

A Look Ahead

The sanctuary marks its 20th anniversary on November 4, 2012. In celebration of this milestone year, the sanctuary will provide support to partners and host a variety of events throughout the year. Conferences for teachers and seabird specialists are being planned, along with events that incorporate art, music and film. During 2012, the sanctuary will strive to continue its efforts to initiate and build partnerships with other government agencies, NGOs, academic institutions and industry groups with the goals of raising awareness, making the sanctuary a sentinel site for Gulf of Maine marine research and reinforcing our role as a catalyst for marine mammal conservation in the North Atlantic.



Evelyn Ganson, SBNMS



Anne Smrcina, SBNMS



Evelyn Ganson, SBNMS

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Members

Officers

Education: Richard Francis Delaney (Chair)
Education Alternate: Susan Farady

Diving: Heather Knowles (Vice Chair)
Diving Alternate: Robert W. Foster

At-Large: John Williamson (Secretary)
At-Large Alternate: Daniel Pingaro

Non-Governmental Members

Research: Jamie Courmane
Research: Dr. Richard W. Murray
Conservation: Dr. Rob Moir
Conservation Alternate: Wayne Petersen
Conservation: Dr. Priscilla M. Brooks
Conservation Alternate: Christopher McGuire

Education: Billy Spitzer
Education Alternate: Robert Rocha
Marine Transportation: Captain Francis Morton
Marine Transportation Alternate: Bob McCabe
Recreational Fishing: Michael Sosik, Jr.
Recreational Fishing Alternate: Capt. Brad White
Whale Watching: Steve Milliken
Whale Watching Alternate: Bob Avila
Fixed Gear Commercial Fishing: William Adler
Fixed Gear Commercial Fishing Alternate: David Casoni
Mobile Gear Commercial Fishing: Vito Giacalone
Mobile Gear Commercial Fishing Alternate: Al Cottone
Business/Industry: Tim Moll
Business/Industry Alternate: Margaret Merrill
Maritime Heritage: David S. Robinson
Maritime Heritage Alternate: John Galluzzo
At-Large: Deborah Cramer
At-Large Alternate: Jonathan Grant
At-Large: Theresa Barbo
At-Large Alternate: Judy Laster

Governmental Members

Federal Government (non-voting)

New England Fisheries Management Council:
Paul J. Howard; Designee: Michelle Bachman
NOAA National Marine Fisheries Northeast Regional
Office: Patricia A. Kurkul; Designee: Jennifer Anderson
U.S. Coast Guard, First Coast Guard District:
Rear Admiral Daniel Neptun; Designee: Captain Peter DeCola

State Government (non-voting)

MA Environmental Police:
Captain John Tulik
MA Office of Coastal Zone Management:
Bruce Carlisle; Designee Todd Callahan
MA Division of Marine Fisheries:
Paul J. Diodati; Designee: Dr. David Pierce

Sanctuary Advisory Council Coordinator:
Nathalie Ward

Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

STELLWAGEN BANK NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY



2011 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



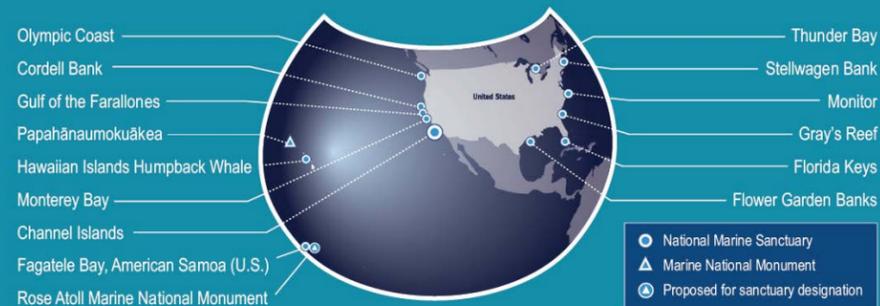
Lucas Cantwell, Plymouth South HS



Anne Smrcina, SBNMS

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary sits at the mouth of Massachusetts Bay, just 25 miles from the busy port of Boston. The 842-square-mile sanctuary is one of the world's premiere whale watching destinations and historically important as a fishing ground. Atlantic cod, haddock, various flounders and bluefin tuna are among its treasured species. Its waters support a rich assortment of marine life, including critically endangered North Atlantic right whales. Numerous shipwrecks, representing more than 400 years of maritime travel, rest on the sanctuary seafloor. Established Nov. 4, 1992.

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM



NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries is committed to supporting lives and livelihoods across the nation and in sanctuary communities through socioeconomic research and monitoring to understand the economic and social drivers of sanctuary resources and improve management practices.

<http://stellwagen.noaa.gov>



SBNMS/Fisheries Permit 605-1904



Elliott Hazen

Sanctuary staff member leads national ocean noise study

The sanctuary's marine ecologist, Leila Hatch, is co-chairing a NOAA effort to develop a comprehensive noise budget for the oceans and model marine mammal distributions and densities. This effort will help marine managers and the general public better visualize and understand the relative differences between impacts on marine life – from lower-power, continuous sound sources over long time scales (e.g., the constant hum of a power plant) versus higher-power sources with short durations (e.g., passage of a cargo vessel). The 2012 goal is to produce noise level maps for U.S. EEZ waters. *Photo taken under NOAA Fisheries Permit 981-1707*

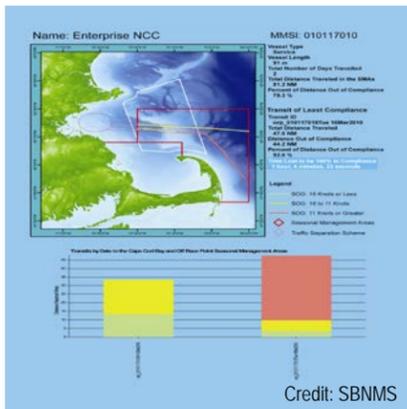


Jamison Smith

Crittercam comes to Stellwagen sanctuary

National Geographic brought its Crittercam® technology to the sanctuary this summer to make visual recordings of underwater behaviors. The team successfully placed the video camera on the backs of four humpback whales and was rewarded with amazing footage, including segments that show humpback whales moving their heads from side to side (until this time it was believed that all great whales had stationary neck vertebra). Future papers and a potential television program may result from this research project.

Photo taken under NOAA Fisheries Permit 605-1904



Credit: SBNMS

Ships get report cards on their behavior in local waters

Since 2008, NOAA has issued speed restrictions for waters off the Massachusetts coast to protect critically endangered North Atlantic right whales. To ensure that ships were complying with the rules for the Seasonal and Dynamic Management Areas, sanctuary researchers turned to the Automatic Identification System (AIS). This international safety and security system records the movements of most large ships in real-time. Researchers were able to plot ship tracks and highlight sections where speeds were not in compliance. As a result, letters were sent to shipping companies providing track speed information and calculating the extra time needed, if any, to stay in compliance. Response to this education/outreach program from shippers has been positive. The International Fund for Animal Welfare has been a key partner on this project.



Kiana Suchecki, Nauset Regional HS

Marine art contest attracts region's talented students

Artwork showcasing the ocean creatures of Stellwagen Bank sanctuary flooded the sanctuary this spring. The paintings and drawings were entries in the annual Massachusetts Marine Educators Marine Art Contest, co-sponsored by the sanctuary along with four other organizations. The sanctuary's education coordinator manages the annual competition. In 2011, the sanctuary mounted a traveling art show of the winning artwork and displayed it in various government facilities in the region, where it was seen by thousands of visitors. The 2011 contest attracted 750 entries, the largest number of entries in the 20+ year history of the contest.



Evelyn Ganson, SBNMS

Ambassadors go forth to inform the public

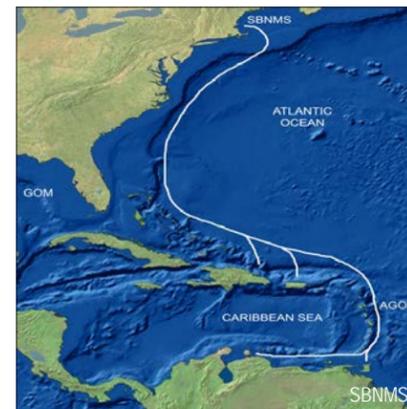
This year, the sanctuary established a formal volunteer program that has already reached more than 1,700 people through library programs, public talks and outreach events. Stellwagen Ambassadors are individuals who volunteer for extensive training and then serve as a docent corps, representing the sanctuary around the region. A *Child's Sanctuary*, for example, brings ambassadors to the Scituate Library to educate young children and their parents about sanctuary resources. The sanctuary is planning to expand this program to other communities. In addition to sanctuary ambassadors, five college interns provided technical assistance in 2011 to sanctuary staff while gaining field experience.



Evelyn Ganson, SBNMS

Seabird study takes wing

The first year-round effort to assess seabird presence in the sanctuary began this year with the assistance of volunteers from the Massachusetts Audubon Society. The program is an outgrowth of the Stellwagen Bank Christmas Bird Count, which established a formal survey track two years ago. The data will be used to establish a baseline of species, educate the public and help create a citizen science program for an area that has already been established as an Important Bird Area. Additional organizations providing technical support for the project are U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries.



Sister sanctuary links expand throughout the Atlantic

This year the Stellwagen Bank sanctuary's sister sanctuary program increased its international cooperative efforts. NOAA and France's Protected Areas Agency signed an agreement to support the protection of endangered humpback whales that migrate annually between Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary and Agoa Marine Mammal Sanctuary in the French Antilles. Agoa becomes the second sister sanctuary in the Caribbean, joining the Marine Mammal Sanctuary of the Dominican Republic. Also in 2011, the government of Bermuda signed a Letter of Intent to establish a sister sanctuary relationship with Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary once Bermuda created a marine mammal protected area in its waters. These waters lie along humpback whales' migratory route.



Jeremy Winn

Fulbright Fellowship leads to study on MPA decision-making

The sanctuary's research coordinator, David Wiley, recipient of an Ian Axeford Fulbright Fellowship in Public Policy, spent much of 2011 in New Zealand. While there, he produced a report that looked at "Increasing the Social Power of Scientific Information used for Decisions on Marine Protected Areas." At the center of the report is an analysis of research studies that include balanced input from a diversity of interests and demonstrate a full set of potential solutions. Analysis illustrates that stakeholders view the results of these research studies as more credible; moreover, these studies are more likely to be accepted for consensus decisions.