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From Sea to Shining Sea

UC Santa Barbara marine ecologist Benjamin Halpern has received the Royal Society of Canada's 2016 A.G. Huntsman Award for Excellence in Marine Sciences. The award recognizes the multifaceted nature of research in the world's oceans.

"Ben has been a global leader, driving ocean solutions by making science-based tools accessible to decision-makers around the world," said Steve Gaines, dean of the Bren School of Environmental Science & Management. "He is a great choice for this important honor."

Named for Archibald Gowanlock Huntsman, a pioneer Canadian oceanographer and fishery biologist, the award was established in 1980 by the country's marine science community to recognize excellent research and outstanding contributions to the field. It acknowledges marine scientists of any nationality who have had and continue to have a significant influence on the course of marine scientific thought.

"Receiving this award is really a great honor," said Halpern, director of the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis and a professor at the Bren School. "Given the many and diverse disciplines within marine science that are recognized by the selection committee, the award is particularly meaningful."

Halpern is widely recognized for his work on marine conservation and resource management. According to the Royal Society of Canada, his research on marine protected areas (MPAs) transformed "our understanding of where, why and how protected areas affect marine species and systems and helped catalyze the

explosion of MPA creation around the world in the past decade.”

Halpern’s measuring and mapping of the cumulative impact of human activities has provided a new way for governments and organizations to implement conservation plans and marine spatial planning, and his contributions to the Ocean Health Index (OHI) have transformed how oceans are measured and managed.

Since the launch of the OHI, governments and organizations from 28 different countries on every continent have developed or are developing regional OHI assessments. Various United Nations assessment and reporting bodies include OHI as a main metric of ocean health, and many global conservation nongovernmental organizations and foundations are using the index to track progress and inform investments.

Halpern also holds a chair in marine conservation at Imperial College London as part of the Grand Challenges in Ecosystems and the Environment Initiative and is director of the Center for Marine Assessment and Planning as well as a senior fellow at the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, an executive agency of the United Nations Environment Programme. He earned his bachelor’s degree from Carleton College in 1995 and his doctorate from UC Santa Barbara in 2003 before becoming a postdoctoral fellow at UC Santa Cruz and UC Santa Barbara. He subsequently became a research biologist at the Marine Science Institute and joined the faculty at Bren in 2013.

The A.G. Huntsman Award consists of a specially designed and engraved sterling silver medal. The award ceremony will take place Thursday, Nov. 17, 2016, at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. After the presentation, Halpern will deliver a lecture titled “Opportunities and Challenges for Aquaculture to Feed the Planet.”

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the

edge of the Pacific Ocean.