

STELLWAGEN BANK E-NOTES: sanctuary news & events

August 2016



Photo: Anne Smrcina, SBNMS/NOAA

Inflatable whale lands in Boston for *Get Into Your Sanctuary* celebration

Even television reporters want selfies with Salt, Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary's inflatable humpback whale. On Saturday, June 25, Frank Holland of WCVB-TV5 (ABC affiliate) covered the Get Into Your Sanctuary celebration on The Greenway – an open space that runs through downtown Boston. The whale and activity stations were located at the Boston Harbor Islands National and State Park Visitor Center and open to the public from 10am to 4pm. Whale watch passengers (those heading out to their vessels and those who recently disembarked), had a chance to see a life-sized whale model, up close. Some lucky passengers got to see the real Salt – grand dame of Stellwagen Bank whales and the inspiration for our inflatable. It was estimated that upwards of 2,000 individuals were introduced to sanctuary information at our exhibit during the course of the day.

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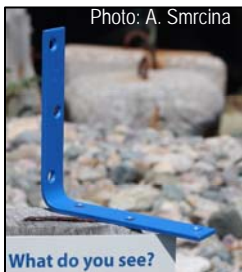
<http://stellwagen.noaa.gov/>

***I See, You See* monitoring program comes to sanctuary boathouse**

A new smartphone app called ICUC (“I See, You See”) allows citizen scientists to record images of an ever-changing environment to help scientists monitor marine ecosystems. This July, an ICUC station was installed at the parking lot for the sanctuary’s boathouse in Scituate Harbor.

Individuals interested in participating in the program first need to download the free app. Then, they place their smartphone or tablet on the L-shaped metal bracket and take a photo (lengthwise, no zoom). The bracket ensures that all photos cover the same geographic area. As photos are uploaded, a record of change over time will accrue at the centralized database.

The web-based reporting system will document such factors as sea level rise, beach erosion and marsh subsidence.



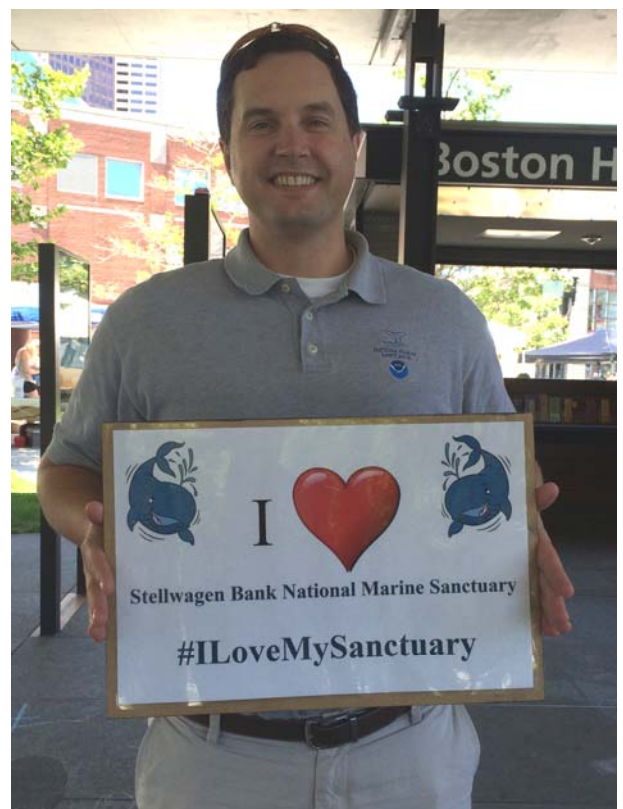
A smartphone owner takes a photo of Scituate Harbor using the ICUC bracket. All photos from this station will record the same landscape with any changes over time.

ICUC is a project of the Ecosystem Indicator Partnership (ESIP), a committee of the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment, with funding from states and provinces around the gulf and the U.S. Geological Survey. ESIP is developing indicators for the Gulf of Maine and integrating regional data for a new web-based reporting system for marine ecosystem monitoring. For more information, go to <http://www.gulfofmaine.org/2/esip-monthly-journals/february-2016-monthly-journal/>

***Get Into Your Sanctuary* campaign raises awareness of sanctuaries**

Visitors large and small came to marvel over the inflatable whale and express their interest in marine life and in the national marine sanctuaries. Office of National Marine Sanctuaries Acting Director John Armor stopped by to lend his support and meet with the public along with sanctuary staff and volunteers.

Photos: Anne Smrcina, SBNMS/NOAA





Another successful whale tagging year

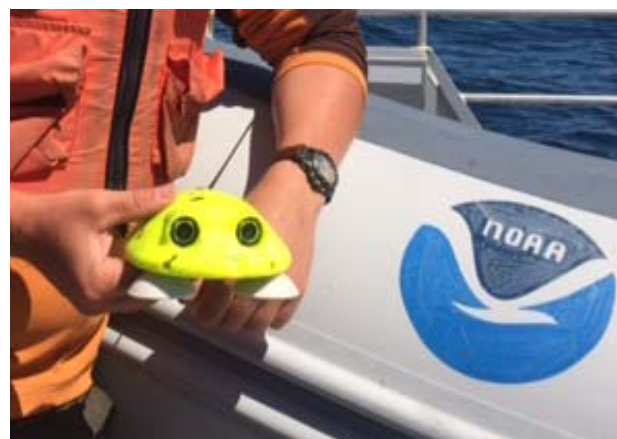
With data from as early as 2002, the sanctuary's whale tagging team now holds the world's most extensive database of humpback whale underwater behavior. This year, Dr. David Wiley, sanctuary research coordinator, and Michael Thompson, AIS/GIS specialist, led a hardy group of field scientists tasked with applying acoustic recording tags (measuring direction, depth, pitch, roll and sounds made and heard) and video recording tags to the backs of endangered whales in and around the sanctuary. The units, employing suction cups, were attached to 17 humpback whales, including six mother/calf pairs, collecting nearly 300 hours of data.

The tagged whales, all well known in the region, included new mothers Entropy, Ravine, Thumper (tagged twice), Venom, Wave and Zeppelin, as well as Pregunta, Nuages, Scratch (tagged twice), Whirlwind, Ursa, Dome, Springboard, Nimbus, and CCS15-055 (a 2015 calf). Also observed, but not tagged, was Salt, the grand dame of Stellwagen Bank whales and a new mother again (her 14th calf).

Information collected during these tagging cruises is used to understand interactions between whales and ships and fishing gear, which have historically been sources of serious injury and mortality to the animals. The work has led to the publication of 15 papers in top-tier scientific journals.

Collaborating scientists during this year's cruise were from Oregon State University, Syracuse University, Stanford University, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and Center for Coastal Studies. Funding for the project is provided by the Volgenau Foundation and the International Fund for Animal Welfare.

Photos: NOAA/SBNMS; NOAA Research Permit #14245. (Top) Researcher observes a tagged whale as it dives; (Middle) The science team used a new form of recording tag this year that is more compact and hydrodynamic; (Bottom) A calf breaches as its mother (a tagged whale) hunted prey.





Winners announced for annual marine art contest

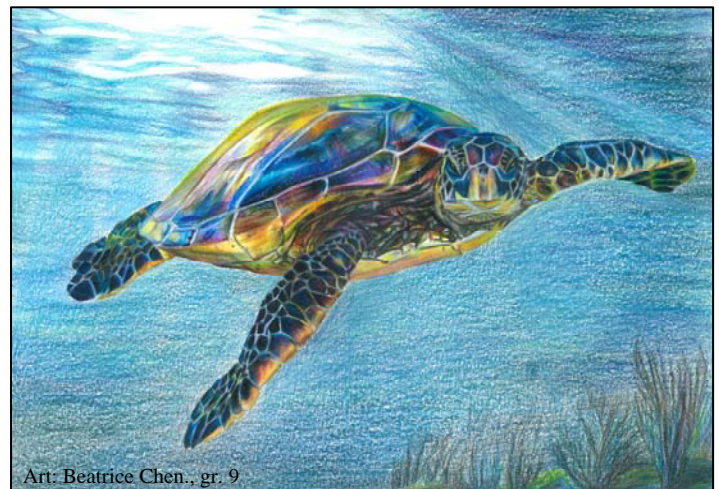
Winners of the 2016 Massachusetts Marine Educators Marine Art Contest (theme: Marine Biodiversity in Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary) were announced in early June.

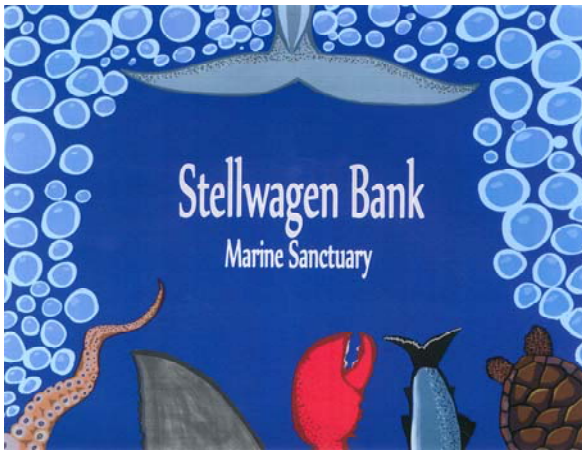
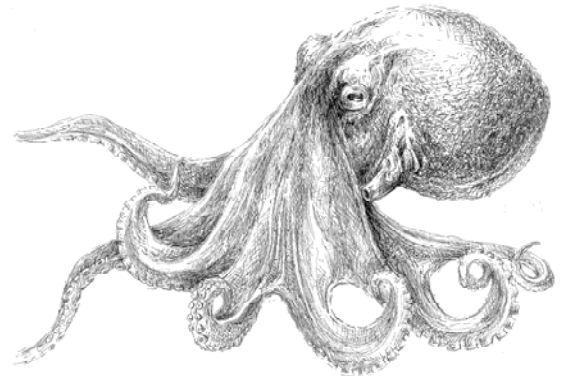
This year's contest attracted 915 entrants (a record number), primarily from Massachusetts, although artwork came from eight other states. Each of the five divisions (elementary, middle, high school, computer graphics and scientific illustration) had strong numbers and very talented submissions.

All prize-winning artwork and honorable mentions will be included in a 2016-2017 calendar, to be web published on the sanctuary home page later this summer and posted in the gallery section of the sanctuary's website. Some 50 pieces will be selected for an art show that will travel throughout the region beginning in September at the New Bedford Whaling Museum.

The sanctuary is a co-sponsor of the contest, along with the New England Aquarium, Center for Coastal Studies, Whale and Dolphin Conservation and The Ocean Genome Project/Northeastern University. The 2017 contest will have the same theme and a deadline of April 28, 2017.

For more information about the 2016 or 2017 contests, the traveling art show and possible marine art/marine biodiversity workshops for teachers, contact anne.smrcina@noaa.gov.





MME and SBNMS policy is to provide only first name/last initial for elementary and middle school students.

Art (clockwise): Minke Whale by Yihan L., Octopus by Erik Zou, Ctenophores by Yanxin W., Humpback Whale by Caroline J., Wolffish by Michael Correia, Atlantic Puffin by Elizabeth Jerome, Acadian Redfish by Meredith Davis, Harbor Seal by Cynthia T., Bubbles/Marine Life by Anne Marie Miscioscia, (center, top to bottom) Pteropods by Julian Draz, White-sided Dolphin by Fallon Mello.

Woods Hole Oceanographic INSTITUTION

Presents

MARIA BATLLE: THE MUSE SEEK PROJECT WHALE MUSE SEEK

An adventure expanding the borders of human perception and interspecies communication.

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Artist opens world of sound to deaf children; Sister Sanctuary Program partners in project

Deaf students in the Dominican Republic can now appreciate the songs of humpback whales through a project that has been labeled a “brilliant initiative” by Forbes Magazine. Artist/film maker/social entrepreneur Maria Batlle from the Dominican Republic created Whale Muse Seek, an offshoot of The Muse Seek Project. The education effort fosters inclusion and aims to open up the world of music to deaf children.

The whale aspect of the project uses hydrophones and technology that transforms whale sounds/songs into motion, detected by the students through packs that fit around the body. The Dominican Minister of Culture has called the project a “revolution in education” and the nation’s Ministry of Tourism reports that it is a “successful case of accessible tourism in the Dominican Republic.”

The Whale Muse Seek Project is a collaboration with Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary’s Sister Sanctuary Program, which seeks to protect a discrete population of humpback whales throughout their migratory range in the North Atlantic.

The Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution will offer a free presentation by Maria Batlle about her project on August 5 at noon. The lecture is in celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Sister Sanctuary Program between the Dominican Republic and Stellwagen Bank sanctuaries.

Legendary voyaging canoe *Hōkūle‘a* and crew visit NE

During the Boston stop in a world-wide tour, several crew members of the Polynesian voyaging canoe *Hōkūle‘a* from Hawaii visited the South Shore Natural Science Center where the sanctuary’s inflatable humpback whale was holding court. Young campers heard stories from these ocean explorers about the use of ancient navigational techniques in a vessel modeled after a traditional Polynesian design. The *Hōkūle‘a* has been making stops in or near all of the national marine sanctuaries along its multi-year, global tour.



Photo: Anne Smrcina, SBNMS



Photo: © 2015 Polynesian Voyaging Society, ‘Ōiwi TV

Outreach patrols seek to educate recreational boaters

Boater Outreach for Whales cruises have been instituted again this year under the direction of the sanctuary's operations coordinator Dave Slocum. The weekend missions allow sanctuary staff to interact with recreational boaters engaged in whale watching. Using the Research Vessel *Auk* as a home base and the rigid hulled inflatable boat as an approach vessel, staff provide brochures about regional whale watch guidelines and sanctuary-specific information to interested boaters.



The program was initiated last year as a follow up to reports that large numbers of recreational boats were congregating in areas with feeding whales. The education effort seeks to reduce threats to whales from boaters unaware of safe boating procedures around these massive marine mammals.

For tips on boating near whales, visit the See a Spout... Watch Out! website – <https://seeaspout.org> – a program sponsored by Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, NOAA Fisheries and Whale and Dolphin Conservation.



Photos: Anne Smrcina/SBNMS/NOAA

Sanctuary hosts volunteer appreciation cook-out; initiates Tuesday night film series

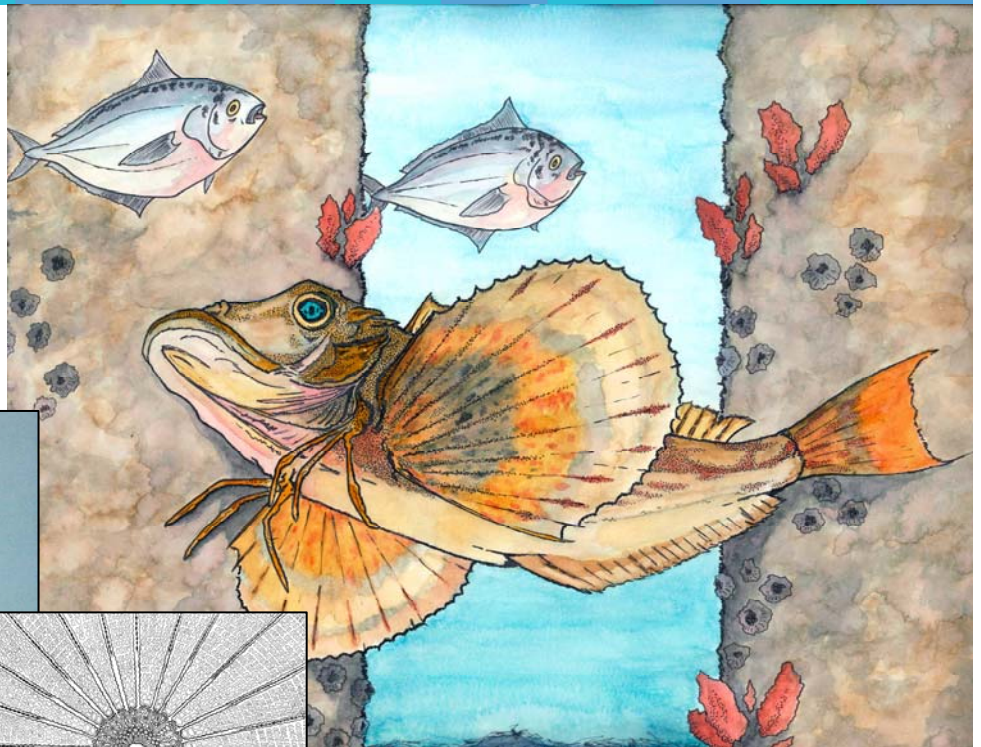
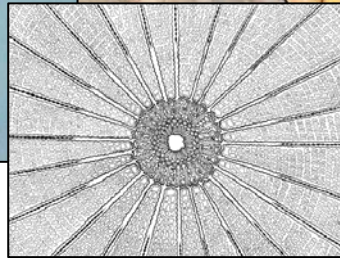
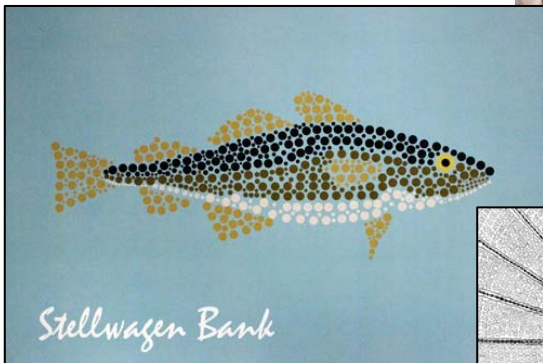
On July 19, the sanctuary rewarded its volunteer corps with a celebratory cook-out at the Scituate campus. Approximately 30 volunteers attended, along with many staff members. Over the past five years, volunteers have contributed a total of 50,000 hours of time, which equates to about \$1.8 million worth of service. At present, 150 volunteers participate actively in sanctuary-related programming. After the cook-out, many of the volunteers stayed for the first night of the sanctuary's summer film fest. Each Tuesday night until August 19, the sanctuary will host films related to ocean issues of concern to the national marine sanctuaries. The first film was *Sonic Sea*, which focuses on the increasing amount of sound in the ocean. Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary marine ecologist Dr. Leila Hatch was a featured acoustics expert (aka "cast member") in the production. Check the sanctuary website -- <http://stellwagen.noaa.gov> – for the complete schedule.



Photo: Anne Smrcina/SBNMS/NOAA

Student marine art posted on sanctuary website

All prize-winning art and honorable mentions from the 2016 Massachusetts Marine Educators Marine Art Contest are now posted on the sanctuary website <http://stellwagen.noaa.gov/pgallery/kidscorner.html>. Contest theme was *Marine Biodiversity in Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary*.



Art (clockwise from top): Northern Sea Robin by Calvin Toran-Sandlin; Diatom by Rita Sherwood; Atlantic Cod by James Porter.

Sanctuary seeks advisory council applicants

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary is seeking applicants for one business/industry alternate seat on the advisory council. The council ensures public participation in sanctuary management and provides advice to the sanctuary superintendent. Applications are due August 31. To receive an application or for further information, contact Elizabeth.stokes@noaa.gov via email or call 781-545-8026 ext. 201 or write SBNMS, 175 Edward Foster Road, Scituate, MA 02066. Applications can also be downloaded from the sanctuary's website at <http://stellwagen.noaa.gov>.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Ocean Service

Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

Gerry E. Studds Stellwagen Bank
National Marine Sanctuary

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM

Olympic Coast
Greater Farallones
Cordell Bank
Papahānaumokuākea
Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale
Monterey Bay
Channel Islands
American Samoa (U.S.)
(Including Rose Atoll)



Wisconsin - Lake Michigan
Thunder Bay
Stellwagen Bank
Mallows Bay - Potomac River
Monitor
Gray's Reef
Florida Keys
Flower Garden Banks

○ National Marine Sanctuary
△ Marine National Monument
■ Proposed National Marine Sanctuary

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

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries serves as the trustee for a system of 14 marine protected areas encompassing more than 170,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington state to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. The system includes 13 national marine sanctuaries and the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. For more information on the National Marine Sanctuary System, visit: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>



<http://stellwagen.noaa.gov/>