

## National Marine Sanctuary System



Photo: Ari Friedlaender, NOAA Fisheries permit #775-1875

National marine sanctuaries are a great place to view our planet's largest mammals in their natural habitat.



Photo: NOAA

Volunteers get involved in national marine sanctuaries in many ways, such as participating in whale counts.

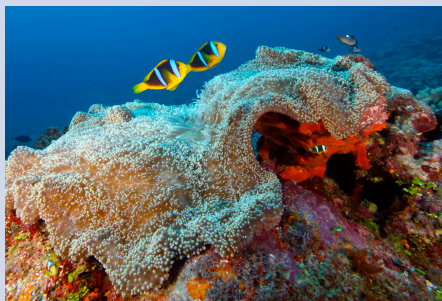


Photo: Greg McFall, NOAA

Sanctuaries are places to experience the power and beauty of the ocean.

**NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries** serves as the trustee for a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 600,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters. The network includes a system of 13 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments. Few places on the planet can compete with the diversity of the National Marine Sanctuary System, which protects America's most iconic natural and cultural marine resources. The system works with diverse partners and stakeholders to promote responsible, sustainable ocean uses that ensure the health of our most valued ocean places. A healthy ocean is the basis for thriving recreation, tourism and commercial activities that drive coastal economies. The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries also leads the National Marine Protected Areas Center, the nation's hub for building innovative partnerships and tools to protect special ocean places.

### Conservation

For more than 40 years, our national marine sanctuaries have worked to protect special places in America's ocean and Great Lakes waters, from the site of a single Civil War shipwreck to a vast expanse of ocean surrounding remote coral reefs and tiny atolls. Backed by one of the nation's strongest pieces

of ocean conservation legislation, the National Marine Sanctuaries Act, the sanctuaries seek to preserve the extraordinary scenic beauty, biodiversity, historical connections and economic productivity of our most precious underwater treasures. By acting as responsible stewards of these special places, we strengthen our nation now and for future generations.

### Research and Monitoring

National marine sanctuaries conduct and support monitoring programs tailored to the information needs of each sanctuary. These programs target a wide array of topics involving natural processes, human influences on water, habitat, living resources and maritime archaeological resources. Research projects within the sanctuary system also allow scientists to address information needs that are not recognized through site characterization and monitoring.

### Education and Outreach

Challenges facing the ocean today cross geographic and ethnic boundaries. The system comprises places where people can find common ground and discuss possible solutions. Sanctuary education and outreach efforts link communities through innovative programs and help spread awareness of the ocean's connection to all of us.

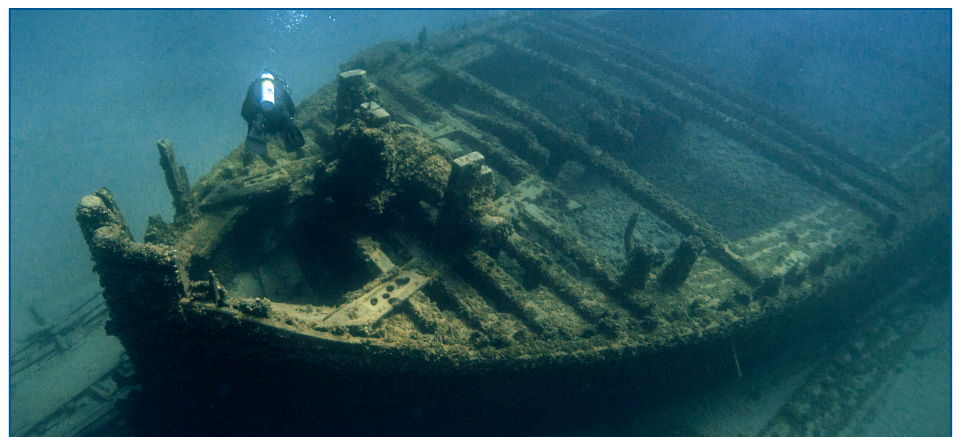
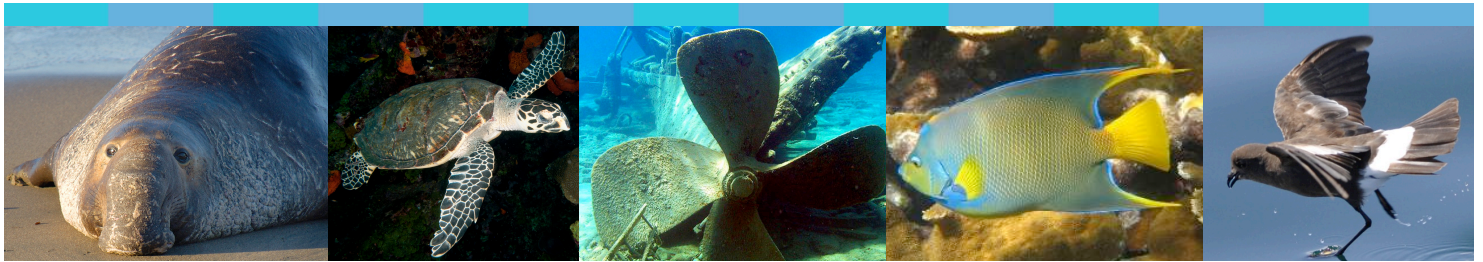


Photo: David Ruck, NOAA

As a seafaring nation, America's greatest museum of our past lays on the bottom of the sea and lakes in national marine sanctuaries.





# NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM



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

## Community Engagement

For a sanctuary to be successful, it must have the support and involvement of the communities that border and rely on it. We involve communities in their sanctuaries through a variety of methods, including advisory councils, public meetings, volunteer opportunities and education and outreach events.

## Sanctuary Advisory Councils

National marine sanctuary advisory councils are community-based advisory groups established to provide advice and recommendations to the sanctuary

superintendents on issues including management, science, service and stewardship.

## Local Economies

From restaurants and hotels, to aquariums and kayak operators, the success of many businesses, millions of dollars in sales and thousands of jobs, directly depend on thriving national marine sanctuaries. Across all national marine sanctuaries, about \$4 billion annually is generated in local, coastal and ocean dependent economies from diverse activities like commercial fishing, research and recreation-tourist activities.

## Protected Area

More than 600,000 square miles

## System Established

October 1972

## Find Us

[sanctuaries.noaa.gov](http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov)  
[www.facebook.com/NOAAOfficeofNationalMarineSanctuaries](https://www.facebook.com/NOAAOfficeofNationalMarineSanctuaries)  
 Instagram: @noaasanctuaries  
 Twitter: @sanctuaries



Photo: Kate Thompson, NOAA

Sanctuaries provide an idyllic setting for many recreational activities.

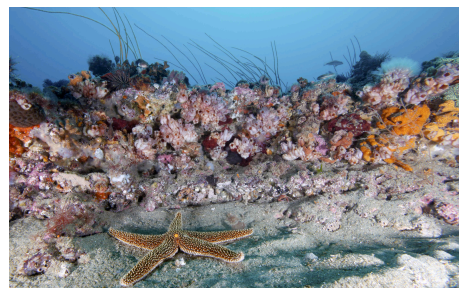


Photo: Greg McFall, NOAA

National marine sanctuaries are home to a wide variety of habitats.



Photo: Mark Sullivan, NOAA

A large number of endangered or threatened species are found within the boundaries of national marine sanctuaries.

<http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>