



Monitor National Marine Sanctuary Accomplishments

Fiscal Year 2021

Designated in 1975 as the first national marine sanctuary, Monitor National Marine Sanctuary protects the wreck site of the USS *Monitor*. *Monitor* was the prototype for a class of U.S. Civil War ironclad, turreted warships that significantly altered both naval technology and marine architecture in the 19th century. The sanctuary protects the wreck for future generations and works to share this vessel's historical and cultural legacy with the public. With more than four decades of protecting and preserving our nation's maritime heritage, the sanctuary and partners began in 2008 to document and survey the many World War II shipwrecks surrounding the sanctuary.

Visit monitor.noaa.gov for more information.



Collaborative Archaeological Research

In July 2021, Monitor National Marine Sanctuary research staff undertook a research cruise off the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Along with a three-person Duke University crew of the R/V *Shearwater*, additional volunteers from Diving With a Purpose and East Carolina University joined the mission. Applying information from local fishing and diving communities, the team used side scan sonar to survey key shipwrecks to better understand the maritime cultural landscape of the region.



Researchers prepare equipment to survey a shipwreck just outside the sanctuary. Photo: NOAA

Expanding Partnership with the State of North Carolina

In an effort to reach a broader and more diverse audience during a pandemic year, the sanctuary and the North Carolina Office of State Archaeology came together to create a series of virtual presentations, the Submerged NC webinar series. The series hosted 15 presentations on a variety of topics, ranging from hurricanes, beach wrecks, and the vast collection of historical shipwrecks off the North Carolina coast. More than 5,300 people, representing over 40 countries, registered for the webinars and more than 2,800 people attended.



Webinars highlighted research serving to honor and protect North Carolina's shipwrecks. Photo: NOAA

Virtually Reaching Educators

As educators relied more on virtual presentations in 2021, the sanctuary and the North Carolina Office of State Archaeology created educator workshops as part of the Submerged NC webinar series. The workshops highlighted Monitor National Marine Sanctuary's curriculum guides and other NOAA educational resources focused on the history of shipwrecks off the North Carolina coast. Topics covered the USS *Monitor*, World War I and II, maritime archaeology, marine debris, and ROVs. More than 1,960 people registered for the six workshops and 970 attended.



Sanctuary staff and partners offered multiple workshops for educators.

Photo: NOAA

Looking Ahead

- Recently, Mallows Bay-Potomac River and Monitor national marine sanctuaries were joined under a single management structure. The sanctuaries retain independent authorities, regulations, and management plans. Staff from both sites will support actions that increase partnerships, community engagement, and programming common to both missions.
- A telepresence project with Global Foundation for Ocean Exploration, the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science, North Carolina's Office of State Archaeology, and the NOAA Ship *Nancy Foster* will document North Carolina shipwrecks to bring them virtually to viewers.
- The sanctuary will celebrate the 160th anniversary of the USS *Monitor* in conjunction with the 50th anniversary for the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. The sanctuary will celebrate through webinars, new products, outreach events with a new travel exhibit, and more.



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 15 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments.