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## **New Map Shows Oregon's Territorial Sea, Marine Seabed Habitats**

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CORVALLIS, Ore. – A new map depicting Oregon's marine seabed habitats was released this week, part of the marine reserve nomination process. The map provides the first coast-wide view of seafloor habitats in Oregon's nearshore marine environment.

The map represents a significant improvement to existing habitat maps for Oregon's territorial sea, defined as the first three nautical miles from shore, according to Chris Goldfinger, an Oregon State University marine geologist and one of the principal investigators in the effort.

“Historically, the nearshore environment has been among the least well-known, least explored areas of the ocean due to the difficulties and dangers of working close to shore,” said Goldfinger, who is an associate professor in OSU's College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences. “This new map will provide a wealth of information – not just about potential sites for marine reserves, but for interests ranging from tourism to fishing to bird watching.”

The interactive map of Oregon's territorial sea is available online at <http://pacoos.coas.oregonstate.edu/MarineHabitatViewer/viewer.aspx>

It not only shows water depths and topography, but can be overlaid with information about buoys, seabirds, fish and invertebrates and kelp beds. Users also may pick and choose other options for the map including state boundaries, cities, highways, rivers and water features, as well as query the map for the biology expected in a given area and habitat type.

Goldfinger and his colleagues created the new map by first digitizing data from an unpublished archive of coastal survey charts that dated back as far as the late 1800s, with assistance from the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development. The researchers were able to merge new data with the old and create features such as historic distribution of kelp beds along the coast.

Marine reserve proposals are due into the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife by Sept. 30. More information on the nomination process is available at: <http://www.oregonmarinereserves.net>. The outreach portion for the process was coordinated by the Oregon Sea Grant program, based at OSU.

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**About Oregon State University:** OSU is one of only two U.S. universities designated a land-, sea-, space- and sun-grant institution. OSU is also Oregon's only university designated in the Carnegie Foundation's top tier for research institutions, garnering more than 60 percent of the total federal and private research funding in the Oregon University System. Its more than 19,700 students come from all 50 states and more than 80 countries. OSU programs touch every county within Oregon, and its faculty teach and conduct research on issues of national and global importance.