A Look Ahead

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary is in the process of implementing its Final Management Plan, published in June 2010. Under the new plan, the sanctuary is working closely with the New England Fishery Management Council and other management authorities to designate a Sanctuary Ecological Research Area, which would enable scientists to study sanctuary ecosystems in a natural state, undisturbed by human activities. Information gathered in the research area would help guide conservation of the sanctuary’s diverse marine life and habitats.

The sanctuary continues to nominate shipwrecks to the National Register of Historic Places. A nomination currently in development focuses on the sunken remains of two historical sailing vessels involved in the granite trade, highlighting the sanctuary’s links to the many New England communities that quarried stone for America’s largest cities. The sanctuary is unique among federal authorities in preserving maritime historical resources and the connection they represent between people and the past.

Jobs, Communities and Culture

An estimated 4.8 million people live in the greater Boston metropolitan area adjacent to Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, which is located between Cape Ann and Cape Cod. The sanctuary supports a diverse and extensive mix of commercial, recreational, scientific and educational activities that occur year-round, with vessels departing from the many ports that rim Massachusetts Bay. The Final Management Plan reports that approximately 300 commercial fishing boats operate within the sanctuary’s boundaries, bringing in annual total commercial landings valued at $15-23 million, with the most valuable commercial fisheries being lobster, cod and flounder. The sanctuary’s recreational fishing industry, encompassing some 75 party and charter boats, generates a direct sales value of about $2.5 million. Recreational fishing from private boats is another important activity. Various sources have listed the sanctuary as a premier whale watching site – one of the Top 10 locations in the world and one of only three such areas in U.S. waters. It is estimated that more than 1.2 million passengers participated in whale watching tours in New England in 2000, generating annual total direct sales of more than $30 million to the region and $24 million to Massachusetts alone.

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.

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Members

Officers
Chair: Richard Francis Delaney
Vice Chair: Heather Knowles
Secretary: John Williamson

Non-Governmental Members
Research: Mason Weinrich
Alternate: Wayne Peterson
Research: Richard W. Murray, Ph.D.
Alternate: Peter Austin, Ph.D.
Conservation: Rob Mor, Ph.D.
Alternate: Jake Levenson
Conservation: Priscilla Brooks, Ph.D.
Alternate: Kate Kellner-McKinnon
Education: Billy Sullivan
Alternate: Robert Rocha
Education: Richard Francis Delaney
Alternate: Susan Fitzally
Marine Transportation: Captain Francis Morton
Alternate: Bob McCabe
Recreational Fishing: Michael Sosik, Jr
Alternate: Captain Brian White

Whale Watching: Steve Miliken
Alternate: Bob Avila
Fixed Gear Commercial Fishing: William Adler
Alternate: David Cawani
Mobile Gear Commercial Fishing: Vito Giaiodone
Alternate: Al Collette
Business/Industry: Tim Mull
Alternate: Margaret Merli
Maritime Heritage: David S. Robinson
Alternate: Mark Wilkins
Diving: Heather Knowles
Alternate: Robert W. Foster
Citizen-At-Large: Deborah Crane
Alternate: vacant
Citizen-At-Large: John Williamson
Alternate: Daniel Pigani
Citizen-At-Large: Theresa Barbo
Alternate: Judy Laster

Governmental Members
State Government
Massachusetts Environmental Police (non-voting):
Captain John Tull
Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (non-voting):
Devin Bello-Bird
Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (non-voting):
Paul J. DeFon
Alternate: David Pierce, Ph.D.

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New England Fisheries Management Council (non-voting):
Pamela A. Kurkul
Alternate: Michelle Bachman
NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (non-voting):
Patricia A. Kurkul
Alternate: Jennifer Anderson
U.S. Coast Guard (non-voting):
Rear Admiral Timothy Sullivan
Alternate: Capt. Peter N. DeCilia

NOAA Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary (non-voting):
Craig McDonnell, Ph.D., Superintendent
Sanctuary Advisory Council Coordinator:
Nathalie Ward

http://stellwagen.noaa.gov

Gerry E. Studds 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 premier whale watching destinations and a historically important fishing ground. Its waters support a rich assortment of marine life, including the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale and the economically important Atlantic cod. A plethora of shipwrecks representing more than 400 years of maritime travel rest on the sanctuary seafloor. Established Nov. 4, 1992.
Sanctuary Becomes Center for Endangered Whale Research

Sanctuary Exhibits Open in Provincetown and Rockport

After a multi-year process that began in 2000, involved public scoping sessions from Maine to Connecticut, engaged eleven working groups with some 200 members, and accumulated more than 45,500 comments from all 50 states, two U.S. Territories and the public, the National Marine Sanctuaries Office has released its latest plan for the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, a 3,000 square mile marine protected area stretching from Massachusetts Bay to Cape Cod Bay and the entire sanctuary. As a benefit to installing Automatic Identification System (AIS) and sanctuary effects to promote great whales to the public, the National Marine Sanctuaries Office and the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary (SBNMS) have released their latest plan for the sanctuary, which will be described in a press release on June 30, 2012. The plan is available online at http://stellwagen.noaa.gov. The plan includes a detailed assessment of the effects of shipping and climate change on the sanctuary's resources, including the conservation of marine biodiversity, and advocates a standard of conservation that is higher than what may be applied elsewhere in the Gulf of Maine.

Over a two day period in August 2010, a Stellwagen Bank sanctuary research team visited seven historic shipwreck sites. The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation’s Maritime Heritage ROV cruise, conducted with the assistance of the National Undersea Research Center (NURC) at the University of Rhode Island, was the sixth Stellwagen Bank sanctuary maritime heritage ROV cruise with NURTEC since 2002; the partnership has successfully investigated 28 shipwreck sites. Archaeologists used data from these cruises to successfully nominate four archaeological sites to the National Register of Historic Places.

A NOAA report, issued in July, indicated that the numbers of Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary’s top-level predators, such as halibut and swordfish, have decreased significantly over the past 100 years. The National Marine Sanctuaries Conservation Council recommended developing a cooperation agreement with the U.S. National Park Service to help protect these resources. A NOAA-Interior partnership with the National Park Service and the National Park Foundation to develop such an agreement is pending.

New Management Plan Released in June

The new management plan, released in June 2012, provides strategic guidance for management actions for the next five years. The new plan includes a comprehensive assessment of the effects of shipping and climate change on the sanctuary’s resources, including the conservation of marine biodiversity, and advocates a standard of conservation that is higher than what may be applied elsewhere in the Gulf of Maine.

The plan, which is available online at http://stellwagen.noaa.gov, provides strategic guidance for management actions for the next five years. The plan emphasizes the conservation of marine biodiversity, and advocates a standard of conservation that is higher than what may be applied elsewhere in the Gulf of Maine.

The plan identifies four priority areas: capacity building, ecosystem management, top predators and biodiversity diminished, and shipping speed feedback to industry.

Maritime Heritage Cruise Targets Seven Historic Shipwrecks

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