



Website of the Week — MarineBio.org

By Art Chimes

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Website of the Week: MarineBio.org (MP3, 1.1MB) 

Time again for our Website of the Week, when we showcase interesting and innovative online destinations. This time it's an Internet site for people who want to learn more about ocean life and the threats it faces.

LAWRENCE: "MarineBio.org is a site that was developed to showcase marine life and remove some of the mysteries surrounding the ocean, to inspire people to appreciate and protect it. And it's targeted to a broad audience from young kids under the age of 12 to students at all academic levels, as well as scientists and policymakers."

Joni Lawrence is the editor of MarineBio.org, which features a wealth of information about the oceans and the creatures that live there. She says the cornerstone of the site is its collection of individual pages on marine species — 250 now, with more being added all the time. The latest additions are a number of different penguin species, but the most popular pages include sharks, dolphins, whales and squid.

LAWRENCE: "On every page we strive to include really beautiful photographs, and then we go into describing biological information like habitat, feeding behavior, life history or ecology. And then at the end, we include comments about each species — whether it's dangerous to humans, whether it's fished for human consumption, and whether it's threatened or endangered."

There are also sections on how climate change threatens the ocean environment and on careers in marine biology. Joni Lawrence also notes the interactive nature of MarineBio.org, notably a feature called the Plankton Forums — a popular online bulletin board.

LAWRENCE: "In the forums we have young people, high school students, who are very involved in the study of marine biology already, and then we also have marine biologists, so those two groups have the opportunity and do interact very often. So it's great for the young people to have access to marine biologists willing to answer their questions about how to develop their careers or questions about individual species or marine issues. And we also often talk about conservation issues in there as well. And we find that everybody from the scientists to the young people are all very passionate about the issues."

Information and passionate conversations about the ocean world on our Website of the Week, MarineBio.org, or get the link from our site, [VOAnews.com](http://www.voanews.com).