



Contact:
Cindy Yeast
+1.202.236.5413
cdyeast@earthlink.net or
Corinne Knutson
+1.808.497.3360
cknutson@seaweb.org
(High resolution photos
available by request)

Media Advisory

CORAL REINTERPRETED JEWELRY COLLECTION TO LAUNCH THIS WEEK *Jewelry Pieces Will Be Auctioned Online To Benefit Increased Coral Protection*

NEW YORK—Beginning February 26, designers will be offering coral alternatives that are perfect gifts for those that love the ocean. To help raise awareness of the threats corals face and the need for immediate action to protect these vulnerable marine animals, renowned designers Hannah Garrison of AZU, Frank Gehry, Kimberly McDonald, Melissa Joy Manning, Jennifer Meyer, Monique Péan, Paloma Picasso, Jean Schlumberger and Vena Cava's Sophie Buhai and Lisa Mayock have united with SeaWeb's *Too Precious to Wear* campaign to launch a one-of-a-kind jewelry collection titled Coral Reinterpreted.

Each designer has created or donated a single piece of wearable art that evokes the feel of the ocean without harming living animals, such as corals. Pieces from the collection were worn at eco-designers' David Peck and Laurel Anderson's Untitled 11:11 show 'Into the Woods' during New York Fashion Week. Socialite Olivia Chantecaille also wore Coral Reinterpreted jewelry during her visits to the New York fashion shows.

The pieces will be auctioned online to benefit increased protection of precious corals. Bids may be placed online from February 26 to April 30, 2009, via www.tooprecioustowear.org.

Corals supply shelter and food for 25 percent of all marine animals, and provide services such as fishing, tourism and coastal protection estimated to be worth US\$375 billion annually. Yet corals around the world are in decline. Recent scientific studies estimate that we have already lost 20 percent of the world's coral reefs, and could lose another 24 percent within our lifetimes if human impacts are not reduced.

Red and pink coral (scientific name *Corallium*) has long been a popular gift. The United States, as the world's largest documented importer of red and pink corals, has placed significant pressure on these threatened animals, importing more than 26 million pieces from 2001 to 2006. *Too Precious to Wear* is urging the United States and other countries to list red and pink corals under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) at the next Conference of Parties meeting in January 2010.

###

Too Precious to Wear is a SeaWeb campaign to create a demand for coral conservation. *Too Precious to Wear* is made possible with support from The Tiffany & Co. Foundation, Kingfisher Foundation, National Marine Sanctuary Foundation and The Ocean Foundation. www.tooprecioustowear.org

SeaWeb is a communications-based nonprofit organization that utilizes social marketing techniques to advance ocean conservation. www.seaweb.org