

UPCOMING EVENTS

Cape Ann Dry Dive

2022 date is TBD

Driving tour and beach clean-ups of the best dive sites on Cape Ann. This all-day event will include lunch and dinner stops with the club. For more information, email: environmental@neadc.org

Great Annual Fish Count

Saturday, July 23, 2022

Stage Fort Park, Gloucester, MA

Coming back for the 19th year, you can help count fish and win prizes! Each year divers help researchers by surveying fish and invertebrate populations. After the dive, we gather at Stage Fort Park in Gloucester, for raffle prizes and a BBQ!

Tropical Fish Rescue and Club BBQ

Saturday, September 17, 2022

(tentative)

Fort Wetherill State Park,
Jamestown, RI

Save the date for the annual Tropical Fish Rescue and NEADC BBQ. Help us rescue tropical fish trapped in our cold New England waters and support the Gulf Stream Orphans project!

General Meetings

Meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month. They are, for the time being, virtual. For information on attending, visit our website: neadc.org

Boston Sea Rovers

Join us October 2nd and 3rd at Boston Sea Rovers, the longest continually running dive show in the world.

Seminars and workshops include over 40 speakers covering topics such as photographic lighting, dive safety, staycation diving opportunities, exploring historic wrecks, diving during the pandemic, and coral reef preservation. The Saturday evening film festival is a highlight with a history of premiering speakers and presentations.

The exhibit hall will offer a wide range of booths including our own New England Aquarium Dive Club booth! Come by and visit us at the show.



President's Letter

Greetings to all new and returning members of the New England Aquarium Dive Club!

Since early March 2020, our local dive community, and the world at large, has experienced unprecedented challenges due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

I would like to thank our members for continuing to support the New England Aquarium Dive Club (NEADC) during this time. We have been fortunate to be able to continue to host our monthly General Meetings virtually with a diverse group of local, national and international speakers. We have had many first time participants join us for our virtual meetings.

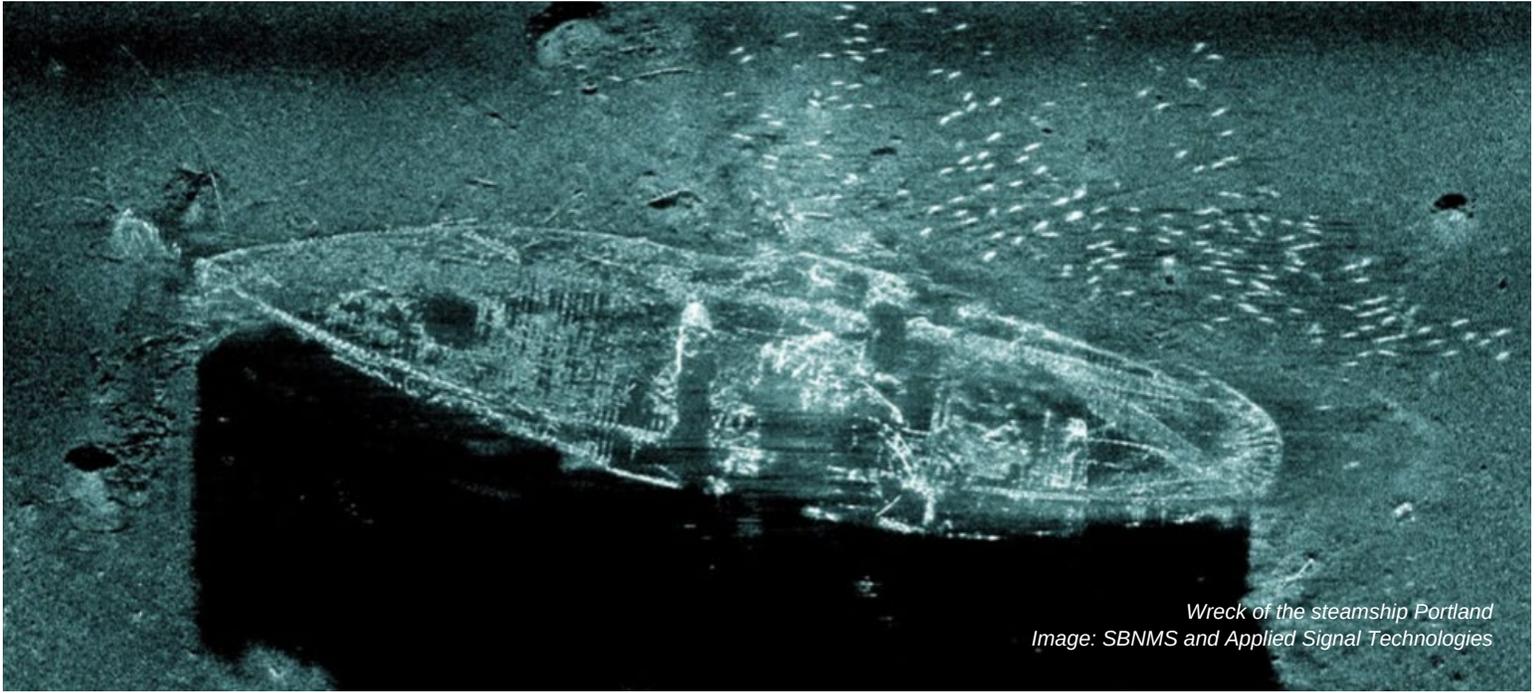
I would also like to thank my fellow NEADC board members for their ongoing efforts to

communicate with and support our members and the local dive community.

Whether you are a new or experienced diver, curious about diving or new to the area, we have a great repository of dive-related information on our website (www.neadc.org), including links to local dive shops, dive sites and upcoming events in the community, such as scheduled dives, lectures and dive travel.

Don't hesitate to reach out to our board members for any questions related to the Club and diving!

*Best Fishes and Happy Diving!
Uma Mirani, NEADC President*



*Wreck of the steamship Portland
Image: SBNMS and Applied Signal Technologies*

Protecting the Stellwagen Bank Sanctuary's Historical Shipwrecks

By Ariel Silverman

When policymakers face the challenge of protecting irreplaceable marine archeological sites, the fishing industry and conservation interests are often at odds. But they don't have to be.

The shipwrecks of Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary have united a variety of stakeholders, from divers and historians to fishermen, over the cause of preserving these irreplaceable historic resources and protecting fishermen and their gear. To accomplish these goals, NOAA is piloting the Shipwreck Avoidance Program (SAP). SAP is an innovative program dedicated to encouraging commercial and recreational fishermen to voluntarily avoid disclosed shipwreck locations.

Through SAP, NOAA publicized the locations of 11 historic shipwrecks to the public, reversing its previous policy of non-disclosure. In return, NOAA officials request that fishermen voluntarily avoid the designated sites to avoid fishing gear

damage. During the pilot phase, officials will monitor voluntary compliance to determine SAP's effectiveness.

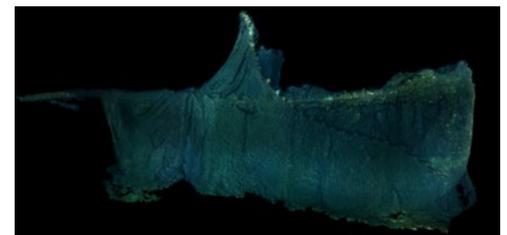
Divers are fundamentally a conservation constituency. After divers explore a wreck, they want to know more about its history and see that it is protected.

Sanctuary archaeologists have located 47 historic shipwrecks in Stellwagen Bank. Historical records indicate that at least 200 more historic and modern vessels that sank within sanctuary boundaries lay somewhere beneath the surface.

Protecting Irreplaceable Dive Sites

Many wrecks have been damaged or destroyed by commercial fishing gear. John Perry Fish is a sonographer and the co-discoverer of the Portland steamship, the

sanctuary's most iconic historic wreck and a memorial site for over 192 passengers and crew lost in its sinking. He explained that "trawl nets and floats can become ensnared on wrecks like the Portland and remain at the site for decades." Wreck divers, like fishermen, have good reason to protect sites from further damage. Before SAP, shipwreck locations were not disclosed to the public because officials were concerned divers would remove or displace artifacts. This concern has greatly diminished because of the advocacy of Heather Knowles, co-founder of Northern Atlantic Dive Expeditions, Inc. and Chair of the Sanctuary Advisory Council.



3-D digital model of fishing nets and lines draping the Portland's bow. Image: WHOI/MITech/SBNMS

Knowles believes that divers are “fundamentally a conservation constituency.” She said that wreck divers want to see the sites up close and rarely disturb them. “After divers explore a wreck,” she added, “they want to know more about its history and see that it is protected.” Knowles is confident that SAP will help fishermen avoid hazardous sites while allowing more wreck divers to bring shipwrecks’ stories to the public.

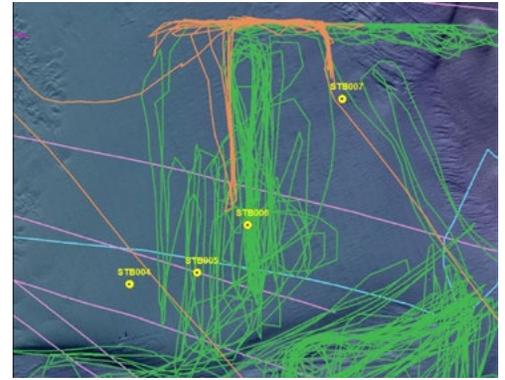
Preserving Non-Renewable Archeological and Ecological Resources

In addition to fishermen and divers, other marine sanctuary stakeholders are in support of SAP because of shipwrecks’ importance to archeological research and biodiversity.

Sanctuary Dr. Calvin Mires, a marine archaeologist and experienced wreck diver, believes that the public will care more about preserving shipwrecks when they better

understand New England’s maritime cultural landscapes. Historic shipwrecks are “non-renewable resources” because they cannot be replaced once they are destroyed. From a ship’s exterior, archeologists can learn about historical ship building techniques. From the cargo they carried, experts can better understand New England’s 19th century economy. Mires believes the sites also share a deeply relatable human story. Ships like the Portland were “traveling hotels” in which crew, staff, and travelers lived and worked closely together. In many ways, New England’s historic maritime transportation industry lessened the strict socioeconomic hierarchy and rampant racial inequality of that time period because of the high wages offered and interdependent working environment onboard.

Knowles believes that SAP also creates an opportunity for citizen science. Many wreck divers, she said, “are investing in



Automatic Identification System data showing the tracks of four commercial scallop dredge vessels that fished in the vicinity of the four wrecks (yellow dots) on southern Stellwagen Bank in 2020.
Image: Michael Thompson/SBNMS

sophisticated underwater cameras. As more sites are disclosed to the public and explored, these photographs can be shared with marine archeologists, shipwreck ecologists and the public, helping to grow scientific knowledge about the wrecks.”

Shipwreck Management to Encourage Voluntary Compliance

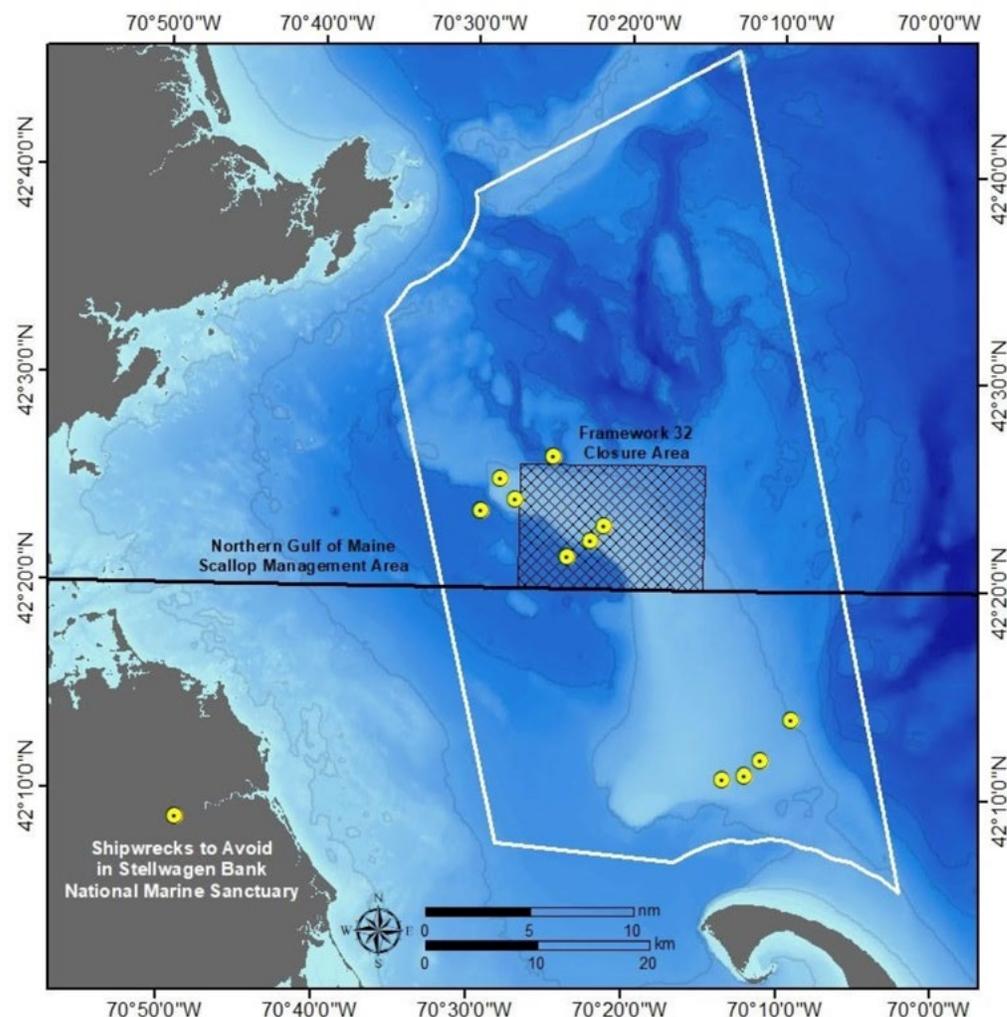
The future of SAP and the sanctuary’s shipwrecks are still uncertain. If the program is successful at encouraging voluntary avoidance, NOAA officials will likely disclose the locations of more sites. By working together towards a shared goal, stakeholders can preserve these irreplaceable resources while sustaining fishing and wreck diving in sanctuary waters.

For more information on SAP or to report a shipwreck location contact:
ben.haskell@noaa.gov.

To view a list of the recently disclosed sanctuary shipwreck sites, visit:

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/bulletin/historic-shipwreck-avoidance-stellwagen-bank>

Ariel Silverman is an ocean sustainability journalist and policy volunteer with Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary. She is currently on a leave of absence from her studies at Harvard University. You can reach her at Arielsilverman1@gmail.com.





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Camping on the Sea: Blackbeard's Live Aboard Cruises

By Ernst VanBergeijk, Ph.D., M.S.W. | NAUI Instructor #10401 | SDI Instructor #29388

Faced with the thought of spending the holidays alone for the first time in my adult life, I decided to take a chance and try a live aboard scuba trip. That decision opened new doors to the diving world for me. Not only did I enjoy my first trip; but have gone back annually ever since. That first one-week trip aboard the Sea Explorer gave me the confidence to tackle a 16 day live aboard in the Red Sea. The economy of the trip made it worth the risk.

Live aboard cruise ships provide a number of advantages over land-based dive trips. First, live aboard excursions can be quite economical. Often, they are inclusive and do not require the extra expense of paying for hotel accommodations. Meals, all the diving, and drinks are included. Usually, airfare, airport transfers, and tips for the crew are not included. Second, the opportunity to dive is maximized with up to 5 dives a day scheduled. Third, live aboard diving eliminates the daily hassle of assembling and

disassembling the gear and transporting it back to your hotel room. On a live a board, you leave your gear fully assembled after each dive and only remove your first stage in order to hook up the compressor hose.

The opportunity to dive is maximized with up to 5 dives a day.

Fourth, a single traveler always has someone with whom to dive and socialize. Fifth, there are chances to take more advanced training certifications like deep diving, night diving, boat diving, and marine species identification courses. Finally, live aboard diving allows you access to dive sites that are usually out of reach of land-based operations. These sites are often more pristine than heavily trafficked sites.

Blackbeard's Cruises are a part of the Allstar Live Aboard Fleet featuring the Sea Explorer

and the Morning Star which are 65' motorized sailing vessels specifically outfitted for diving. This company is one of the longest operating live aboard companies in the Caribbean. The vessels accommodate 20 divers each in dormitory style bunk rooms. The berths resemble the bunks you would find in a sleeper car in a train. The experience gives you a camping on the seas feel. The meals are plentiful and delicious. The amazing feat is the fact that the galley is the size of a closet and feeds 25 people three times a day. On Christmas Day, dinner featured a full-sized turkey dinner including all of the trimmings.



© Ernst VanBergeijk

Meals are a communal experience that can be enjoyed in the dining area or in the fresh air on deck.

When the seas and winds are favorable, the Sea Explorer and Morning Star leave from Nassau Harbor and head south through the Exumas National Park. If the seas do not favor this route, the ships head to the leeward side of Eleuthera Island which also has a variety of sites. More than likely divers will only touch land once while sailing through the Exumas National Park. That stop will be on Allen Caye, one of only three small uninhabited islands where the endangered Bahamian Iguana reside.

The dive sites provide a wide range of experiences for divers of all levels. Shallow dive sites such as Smuggler's Plane are laden with marine life hiding among the wreckage. There are spectacular wall dives with swim-throughs on the Exumas Trench. Diving the wall here is akin to flying over a liquid Grand Canyon, with the Trench reaching depths of 4,000'. Gray reef sharks are frequent companions on these dives. Pinnacle Reef is a fantastic dive simply because of the coral formations. If the timing is right, during the full moon, the Nassau Grouper mass on this reef for spawning at night. Even during the day, during this phase of the moon, you can see large gatherings of grouper waiting for the full moon to rise. The ships take guests to one of the hundreds of blue holes off of the shores of the over 700 islands that make up the Bahamas. Here divers are treated to a cavern at 90' as well as nurse sharks, loggerhead turtles, and dozens of fish species that make the blue hole environment their home. The Cobia Fish Farm dive site is by far the strangest site you will ever dive. Looming out of the depths this fish farm looks like an underwater UFO.

The highlight of the trip for many divers is the famous shark dive. This takes place on the Austin Smith Wreck where the crew of the Blackbeard's ships tethers a chum-suckle 15' above the heads of divers. The divers are witnesses to a feeding frenzy that is exhilarating. One of my favorite dives of all time is known as the Washing Machine. This dive can only be done during certain tidal



conditions. The Washing Machine is a drift dive between two small islands. The crew line up the 20 divers; 10 per exit. This is a negative entry, meaning no air is in the divers' BCDs. The divers bail out simultaneously like skydivers bailing out of a large cargo plane to form a formation in the sky. The reef flies by and the divers float effortlessly in the current. The divers are treated to an underwater roller coaster ride and feel like a sock in the spin cycle. I laughed so hard on this dive my mask filled with water. It is not to be missed.

The highlight of the trip for many divers is the famous shark dive.

Lessons learned:

- Fly into Nassau the day before departure the boat's departure. It's less stressful
- Stay at the Nassau Harbour Club, it's less than 100' from the boats and inexpensive
- Pay for Airport Transfer ahead of time to save money

- See local sites like the Pirate Museum, Pirate Republic Brewery & the Straw Market

Bring:

- Passport
- Sea sickness medication*
- Reef safe sunscreen
- Foul weather gear
- Fleece jacket and pants
- Warm hat
- Power Strip
- 3mm or 5mm wetsuit (possible chicken vest, if you get cold easily. I used mine during the night dives)
- Less clothing than you would bring on a land-based trip. You will be living in your swimsuit.

Diving upon a liveaboard is an experience that is not to be missed. Joining a Blackbeard's Cruise is a wonderful entry into the world of liveaboard cruises. The cost is \$1,045.00 for the week of diving. All you need to do is pay for airfare, tips, and park fees. With direct flights from Logan, diving in paradise is a short distance away. The reefs on this cruise were not affected by recent hurricanes. Support recovery efforts by diving in the Bahamas. The Bahamas are open post COVID and I will be leading another group. The boat leaves the dock at 3:00 PM on December 25th and returns to port on December 31, 2021. Come spend the holidays with Ernst!



NEW ENGLAND AQUARIUM DIVE CLUB, INC.

Central Wharf, Boston, MA 02110

www.neadc.org

The Dive Club

Begun in 1975, the New England Aquarium Dive Club is one of the world's oldest, largest and most active dive clubs. Our 300+ members range from veteran divers to the newly certified. We share the fun of diving, a love of the sea, a concern for diving safety, and a desire to learn more about the aquatic realm.

To learn more about the Dive Club, stop by one of our monthly meetings. They are held the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. at the New England Aquarium Conference Center. See our site for details:

www.neadc.org

Newsletter

The dive club's newsletter features articles about local diving, travel, the environment, education, and topics supporting the New England Aquarium. If you have a dive story, diving tip, underwater photograph or anything else which may be of interest to the local dive community we would love to hear from you!

Send an email pitching your idea to:

newsletter@neadc.org

NEADC General Meetings

by Program Director Joy Marzolf

We hope you have been enjoying our Monthly General meetings on Zoom during COVID.

This format has enabled the NEADC to bring in speakers from across the US and around the world to speak about crocodile and manatee research in Belize, diving in Canada and around the world, sharks and whales in the Farallons off California and more.

While this is a temporary meeting format, we have noticed that Zoom has also allowed our members to join from wherever they are that day, even from other states or countries themselves!

Stay tuned to our NEADC emails and website for more interesting topics each month online until we can meet again in person.

REEF Partnership

NEADC has joined REEF as a Conservation Partner.

Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF) is an international marine conservation organization that implements hands-on programs to involve local communities in conservation-focused activities.

Founded in 1990, its mission is to protect biodiversity and ocean life by actively engaging and inspiring the public through citizen science, education, and partnerships with the scientific community.

NEADC is proud to join REEF's efforts as a Conservation Partner.



Photo by Troy Mayne

THINK BLUE!

Join our NEADC Clean Up Each Dive campaign!

- Pick up trash whenever you can both above and below water
- Bring reusable bottles to events for drink refills
- Pack gear in reusable bags or be sure to secure plastic bags used to carry gear so they don't fly away into the water