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International Network on Water,
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Canadian-based UN Coral Reef Expert Honored at World Meeting in Australia

*Bleeker Award for Distinguished Contributions to Studies of Marine Fish Life in Indo-Pacific
Presented to Dr. Peter Sale, Assistant Director of United Nations University's water institute*

World experts meeting in Australia will present a Canadian-based UN coral reef specialist with a distinguished award for his lifetime of achievement in marine research.

Peter Sale, Assistant Director for Coastal Zones at the United Nations University's International Network on Water, Environment and Health, and Emeritus Professor at the University of Windsor, will receive the Pieter Bleeker Award for Excellence in Indo-Pacific ichthyology on Tues. June 2 at the 8th Indo-Pacific Fish Conference (IPFC, www.ipfc2009asfb.com) in Perth.

Dr. Sale is being recognized for major contributions to world knowledge of fish communities, particularly those in coral reefs.

His work on reef fish ecology and behavior began in Hawaii in 1964 and has continued ever since in both the Indo-Pacific and Caribbean, shedding important light on how to manage marine environments sustainably.

Last year, Dr. Sale and eight international colleagues presented a stark warning at UN Headquarters, New York, that current coastal management practices are ineffective and their continuation endangers ecosystems that support the economies over half the world's population.

Dr. Sale and the report's co-authors said a potentially "terminal" disaster looms in several coastal areas unless humanity introduces "much more effective management immediately."

Over the past several years as Assistant Director of UNU-INWEH, an international capacity building science organization based in Hamilton, Canada, Dr. Sale has led a scientific team advising measures to mitigate the impacts of massive off-shore construction projects in Dubai. These include Palm Jumeirah and Palm Jebel Ali, palm tree-shaped marine residential developments visible from space.

Educated at the University of Toronto and University of Hawaii, Dr. Sale has taught a large number of Masters, PhD, and post-doc fellows, starting at the University of Sydney, Australia, and later the University of New Hampshire. Joining the University of Windsor in January 1994, he served as Head of the Department of Biological Sciences, and as acting Director of the Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research.

Among other honors, he was President (and now an Honorary Life Member) of the Australian Coral Reef Society (1984-86), and President of the International Society for Reef Studies (1989-91). He has published over 200 refereed publications on coral reef ecology, edited three books, and continues to lead major projects in the Caribbean and Middle East. Recent research interests have concerned the structure and organization of ecological communities, and the responses of marine life to environmental change.

The Pieter Bleeker Award has been presented only once before, shared by two renowned global scientists:

- John E. Randall, Bishop Museum and University of Hawaii, widely recognized as the father of taxonomy and systematics related to coral reef fishes worldwide; and
- J. Howard Choat, former Head, Dept of Marine Biology, James Cook University, Australia, widely recognized for having turned a small department into a powerhouse of global coral reef research today, as well as a foremost coral reef ecologist with many major contributions of his own to the science.

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United Nations University

Established by the U.N. General Assembly in 1973, United Nations University is an international community of scholars engaged in research, advanced training and the dissemination of knowledge related to pressing global problems. Activities focus mainly on peace and conflict resolution, sustainable development and the use of science and technology to advance human welfare. The University operates a worldwide network of research and post-graduate training centres, with headquarters in Tokyo.

UNU-INWEH was established in 1996 to strengthen water management capacity, particularly of developing countries, and to provide on-the-ground project support. With core funding from the Government of Canada through CIDA, it is hosted by McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada.