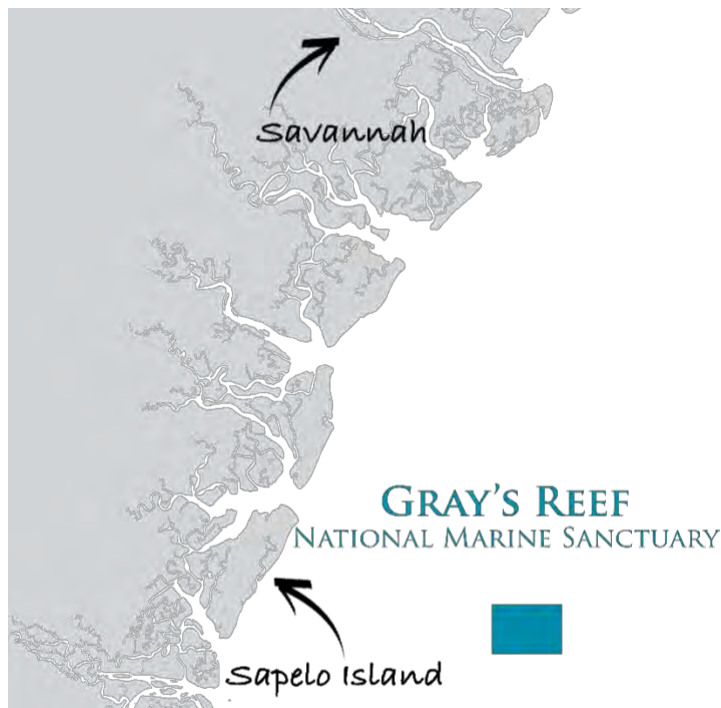


## Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary Accomplishments

### Fiscal Year 2020

Designated in 1981, Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary off the coast of Georgia is one of the largest near-shore "live-bottom" reefs of the southeastern United States. Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary is currently the only protected natural reef area on the continental shelf off the Georgia coast. The approximately 22-square-mile sanctuary (about 14,000 acres) is teeming with marine life and is part of the endangered North Atlantic right whale's calving ground. Loggerhead turtles rest at the reef, where scientists have identified more than 200 fish species.

Visit [graysreef.noaa.gov](https://graysreef.noaa.gov) for more information.



### Gray's Reef hosts new fellowship

Through a partnership with the University of Georgia's Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant, the sanctuary is providing unique educational and professional opportunities to its first two Sea Grant Fellows, both graduate students at Savannah State University. Sea Grant Fellows work closely with the sanctuary's research coordinator and resource protection coordinator to advance science, policy, and planning projects, from assisting in developing comprehensive research plans to evaluating resource protection needs.

### Gray's Reef gains global media attention

The sanctuary anchored a news story about the importance of marine protected areas in conserving and protecting the ocean. "Safeguarding the Seas, One Protected Area at a Time" features NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries Director John Armor and several scientists who conduct research at Gray's Reef, along with others. Reported by the Associated Press, the story has been published by more than 12,000 media outlets worldwide. The multimedia piece is available in several different languages under two titles. Formats include a print story with photos and videos.



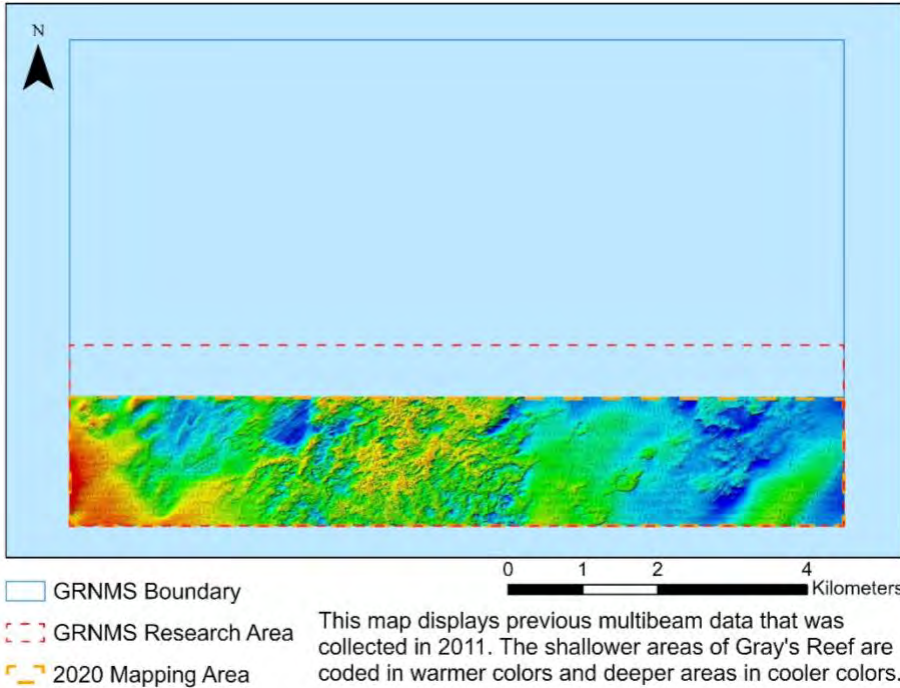
A Sea Grant Fellow works alongside NOAA Northeast Fisheries Science Center staff.  
Photo: Kimberly Roberson/NOAA



Sea Grant Fellow works in Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary alongside NOAA Northeast Fisheries Science Center.  
Photo: Kimberly Roberson/NOAA

## Ocean mapping completed at Gray's Reef

Sanctuary scientists and partners from NOAA's Office of Marine and Aviation Operations and the Office of Coast Survey completed the benthic mapping portion of the sanctuary's Southeast Regional Ecosystem Assessment. The depth, shape, and composition of the seafloor are foundational data elements needed to explore, sustainably develop, conserve, and manage America's ocean resources. Using multi-beam sonar and other ship survey systems, scientists and survey technicians collected data to produce a fine-scale habitat map of the sanctuary. The seascape baseline enables researchers to study changes in the sanctuary's habitat.



The NOAA ship *Nancy Foster* completed multibeam mapping of the bathymetry in portions of Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary. Image: NOAA

## Looking Ahead

- The sanctuary will begin generating its first condition report since 2008. The report will provide a summary of resources in the sanctuary, pressures on those resources, the current condition and trends, and management responses to the pressures that threaten the marine environment.
- The sanctuary is collaborating with the Coastal Heritage Society to create a large exhibit including a Science On a Sphere® display in Tricentennial Park's children's museum.
- In collaboration with The Nature Conservancy, the sanctuary will launch an interactive learning portal for recreational fishers that focuses on best fishing practices. The portal will educate anglers on how they can help sustain and improve the marine resources of the sanctuary.

## NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM



The National Marine Sanctuary System is a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 600,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters. The network includes a system of 14 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments.

- National Marine Sanctuary
- ▲ Marine National Monument
- Proposed National Marine Sanctuary

Scale varies in this perspective. Adapted from National Geographic Maps.