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For Ecology and Conservation

In recognition of his contributions to the field of ecology, UC Santa Barbara professor Benjamin Halpern has been named an Ecological Society of America (ESA) 2020 Fellow.

The society's fellowship program recognizes the many ways in which its members contribute to ecological research and discovery, communication, education and pedagogy, and management and policy. Fellows, according to the ESA, "are members who have made outstanding contributions to a wide range of fields served by ESA, including, but not restricted to, those that advance or apply ecological knowledge in academics, government, non-profit organizations and the broader society." They are elected for life.

"Ben's contributions have changed how we collaborate, quantify and understand human impacts on the ocean," said Steven Gaines, dean of UCSB's Bren School for Environmental Science & Management. "His work is fundamental to scientists, policy makers and academics around the world who develop data-driven assessments of marine ecosystem health."

Halpern was cited by ESA for "repeatedly transforming ecology and conservation, contributing to understanding of biomass distribution in ecosystems, contributing landmark syntheses of human impacts on the ocean, and developing the Ocean Health Index, which redefined how policymakers approach marine ecosystem assessments worldwide."

“This is a wonderful honor from the ecological community,” said Halpern, a professor in the Bren School, and also the director of the campus’s National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (NCEAS).

A marine ecologist by training, Halpern focuses his research at the intersection of marine ecology and conservation planning, with efforts that address a broad range of questions that span local to global scales, including spatial population dynamics, trophic interactions in community ecology and the interface between ecology and human dynamics.

As the director of NCEAS, Halpern sets the vision and programmatic direction of the center, whose aim is to synthesize vast amounts of data from diverse ecological disciplines into knowledge that can inform environmental policy and management. In addition, he has conducted field expeditions in tropical and temperate systems in the Caribbean, Red Sea, Mediterranean, Solomon Islands, Indonesia and various parts of the South Pacific, California and Chile. He was the recipient of the 2016 A.G. Huntsman Award for Excellence in the Marine Sciences, and is a member of the Earth Commission, an international group of scientists chosen to establish global and regional scientific goals for a stable and sustainable planet.

Halpern completed his bachelor’s degree in biology at Carleton College in 1995, followed by a doctoral degree in marine ecology at UC Santa Barbara in 2003.

ESA established its fellows program in 2012 with the goal of honoring its members and supporting their competitiveness and advancement to leadership positions in the society, at their institutions and in broader society.

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.