceanography Division at Scripps earlier this year. CalCOFI is a partnership of Scripps Oceanography, the California Department of Fish and Game and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service. Launched in 1949 to investigate the plummeting harvests of the Pacific sardine, CalCOFI is one of the world's longest-running multidisciplinary field programs. Its valuable database of physical, chemical and biological measurements, along with fishery censuses, reveals the dynamics of the California Current.

In addition to deep-sea ecology, Koslow's research interests include biological oceanography. For five years prior to joining Scripps, he designed and led Western Australia's first biological oceanography program, a "mini-CalCOFI" off Perth, for Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization's (CSIRO) Marine and Atmospheric Research Division. Previously, he led CSIRO's deepwater ecology program, where he played leading roles in assessing deepwater fish populations, discovering the broad diversity of seamount coral reefs in the South Pacific and in designing marine reserves to protect Tasmanian seamounts.

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