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### **National Marine Sanctuary Foundation Honors Kevin Buch**

Kevin Buch, a volunteer science diver at Flower Garden Bank National Marine Sanctuary, was honored Tuesday by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (NMSF) in Washington, D.C.

Buch was one of 14 individuals across the National Marine Sanctuary system nominated for the foundation's Volunteer of the Year award. The recognition is part of Capitol Hill Ocean Week, an oceans-focused annual conference coordinated by the NMSF, a private non-profit organization supporting NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries.

The dive safety officer at Texas A&M University at Galveston, Buch helps the sanctuary's science team with a variety of projects including long-term monitoring of the coral reefs. He also conducts safety training updates and leads a fish identification class for the sanctuary's annual "Down Under, Out Yonder" teacher workshop.

During the management plan review in 2010, Buch used his contacts with university students and faculty to generate interest in the process by advertising the public scoping sessions and Advisory Council meetings. He frequently recommends the sanctuary as a source of interesting guest speakers to local clubs, and he helps support the sanctuary at community events and trade shows.

"Kevin is a great resource and an enthusiastic sanctuary supporter," said George P. Schmahl, sanctuary superintendent. "He has a clear understanding of the skills needed to safely accomplish tasks underwater. He also values the uniqueness and beauty of the sanctuary's coral reefs and is passionate about sharing his knowledge with others."

For a slideshow of images from CHOW, visit the NMSF website at [www.NMSFocean.org](http://www.NMSFocean.org).

Located 115 miles off the Texas/Louisiana coast, Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary includes the northernmost coral reefs in the continental United States, sponge communities and other essential habitats for a variety of species.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Find us on [Facebook](#).