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## Story Archives



### Sanctuary Boat Captain Honored for Heroic Rescue

The U.S. Department of Commerce recently awarded its Gold Medal in Heroism to Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary NOAA Corp LCDR Mark H. Pickett for "exemplary courage and heroism" in saving the lives of two U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) employees after a capsizing of the Channel Islands Sanctuary vessel *R/V Ballena* on November 4, 2000.

[More](#)

### Sanctuary Explorer Describes Life Below the Waves

Cathy Sakas, education coordinator for the Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary, and five other aquanauts spent nine days in Aquarius, an undersea laboratory off Key Largo in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

[Read about her adventures](#)

### Sanctuary's Researchers Reach Deep Dives

A Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary research team, monitoring the effects of fiber-optic cables on the ocean floor, reaped additional benefits. Using *Delta*, a two-person submersible, scientists conducted 55 dives throughout the mission.

Sanctuary News

NATIONAL MARINE  
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[Learn more](#)

## **National Marine Sanctuary System's New Director**

On January 10, 2001, Dr. James D. Baker, the NOAA's Administrator and Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, named Daniel J. Basta as Director of the National Marine Sanctuary System.

[More on Dan Basta](#)

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## **Great Lakes Marine Sanctuary Manager Search**

Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve, the nation's newest marine sanctuary, began a search for a sanctuary manager to help in the protection of a nationally significant collection of over 100 shipwrecks, spanning over a century of Great Lakes shipping history.

[For more details](#)

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## **Sanctuary scientists discover shipwreck**

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary archaeologists and staff have located the steel hull of the *Temple Bar*, wrecked among the Quillayute Needles in 1939.

[More on the Olympic Coast wreck](#)

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## **'Elye'wun's Historic Channel Crossing**

It's been more than 125 years since a Chumash tomol was paddled across the rough waters of the Channel Islands. On September 8, NOAA's Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS) staff members, aboard the NOAA support research vessel *Xantu*, were witness to an historic tomol crossing reports the sanctuary's Cultural Resources Coordinator Robert Schwemmer.

[Learn more](#)

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**January 8, 2002**

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## Feature Stories



### Safety is Job One at Our National Marine Sanctuaries

*By Gail Krueger and David Hall*

The cry "Man overboard!" was heard at a number of NOAA's national marine sanctuaries last month. There was also a wave of fires, hurricanes, and even earthquakes. In each case the response was quick and no lives were lost.



These were only mock disasters, staged during the sanctuary program's first annual "Safety Week." But should such events actually occur sanctuary staff will be well prepared, thanks to an intense week of hands-on safety programs and drills.

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary's Karen Grimmer (left) and Deirdre Hall practice a "man overboard" drill aboard the sanctuary vessel SHARK CAT. Photo: Brad Damitz/MBNMS

At sanctuaries throughout the 14-site National Marine Sanctuary System, staff learned how to handle everything from heart attacks to hazardous waste spills.

Because many sanctuary staffers spend time on or under the water, boat and diver safety drills were an important part of the safety stand-down.

At several sanctuaries, staff members simulated boat evacuations by donning bright orange immersion, or "Gumby," suits and jumping into the water. Each orange-clad staffer then drifted toward a life raft or

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#### [Gray's Reef](#) [Shades of Gray](#)

**Monitor**  
**Cheesebox**

sanctuary vessel and practiced climbing aboard.

Sanctuary staff also practiced various forms of “man overboard” drills. In each case, lessons were learned.

**Monterey Bay**

“We now know which sanctuary boat we have to use to get people out of the water and transport them to safety,” said Steve Baumgartner, operation manager for the lower region of Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. “One particular boat worked out very well. We would definitely turn to that one first [in that situation].”

**Olympic Coast**  
**e-news**

**Gerry E. Studds**  
**Stellwagen Bank**  
**Soundings**

“The entire program made me feel that I, too, could help in a dive or other emergency on either of the sanctuary’s boats,” said Becky Shortland, policy coordinator for Gray’s Reef Sanctuary. Shortland and other non-diving members of the Gray’s Reef staff often go out with researchers as assistants and observers on both research dives and routine patrols.

**Thunder Bay**  
**Beneath the Waves**

Safety Week was not confined to boating safety drills, however. Staff throughout the sanctuary system, including its Silver Spring headquarters, reviewed emergency procedures, supplies and equipment.

“Our safety stand-down is about more than just safe boating,” said NOAA Capt. Ted Lillestolen, NMSP’s deputy director for facilities, vessels, aircraft and safety. “It’s a host of carefully-planned, comprehensive training exercises for all sanctuary program staff, regardless of where they work. We want to be sure that when people come to sanctuaries, they are in an environment that is as safe as we can make it.”

“This was a very important learning experience,” said Sarah Fangman, the Safety Week coordinator for Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. “I was really pleased to see how seriously my colleagues took this day of training. They were fully engaged, asked really important questions and offered fantastic ideas on how we could better prepare ourselves for emergency situations.”

“This has been a valuable opportunity for team-building as well as an important commitment to safety,” said Gray’s Reef Sanctuary Manager Reed Bohne.

While the sanctuary program plans to make Safety Week an annual event, Lillestolen and NMSP Director Daniel J. Basta say the sanctuary program won’t wait a year before updating emergency procedures and providing additional safety training to staff. “It will be an ongoing activity,” said Lillestolen.

“We value the health and well-being of our employees, those who volunteer in our sanctuaries, those who visit them, and those who conduct research in them. That’s what’s driving this effort.” said Basta. “Like our other NOAA colleagues, we know that safety is our first responsibility.” -- [[Click here](#) for field site reports]

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# Press Releases



[Jan. 7, 2005](#) --Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary, managed by the U.S. Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, is seeking applicants for four Sanctuary Advisory Council seats.

[Jan. 3, 2005](#) --The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary (CBNMS) is seeking applicants to fill sanctuary advisory council seats representing research, conservation, maritime activity, education and community-at-large interests. NOAA is an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

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# Calendar



## January 2005

### Natural Events

Gray whales (*Eschrichtius robustus*) migrate south through the Monterey Bay, Gulf of the Farallones, and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries. From December through February, the whales swim along the coastline and may be visible from shore as they head for the warm waters of Mexico's west coast lagoons for calving and mating.

January is the peak month for Northern elephant seal pup births in the Monterey Bay and Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuaries. Females give birth to a single pup within a week of hauling out on the beach. Pups will be nursed for three to four weeks before weaning.

In Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary, rockfish spawning peaks this month.

Northern elephant seal (*Mirounga augustirostris*) pupping and breeding season on San Miguel Island in Channel Islands continues through February. On Anacapa and Santa Barbara Islands, California Brown Pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis californicus*) begin nesting through the month of February. The seals also breed on Southeast Farallon Islands and at nearby Pt. Reyes National Seashore.

Hammerhead sharks and spotted rays school around the East and West Flower Garden Banks Sanctuary, through early April.

In mid January, North Atlantic right whale return to Cape Cod Bay and the southern end of the Stellwagen Bank Sanctuary to feed on early bloom of copepods.

Winter gull migration begins.

Female northern right whales calve off the coast of Georgia and North Florida, Gray's Reef Sanctuary.

Alcids, such as razorbills and dovebies, overwinter at Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary.



A portion of the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale population returns to Cape Cod Bay and Stellwagen Bank region to feed on patches of copepods.

Legions of seabirds feast on the abundant food resources present at Cordell Bank.

The winter months are excellent for tidepooling in the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary because afternoon low tides expose marine algae and invertebrates. The low tides which began in November continue though February.

Minus tides in the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary permit intensive intertidal algae and invertebrate surveys at S.E. Farallon Island.

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## Sanctuary Events

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**Jan. 11** • Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary  
"FROM SHORE TO SEA" Speaker Series

Speaker to be announced

This speaker series is free and open to the public.

7pm at Chase Palm Park Center

236 E Cabrillo Blvd., Santa Barbara, CA.

**Jan. 12 • Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary  
FROM SHORE TO SEA Speaker Series  
Speaker to be announced**

This speaker series is free and open to the public.  
7pm @ the Robert J. Lagomarsino Visitor Center  
1901 Spinnaker Drive in the Ventura Harbor.

**Jan. 14 • Monterey Bay Sanctuary Research Activity Panel (RAP)  
Meeting, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m., USGS office, Santa Cruz. For more  
information contact Andrew Devogelaere at (831) 647-4213. [Click here](#)  
for more information.**

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# SANCTUARY WATCH



Four times a year, the National Marine Sanctuary Program publishes a national newsletter in print and electronic format to keep our colleagues, collaborators and constituents informed about the many program activities and accomplishments that take place within our 13 national marine sanctuaries.

[Click here](#) for instructions on how to receive an html formatted e-mail version of the Sanctuary Watch newsletter.

Please e-mail the [editor](#) if you would like to be added to the mailing list or to receive a hard copy of the newsletter.

If you do not have Adobe Acrobat Reader, [please download](#) the free program.

**Links to additional Sanctuary Newsletters**

[Florida Keys Sounding Line](#)

[Gray's Reef Shades of Gray](#)

[Humpback Whale Ke Leo O Ke Kohola](#)

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## **Sanctuary Watch Vol. 5 No. 3 Fall 2004 - Special Issue: Diving into Education**

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- Sanctuary Education Programs for Teachers and Students
- Critter Files: Black-footed Albatross
- Newsplash
- Star of the Sea: Kim Rusk
- Sanctuary Voices: Consortium for Oceanographic Research and Education

[\[Download Sanctuary Watch Vol. 5 No. 3 -- pdf document, 2.2 MB\]](#)

**Monitor**

Cheesebox

**Monterey Bay**

**Gerry E. Studds**

**Stellwagen Bank**

Soundings



Sanctuary Watch Fall 2004

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***Sanctuary Watch Vol. 5 No. 2***  
**Summer 2004**

- Olympic Coast Sanctuary Celebrates 10 Years of Stewardship
- Critter Files: Sea Otter
- Studying Humpback Whales Across North America
- Star of the Sea: Stephanie Harlan
- Sanctuary Voices: U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy

*[Download [Sanctuary Watch Vol. 5 No. 2](#) -- pdf document, 2.9 MB]*



Sanctuary Watch Summer 2004

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***Sanctuary Watch Vol. 5 No. 1***  
**Spring 2004**

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- Spotlight on Exploration
- Sound Science
- Hunt for the *Alligator*
- James Christley: Star of the Sea
- Warty Sea Slug
- Sanctuary Voices: Reaching Out to Boaters

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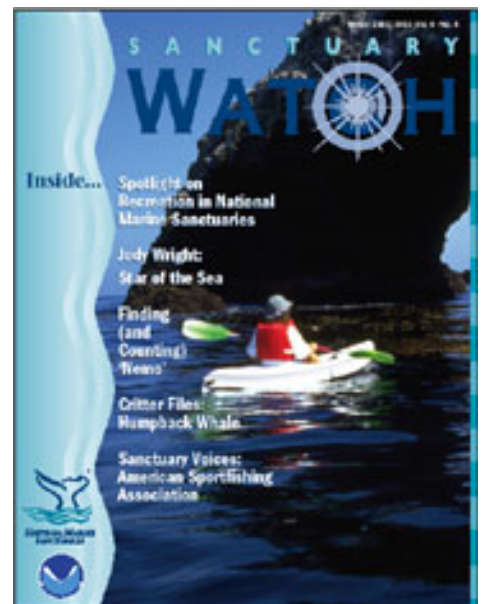
Sanctuary Watch Spring 2004

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### **Sanctuary Watch Vol. 4 No. 4 Winter 2003**

- Sanctuaries: Something for Everyone
- Paddling Through Paradise
- Sanctuaries are for the Birds
- Finding (and Counting) 'Nemo'
- Critter Files: Whale Watching/  
Humpback Whale
- Sanctuary Voices: American  
Sportfishing Association

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Sanctuary Watch Winter 2003

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### **Sanctuary Watch Vol. 4 No. 3 Fall 2003**

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- Seabirds Find a Home at Gray's Reef Sanctuary
- Revisiting the *USS Monitor*
- Critter Files: White Shark
- Gordon Bennett and Al Brooks: Stars of the Sea
- The 'Canaries' of Fagatele Bay Sing the Blues
- New Sanctuaries Managers

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Sanctuary Watch Fall 2003

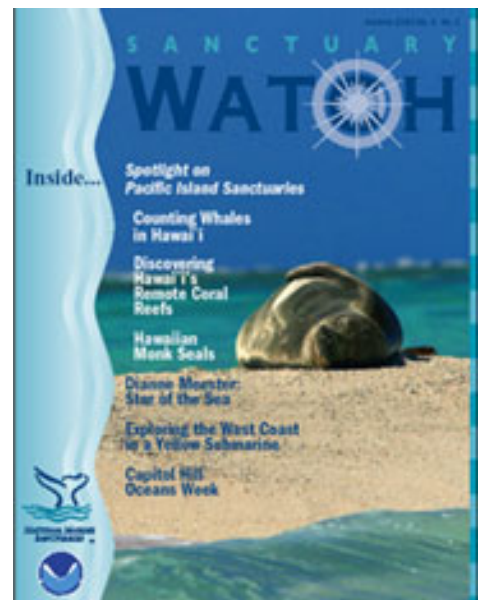
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### ***Sanctuary Watch* Vol. 4 No. 2 Summer 2003**

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- Spotlight on Pacific Island Sanctuaries
- Counting Whales in Hawai'i
- Discovering Hawai'i's Remote Coral Reefs
- Hawaiian Monk Seals
- Dianne Meester: Star of the Sea
- Exploring the West Coast in a Yellow Submarine
- Capitol Hill Oceans Week

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Sanctuary Watch Summer 2003

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### ***Sanctuary Watch* Vol. 4 No. 1 Winter 2002/2003**

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- Sanctuary Discoveries: *Pacbaroness*, *Portland*, Thunder Bay
- Sanctuary Watch Star of the Sea: Billy Causy, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary
- New Vessel Helps Scientists, Students Study the Sea
- Monitor Expedition 2002
- Follow that Fish! Tagging Program Helps Researchers get to the Bottom of a Fishy Mystery
- U.S. Senator Breaux honored for work with Flower Garden Banks Sanctuary
- Channel Islands Sanctuary Explorer Ballard Take Students From 'Shore to Sea'



Sanctuary Watch Feb/April 2003

[\[Download Sanctuary Watch Vol. 4 No. 1 -- pdf document, 4.5 MB\]](#)

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### **Sanctuary Watch Vol. 3 No. 6 December 2002/January 2003**

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- California Creates Marine Reserve in Channel Islands
- Sanctuary Managers Promote Program Around the Globe
- California Mystery Oil Spill Solved
- National Marine Sanctuary Program Joins in Korean MPA Planning Workshop
- Channel Islands Welcomes New Sanctuary Manager Christopher Mobley
- More explorations at the *Portland* site in Gerry. E. Studds



Spiny lobsters scuttling along the ocean floor now have additional protections in the Channel Islands.

Photo: Shane Anderson



## Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary

- Sanctuary Staff John C. Halas and Andrea Hrusovsky Awarded NOAA's Bronze Medal 2002
- Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Park Manager Jeff Gray Joins Search for WWII Japanese Sub
- Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary Field Station for Sensor Tests
- Scenes from the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary 10th Anniversary
- "Rescuing "Beany," a California Baby Sea Lion
- Safe Havens in Half Moon Bay--the National Marine Sanctuary Program Celebrates its Newest California Field Office
- Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary Student ROV Competes for Florida Prize
- U.S. Reefs Receive International Protection
- National Aquarium Gets Sanctuary Facelift
- Sanctuary Reefs on Coral Reef Task Force Agenda
- December 2002/January 2003 Calendar Highlights

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### ***Sanctuary Watch Archives***

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[Click here](#) for the Sanctuary Watch newsletter archives covering the years 2000 to 2002.

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## Story Archives



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### **New National Marine Sanctuary Designated in Great Lakes**

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The new Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve was designated on October 7, 2000 in Alpena, Michigan. This new sanctuary is the first marine sanctuary in the Great Lakes, the first one in freshwater, and only the second designated to protect underwater cultural resources!

[Learn more about our newest sanctuary](#)

[Stories from 2001](#)

[Stories from 2000](#)

[Stories from 1999](#)

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### **Agreement reached on Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary**

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[Designation planned for Great Lakes sanctuary](#)

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### **Snapshot day Volunteers Test Monterey Bay Sanctuary Waters**

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On Earth Day 2000, local citizens celebrated the event along California's Central Coast by participating in the first annual Monterey

Bay National Marine Sanctuary "Snapshot Day," a sanctuary-wide watershed monitoring event designed to increase public awareness of water quality issues affecting sanctuary watersheds.

[Volunteers help to protect Monterey Bay waters](#)

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## **Students join scientists in Gray's Reef Sanctuary Research**

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Braving howling wind and high seas four high school students-at-sea from Gray's Reef's Student Ocean Council assisted scientists Dr. Jeff Hyland, Cindy Cooksey and Len Balthis from NOAA's ORCA Lab in Charleston, South Carolina in a mission to Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary.

[Learn more about their discoveries.](#)

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## **Joining Forces on Salmon and Steelhead Habitat Programs**

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NOAA's Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary in the National Ocean Service (NOS) and the Southwest Region of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) recently embarked on a joint effort to promote public awareness and support for conserving threatened salmon and steelhead in the California Central Coast area.

[Read more about the partnership.](#)

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## **Monterey Bay Sanctuary Announces Diving Photo Contest**

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The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary announces a new diving photo contest for coastal and underwater enthusiasts starting on May 2 and ending on September 1, 2000. Contest winners will have their work prominently featured in a new brochure being developed by the Sanctuary and members of its Diver Partnership Program.

[Learn more about it.](#)

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## **NOAA's Marine Sanctuaries Celebrate Earth Day**

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From the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans, the national marine sanctuaries will be celebrating Earth Day, reminding us of the important connections between land and sea.

[Join the fun.](#)

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## **Sustainable Seas Expeditions in Hawaii**

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Over 400 students in Hawaii were fortunate to get a closer look at the Sustainable Seas Expeditions (SSE) during its two week visit to the Hawaiian Islands Humpback National Marine Sanctuary.

[Learn more about their ocean adventures.](#)

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## **Sanctuary Assists in Alaska Airlines Flight 261**

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On January 31, 2000 Alaska Airlines Flight 261 went down about three miles from Anacapa Island in the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. More about the recovery efforts within the sanctuary is available at <http://www.nos.noaa.gov/news/flt261/flight261.html>

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## **Sanctuaries Join to Aid Samoan Coral Reef**

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Coral reefs threatened by the removal of grounded vessels in Pago Pago Harbor, American Samoa are now a little bit safer through the efforts of the Florida Keys and Fagatale Bay National Marine Sanctuaries and NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration.

[More about the coral recovery](#)

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## **DOC Silver Medal awarded to Sanctuary Staff**

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Managers of National Marine Sanctuaries are no strangers to putting out fires. NOAA's Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Manager Lieutenant Commander Ed Cassano quickly moved from fighting metaphorical fires to actual firefighting when he joined sanctuary staff and others in the Santa Barbara community to fight an intense fire engulfing a historic seaside wharf.

[More about the award](#)

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## **Sustainable Seas Expedition 2000**

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After a successful year conducting more than 150 submersible dives in nine of NOAA's national marine sanctuaries, Sustainable Seas Expedition explorers are looking to 2000 with renewed energy and enthusiasm in their quest to learn more about these unique protected areas.

[Learn more about SSE 2000](#)

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## **New *Monitor* Exhibit Opens**

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A nearly full-scale replica of the *Monitor's* famous revolving turret is the centerpiece of a dramatic new exhibition on the USS *Monitor* and the *Monitor* Sanctuary that opened at The Mariners' Museum in Newport News, Virginia, on September 25.

[More about the \*Monitor\*](#)

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**September 17, 2001**

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### Sanctuaries seek protection of maritime history

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Advances in diving gear, navigational electronics, and aquatic robots are bringing historical sunken vessels within the reach of marine archaeologists and recreational divers alike. Concerned recreational divers are now joining with scientists to take an active role in preserving and documenting underwater maritime history and educating others as to the importance of conserving it.

[More about NOAA's role](#)

[Stories from 2001](#)

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### Ocean Report offers support to U.S. sanctuaries

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[Stories from 2000](#)

On September 2, Vice President Al Gore announced new actions to help preserve and protect our nation's oceans and coasts in a special report given at the New England Aquarium in Boston. One proposal in the "The Ocean Report would enlist commercial fishermen and divers in research efforts at the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary in California.

[Read more about "The Ocean Report"](#)

[Stories from 1999](#)

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### NOAA's Shipwreck Trail

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Weather and war, uncharted waters and human error enacted a deadly toll on seagoing vessels traveling the waters now contained within the boundaries of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuaries. The new Shipwreck Trail offers a thematic map of significant, accessible, commonly-dived shipwrecks and artificial reefs through the sanctuary's waters.

[For more on the new diving adventure](#)

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## ***Monitor Mission 1999***

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A joint Navy and NOAA expedition completed part one of a two-part mission this summer to salvage and shore up the historical remains of the *Monitor*, the famous Civil War ironclad that foundered and sank in a storm 137 years ago.

[For more on the \*Monitor\* mission including daily updates.](#)

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## **From vessel grounding to reef recovery**

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On August 10, 1994, the R/V *Columbus Iselin*, a research ship studying the currents on the Florida Straits, smashed through a coral reef colony in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. The damaged area, Looe Key, contains some of the most aesthetically valuable and heavily visited reefs in the continental U.S. part of the Florida Reef Tract, it is the third largest barrier reef in the world. Now five-years later, the Looe Key reef restoration has begun.

[For more on the Columbus Iselin reef restoration](#)

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## **One fish, two fish, rockfish, bluefish!**

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For two weeks in July, the annual Great American Fish Count sends recreational divers and snorkelers into the water to help scientists learn more about fish diversity and populations. Waters include five



national marine sanctuaries: Channel Islands and Monterey Bay, California; Flower Garden Banks, Texas; Florida Keys, Florida; and Gray's Reef, Georgia.

[For more on the Great American Fish Count](#)

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## **First Great Lakes sanctuary moves closer to designation**

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Shipwrecks spanning more than a century of Great Lakes shipping -- early wooden sailboats to steel-hulled lakes steamers -- may soon receive protection as part of NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary system. An important step in the designation process of Thunder Bay, Michigan, took place recently with the publication of a Final Environmental Impact Statement and Management Plan.

[For more on the proposed Thunder Bay Sanctuary](#)

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## **Sustainable Seas Expeditions head east**

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In early July, the Sustainable Seas Expeditions move to the East Coast where aquanauts will explore the rich boulder reefs and sandy plains of the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary. The sanctuary, 25 miles east of Boston, Mass. protects 842-square miles of open ocean.

[Learn more about SSE](#)

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## **Sustainable Seas Expeditions**

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After a year of planning, the Sustainable Seas Expeditions kicks off its unprecedented deep sea exploration of NOAA's twelve national marine sanctuaries this month.

[For more on Sustainable Seas Expeditions](#)

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## **New Navigation System Protects Florida's Coral Reefs**

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In early March the federal government installed state-of-the-art navigational aids in NOAA's Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary to help ships avoid grounding on fragile, threatened coral reefs.

[For full story](#)

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## **Sanctuary educators praised for environmental work**

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Sarah Mitchell and Becky Shortland of NOAA's Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary were honored recently in a *Savannah Morning News* series for their positive and significant roles in preserving ocean and coastal environments.

[Praise for Gray's Reef Marine Sanctuary educators](#)

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## **Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary honored as conservation accomplishment of the century**

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As the 20th century draws to a close, The Audubon Society, the nation's first bird preservation organization, took the opportunity to reflect back on the greatest conservation accomplishments of the past 100 years.

[For full story](#)

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## **Coast Guard pilots help sanctuary protect coral reefs**

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NOAA's Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary staff Shelley Du Puy and Emma Hickerson once had to travel eleven hours to reach sanctuary boundaries located 100 miles off the coasts of Texas and Louisiana. Now U.S. Coast Guard pilots help sanctuary staff reach the sanctuary in 45 minutes.

[For more "eyes in the sky"](#)

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**September 17, 2001**

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## Sanctuary Boat Captain Receives Gold Medal for Heroic Rescue

The U.S. Department of Commerce awarded its Gold Medal in Heroism to NOAA Corp LCDR Mark H. Pickett for "exemplary courage and heroism" in saving the lives of two U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) employees during a boat capsizing in the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. Pickett was on detail to the sanctuary serving as vessel captain of the *R/V Ballena* when the incident occurred on November 4, 2000.

LCDR Pickett received the Gold Medal Award at the 53rd Annual Department of Commerce Awards Program at a ceremony in Washington, DC. The Department of Commerce citation notes that after the capsizing, "At significant personal risk, [LCDR Pickett] returned to the icy waters to save the lives of his crew, USGS chief scientist Dr. Guy R. Cochran and USGS electronics/special projects technician Michael E. Boyle.

On the day of the capsizing, the *R/V Ballena* was engaged in routine sidescan sonar surveys near the California coast when a rogue wave struck, overturning the vessel and briefly trapping the men inside. After attempts to deploy a life raft failed, LCDR



Pickett swam ashore and then returned to bring both men ashore, saving their lives.

LCDR Mark Pickett, recipient of the NOAA 2001 Gold Medal. Photo: Kip Evans

LCDR Pickett, a NOAA Corps officer for 18 years, resides in Monterey and is an oceanographer at NOAA's Pacific Fisheries Environmental Laboratory. For more information about the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, visit [http://  
www.cinms.nos.noaa.gov/](http://www.cinms.nos.noaa.gov/)

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November 27, 2001

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### Sanctuary Explorer Describes Life Below the Waves in the Aquarius Undersea Lab

*Cathy Sakas, education coordinator for the Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary, and five other aquanauts spent nine days in an Aquarius, an undersea laboratory off Key Largo in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. During her underwater adventure, Sakas studied corals that had become encrusted and colonized by algae.*

If the travel brochure had read "fall asleep to the soothing sound of snapping shrimp crackling in your ears, enjoy fine dining while watching big lipped groupers and slender yellowtails cruise by your private dining room table, thrill to the underwater vistas of a beautiful coral reef, bask in the warmth of clear blue ocean water, and stretch the muscles of your mind and body while diving for seven plus hours each day," wouldn't you sign up immediately? Well, I did! Only it wasn't a travel brochure that hooked me. It was a call from Dr. Steve Gittings NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Science Coordinator. When he asked if I wanted to become an Aquanaut, I leaped at the chance. It's not everyday that a lady can live with the fish and lobster and have five good looking guys as companions for nine days.

Of course, this was not a vacation, far from it as a matter of fact. This mission was to become our National Marine Sanctuary Aquarius Mission. Officially numbered Aquarius 2001-06, but to us it was dubbed Sanctuary Saturation. Four candidates were chosen from three different sanctuaries and Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF) an organization that works closely with several sanctuaries in the system to census fish populations. The four candidates were Billy Causey, Superintendent of Florida Keys Sanctuary, Dr. James Lindholm, Research Coordinator for Stellwagen Bank Sanctuary, Laddie Akins Executive Director of REEF and yours

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truly Cathy Sakas, Education Coordinator for Gray's Reef NMS.

The four of us were put through a rigorous training program expertly led by National Undersea Research Center staffers Mark Hulsbeck, a former Navy helicopter rescue crewman aka known as "Otter," and Paul Masaki, an incredible free diver. Both men were tough yet always encouraging. Even for this several decades old lady (a lady never tells her true age), they pulled no punches. They couldn't. This was technical diving that required us to be completely trained for all contingencies and emergencies. It was drilled into our heads that "the surface is not an option," that "safety is paramount" and that "slack is our enemy." (The latter phrase referring to the need to keep our reel lines taut.)



Living underwater in the Aquarius lab allowed Cathy and the other divers to spending longer hours doing research.

The "surface is not an option" referred to the fact that our surface was not the surface as we normally knew it to be. Our surface was 47' down at our underwater habitat called Aquarius. Our bodies were saturated at 2.5 atmospheres. Coming to the one atmosphere surface without sufficient decompression time would have resulted in decompression sickness better known to divers as the bends.

By working in and out of Aquarius we maximized our diving time. Our normal schedule was to be up and out of the habitat at 8 AM and be on our research sites by 8:30 AM. By 10:30 AM we had to check in at one of the fill-up stations that were small domes where we could stand up with our shoulders and heads out of the water. We talked to our ever vigilant and amiably attentive technicians and fellow Aquanauts Jay Styron and Mike Smith. These guys had the hardest task of all. They had to keep track of us and work on the habitat or tag fish one at a time (one always had to be inside Aquarius) venturing only as far as their hookah line would allow. The required check-in every two hours also allowed us time to refill our tanks.

By noon we returned to Aquarius for four hours of rest and to outgas a

little. We used the time to eat, catch up on e-mail messages, transfer data, nap and watch the news on the internet. Our first day of saturation was the day of catastrophe, September 11th. We heard of the attacks when we returned to Aquarius at the completion of that first morning dive. After much discussion and calls home to make sure our families were safe we decided to continue the mission. Continuing the mission we reasoned would better serve our country since there was not a lot we could do otherwise. We did ask for and receive two American flags, one to hang inside Aquarius and one to flap in the currents just outside the habitat. We received several messages from folks who were tracking us that they were moved by our show of patriotism. Even though removed from the events unfolding topside, we could access the Internet to hear the news and see the horrible images.

By 4 PM we were always ready to head out on our afternoon dive. While James observed the social foraging behavior of fish, Laddie his partner was censusing fish. Their studies meshed well, and they could do their own research close by without getting in each other's way. They were never a breath's distance from each other, another safety tenet drilled home by our instructors. I was privileged [Causey] as my partner. Our research had us working literally side by side, fin to fin. While I surveyed four 25 meter transect lines for benthic (bottom) cover, Billy assessed the size and condition of the hard corals on my first two transect lines. If he finished his work before I did he would grab his digital video recorder and document the reef and its many colored inhabitants. If he became absorbed in the pursuit of some odd fish or excited about the large schools of Gray Angelfish we were seeing I would stop my survey and follow.....never being more than a breath's distance from each other at all times. Your buddy was your safety net.

My work required that I keep my head down and my feet up which afforded me the ability to look at the bottom, touching it sparingly. While I was doing my work I had the advantage of seeing an amazing number of Spiny Lobsters. After Tropical Storm Gabrielle passed over us it seemed the lobsters came in by the droves. Under every nook and cranny, in every crack and crevice there were the liquid black eyes of a wary lobster staring back. We also observed the amazing phenomenon of large aggregations of non-spawning fish-Mutton Snappers (~1000), Gray Angelfish (~60), and Spotfin Hogfish (~80). We did not see those large groupings until Gabrielle left us with so much turbidity that we had only 5' &ndash; 15' visibility. Prior to Gabrielle the "viz" was a gorgeous 75'.



Now being 50' down while a tropical storm passes overhead is an interesting experience in and of itself. I awoke at 3 AM the morning Gabrielle passed through because my ears were killing me. As the waves passed by they compressed the air inside the habitat. My ears were already compromised due to an infection and were very sensitive to the slightest changes. Dr. Richard Courtney, our medical dive officer on loan from the Navy, visited me several times in Aquarius to keep me medicated and diving, but there wasn't much he could do for the pain short of doping me up which was not an option. So that morning the pressure changes got my attention, and the door to our entry porch was closed eliminating most of the discomfort with the storm. Every now and then however a large wave would pass over, and Aquarius would lift and shake, a most disconcerting feeling. Just for grins I blew up a garbage bag and hung it in the wet porch where we entered and exited the water. The bag contracted and expanded in response to the passing waves compressing and decompressing the air. It was a graphic image of what our eardrums were experiencing. I didn't really need a reminder, but it was cool to watch.

With Gabrielle confining us to the habitat for an entire day we were able to catch up on our data and sleep; however, by the next morning we were all ready to get back outside.

Billy asked if I minded diving with the viz so low. My response was that it looked pretty much like a typical day at Gray's Reef, so off we went. Our training with our dive cave reels came into practical use for the rest of the mission. We used them to mark our way off the main transit lines that directed us back to Aquarius. We were encouraged to pull ourselves along the lines to conserve energy and air; however, all of us rarely did that, finding it more comfortable and efficient to swim close to the bottom. On our last two dives Billy and I were working the S-4 area at 100', a stunningly beautiful area. The current was so strong that when I saw Billy go to the transit line I knew I better follow suit. Billy is an incredibly powerful swimmer (I referred to him as a moose on several occasions), and for him to need help against the current meant that it was an unusually strong force, another present from Gabrielle. I was glad for the lines.

On that very last dive while my nose was next to a coral boulder I noticed one of those beautifully marked Spiny Lobsters meticulously using her legs and mouthparts called mandibles to move water over her swimmerets. There nestled against her abdomen were hundreds of bright red peppercorn size eggs. To keep them free of debris and bacteria she kept water flowing over them. It was fascinating to watch. Eye to eye like that with a creature makes you do funny things. I had a

mental conversation with this magnificent marine wonder. I made her a promise that no matter what was happening in my crazy terrestrial world I would do my best to make her saltwater world a healthier, safer place for her offspring and theirs for generations to come. I really meant it, and she understood.

Of course some would say I was "narced," giddy from the high levels of nitrogen in my tissues from being saturated; however, I think I was just having one of those naturalist moments when you connect at some level with another life form. Just ask Billy, James, Steve or Laddie or anyone else for that matter who has had the great good fortune to live closely among the fish and lobsters and other sea creatures. Above all else, go and have your own natural history moment all to yourself in the great blue under on your own beautiful coast or wherever you choose. Just go and do it!

To read the daily logs of the "Sanctuary Saturation" Aquarius Mission go to: <http://www.uncwil.edu/nurc/aquarius/>. Click on 2001 Missions Completed in the middle of the page at the bottom. From there click on September 2001 - Causey Mission and then click on Expedition Journals. Explore the rest of the website to find out more about this incredible NOAA owned and University of NC at Wilmington operated Aquarius Program or contact the Center Director Dr. Steven Miller at 305-451-0233.

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### Sanctuary's Researchers Reach Deep Dives



Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary staff and partners aboard the R/V *Velero IV*. Left to right: Ed Bowlby (OCNMS), Katie Brenkman (OCNMS), Mary Sue Brancato (OCNMS), Joe Lily (Delta pilot), Chis Ijames, (Delta pilot), and Dave Slater (Delta pilot). Not pictured are night crew in Leg One: Barbara Blackie (OCNMS), Dave Kirner (OCNMS), Steve Muller (OCNMS), and Hanna Gillham (OCNMS). For the final leg (Leg Two), Katie was replaced with Liam Antrim (OCNMS), and Barbara, Steve and Hanna were replaced with Sarah Howlett (NMFS), Ian Butler (OCNMS), and Sarah Hilbert (OCNMS). Photo: Delta Oceanographics.

A Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary research team, monitoring the effects of fiber-optic cables on the ocean floor, reaped additional



benefits during a recent 16-day cruise. Using *Delta*, a two-person submersible, scientists conducted 55 dives throughout the mission. During one dive, explorers achieved one of the deepest dive ever in the sanctuary, reaching a depth of just over 1,000 feet.

Headed by co-chief scientists Mary Sue Brancato and Ed Bowlby, this year's primary mission brought together a contingent of 16 people: seven scientists, three sub pilots, and six crew. Their job was to monitor the status of the sea floor benthic community in areas where fiber optic cables were laid and to study natural variations in the ocean floor. At the same time, researchers looked for varying levels of fishing gear impacts. Hundreds of hours of videotapes and benthic samples await analysis for this year's cruise.

The 2001 cruise launched the second year of a 10-year monitoring program begun after the two cables were laid in the winter of 1999/2000 across 30 nautical miles of the sanctuary. Today the cables stretch from Washington State to California and Japan. As part of the special use permit for disturbing the sea floor, a prohibited activity within the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, the cable company funded the research program to monitor and assess initial impact and long-term recovery.

The Delta's support vessel, the 110 ft. R/V *Velero IV*, also provided a platform for research and was used around the clock in one activity or another. Daytime was primarily for submersible dives, but when sea state or fog prevented dives, the daytime research crew (the research contingent consisted of 3 daytime and 4 nighttime scientists) switched to either conducting bottom grabs for benthic community characterization or deploying the CTD (conductivity-temperature-depth) rosette for harmful algal bloom (HAB) sampling efforts.

Nighttime research consisted of bottom grabs along the parallel "control" areas for substrate assessment including sediment characterization and chemistry, benthic taxonomy sampling and to ground-truth areas that had been previously acoustically mapped. The night crew also conducted HAB sampling. The ship deployed two satellite-tracked drifters for oceanographic current monitoring related to HAB events.

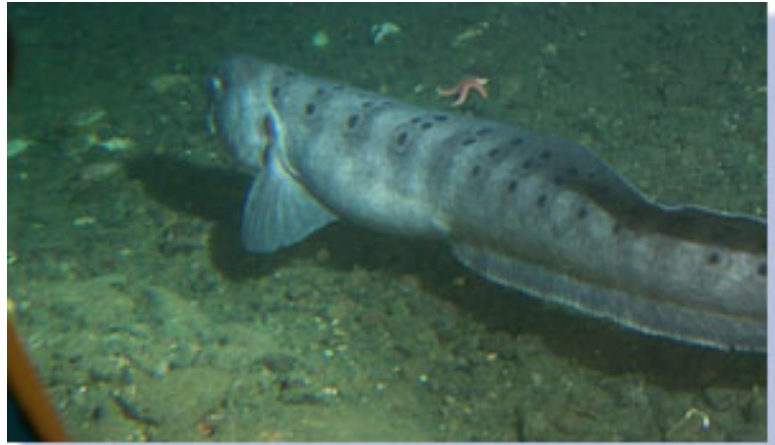
"It was a challenging 16 days at sea due to unfavorable weather and equipment constraints," said Ed Bowlby. "But we still managed to accomplish most of our video diving transects, complete the priority harmful algal bloom work, and much of our benthic sampling effort. With this and last year's collected samples (and future cruises), our

understanding of the deep sea benthic communities along the cable area will expand dramatically,"

At its conclusion, scientists had collected video footage of the cable and control areas, sampled harmful algal blooms, and collected benthic habitat grab samples to verify habitat acoustic mapping. The cruise also discovered additional area of unburied cables as well as lost fishing gear along the cable route.

*Delta* pilots also collected slurp samples to assess infauna species that are not detected from surface observations.

To learn more about the Olympic Coast Sanctuary, visit <http://www.ocnms.nos.noaa.gov/>.



Bottom dwelling wolf eel. Photo credit: Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary

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### Director Named for National Marine Sanctuaries

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Dan Basta assumes leadership of NOAA's National Marine Sanctuaries Systems.

On January 10, 2001, Dr. James D. Baker, the NOAA's Administrator and Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, named Daniel J. Basta as Director of the National Marine Sanctuary System. Both headquarters and field staff, who served under Basta in his role as acting sanctuary director for the past year, greeted the announcement with enthusiasm.

"It's time for the National Marine Sanctuary System to have a strong

leader like Dan Basta at the helm. He has tremendous leadership skills and is extremely capable of focusing the program on achieving the mission and goals we have established," said Billy Causey, Superintendent of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

"Dan's familiarity with NOAA and the various line offices will help build cooperation and establish partnerships within our agency as well as outside. We'll see an enormous amount of energy and focus on helping site operations improve and meet our resource management goals," Causey said.

Basta outlined a variety of innovations and approaches to further the system's success through community-based management, increased partnerships, monitoring, education and outreach, monitoring and ocean exploration.

"The National Marine Sanctuary System is the world leader in demonstrating the effectiveness of marine protected areas," said Basta. "As director, I'm committed to see the system remain as a leader through a stronger emphasis on protection of both living marine resources and our submerged cultural resources from important shipwrecks to pre-historic settlements."

Trained as an environmental engineer, Basta joined NOS in 1979 as the founding chief of the Strategic Assessments Branch (later the Strategic Environmental Assessments Division). He later served as Director of NOAA's National Ocean Service Special Projects Office.

Over the last two decades, Basta specialized in environmental quality and natural resources management throughout the United States, Europe, Australia, Mexico, China, and Canada. He co-authored more than 50 publications in his field including textbooks on environmental modeling, atlases of U.S. coastal and ocean regions, reports and books on national and international environmental problems.

Before joining NOAA, Dan Basta held positions at Resources for the Future in Washington, DC, the Environmental Studies Board of the National Academy of Sciences, and John Hopkins University.

The National Marine Sanctuary System, under his direction, includes 13 protected areas in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans and the Great Lakes. A 14th sanctuary has been proposed for in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

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### Great Lakes Marine Sanctuary Manager Search



Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve (Photo: Jessica Piltelka)

Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve, the nation's newest marine sanctuary, began a search for a sanctuary manager to help in the protection of a nationally significant collection of over 100 shipwrecks, spanning over a century of Great Lakes shipping history.

Designated in October 2000, the newest member of NOAA's National Marine Program, is a result of a NOAA and State of Michigan agreement to jointly manage the sanctuary and underwater preserve. Thunder Bay Marine Sanctuary and Underwater preserve represents many "firsts" for the National Marine Sanctuary Program. The new manager will lead the first Great Lakes sanctuary, the first sanctuary to focus solely on a large collection of underwater cultural resources, and the first sanctuary located entirely in state waters.

The new sanctuary's location in a sheltered bay on the tempestuous

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gale-prone Lake Huron helped Thunder Bay earn the name "Shipwreck Alley." Scores of vessels ended their sailing days on the lake floor and today known wrecks rest as close to the surface as 12 feet and as deep as 180 feet. Some of the wreck sites within the 448-square mile boundary remain largely intact while other sites are only remnants of vessels' boilers, engines, rudders, windlasses, and anchors. However, the known wrecks are only a small section of the total wreckage yet to be discovered.

NOAA's new manager will work on site with the State of Michigan as an equal partner. His or her duties will include directing the cultural resource protection, education, research and recreation enhancement programs for the sanctuary/preserve. In addition, the manager will coordinate and communicate with the Federal, state, regional and local government agencies; research and education communities, user groups; and business and industry.

Closing date for applications is November 29, 2001. For further information on the job announcement for Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary, visit: <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/wfjic/jobs/TN5293.HTM>.

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# Sanctuary scientists discover shipwreck

Archaeologists and staff from the NOAA's Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary have located the steel hull of the *Temple Bar*, wrecked among the Quillayute Needles, a particularly nasty patch of offshore rocks and pinnacles just south of the mouth of the Quillayute River.



Archaeologists from East Carolina University launch a side-scan sonar tow-fish from the sanctuary's research vessel *Tatoosh* in search of shipwrecks. Cake Rock is in the background. Photo: Bob Steelquist

Using side-scan sonar and a powerful magnetic sensor towed behind a research boat, the team located and mapped the hull that wrecked in about 40 feet of water just off Second Beach, near La Push, Washington in 1939.

"We've had a pretty good fix based on photographs of the wreck and reports from divers in the area," said Bob Steelquist, Olympic Coast's Sanctuary Education Coordinator. "Precisely mapping the site will allow us to return with divers to survey the ship's remains and

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determine its condition, whether or not it is a hazard, and help us understand the wreck better."

The *Temple Bar* was a coastal freighter carrying a cargo of scrap metal from Tacoma to Japan when it grounded among the jagged pinnacles of the Quillayute Needles on April 8, 1939. There were no fatalities. The ship's cargo and superstructure were later salvaged leaving only the hull structure on the sea floor.

A marine archaeology crew from East Carolina University has been working with the sanctuary on the project, which also includes searches for parts of the *WJ Pirrie*, which broke up and sank off Cake Rock with a loss of 18 lives in 1920, and the *Lamut*, grounded on Teahwhit Head in 1943. The searchers are working from the sanctuary vessel *Tatoosh*, a 42-foot research boat.

"The magnetometer registered a definite target on the *Temple Bar*, and immediately, the side-scan sonar showed images of the ship's hull structure and steel ribbing. Each time the boat passed over the ship, we got an image of the wreckage. For our last passes, we ran lengthwise along the hull and saw images of the ship's outline," said Steelquist.

This year's survey is part of ongoing work at Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary to locate and inventory shipwrecks within the 3,310 square mile national marine sanctuary. Historical and cultural materials are protected under state and federal laws and the sanctuary, as a federal agency, is charged with identifying and conserving historical, as well as natural resources. "Our task is to study and protect these resources for the benefit of the American people," said Carol Bernthal, Sanctuary Superintendent.

"Olympic Coast shipwrecks are part of the historical fabric of the communities here--each one affected local people in some way. Some, like the wreck of the *WJ Pirrie*, affected families of the crew in places as far away as Chile and illustrate the fact that the oceans unite, as well as separate us," said Bernthal.

Participants in this year's survey are Jeff Morris, Mike Plakos, Matt Lawrence and Dede Marx, all associated with the Program in Maritime Studies, East Carolina University; Andy Palmer, Rick Fletcher and Robert Steelquist, of Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary; and Bruce Terrell, marine archaeologist for the National Marine Sanctuary Program, based in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Visit <http://www.ocnms.nos.noaa.gov/> to learn more about the sanctuary and its shipwrecks.

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### 'Elye'wun's Historic Channel Crossing



After 125 years, a Chumash tomol voyages between the Channel Islands. Photo: Bob Schwemmer

On September 8, NOAA's Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS) staff members, aboard the NOAA support research vessel Xantu, were witness to an historic tomol crossing reports the sanctuary's Cultural Resources Coordinator Robert Schwemmer,

The five-paddle crew on the Chumash Native American planked canoe launched at Channel Islands Harbor at 3:30 a.m. that morning. The tomol, christened 'Elye'wun (pronounced "El-E-ah-woon), successfully crossed the Santa Barbara Channel arriving at Arch Rock, Anacapa Island at 9:30 A.M. It was the first successful tomol crossing to the islands in over 125 years.

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"At the end of the six-hour trip, the paddlers raised their paddles in unison to symbolize their accomplishment as they passed in front of Arch Rock at the eastern most end of the island," said Schwemmer.

*'Elye'wun's* crew continued their historic voyage traveling by the north face of Anacapa Island where they were greeted by dolphins. Encountering rougher sea at the passage between Anacapa and Santa Cruz Island, the crew reduced its number to four paddlers to help raise the tomol higher in the water in a bid to make the passage across to Santa Cruz Island. The historic crossing was completed when *'Elye'wun* arrived at Little Scorpion Anchorage, Santa Cruz Island at 3:20 P.M, a twenty-two mile journey taking twelve hours to complete.

As *'Elye'wun* came into view near Little Scorpion a cry of celebration was heard from more than 150 Chumash families and their friends. Sanctuary Manager LCDR Matt Pickett , Schwemmer, Outreach Project Coordinator Nancy Berenson and Vessel Operations Coordinator Matt Kelly and staff from the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum and Channel Islands National Park joined in the cheering. The aroma of burning sage and sounds of horns made from seashell and ram's horn funneled through the cove. Children dressed in traditional Chumash clothing stood ready to greet the paddlers.

Just as *'Elye'wun* approached the island shore the protective marine layer that kept the seas reasonably calm during the crossing opened to rays of sunlight. As *'Elye'wun* made the historic landing the crew once again raised their paddles in unison as on watchers sang in tribal song and chant. Several people waded into sanctuary waters assisting the weary but joyful paddlers from the tomol.

*Elye'wun*, a redwood constructed planked canoe, was lifted out of the water and taken ashore where the paddlers received blessings from a Chumash Elder. Sanctuary Manager Pickett and Schwemmer were asked to participate and received a blessing referred to as smudging. The celebration continued throughout the evening where a feast of food was offered to all, concluding with Chumash storytelling.

A celebrating crewmember, Dennis Kelley, described the importance of the tomol to Chumash culture.

"The Chumash Indians of California's Central Coast are known for many things in ethnographic circles, but perhaps the most unique is our use of the plank canoe or tomol. This vessel was not only

instrumental in the Chumash relationship to marine resources, but it also served to solidify the complex regional trade system whose influence was felt far beyond our homeland," said Kelley.

The day before the crossing a gathering was held for the public to view *'Elye'wun* and meet with crewmembers. During the preview was the unveiling of a poster depicting the Chumash story of the coyote saving the hawk, including images of a tomol and paddlers, providing a linkage of past and present ties to the Santa Barbara Channel. The poster was sponsored by the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary.

*Elye'wun* was built by hand through funds provided to the Chumash Maritime Association by NOAA's Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary education and outreach program. The tomol is a featured "living exhibit" at the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum, where the public can visit this working vessel. Some days visitors will not find *'Elye'wun* on exhibit, but may be fortunate to see the Chumash watercraft at sea heading out to the sanctuary.

To learn more about the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, visit <http://www.cinms.nos.noaa.gov/>.

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