News from
Spring 2010

NOAA in the North Atlantic

NOAA's North Atlantic region spans from the mountains of Maine to the beaches of Virginia and includes all or part of 12 states and the District of Columbia. This newsletter includes highlights of recent activities in our region brought to you by your North Atlantic Regional Team.

"Spill of National Significance" Drill Occurs in the North Atlantic Region

The 2010 Spill of National Significance (SONS) exercise took place in New England on March 24 and 25th. Over five hundred participants at six different venues tested our nation's ability to respond to a major catastrophic oil spill on the local, state and Federal levels. NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration (OR&R) and the Weather Service's Gray, Maine Weather Forecast Office (WFO) were on hand to support SONS 2010.

OR&R's Emergency Response Division provided science support for the US Coast Guard to affect operations, while the Assessment and Restoration Division carried out natural resource damage assessments. The exercise also presented an opportunity to test the Environmental Response Management Application, or ERMA, developed by OR&R and the University of New Hampshire's Coastal Response Research Center. ERMA is an integrated data management system that provided SONS decision-makers with situational awareness at the various command posts during the exercise.

John Cannon, Senior Meteorologist and Marine Focal Point with the Gray WFO provided one of the most important components of the SONS exercise: the weather scenario.

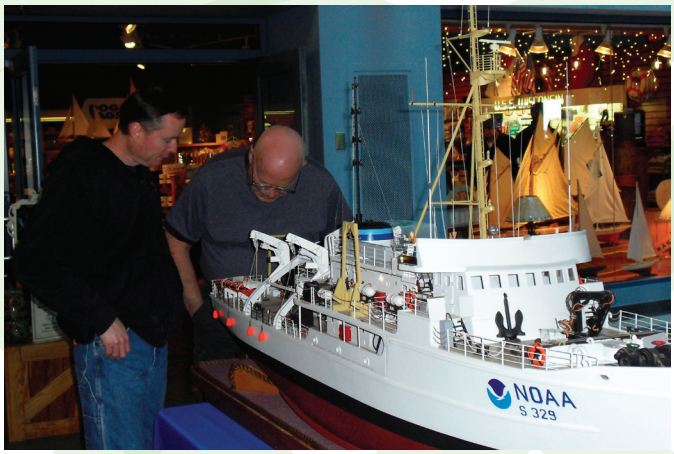
"We needed a blockbuster storm to create the incident, and then some fair weather conditions to allow deployment of assets. But if you want to drive a meteorologist nuts, make them deliver a calm forecast," Cannon said with a laugh. "We wanted to add some excitement. So we added challenges with a major storm moving in over New England coastal waters."

Cannon merged two large databases to come up with a storm situation that fulfilled the needs of the exercise. The 2007 Patriot's Day Storm was used to cause the accident, and the approaching New Year's Day Storm of 2010 provided the "excitement."

An additional challenge was creating simulated live briefings throughout the day as if weather data were coming in real time. During the exercise, Cannon provided as many as 30 briefings a day to ecosystem managers, salvage teams, incident command, media, private industry, and others.

"At the end of the day you just crawl into bed," Cannon said. "It felt like the real thing."

A NOAA "lessons learned" assessment for the exercise is planned for summer and is being supported by NOAA's North Atlantic Regional Team. For more information contact Nicole.Bartlett@noaa.gov.



Nauticus museum visitors examine a model of the NOAA Ship WHITING at "NOAA Day" at Nauticus.

NART Leadership Meets at Woods Hole

NOAA's North Atlantic Regional Team (NART) works to increase regional collaboration among NOAA offices in the North Atlantic to improve services for our customers. On March 10, 2010, the NART leadership team, led by Peyton Robertson and regional coordinator Nicole Bartlett, met in Woods Hole, Massachusetts to review progress on FY10 regional projects, establish connections between the regional team and the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) and the National Estuarine Research Reserve System, and increase NEFSC awareness of regional collaboration and ongoing projects in the North Atlantic.

Robertson presented as part of the NEFSC weekly seminar series and highlighted the benefits of enhanced NOAA collaboration. He also provided examples of recent successful NART projects.

For more information about about the NART leadership meeting, FY10 projects, or how you can participate contact Nicole.Bartlett@noaa.gov.

"NOAA Day" Celebrated at Nauticus

On March 6, 2010, the NOAA offices in Hampton Roads, Virginia celebrated the 2nd annual "NOAA Day" at Nauticus with special exhibits, films and tours for the public. Nauticus is a maritime musuem in Norfolk, Virginia that works in partnership with NOAA to promote environmental literacy and to help the public get to know NOAA. NOAA staff from the Office of Coast Survey, the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office, and NOAA Research are co-located at the museum.

As part of NOAA Day, museum vistors toured the NOAA research vessel BAY HYDROGRAPHER II, viewed a NOAA Film Festival in the museum's theater, and experienced exhibits and people from six different local NOAA offices (National Geodetic Survey, Chesapeake Bay Office, National Weather Service, Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services, Coast Survey, and the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary).

NOAA Day was attended by over 500 visitors, including approximately 100 NOAA employees and their families. For more information contact Andrew.W.Larkin@noaa.gov.

DID YOU KNOW?

NOAA Fisheries Northeast Region and **NOAA's Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary** have been collaborating on a number of projects to enhance marine resource conservation and management efforts in the region. It's part of a larger effort between NOAA Fisheries Service and National Marine Sanctuaries to increase collaboration nationwide.

More details about this partnership will be available in the Summer 2010 newsletter.

NOAA-Supported Research Predicts 'Significant' NE Red Tide in 2010

In February, scientists at the NOAA/Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution's Cooperative Institute for the North Atlantic Region predicted a significant regional toxic algal bloom that causes 'red tides' in the spring and summer, potentially threatening the New England shellfish industry.

Researchers also issue a weekly forecast of bloom distribution and magnitude. To support this prediction, the NOAA National Weather Service Northeast River Forecast Center provides weekly to biweekly hydro-meteorological outlooks for prolonged onshore flow, heavy rain and significant runoff episodes. These conditions seem to foster growth/movement of algal cells toward the shoreline. A string of consistent northeast winds and onshore flow in March led the State of Maine to begin early monitoring of shellfish beds, finding signs of red tide, and issuing a closure more than a full month earlier than in recent years.

The Gulf of Maine red tide prediction is a product of the Gulf of Maine Toxicity Project funded through the NOAA Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research and involving collaboration of scientists from federal, state, academic, and other partner entities.

For more information contact Elizabeth.Turner@noaa.gov or David.Vallee@noaa.gov.

NOAA Engaged in Regional Coastal & Marine Spatial Planning

In December 2009, President Obama's Ocean Policy Task Force released its Interim Framework for Effective Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning (Interim Framework). The Interim Framework offers a comprehensive, integrated approach to planning and managing competing uses and activities in the ocean and coastal areas.

On February 18th, NOAA senior policy advisor Jennifer Lukens attended the Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC) meeting to clarify concepts in the Interim Framework. State and federal participants confirmed NROC's desire to lead the development of a regional Coastal and Marine Spatial (CMS) plan and solicited partner support in analyzing ecological assessments, designing a regional data portal, and organizing a stakeholder engagement process. Representatives from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean discussed the need for continued coordination across regions to ensure compatible CMS plans, particularly within the shared Long Island Sound ecosystem.

NOAA will assume the federal chair of NROC in June and will sponsor a workshop for the Northeast community in September 2010 to focus on implementation of the CMS Planning framework. For more information contact Betsy.Nicholson@noaa.gov.

NOAA People in the North Atlantic Region

NART Member

Scott Mowery is the Northeast Regional Science Officer for the NOAA National Oceanographic Data Center (NODC) and National Coastal Data Development Center (NCDDC).

In his current position, Scott works with regional data managers from the Mid-Atlantic through New England to help identify ways to best manage data assets and expand data discovery and access, and explore new visualization and mapping tools to help both data producers and users exploit the full potential of NOAA sponsored research. He also works to ensure scientific data and information are being archived in the appropriate NOAA National Data Center.

A former Navy Meteorology and Oceanography Officer, Scott spent his first two years with NOAA in Silver Spring working closely with the data archivists at NODC. He moved to Hampton Roads, Virginia in 2008 with his wife and three young children, where he is happy to be close to his wife's family--even his mother-in-law!

NART Background

The NART is one of eight regional teams created by NOAA's Regional Collaboration effort. It is composed of 21 members from five line offices and is currently led by Peyton Robertson. Nicole Bartlett is the NART Regional Coordinator. For more information on team members and activities visit: **http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/PPI_Capabilities/north_atlantic.html**

NOAA Places in the North Atlantic Region

National Weather Service Eastern Region Headquarters

The National Weather Service (NWS) Eastern Region headquarters, located in Bohemia, New York, manages 23 Weather Forecast Offices, three River Forecast Centers, and four Center Weather Service Units. The NWS Eastern Region provides weather, water, aviation, and climate services to over 93 million people, including all the states in NOAA's North Atlantic region, representing over one third of the US population.

The NWS Eastern Region headquarters manages all operational and scientific meteorological, hydrologic, and oceanographic programs of the region including observing networks, weather services, forecasting, climatology, and hydrology. The office conducts programs to review and upgrade the scientific programs and procedures at field offices. It monitors these services and adjusts resources to provide the most effective weather and warning services possible.

The NWS Eastern Region divisions include the Director's office, Meteorological Services, Hydrological Services, Scientific Services, Systems Operations, and Administration with a staff of nearly 60 people. In February 2010, Chris Strager became the new Director of the NWS Eastern Region. For more information about the NWS Eastern Region, contact Marcie.Katcher@noaa.gov.

The National Weather Service's Eastern Region Headquarters Office in Bohemia, NY.