FY16 Accomplishments

BACKGROUND

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary was established in 1992 to protect and preserve one of the most biologically diverse ecosystems in the Gulf of Maine. Renowned for its biological diversity and remarkable productivity, the sanctuary is a critical feeding and nursery ground for several whale and dolphin species and has become one of the world's premier whale watching destinations.

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary is part of the National Marine Sanctuary System, which is a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 600,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington state to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. National marine sanctuaries are managed for the conservation of their natural and cultural resources, while supporting sustainable recreation, tourism and compatible commercial activities. The network includes a system of 13 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments.

http://stellwagen.noaa.gov/
A BOWW patrol provides guidance on safer boating around whales.

Researchers spent long days and nights studying the habits and habitat of the sand lance.

A life-sized inflatable whale serves as one of the sanctuary's premier outreach tools. “Salt,” named after the grand dame of the sanctuary's humpbacks, reached over ten thousand people in her first year of outings, making visits to The Maritime Aquarium in Norwalk, Connecticut, Boston Harbor Islands National Park during “Get Into Your Sanctuary Day,” and a variety of schools and community centers to raise awareness of marine mammal conservation. The sanctuary partnered with the South Shore Natural Science Center, Bass Pro Shops, and NOAA Fisheries to acquire the model.

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary
Looking Ahead to FY17

- With On the Water magazine and the advisory council, the sanctuary will develop a campaign to celebrate recreational fishing on Stellwagen Bank, to engage and expand a key sanctuary user group.
- Autonomous underwater vehicles and moored stations will record sounds in the sanctuary, including whale vocalizations, sound from other marine species and noise from boats and other anthropogenic sources. This will provide better understanding of the regional acoustic environment.
- The sanctuary will work with NOAA Fisheries and National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science to produce a Condition Report in advance of preparing for a new management plan. This report will evaluate the status of natural and historical sanctuary resources.

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