

Blue Frontier: Saving America's Living Seas by David Helvarg (Freeman & Company 2001) Hardcover 299 pages with index. ISBN 0-7167-3715-9, \$24.95.

Over a recent weekend I read David Helvarg's new book *Blue Frontier*. He notes that Surfrider was there when California got its first National Marine Sanctuary and credits us with being on the leading edge of groups addressing environmental issues related to the coast and oceans. For example:

"All across coastal America people who care are beginning to act on their beliefs. The number of blue groups is growing, along with public awareness about our oceans. Major activist organizations include the Center for Marine Conservation, which sponsors the National Beach Cleanup Day every year and is headed by a former Coast Guard admiral; the Surfrider Foundation; the Cousteau Society; the American Oceans Campaign . . ." (page 233)

In this book, Surfrider Foundation is mentioned several more times. But it is not just because Helvarg's research into the issues confirms the important role Surfrider has played that I think this book is important. In fact, *Blue Frontier* and Colin Woodard's *Ocean's End* are two recent books on how bad off the oceans really have become. However, while *Ocean's End* is more of a travelogue through the seas which documents in journalistic style the current degraded status of our ocean resources, Helvarg goes further and addresses the political and social causes of neglect that have led to the degradation.

Moreover, it is on the politics that Helvarg shines (as he did in his book *The War Against the Greens*). While he includes valuable information on the *Blue Frontier*, I enjoyed reading this book more for his insights into political interests and how they are undermining US legislation protecting our coasts and oceans.

Overall, I liked the book, although there are some rough spots where the writing is not as clear as it could be. But it is a good read and tells us how we can still make a difference through conservation, activism, research and education.

Reviewed by Mark J. Spalding, Chair, Surfrider Foundation Board of Directors