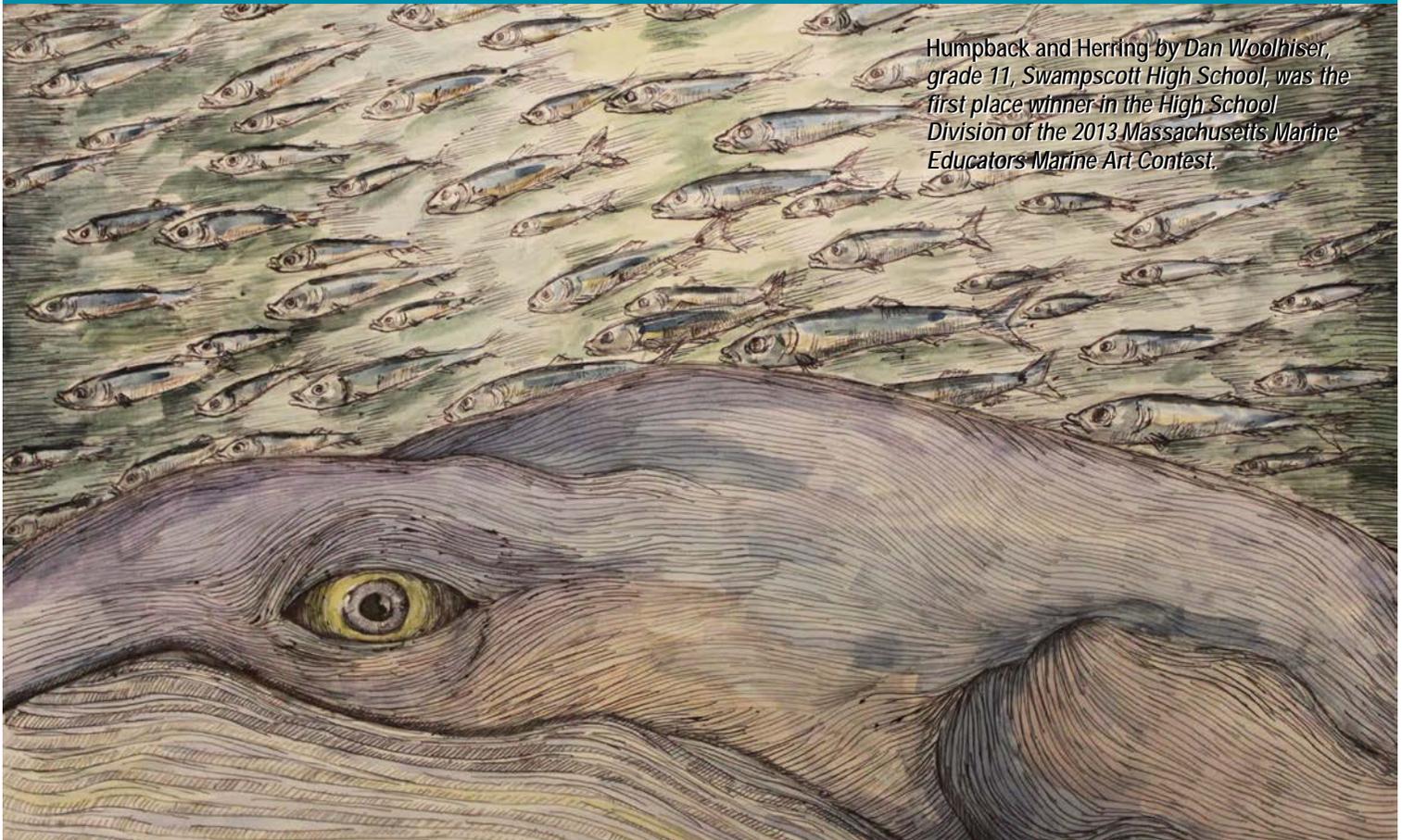


STELLWAGEN BANK E-NOTES: sanctuary news & events

December 2013



Humpback and Herring by Dan Woolhiser, grade 11, Swampscott High School, was the first place winner in the High School Division of the 2013 Massachusetts Marine Educators Marine Art Contest.

2014 Marine Art Contest Now Underway

There is a plethora of amazing ocean creatures in Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary that are often unrecognized by local residents. Each year, students in grades K-12 have the opportunity to discover the diversity of wildlife in the marine waters off the Massachusetts coast and explore their creativity through an annual art contest sponsored by Massachusetts Marine Educators.

The contest is open to all students (any state, any country, in public or private school or homeschooled). There is no cost to enter. Artwork must illustrate one or more species found in Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary. Co-sponsors for the contest are: New England Aquarium, Center for Coastal Studies, Whale and Dolphin Conservation and the sanctuary. There are a variety of prizes; winning art becomes part of a year-long traveling exhibit and is used to illustrate an annual calendar. **Deadline is May 2, 2014.** The 2013 exhibit visits the New Bedford Ocean Explorium until the end of December. It opens at the South Shore Natural Science Center on January 7. Rules and an entry form for the 2014 art contest can be found at http://stellwagen.noaa.gov/news/pdfs/sb_art_contest2014.pdf.

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www.facebook.com/SBNMS



www.youtube.com/user/SBNMS

This North Atlantic right whale swims in waters near the sanctuary. Locally, its tendency to swim slowly at or near the surface as it skim feeds on plankton makes the animal very susceptible to ship strikes. Added dangers arise from animal's migratory route, which takes it past all of the major ports along the U.S. east coast.

Credit: NOAA/SBNMS file photo.
Photo taken under NOAA Fisheries Research Permit #633-1763-01.

Many large ships pass through whale feeding grounds on their way to and from the Port of Boston.
Credit: SBNMS



TRIVIA: The population of North Atlantic right whales is estimated to be between 450 to 500 individuals.

Ship Speed Limit to Protect Right Whales Renewed Just in the Nick of Time

On Dec. 6, NOAA Fisheries renewed the Final Rule to Reduce the Threat of Ship Collisions with North American Right Whales (also known as the "Ship Strike Rule"). The rule, first published in Oct. 2008 and set to expire on Dec. 9, established a 10 knot speed limit for vessels of 65 feet or greater at certain times and locations along the U.S. east coast where right whales feed, migrate or reproduce.

"Since the ship speed restrictions went into effect, no known fatal ship strikes of North Atlantic right whales have occurred in the management zones," said Mark Schaefer, deputy NOAA administrator and assistant secretary of commerce for conservation and management. "This rule is working. Before this rule went into effect, 13 right whales died as a result of being hit by vessels in the same areas during an 18-year study period."

The rationale for the rule draws heavily on the work of sanctuary researchers. Dave Wiley, Brad Cabe and Mike Thompson were coauthors of a 2011 paper that showed that speed restrictions in Seasonal Management Areas in waters off New England (in the first year of the rule) reduced the risk of fatal strikes of right whales by 57%. A NOAA Fisheries-supported study of more than 100,000 vessel trips during the first four years of the rule concluded that speed restrictions reduced the probability of lethal ship strike by 80 to 90 percent.

The rule is part of NOAA's broader ship strike reduction efforts. Existing protective actions include surveying whale aggregation areas by aircraft, extensive mariner outreach programs (including "Whale ALERT," an app developed by a multi-organization team led by the sanctuary) and mandatory ship reporting systems that provide advisories and information on right whale locations to mariners. Go to http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/mediacenter/2013/12/04_12_shipstrikereduction_final_rule.html for more information.

Whaleship *Charles W. Morgan* Update

Mystic Seaport's prized exhibit, *Charles W. Morgan*, the only surviving 19th century wooden whaleship, will sail into the sanctuary in mid-July as part of the ship's 38th voyage. The three-month-long adventure will include stops in New London, Newport, Martha's Vineyard, New Bedford, Provincetown, Boston and Buzzards Bay. During its three day-long cruises into the sanctuary, the former whaleship will act as an ambassador to the whales and focus on whale research and marine science.

Sanctuary Speaker Gives "Dynamic" Presentation

David Wiley, sanctuary research coordinator, participated in a Stanford University-sponsored international workshop on Dynamic Ocean Management in Honolulu in early December. Dr. Wiley presented information on "Whale ALERT," a real time software application that provides management information to mariners. Whale ALERT is an excellent example of how dynamic ocean management can be aided by the development of "apps" for use on tablets and smartphones.

John Galluzzo honored as sanctuary's 2013 Volunteer of the Year



John Galluzzo displays his Volunteer of the Year award. Credit: SBNMS.

John J. Galluzzo, a Massachusetts South Shore resident, author and education director at the South Shore Natural Science Center, was named the 2013 Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Volunteer of the Year.

John's continued efforts to raise the visibility of and build support for the sanctuary reached more than 100,000 people over the last year. His dedicated efforts and award were recognized at the sanctuary's advisory council meeting in Plymouth on Nov. 5th.

John's partnership with the sanctuary began in 2000, when, as director of the Scituate Historical Society, he volunteered to help develop a photographic archive of the Coast Guard Station in Scituate where the sanctuary's offices had relocated. History continued to draw him to the sanctuary and through the years he included several sanctuary-related articles, written by him or sanctuary staff, in *Wreck and Rescue*, the journal of the U. S. Life Saving Service Heritage Association, which he edits. More recently, during his tenure with the Massachusetts Audubon Society, he helped pioneer the sanctuary's new citizen science program, Stellwagen Sanctuary Seabird Stewards.

In 2012, as part of the sanctuary's 20th anniversary celebration, John dramatically ramped up his volunteer efforts to raise the site's public profile. His efforts included developing a seminar course for older citizens that focused on the sanctuary, writing articles for South Shore magazines and newspapers, and discussing the sanctuary during lectures at yacht clubs and conferences, as well as on the radio.

"The breadth and depth of service John donated in the past year alone is amazing and inspirational," said Craig MacDonald, sanctuary superintendent. "His contributions to the sanctuary have instilled a higher level of local stewardship and conservation to this special place. John is indispensable to us and to the entire National Marine Sanctuary System."

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation organizes the Volunteer of the Year program and made the announcement earlier this year. The foundation is a private, non-profit organization that assists national marine sanctuaries with education and outreach programs designed to preserve, protect and promote meaningful opportunities for public interaction with these special places in the ocean and Great Lakes.

To learn more about volunteering at Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, visit <http://stellwagen.noaa.gov/involved/volunteers.html> or call Anne-Marie Runfola, sanctuary volunteer coordinator at 781-545-8026 ext. 240.

SAVE THIS DATE – 2/26/14!

The next Sanctuary Advisory Council meeting is scheduled for Wed., February 26, 2014. For more information about the meeting, check our website at <http://stellwagen.noaa.gov>

Sanctuary Advisory Council seeks applicants for 4 seats

NOAA's Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary is seeking applicants for four seats on its advisory council. The council ensures public participation in sanctuary management and provides advice to the sanctuary superintendent.

The sanctuary is accepting applications for the following seats: recreational fishing (alternate), business/industry (alternate); youth (primary and alternate).

Candidates are selected based on their expertise and experience in relation to the seat for which they are applying, community and professional affiliations, and views regarding the protection and management of marine resources. Applicants who are chosen as members should expect to serve a three-year term.

"Each of the members brings a unique perspective to the council based on their experience in the New England area," said Craig MacDonald, sanctuary superintendent. "Since its establishment, the council has played a vital role in advising the sanctuary and NOAA on critical issues. We are very pleased that council members offer their considerable talents to help us manage the resources of Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary."

The advisory council consists of 36 primary and alternate members representing a variety of public interest groups. It also includes six governmental seats representing Massachusetts Environmental Police; Coastal Zone Management; Division of Marine Fisheries; New England Fisheries Management Council; NOAA Fisheries; and U.S. Coast Guard First District.

Applications are due by December 31. To receive an application kit or for further information please contact Elizabeth Stokes via email at Elizabeth.Stokes@noaa.gov; by phone at 781-545-8026 x201; or by mail at 175 Edward Foster Road, Scituate, MA 02066. Application kits can also be downloaded from the sanctuary's website at <http://stellwagen.noaa.gov/>.

Sanctuary Team Wins NextGov Bold Award

Nextgov, an information resource for federal technology decision makers, has announced the eight winners of the 2013 Nextgov Bold Awards at a Washington, DC conference. These awards are designed to recognize federal employees who have taken risks to implement innovative programs that make government more effective. A key element of this selection process is the exploration of emerging technologies and their potential impact on government. Among the winners was the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary team of David Wiley, Leila Hatch and Michael Thompson for their work on the right whale protection app – Whale Alert.

Our team was one of 180 federal individuals or groups nominated for these awards. Other winning federal employees represented the State Department, NASA, the Department of Veterans Affairs and other agencies. The Nextgov Bold Award recognized the sanctuary’s use of cutting edge technology to solve resource protection problems. As noted in the Bold Awards website, “Whale Alert provides up-to-date information about the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale, displaying data on nautical charts via iPad or iPhone platforms. To protect right whales from ship strikes—the leading cause of death—NOAA has promulgated a suite of rules and voluntary measures that affect East Coast shipping. Prior to Whale Alert, information was delivered to ships in piecemeal fashion, making compliance difficult and resulting in industry fines. With more than 17,000 downloads, the app has been highly successful improving conservation efforts.”



Shipwreck Twister Project

Students from the Environmental Club at Gates Intermediate School in Scituate help paint simulated shipwreck scenes. These scaled to real-life floor panels will be used as part of a traveling maritime heritage education program developed by sanctuary staff and offered to libraries, museums and schools. Volunteers have been trained to help teach the shipwreck curriculum.

FATHOM THAT!

a marine sanctuary adventure



Dial and Dive In! (781) 304-1013
Explore your national marine sanctuary without getting wet.
The tour is free, but your normal calling rates apply.

New Fathom That! Signs

Fathom That! audio messages, web pages and signs are now active for the following locations:

- South Shore Natural Science Center
- Harvard Square Post Office (with Ocean River Alliance)



Fathom That! is a cooperative outreach project of Stellwagen Alive! Friends of our National Marine Sanctuary and the sanctuary.

Sanctuary Trivia: Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary encompasses 842 square miles (or 638 square nautical miles) of open ocean and the seafloor below.

Enhancing Our At-Sea Capabilities

Dave Slocum, sanctuary facilities and operations coordinator, attended a Scientific Computer System (SCS) training in Virginia Beach early in December. SCS installation is currently underway on the R/V *Auk*, the sanctuary’s research vessel. SCS will coordinate the collection and distribution of scientific data aboard the vessel and will help bring R/V *Auk*’s capabilities in line with those of other NOAA Ships.

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM



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

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Ocean Service
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
Gerry E. Studds Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary

