

SANCTUARY WATCH

A Message from National Marine Sanctuaries Director Daniel J. Basta

By the end of that tragic morning of September 11, we found our grief multiplied when we learned that friends from the National Geographic Society, and students and teachers on their way to a marine workshop at the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary had been passengers aboard one of the hijacked planes.

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, we have been strengthened by our shared bond as Americans. We in the National Marine Sanctuary Program are even more committed to the important work of protecting marine habitats and creatures for future generations.

The National Marine Sanctuary Program celebrates the accomplishments of those who perished on Flight 77. We cherish the memories of the National Geographic Society's Director of the Travel Office Ann Judge and Joe Ferguson, director of the Geography Education Outreach Program, who were accompanying students Asia Cottom, Bernard Brown, and Rodney Dickens and their teachers Sarah Clark, Hilda Taylor, and James Debeuneure to a marine workshop at the Channel Islands Sanctuary.

The student workshop in Santa Barbara, California, was planned as an introduction to the Sustainable Seas Expeditions, a five-year project of deepwater exploration and public education conducted by National Geographic Society and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families and friends of the victims. Over the coming months, we will be looking for ways to remember these young adventurers and the teachers and explorers who were bringing new ocean worlds to them.

Islands in the Stream 2001 Concludes in Monitor Sanctuary

NOAA's *Islands in the Stream* Expedition had planned to complete its 2001 expedition with a visit to the *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary during September 11-16, 2001.

However, weather in the "Graveyard of the Atlantic" was so severe that submersible dives became impossible. As a result, expedition explorers made a brief return on October 3-4 conducting four dives from the *Johnson-Sea-Link I* sub and the Research Vessel *Seward Johnson II*.

These ocean dives allowed scientists to complete a number of important projects including controlled imaging (digital video and still photography) and surveys of the *Monitor* wreck (both profile and overhead views). These new views will give the project manager for *Monitor* Mission 2002 a jump start in providing a first hand look at the turret.



Divers capture the image of the forward area of the wreck looking aft. Significant collapse of the midship bulkhead is apparent. The structure on the right marks the original location of the Monitor's turret.

Photo: Monitor NMS

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Monitoring Symposium

December 6, 2001

The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary:
An Ecosystem Report Card

NOAA Main Auditorium
1305 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland

The public is welcome to attend. For details, contact Dr. Brian Keller, 305-743-2437, x25 or at Brian.Keller@noaa.gov.

Presented by the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, The Environmental Protection Agency, State of Florida and other conservation partners.

Hawaiian Ocean Count 2002 Gears Up

As Hawai'i approaches its winter whale season, the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary staff and volunteers are gearing up for the 6th Annual Sanctuary Ocean Count to be held on January 26, February 23, and March 30, 2002.

During the count, volunteers scan the water's surface from island shore sites and count the number of humpback whales they see in a three-hour period. The numbers they collect provide an estimate of humpback whale populations and distribution patterns around the Hawaiian Islands. The annual count also serves as a vehicle to teach the public about whales and whalewatching opportunities off Hawai'i's shores.

The project, initiated in 1996 on O'ahu, has grown from approximately 150 volunteers to over 1,000 volunteers now scanning the waters off O'ahu, Kaua'i, and Hawai'i. The event has become so popular that visitors from the mainland and abroad now plan their vacations around the Sanctuary Ocean Count.

For more information about the Ocean Count, visit <http://www.hihwnms.nos.noaa.gov>.

—Kellie Cheung

Islands in the Stream *(Cont'd from pg. 1)*

In addition, divers placed an acoustic transponder at several previously identified points on the wreck that allows for precise GPS measurements.

Finally, the mission allowed sanctuary staff to assemble photomosaic images documenting the *Monitor's* current condition. The imagery and divers' personal observations will aid next summer's recovery plan—to recover the turret from the famed Civil War shipwreck. To learn more, visit <http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/explorations/islands01/islands01.html>.

Oil Spill Restoration Monies Fund Teachers' Workshop

Funds from an oil spill restoration gave teachers from Marin and San Francisco Counties the opportunity to learn about a 1984 oil spill and its effect on wildlife in addition to the facts about food webs, oceanography, and the sandy beach habitat of the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary.

Supported by the Gulf of the Farallones Sanctuary and the T/V *Puerto Rican* Oil Spill Restoration Fund, the Coastal Ecosystem Teacher Workshop was held in August. The week-long workshop, hosted by the Farallones Marine Sanctuary Association, also included an excursion on the Sanctuary's research boat, where teachers studied current marine research and collected plankton samples.

Other marine educational activities have been launched since the teachers' workshop. High school students from five schools now monitor the sandy beaches near the Gulf of the Farallones and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries.

—Jennifer Saltzman
Farallones Marine Sanctuary Association

Oil & Gas Industries Join Forces with Flower Garden Banks Sanctuary

The Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary lies in one of the largest oil fields in the world; it even has a producing oil platform within its boundaries. Because of this unique situation, it is vital that rapid and accurate communication takes place between the NOAA Oil Spill Response teams, sanctuary staff, and representatives from the oil and gas industry. Developing working relationships may one day save precious time if an oil spill or other threat to the sanctuary's coral reefs occurs.

On August 19-22 divers, representing government agencies and the oil and gas industry, joined forces for a three-day brainstorming trip to the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary.

Sanctuary Research Specialist Kevin Buch prepared divers with a REEF Fish Identification class that detailed the most common fish species found in the sanctuary. "I think that bringing together such a diverse group of people and having them share their opinions and information will be a big help to the Sanctuary now and in the future. I'm already looking forward to next year's cruise," Buch said.

—Sarah Bernhardt

Sanctuary/Reserves Project Potential

Efforts at promoting greater partnerships between the National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP) and National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) may sometimes be hindered by simple geography. However, some connections do occur when sanctuaries and reserves are located relatively close to each other, for example, California's Monterey Bay Sanctuary and Elkhorn Slough Reserve. In other areas, the two programs do share similarities that allow for collaboration. The most prominent of these can be found in their systemwide monitoring and education and outreach programs.

On September 18, Senior Marine Sanctuary Program staff met with staff from the NERRS to explore greater opportunities for shared projects.

Monitoring provides one area of promise. Since 1995, the NERRS has been conducting systemwide monitoring. (Every 30 minutes, a suite of water quality data is collected in all 25 Reserves.) In addition, the NERRS developed a framework for expanding the monitoring beyond its present water quality focus.

Currently, the Sanctuary Program is embarking on its own systemwide monitoring program. Though modeled differently than the NERRS program, the sanctuary monitoring program allows for the assessment and reporting of the status of resources in a systematic manner, addressing site-specific, regional, and national issues. During this process, NERRS will be consulted on program development and participate on the planning committee and in workshops. NMSP is also considering collaborating on a periodic joint report on the status of NOS protected areas that will highlight NERRS and NMSP monitoring programs.

Currently, the Sanctuary Program is exploring a NMSP graduate fellowship program and has turned to Reserve staff for their expertise. (The NERRS Graduate Fellowship program, in place since 1997, provides master and doctoral degree candidates with an opportunity to conduct research of national and local significance in a Reserve.)

The recent NMSP/NERRS meeting illustrated how both programs can benefit from the exchange of experiences. We will look for possible synergies, such as fostering interaction among the fellows of both programs, in the future. To learn more about NERRS, visit <http://www.ocrm.nos.noaa.gov/nerr/welcome.html>.

—Margo Jackson

Newsplash

Leadership Team Meeting—With the theme of “A Maturing Program,” managers and superintendents of NOAA's 13 marine sanctuaries and a new Northwestern Hawaiian Island coral reef reserve met in Port Angeles, Washington, to discuss significant actions and agreements planned for the coming year. These include new budget reporting and tracking methods, the Baja to Bering Project along the California/Mexico coastline, increased media and outreach efforts, systemwide monitoring of marine resources, and sanctuary management plan reviews.

Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail—Congressman Sam Farr (D-CA) joined in celebrating the first interpretive exhibit of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Scenic Trail. The trail is a project of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Inter-Agency Task Force, a collaboration of public agencies including California State Parks, local cities and counties, and transportation and ports commissions.

The sanctuary has committed up to \$100,000 for interpretive displays along the length of the Sanctuary Scenic Trail in Santa Cruz County. The contribution comes from federal funds specially allocated for construction projects for the nation's sanctuaries.

Joint Management Plan Review—Cordell Bank, Gulf of the Farallones, and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries are currently undergoing a joint management plan review. The sanctuaries are located adjacent to one another off north-central California and share many of the same resources and issues. During the review, the sanctuary and the public will examine management, regulatory goals, policies, and activities. The review also helps ensure that the sites are doing their best to conserve, protect, and enhance each sanctuary's significant living and cultural resources. A series of public scoping meetings will be held in late 2001 and early 2002. Public comment is also welcome through the National Marine Sanctuary website (<http://sanctuaries.nos.noaa.gov/jointplan/>).

Five-year Review in Hawaii—The Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary will be holding public meetings during its 5-year review on January 14-18. For more information, visit <http://www.hihwnms.nos.noaa.gov/>.



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vision People value marine sanctuaries as treasured places protected for future generations.

mission To serve as the trustee for the nation's system of marine protected areas to conserve, protect, and enhance their biodiversity, ecological integrity, and cultural legacy.

December/January Calendar

Natural events • In December, hammerhead sharks and spotted eagle rays begin arriving in the Flower Garden Banks Sanctuary. Gray whales migrate south through the Gulf of the Farallones and the Monterey Bay Sanctuaries in December and January. In the Atlantic Ocean, northern right whales calve off the Georgia and North Florida Coasts.

December 5 • The Coral Reef Task Force meets in Washington, D.C. For more information, call Cheva Heck 305-292-0311.

December 6 • Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Monitoring Program Symposium, NOAA Auditorium, Silver Spring, MD. Call (305) 743-2437 for info.

December 15 • Christmas Bird Count at Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary with Massachusetts Audubon Society.

January 16 • Gulf of the Farallones and Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuaries share a 21st anniversary.

January 17 • Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary celebrates its 10th anniversary.

January 30 • Monitor National Marine Sanctuary celebrates its 27th anniversary.

Monitor Manager Assists in Expedition to R.M.S. Titanic

Titanic filmmaker James Cameron enlisted the talents of Monitor National Marine Sanctuary Manager Dr. John Broadwater during a recent deep ocean expedition to the R.M.S. *Titanic*.

Because NOAA holds the responsibility for managing the activities of U.S. researchers to the site (through the *Titanic* Memorial Act of 1986), the National Marine Sanctuary Program accepted Cameron's invitation to send a NOAA Advisor on the expedition. Dr. Broadwater was chosen because of his involvement in deepwater archaeology and submerged cultural resource management.

The filmmaker's primary goals during the August 13 - September 15 expedition were to produce a digital high-definition 3-D I-MAX movie and a 90-minute television documentary on the *Titanic* and to produce a photomosaic of the famous wreck site.

Dr. Broadwater developed a survey plan working closely with staff from Phoenix International, builders of the ROV

Medusa, and Cameron's Earthship Productions.

On September 10, Dr. Broadwater descended 12,600 feet in the Russian submersible *Mir 2* to examine the *Titanic* at close range.

"Seeing that famous ship and knowing the horrible tragedy that her sinking represents, made it very difficult to examine her with the cold, impartial eyes of a scientist," said Dr. Broadwater.

Problems with the new ROV and bad weather prevented the expedition from completing necessary imaging.

However, Dr. Broadwater agreed to work further with Earthship Productions to obtain video documentation that will assist NOAA in establishing a "baseline" condition of the *Titanic*, similar to the site documentation developed at the *Monitor* Sanctuary.

Cameron's company, in cooperation with the NOAA and the U.S. Navy, will assist the Sanctuary during *Monitor* Mission 2002 in using high-definition 3-D cameras mounted on the Navy research submersible *NR-1* to document the Civil War wreck.

Sanctuary Watch is a publication of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Sanctuary Program, Communications and Development Branch.

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The National Marine Sanctuary Program is managed by NOAA's National Ocean Service.