



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
**NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE**  
**Office of National Marine Sanctuaries**  
**Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary**  
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**57<sup>th</sup> SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC)**  
**October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019 9:30 am – 3:30 pm**  
**NOAA Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO)**  
**MINUTES of MEETING**

**Present:**

Bill Adler	Primary: Fixed Gear Commercial Fishing
Michelle Bachman	Federal: New England Fishery Management Council
Terri Birkeland	Alternate: At Large
Kevin Blinkoff	Primary: Recreational Fishing
Jeanine Boyle	Alternate: At Large
Tim Brady	Alternate: Recreational Fishing
Shelley Brown	Alternate: At Large
Todd Callaghan	State: MA Coastal Zone Management
Tracey Dalton	Primary: Research
Rich Delaney	Primary: Education (Vice Chair)
Tim Donovan	Federal: NOAA Office of Law Enforcement
John Galluzzo	Primary: Maritime Heritage (Secretary)
Allen Hale	Primary: Youth
Laura Howes	Primary: Whale Watch
Les Kaufman	Alternate: Research
Moira Kelly	Federal: NOAA GARFO
Capt Kevin King	Federal: First US Coast Guard District
Martin Klein	Alternate: Maritime Heritage
Heather Knowles	Primary: Diving (Chair)
Marissa Marcoux	Alternate: Diving
Frank Mirarchi	Alternate: Mobile Gear Commercial Fishing
Monica Pepe	Alternate: Education
Wayne Petersen	Alternate: Conservation
Kevin Powers	Primary: At Large
Jeff Rosen	Primary: Business Industry
Rory Simpson-Brown	Alternate: Youth
John Williamson	Primary: At Large

**SBNMS Staff:**

Pete DeCola	Anne-Marie Runfola	Alice Stratton
Ben Haskell	Elizabeth Stokes	Anne Smrcina

*Audio recording of SAC Minutes and Presentations are available on request.*  
Contact [Anne-Marie.Runfola@noaa.gov](mailto:Anne-Marie.Runfola@noaa.gov) or [Elizabeth.Stokes@noaa.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.Stokes@noaa.gov)



**I. Welcome, Review and Approval of 56<sup>th</sup> SAC Minutes and Review of 57<sup>th</sup> SAC Agenda**  
(H. Knowles)

The 56<sup>th</sup> SAC Minutes were unanimously approved.

**II. Sanctuary Business** (A.M. Runfola)

i. New SAC Member Introductions

- Allen Hale –Youth Primary
- Captain Michael Grady – Designee MA Environmental Police (absent)
- Moira Kelly – NOAA GARFO Federal Designee

View SAC member biographies at <https://stellwagen.noaa.gov/management/sac/member.html>.

ii. SAC Recruitment Update

The results from June 30, 2019 SAC Recruitment were announced:

- At Large Alternate – Shelley Brown
- Mobile Gear Commercial Fishing Alternate – Frank Mirarchi
- Recreational Fishing Alternate – Tim Brady
- Research Alternate – Les Kaufman
- Youth Primary – Allen Hale
- Youth Alternate – Rory Simpson-Brown

Thank you to those who previously served:

- Aurora Avallone – Youth Primary
- Jen Anderson – NOAA GARFO Federal Designee

Following are the seats that will be recruited during November 1-30, 2019:

- Business/Industry Alternate
- Conservation Primary
- Education Alternate
- Marine Transportation Primary
- Marine Transportation Alternate
- Recreational Fishing Primary
- Whale Watch Alternate

iii. Next SAC Meeting and New England Boat Show

The 58<sup>th</sup> SAC meeting will be held on February 12<sup>th</sup> at the New England Boat Show in Boston. The sanctuary will also have an outreach booth with Salt, the inflatable whale, set up during the ten-day event. SAC members are encouraged to visit the booth and assist staff and volunteers in engaging with the general public.

### III. Sanctuary Updates

#### i. Sanctuary Shipwreck Exploration and Live Broadcasts: Report, Plan for Next Year (B. Haskell)

Ben reported on the results of the first year of a 3-year telepresence expedition to deep shipwrecks and habitats in SBNMS. On September 17-19, scientists from NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and Marine Imaging Technologies explored the wreck of the SS Portland, which sank in a gale in 1898. During the mission, a variety of innovative marine technologies, including a cinema-class remotely operated vehicle (ROV), was deployed to survey and document the *Portland* and the marine species that contribute to the sanctuary's biological heritage. Three important discoveries were made during the expedition:

- (1) A large trawl net now drapes the port bow of the historic wreck and was not present in 2009 during the last visit to the Portland. The net has scarified the marine life on the bow, damaged the cutwater, and blocks access to the foredeck.
- (2) We were able to confirm that the connecting rod is intact between the walking beam and the paddle wheel shaft which eliminates one possible cause of the steamship's demise.
- (3) It appears that the aggregation of large cod and pollock that characterized the wreck from 2002-2010 have now been replaced by Acadian redfish (*Sebastes faciatus*) although this observation needs to be confirmed with more data next year.

Live programs were broadcast each morning to a total of 1,415 students from 28 schools around the country who connected with team members through two-way communication, allowing students the opportunity to dive deeper into the expedition. Each afternoon one or two live programs were broadcast via the internet to the general public, giving viewers the opportunity to interact with members of the expedition by sending them questions and to learn about the. Over 9,400 people tuned in from 12 countries. Next year the expedition will return to the Portland and other deep iconic shipwrecks as well as surrounding natural habitat and will be guided by new multibeam sonar surveys of the northern deep Y-valley dubbed the "tuning fork".

For a summary of the project please visit <https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/news/dec19/scientists-document-historic-shipwrecks-in-stellwagen-bank-national-marine-sanctuary.html>

**Action Item: Heather Knowles, SAC Chair - The SAC should not lose sight of this and contemplate supporting this event next year, and factor it into the SAC work plan. This topic is earmarked for further exploration and discussion in more detail at the February 12<sup>th</sup> SAC meeting.**

#### ii. Scallop Population and Projected Fishing Effort (T. Ford, GARFO and M. Bachman, NEFMC)

Michelle Bachman presented on the Scallop Amendment 21 and Framework 32. She presented two scallop actions, along with monitoring, survey outlook and management issues that are being considered. Details of the PPT presentation can be viewed at:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1NMPPLP8kldrLUcLg5p5y8sWs1prQtc-u>.

**Action Item: Heather Knowles, SAC Chair - This is a great example of where the SAC needs to capitalize on objectives and meet mutual goals. SAC will stay on top of this topic.**

iii. Maritime Heritage Management and Policy (B. Haskell and P. DeCola)

Ben Haskell provided an update on the scallop dredging mitigation experiment. The experiment was initiated in response to the 2017 scallop fishing derby that occurred in a small area on the northwest corner and involved over 50 large and small scallop dredge boats. In order to prevent future fishing impacts to historic and non-historic wrecks in that area, Ben worked with staff at GARFO to send out a fishing bulletin prior to the start of the 2018 and 2019 seasons releasing the location of six wreck sites and requesting fishermen stay 360 feet away from the sites. Compliance with this voluntary measure was verified in three ways:

- 1) Pre- and post-season side scan surveys were conducted of the six wrecks to determine if any dredge marks were present within the 360 foot buffer,
- 2) vessel monitoring system (VMS) tracks (5 knots or less) were plotted for 2017-2019 for each of the six, 360-foot buffer areas, and
- 3) interviews of 14 scallopers with Northern Gulf of Maine permits were conducted in 2019 by a graduate student at University of Rhode Island (URI) to determine if they had received the fishery bulletin and their attitudes and perceptions of it and the sanctuary (the URI report will be shared when finalized).

Ben and Pete reported that the draft disclosure policy guidance prepared by Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) Maritime Heritage Program is still undergoing internal review. The policy is reconsidering the disclosure policy in response, in part, to the issues we are experiencing in the Sanctuary. The consideration of new guidance on disclosure will be timely in light of the discovery of the “new” net on the bow of the *Portland*, which could indicate that non-disclosure is an ineffective protection measure for this wreck.

Ben and Pete reported that the Sanctuary is planning these next steps:

- 1) Reconvene the Maritime Heritage Working Group to discuss specifics of a potential disclosure of the *Portland* site would work such as size of the avoidance buffer.
- 2) Consult with the Keeper of the National Register on disclosure of the site since it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- 3) Continue to work with GARFO on mitigation of fishing impacts pursuant to requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

iv. Condition Report, Management Plan Status Report (A. Stratton)

The SBNMS Condition Report is almost done. There were several delays over the past year, including the Federal furlough and the need to include some updated data that became available just before prior to peer review. We are now doing a final internal review to ensure the language and messaging is consistent, and expect to have the content final by the end of October. Final document preparation and clearance is managed by ONMS Headquarters and that timeline may take up to 3 months; we are hoping that the final Condition Report will be published by February, 2021. As we have discussed previously, the Condition Report is one of the underpinnings of the Management Plan Review (MPR) process, so once the Condition Report is final, we will be able to initiate scoping for MPR. We have used input from the two SAC Working Groups and the MPR Subcommittee to identify initial priorities for scoping consideration and those will be the basis for the draft Scoping Notice of Intent. We plan to have three scoping meetings, hopefully including one at the New England Boat Show to be held in conjunction with the next SAC meeting. The breadth and depth of scoping comments will guide the process for developing the draft management plan and what type of environmental review is required (Environmental Assessment

versus Environmental Impact Statement), as well as what level of participation we need from the SAC (i.e., if scoping indicates the need for major changes, we may need multiple working groups as in the last MPR, but if we do not foresee major changes, then working through the MPR Subcommittee may be sufficient). Until the Condition Report is published, all timing is quite tentative, but at the moment we are considering the following two-year timeline:

- 9 months (December 2020) for development of draft management plan,
- 3 months (March 2021) for clearance/publication
- 2 months (April 2021) for public comment
- 6 months (October 2021) for preparation of final management plan, and
- 2 months for clearance and publication (December 2021).

v. Brief Address and Q&A NOAA GARFO Administrator (Mike Pentony)

Mike Pentony spoke about issues that his staff is engaged with. During the Q&A period, one of the topics focused on was the impending coexistence between the offshore wind energy and fishing industries, and impacts these industries combined will have on fisheries resources and habitat.

vi. SAC Workplan: Review and Goals (H. Knowles)

Heather Knowles performed a review of progress to date against goals contained within the 2019 Work Plan. Overall, the SAC has made excellent progress on goals, which is a good indicator that the goals are relevant and reasonably achievable. See 2019 Work Plan for a detailed description of the goals.

The draft table below summarizes Heather’s understanding of progress to date. The next step is to receive input from SAC and staff. There was discussion on the topic of protection for right whales and the status of acoustic monitoring buoys, which were planned to be decommissioned but have not yet been.

**Action Item: To follow-up on the status of the buoys and whether they are still operating.**

The 2020 work plan will be drafted for review at the February 2020 SAC meeting.

Management Plan Topic	Abbreviated Goal Description	Goal Status	Comments
Capacity Building	Subcommittee and WG outputs	Achieved	Maritime Heritage WG to reconvene and continue work based on MH access policy implementation
	Scoping Meetings	TBD	Public scoping strategy under review by SBNMS staff
Education and Outreach	White Sharks	Achieved	Presentation at Oct SAC meeting
	Protection for Right Whales	At Risk / Missed	Need assessment of SBNMS staff resources
	Maritime Heritage	Achieved	WHOI TP / live broadcasts

<b>External Support for SBNMS</b>	Collaboration with MOTT	On Track	Whale trail activities from late 2018, and follow-up interactions, early planning on Portland sinking anniversary
	Political Activism	At Risk	Need assessment of SBNMS staff resources
<b>SAC Related Events and Activities</b>	Work Plan	On Track	Work plan implemented, 2020 plan will be drafted for February meeting
	SAC Chair/VC Call	TBD	SAC Chair/VC call to be scheduled, uncertain if these are still occurring
	GIYS / Other	Achieved	GIYS / Boat show attendance and participation occurred

vii. Recreational Fishing Community Engagement (M. Kelly, K. Blinkoff, T. Brady, AM Runfola)

GARFO Recreational Fisheries Coordinator and Senior Fishery Program Specialist, Moira Kelly, sanctuary staffer, Anne-Marie Runfola, and our two Recreational Fishing Seats, Tim Brady and Kevin Blinkoff, presented on our joint collaboration to engage the recreational fishing community. Moira briefed the group on GARFO's recreational fisheries engagement plan: <https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/17052> General program info: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/saltwater-recreational-fishing-greater-atlantic-region>

Anne-Marie highlighted some of the joint activities that meet the engagement plan and the sanctuary's goals, including joint outreach at fishing and boat shows and the recreational fishing funding through the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation for education, outreach and research projects that forward fish and fishing education, sustainable practices and ethical angling. Kevin and Tim detailed the funded projects they worked on: Kevin worked with the Massachusetts Department of Marine Fisheries and the New England Aquarium to develop a sustainable fishing best practice and associated media campaign to reduce bycatch of cod when fishing for haddock: <https://www.onthewater.com/the-best-rig-for-haddock-fishing>. Tim worked with the Plymouth Lions Club to take visually impaired fishers out to fish in the sanctuary and embedded conservation practices and messages into the charter, forwarding the sanctuary's conservation and inclusivity goals.

viii. Unexplained Mortality Event (Mendy Garron, NOAA GARFO)

The Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program is currently investigating four Unusual Mortality Events occurring within the Greater Atlantic Region:

- North Atlantic Right Whales (2017 - present)
  - Preliminary cause: human interaction
- Humpback Whales (2016 - present)
  - Preliminary cause: suspect human interaction
- Minke Whales (2017 - present)
  - Preliminary cause: suspect human interaction & infectious disease
- Northeast Pinniped (2018 - present)
  - Preliminary cause: infectious disease (Phocine Distemper Virus)

Details of the Mendy Garron's PPT presentation can be viewed at:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1NMPPLP8kldrLUcLg5p5y8sWs1prQtc-u>

#### **IV. Lunch Presentation – Sharks in the Sanctuary (G. Skomal, MA DMF)**

Greg Skomal's "Sharks in the Sanctuary" presentation can be viewed at:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1NMPPLP8kldrLUcLg5p5y8sWs1prQtc-u>

Greg encouraged Sanctuary staff to add acoustic receivers in the Sanctuary to monitor sharks. This type of instrumentation is already ongoing in the sanctuary, so additional transmitters are easily added.

***Action Item: Heather Knowles, SAC Chair - This is an opportunity for SAC and staff to start thinking about incorporating sharks in the Sanctuary into its work and to discuss data that can be of use to the Sanctuary and the Condition Report, and what other processes might be appropriate if this becomes a strategy for the Sanctuary to pursue.***

#### **V. National Ocean Service (NOS) Peer Rafting Award (P. DeCola, AM. Runfola)**

Anne-Marie Runfola and Pete DeCola presented the NOAA National Ocean Service (NOS) Peer Rafting Award to five staff members from the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office for exemplary collaboration on a cross-cutting outreach program, exponentially increasing engagement with the recreational fishing community in New England.

The awardees are: Greg Power, Supervisory Fishery Information Specialist, and his team: Bill Duffy, Port Agent; Walter Anoushian, Fishery Reporting Specialist; and Caleb Gilbert, Fishery Specialist; along with Moira Kelly, Senior Fishery Program Specialist and Recreational Fishing Coordinator. They will receive their official award at NOAA HQ in Silver Spring, MD in December 2019.

The NOS Peer Rafting Award encourages coordination among offices, emphasizes integration across programs, provides NOS employees the opportunity to express our appreciation to colleagues in other NOS or NOAA line offices, and promotes professional respect and cooperation in the agency. Anne-Marie Runfola nominated the group for sharing significant time, expertise and resources to collaboratively promote sustainable, responsible recreation and tourism in our special coastal and marine places.

## VI. Agency/Governmental Reports

### i. MA Coastal Zone Management (CZM) (T. Callaghan)

CZM has joined the coastal programs of New Hampshire and Maine as advising partners to the NOAA Office of Coastal Management on a project to use existing data to make a comprehensive bathymetric map of the Gulf of Maine. One of the derived products will be a map of “geoforms” all of the banks, ledges, valleys, basins, and other features. The three state programs are interested in these maps to help with siting and evaluating regional projects such as cables, pipelines, and wind farms as well as for habitat mapping. It is hoped that where the data resolution is appropriate, archeological features could be identified as well. The maps should be available in late 2020.

CZM met with Progression Energy (<https://progression-energy.com/>) about its interest in siting floating offshore wind turbines somewhere in the Gulf of Maine. Progression is proposing to use the Principle Power Windfloat (<http://www.principlepowerinc.com/en/windfloat> ) as the floating platform.

CZM will be participating in a Bureau of Ocean Energy Management Intergovernmental Task Force with New Hampshire and Maine to begin discussing the siting of offshore wind in the Gulf of Maine. We hope that the regional bathymetry map and derived products will help in that discussion.

### ii. MA Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) (C. O’Keefe)

Cate O’Keefe was not present but provided the following report on behalf of DMF:

Scallop Northern Gulf of Maine Amendment and 2019 Observed Recruitment:

The New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) has initiated Amendment 21 to the Scallop Fishery Management Plan to introduce measures in the Northern Gulf of Maine Management Area. MA DMF has representatives on the Scallop Plan Development Team and the Scallop Committee, and is interested in hearing input from the SAC as the management measures are developed over the next year.

DMF Director and staff met with Sanctuary Director and staff, Pete DeCola and Ben Haskell, in September to provide an update on the recent scallop recruitment observed on Stellwagen Bank. The University of Maine and Maine Department of Marine Resources conducted a dredge survey in areas of the Gulf of Maine in the summer 2019, including Stellwagen Bank, and observed a large abundance of scallop recruits, aggregated in both northern and southern Stellwagen. DMF staff briefed the Sanctuary staff on the current New England Council activities to develop management measures for the Northern Gulf of Maine management area (Amendment 21), as well as proposals for a 2020 scallop fishery closure surrounding portions of Stellwagen to protect the small scallops.

Atlantic Herring Spawning Protections:

The New England Council and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission will be working in coordination to develop herring spawning protections on Georges Bank. These management measures were initiated in response to the results of the 2018 stock assessment, which showed reduced levels of recruitment and spawning stock biomass over the past five years. DMF staff serves on the NEFMC Herring Plan Development Team and will contribute to analyses to identify areas and seasons to maximize protections for spawning herring aggregations.

Offshore Wind Energy:

The MA Clean Energy Commission (CEC), in coordination with Bureau of Energy Management (BOEM) and Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management recently accepted proposals

for “Pilot Studies for Regional Fisheries Monitoring in Relation to Southern New England Offshore Wind Projects.” Up to \$1 million in funding will be provided to fund projects related to fishery resource studies, seafloor habitat studies, or technical studies (on how to maximize compatibility of offshore wind and fishing) related to offshore wind energy development.

#### Right Whale Protections:

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) initiated Addendum XXVIII to Amendment 3 of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster. The action considers reducing the number of vertical lines in the water in response to concerns about the right whale population and the potential impacts of conservation measures on the lobster fishery. The proposed measures include reducing vertical lines up to 40% through trap limits, gear configuration changes, seasonal closures, and the acceleration of currently planned trap reductions. DMF will continue to work with ASMFC, NOAA, and the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team to work toward solutions for protecting right whales from vertical lines. We will continue to provide updates related to mitigation measures in MA state waters and surrounding areas.

#### iii. Enforcement Reports

##### US Coast Guard (USCG) (CPT K. King)

The Coast Guard continued to patrol Stellwagen Bank with station based small boats, cutters, and fixed and rotary wing air craft. Some areas of focus have been Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan enforcement through fixed gear inspections and Highly Migratory Species (tuna) boardings. We look forward to future discussions on enforcement of historic wrecks if their locations are publicized.

#### iv. NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) and MA Environmental Police (MEP) (T.Donovan)

- Our new IS Analyst provided vessel track data to the Sanctuary Maritime Heritage Group.
- In April, Enforcement Officer (EO) Wilmarth held a meeting with partners from USCG, MEP and Sanctuary management to review Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA)/Endangered Species Act (ESA) enforcement priorities in the sanctuary and discussed ideas to enhance compliance levels.
- Tim Donovan and Peter DeCola attended the June Sanctuary Enforcement Summit -The general concept was to discuss strategic priorities on a national level, and the then break down into regional working groups to discuss site-specific priorities and focus best resources to them.
- EO's received training from the ship builder Metal Shark on the new patrol boat. Officer Wilmarth has been ensuring all agency safety requirements are met and operators are signed off before conducting operations.
- On September 17, 2015, a speeding and careless recreational vessel struck and injured a humpback whale inside the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary. The strike caused visible damage to one of the vessel's three outboard motors and left a visible wound on the back of the animal. Two interns provided by Whale and Dolphin Conservation were onboard the Hyannis-based whale watch boat, the Whale watcher and witnessed the incident. Both provided thorough reports to Special Agent (SA) Nickerson as well as helpful video of the vessel speeding around feeding whales (the strike was not captured on video). SA Nickerson interviewed the owner and operator of the vessel who denied speeding and ultimately went to court to fight the charges. Numerous witnesses were called to testify including the Executive Director of Whale and Dolphin Conservation, the Captain of the Whale Watcher, as well as both interns who

reported the strike. On July 24, the Administrative Law Judge issued her finding of Responsible (guilty) and imposed a \$17,000 fine. In her finding, the Judge specifically mentioned the compelling testimony of the witnesses which helped her make her decision.

Vessel patrol hours: 42

- Boardings/contacts: 20
- Violations: 10
  
- Two day at-sea patrol of Middle Bank with USCG Cutter Key Largo (10/3-10/4)
- Boarded 6 vessels. One violation no license on-hand. Two reporting violations.
- Patrol of Northern Stellwagen w/USCG Station Gloucester - 1805175
- 5 vessels boarded, two reporting violations
- Patrol of Northern Stellwagen w/USCG Station Gloucester focused on
- Joint patrol operation with USCG Bluefin Blowout tournament
- 15 vessels contacted, boarded two of them that had catch onboard.
- One reporting violation. Outreach and provided law enforcement presence with other 13 vessels.
- An EO is investigating 2 vessels for failure to report Bluefin tuna harvested from Stellwagen Bank.

#### Massachusetts Environmental Police Metrics

- Vessel patrol hours: 135
- Boardings/contacts; 51
- Outreach hours: 44
- Violations: 1\*
  
- The bulk of violations are Highly Migratory Species (HMS) reporting for Blue fin tuna (BFT) caught on Stellwagen Bank and are not specific to one HMS permit category.
  
- \*An MEP officer on an Living Marine Resource (LMR) air patrol with USCG spotted a vessel with a tuna in tow. An EO followed up and determined the captain did not report the catch. A summary settlement to be issued.

#### v. New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) (M. Bachman)

Updates on scallop actions were provided earlier in the day (see Michelle Bachman's slide presentation from Scallop Population and Projected Fishing Effort in section III.ii above). Final action on scallop specifications for the 2020-2021 fishing years is planned for December; this may include a closure on Stellwagen Bank to protect small scallops. Amendment 21 is also under development and includes adjustments to the Northern Gulf of Maine fishery management program.

Herring: The Amendment 8 comment periods are open now (notice of availability comment period is open until October 21; the proposed rule comment period is open until November 25). Amendment 8 modifies the control rule used to set herring catch limits and recommends a mid-water trawl closure to mitigate concerns about localized depletion of the resource. The final version of the 2019-2021 herring specifications document was submitted to NMFS in early October, and rulemaking is forthcoming. Catch limits going forward will be much lower than in past years.

Groundfish: The Council is currently working on updated specifications for many of the stocks and will take final action on these in December. The Council is also working on a monitoring amendment (Amendment 23). The draft environmental impact statement for Amendment 23 is currently in development.

Ecosystem Based Fishery Management: The Council reviewed a Fishery Ecosystem Plan for Georges Bank during the September meeting. This plan describes components of the ecosystem as well as fishery management tools and approaches that could be employed to better account for ecosystem considerations in the Council's fishery management plans. A steering committee of Council members and other experts (Management Strategy Evaluation Steering Committee) is considering how to share this information and gather feedback from stakeholders, and how to develop more specific goals and objectives for ecosystem-based fisheries management (EBFM).

The Council is also engaged in the offshore wind development process through its Habitat Committee. While at present the lease areas are located in Southern New England and the Mid-Atlantic Bight, there is interest in floating offshore wind in the Gulf of Maine.

As a general matter, a good way to stay up to date on Council activities is through the Three Meeting Outlook and timeline documents posted on Council meeting webpages <https://www.nefmc.org/council-meetings> and through our press releases, <https://www.nefmc.org/news>.

vi. NOAA Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) (M. Kelly)

Moira Kelly presented earlier in the meeting on GARFO's recreational fishing engagement plan and collaborative outreach with the sanctuary. GARFO had recently completed a series of public hearings on the North Atlantic Right Whale biological opinion, and that staff are working through the comments in preparation for a draft document early next year.

**VII. New Business:**

Heather Knowles was excited to announce the identity of a shipwreck that her diving company, Northern Atlantic Dive, has been trying to identify for several years. This came about through a Memorandum of Agreement that Northern Atlantic Dive and the Sanctuary established to collaborate on unexplored targets. There was a target that was previously identified through a survey where a partial image of a wreck had been obtained. Heather's dive team spent the last 3-4 years diving the wreck in 200 feet of water with poor weather conditions to identify it. They were able to determine that it was an iron hulled steamship that turned out to be the wreck of the *Allentown* which was a coal steamer that sank in a November 1888 storm. Originally it was believed to have sunk off of Scituate since debris had washed ashore there, but it actually sunk off of Cape Ann but is outside of SBNMS. This is a good example of the collaboration between divers and the Sanctuary in sharing information and resources which led to this discovery and bringing this story to light. Heather thanked Sanctuary staff for working with the divers, and hopes to have the MOA renewed in the future. More information regarding the *Allentown* can be found at: <https://northernatlanticdive.com/allentown/>.

**VIII. Adjourn:** 3:45 pm.

*Audio recording of SAC Minutes and Presentations are available on request.  
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**APPENDIX**  
**SBNMS PROGRAMMATIC UPDATE**  
**FALL 2018 – SUMMER 2019**

**Education and Outreach Overview**

**Anne Smrcina, Education and Outreach Coordinator**

**Extension of Diversity & Inclusion Program with links to Hispanic Access Foundation**

During Summer 2019, the sanctuary provided a three-week ocean program to rising fourth and fifth graders at the Arlington Middle School in Lawrence, MA. The program expanded the sanctuary's contact with students in a city with one of the largest Dominican populations in New England. Along with Greening Youth intern Maia Garrison, Anne Smrcina, education coordinator, provided lessons in seafloor mapping, analyzing real-time oceanographic and meteorological data, identifying humpback whales (using a catalog of whale tails), building food chains and food webs (using playing cards developed at the sanctuary), and classifying marine life (while playing a classification bingo game that uses artwork from the annual student marine art contest). The original program was in partnership with the Hispanic Access Foundation, and the sanctuary worked with HAF to secure a grant for this year. The sanctuary will continue its work with this school and, if arrangements succeed, our partner school from 2017, to continue our ocean program throughout the year, including following the migration of humpbacks from SBNMS to the Dominican Republic's marine mammal sanctuary and back. The new program includes a fishing and fish education program (see A. Runfola's summary under fishing liaison). The Arlington School was one of the participating schools in the September Sanctuary Live: Expedition to the Wreck of the *Portland*. Approximately 30 students participated in the summer program and 50+ in the *Portland* session.

**Sanctuary Live: Expedition to the Wreck of the Portland**

The sanctuary worked with Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Marine Imaging Technologies, and the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries to bring a mission to the wreck of the *Portland* to students and the public during Sept. 17-19. Recruitment of participating schools occurred at the National Marine Educators Conference, through the MA Marine Educators, via the ONMS educator network and a distance learning network entitled "Exploring by the Seat of Your Pants." During three sessions over each of the three days, students were able to ask questions of the mission specialists and view footage from the wreck (filmed earlier in the summer). Programs were directly sent (via Zoom) to 28 schools, with an approximate total of 1,415 students. The mission's principal investigator, biologist Kirstin Meyer-Kaiser, developed background readings on invertebrate larval dispersal, critical thinking questions, and lessons using frame grabs to study community composition. The sanctuary produced a field guide to species on the wreck that students could use while watching ROV footage. All of these materials were sent by the sanctuary to participating schools. In addition, education partner institutions hosted viewing sessions for the four public programs in the afternoons/evenings of the three days. The sanctuary will be working with this year's cohort of schools to answer the many questions that were not asked during the programs, to supply additional education materials (including video transects for species identification), and maritime history and archaeology products. Additionally, we will work to expand outreach to new schools with these materials to better prepare for next year's mission education effort. This was year one in a three-year project. The sanctuary also worked with HQ and WHOI to distribute media advisories and inform contacts. Stories appeared in the Boston Globe, Portland (ME) Press Herald, Cape Cod Times, Gloucester Times, Salem News, WATD, and other news outlets.

### **2019 K-12 Marine Art Contest Attracts Hundreds of Entrants**

The 2019 contest received 672 entries from eight states (the majority from MA) and 10 entries from Hong Kong. Again, as in past years, students, ranging in grade from K-12, created an amazing collection of artistic creations focused around the contest theme of “Exploring the Biodiversity of Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary. The sanctuary and MA Marine Educators offer the contest, with the sanctuary running operations, and co-sponsorship from several other MA marine education institutions, including the New England Aquarium and Center for Coastal Studies. Woods Hole Sea Grant has joined as a co-sponsor this year. Winning art will tour in the region during the coming months (2018 art completed its run in June after stops at the South Shore Natural Science Center and the Cape Cod National Seashore, where hundreds viewed the art). A 2020 contest will be announced soon (same theme, deadline May 1, 2020). This year, the sanctuary offered a workshop (STEM to STEAM) for teachers and students that covered the basics of marine biodiversity, introduced the wide variety of animals found locally, and shows how art can be used to engage students. The workshop has been offered to a HS marine art class, art and STEM clubs, and at the National Marine Educators Association annual meeting. Artwork from 2019 and earlier years has been used in a variety of educational products. The sanctuary’s marine art program and Anne Smrcina received the ONMS Sea to Shining Sea annual education award for 2019.

### **Tracking Shearwaters Education Project Expands**

An education program that uses data from the sanctuary’s tagged great shearwaters is now underway. Last year, maps of the Gulf of Maine and the Atlantic Ocean were printed. This year, the sanctuary produced a background reading document and a tracking activity, along with data from the 2019 birds. A workshop for teachers has been offered to MA Marine Educators and at the National Marine Educators Association, where it received excellent reviews. The workshop has also been offered to students at Arlington Middle School (see Diversity entry above) and other middle school programs. Associated activities that address other avian topics are also available, including bird adaptations.

### **Other 2019 Education/Outreach Highlights**

- The *Animals Without Passports* exhibit has been moved from The Maritime Aquarium in Norwalk, CT to the Mystic Aquarium in Mystic, CT.
- 30,000 copies of a 2019-2020 issue of *Stellwagen Soundings* were printed; copies have been distributed to all whale watch companies, tourism centers on Cape Cod, the South Shore, and Cape Ann, education partners, and at locations where sanctuary offers programming.
- 3,000 copies of the sanctuary map-poster were printed and are being distributed at conferences, exhibits and at other public venues.
- Sanctuary images provide inspiration on the walls of the conference room and first floor hallway; other parts of the headquarters facility will show a more colorful face later this year.
- Sanctuary images adorn two beanbag target boards produced for use at public events

**Operations, Management Planning, and Special Projects**  
**Ben Haskell, Deputy Superintendent; Alice Stratton, Ecologist; Dave Slocum, Operations Coordinator; and Officer Tim Wilmarth, NOAA Office of Law Enforcement**

**Condition Report** (Alice Stratton)

Work on the SBNMS Condition Report this year involved ongoing revisions and two external review cycles. SBNMS began updating the SBNMS Condition Report in March 2017. The report will provide an assessment of the condition and trends of sanctuary resources, particularly in comparison to their status as reported in the original 2007 Condition Report. In November 2018, a draft was distributed to invited partners (SAC members, partner agencies and stakeholders) for review, and then a revised draft was distributed for peer review in late May 2019. The document is now being finalized and will be ready for final editing and document preparation shortly. The review process encountered several delays this year, including the Federal furlough and last minute incorporation of new fisheries / VMS data, but we anticipate that it will be published in late 2019 or early 2020.

**Management Plan Review** (Alice Stratton)

In early 2019, the three SAC management plan review subcommittee / working groups (Management Plan Review Subcommittee, Small Boats Working Group, Maritime Heritage Working Group) completed their initial review and developed an initial list of recommended revisions and or areas to focus on. These recommendations were presented to the full SAC at the February 2019 Meeting. Once the Condition Report (see above) is available, these recommendations will be compared against the findings of the Condition Report to ensure that suggested revisions accurately take into account the status of sanctuary resources. The initial recommendations will also be used as the starting point to develop a scoping notice for Management Plan Review. In addition, SBNMS staff used feedback from the SAC to begin discussions with ONMS HQ about how best to plan the MPR scoping process. We anticipate that the scoping will begin in early 2020.

**Permitting** (Alice Stratton)

In FY19, SBNMS issued four permits to conduct prohibited activities within the sanctuary, provided input for one multi-site permit, and reviewed/ provided feedback on four external permit applications. Under the new Superintendent's Permit, which permits the Superintendent to conduct prohibited activities for management purposes, we also issued three authorizations to staff for specific projects: Dr. Leila Hatch for deployment of acoustic receiver, and Dr. David Wiley for deployment of whale tags and deployment of seabird tags. SBNMS has continued to be engaged in the review process for Amitie submarine cable, proposed for installation just outside the northern boundary of SBNMS.

**Telepresence: Live Broadcasts from the Wreck of the *Portland*** (Ben Haskell)

SBNMS has partnered with Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) and Marine Imaging Technologies to embark on a three-year mission to explore deep shipwrecks and habitats and to conduct live broadcasts of each expedition accessible to classrooms and the public. This combined archeological and biological project utilizes remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) to survey, record, and sample several of the hundreds of historic shipwrecks and natural habitats located inside the Sanctuary. The project is made possible through a three-year grant from the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries to WHOI.

In 2019, an interdisciplinary team of scientists investigated the historic wrecks of the steamship *Portland* and the coal schooners *Frank A. Palmer* and *Louise B. Crary*. Using a cutting-edge, cinema-class ROV named Pixel, researchers conducted several dives on the wrecks in July to gather as much imagery as possible. The digital imagery will be used to build 3D photogrammetric models of each wreck in order to further archeological studies of the shipwreck as well as to track the natural and human effects on the wrecks over time. Digital imagery will also be used to conduct analysis of the biological communities on the wrecks which are the equivalent of island-like habitats and serve as oases of biodiversity.

In addition to the science, an important objective of the mission was to enable students and the public to engage real-time in the expedition through two-way communication with the scientists and technicians on board the research vessel. Unfortunately poor weather prevented ROV dives on the wrecks; however, the live broadcast connection to the Research Vessel *Connecticut* proceeded using prerecorded footage from July. Hannah MacDonald, education specialist at ONMS, hosted the live programming from the Inner Space Center at the University of Rhode Island to bring the expedition to classrooms, venues and personal screens across the world. Nine ship-to-shore interactions connected over 1,415 students in 28 schools to the exploration. School programs focused on either the biology and archeology of or the marine technology used throughout the expedition in Stellwagen Bank. Students were able to speak and ask questions to the entire expedition team. Additionally, four public programs were streamed to 21 venues, some of which were accompanied by Sanctuary volunteers, to reach another 647 viewers in person. Additionally more than 9,400 viewers watched the public programs on their own web browser across twelve countries. Viewers of public programs were able to engage with the expedition team by typing out questions in a chat box. A *Portland* Memorial program was streamed to the public and into various venues across New England where descendants of the SS *Portland* shared artifacts, stories and emotions throughout the events.

#### **International Sister Sanctuary Program (Ben Haskell)**

The Sister Sanctuary Program (SSP), initiated by SBNMS (2007) to protect our shared population of humpback whales in collaboration with marine mammal sanctuaries/initiatives in the Dominican Republic, Bermuda, French Antilles (Agoa) and the Caribbean Netherlands (Yarari), is a pioneering program of NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) the United Nations Environment Programme's Special Protected Areas and Wildlife's (UNEP-SPAW) Marine Mammal Action Plan for the Wider Caribbean Region (MMA-P-WCR).

Accomplishments:

- Ben attended a meeting in Martinique, French West Indies in February (see below) where he informally renewed commitments with Agoa and Yarari marine mammal sanctuaries.

#### **International Transatlantic Marine Mammal Protection Initiative (Ben Haskell)**

Ben attended the fourth meeting of the Transatlantic Marine Protected Areas (MPA) working group for the protection of marine mammals held in Martinique, French West Indies. The working group was comprised of MPA managers representing the following countries: Iceland, Azores, Cape Verde, France, Netherlands, and the USA (Brazil, Bermuda, and the Dominican Republic could not attend). This workshop is part of a European Union-funded initiative, now in its third year, to foster more collaboration across the Atlantic (North America, South America, Europe and Africa). The initiative is focused on three themes: shared species/connectivity (focus on humpback whales, based on ONMS sister sanctuary program); collaboration among

regional MPA Networks (e.g. in Mediterranean, Caribbean, North American, West African); and coastal resiliency. The aim of the Martinique workshop was to develop a roadmap and timeframe for the development of the guidelines for incorporating marine mammal protection into MPA management plans. Humpback whales are a shared international resource and require protection throughout their migratory range. It is important for NOAA to remain engaged with international partners in the protection of transboundary marine animals by sharing best practices and lessons learned.

#### **Vessel Operations** (Dave Slocum)

- The R/V *Auk* conducted 105 days-at-sea in FY19 which is the most we have ever done.
- 44 Internal/61 External Days at Sea.
- Over 800 Vessel Maintenance Hours
- Research Partners: (This List may be incomplete) BU, NEFSC, USGS, WHOI, UCONN, Battelle, MWRA, Syracuse University, ONR, BOEM.

#### **Boater Outreach for Whale Watching (BOWW)** (Dave Slocum)

The BOWW program conducted two outreach missions. The number of available days was reduced due to an extraordinarily busy field season on R/V *Auk*. The goals of the program continue to include educating the public on safe operation of private vessels while whale watching and relieving heavy vessel congestion around whales during busy summer months.

#### **Facility Operations** (Dave Slocum)

- EPSC upgrades include six new heat pumps, a new heat exchanger, a new HVAC Building Management System, improved building weatherization and comprehensive interior LED Lighting.
- New roof replacement of Administration Building and Annex Building.

#### **Enforcement Summary** (Tim Wilmarth, NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (OLE))

Office of Law Enforcement:

- Vessel patrol hours: 42
- Boardings/contacts: 20
- Violations: 10 (6 HMS reporting violations where the tuna was caught in SBNMS, 2 permit violations (scallop and HMS), 1 fishing in a closed area, 1 possession of striped bass in EEZ)

\*Massachusetts Environmental Police (MEP) under the Joint Enforcement Agreement:

- Vessel patrol hours: 135
- Boardings/contacts; 51
- Outreach hours: 44
- Violations: 1

\*MEP officers assisted with 2 violations while on OLE patrol vessel. Actual patrol hours for MEP typically exceeds what is reflected due to reporting constraints.