

USS MONITOR

2 0 0 7 A C C O M P L I S H M E N T S



The Monitor Center opened March 9, 2007 in Newport News, Va. Photo: The Mariners' Museum



A diver surveys the Monitor. Photo: 2007 Weydig-Silverstein Expedition.



A NOAA data buoy provides real-time information on water and weather conditions. Photo: NOAA

Monitor Center Brings America's First National Marine Sanctuary to the Public

On March 9, 2007, exactly 145 years after the historic clash between the Civil War ironclads USS *Monitor* and CSS *Virginia*, The Mariners' Museum and NOAA opened the USS *Monitor* Center in Newport News, Va. Exhibit highlights at the \$30 million, 63,500-square-foot center include a full-scale replica of the *Monitor*, interactive theaters and a view into the conservation laboratory where staff are currently conserving the ironclad's steam engine, turret and cannons. NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program has provided over \$14 million in federal funds for the center and ongoing artifact conservation efforts. The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation is spearheading the Monitor Artifacts Conservation Campaign to help raise the money necessary to continue the conservation work on the *Monitor*.

Researchers Survey Shipwrecks in the Graveyard of the Atlantic

Sanctuary staff returned to the waters off of Cape Hatteras, N.C., in fall 2006 to locate additional historic shipwrecks lost in the "Graveyard of the Atlantic," including the famed Civil War submarine USS *Alligator*. Working with the U.S. Navy and the Maritime Heritage Program, program personnel spent more than a week aboard the U.S. Navy's NR-1 nuclear research submarine investigating points of interest that had been identified in previous surveys of the region. Although the *Alligator* was not located, the expedition was successful in eliminating certain targets, paving the way for future survey work. The expedition also provided sanctuary personnel with a better understanding of the marine life that populates the many shipwrecks that serve as artificial reefs off of North Carolina.

Education and Outreach Efforts Target Outer Banks

Education and outreach efforts in 2007 focused largely on educating residents of North Carolina's Outer Banks about the *Monitor* sanctuary. Staff spent much of the summer working with partners including Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum, North Carolina Aquarium on Roanoke Island and the National Park Service to provide public lectures and continue work on exhibits and interpretative signage. Among lectures given, staff represented the sanctuary program at the first Outer Banks shipwreck forum, where divers discussed shipwreck management and conservation with federal and state agency representatives.

Buoys Warn Mariners of Dangerous Weather Conditions

NOAA data buoys aide mariners in determining sea conditions before leaving shore. New outreach products featuring the "When Red Sky at Night Isn't Enough" tagline encourage divers, boaters, fishermen and other users to visit the data buoy web site or call the dial-a-buoy information line for up-to-date weather and sea conditions in the sanctuary. Posters, magnets and cards including sanctuary regulations and diver permit information were distributed at community events and to dive shops, recreational fishing installations and other venues across the Outer Banks. The sanctuary also created a lesson plan for middle

<http://monitor.noaa.gov>



and high school students highlighting the data buoy, available online at <http://monitor.noaa.gov/publications/welcome.html>.

Monitor Surveys Continue

Since the removal of some of the USS *Monitor*'s key components, NOAA continues to study and monitor the wreck site. For the third year since the site was reopened to permit-regulated access in 2002, private research divers returned to the *Monitor* to continue the study of this national treasure. Divers spent two weeks in June and July 2007 mapping and surveying the wreck and its surrounding area. The imagery and documentation collected helps the *Monitor* sanctuary staff update existing data about the site, and aids in monitoring the wreck for significant changes.

Divers also verified that lionfish have arrived at the *Monitor*. Lionfish were first reported in coastal North Carolina in 2000 by recreational scuba divers exploring wrecks off Morehead City, located approximately 50 miles to the south of *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary. Lionfish are considered an invasive species and their spread up the Atlantic Coast is being watched carefully by sanctuary staff and NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science.



Sanctuary maps available at sanctuaries.noaa.gov

*To learn more about these and other accomplishments,
visit sanctuaries.noaa.gov*

