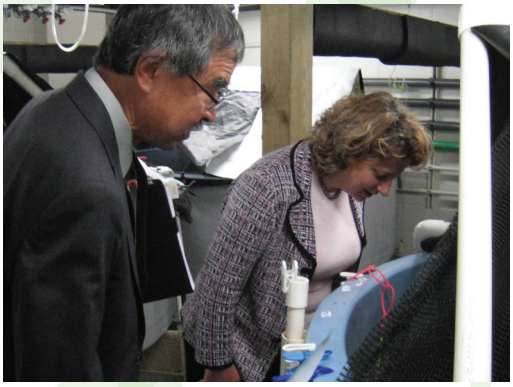
News from
NOAA in the North Atlantic
Winter 2011

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 (NART).

North Atlantic Region Hosts Three National Ocean Policy Meetings

NOAA's North Atlantic Regional Team (NART) coordinated three National Ocean Policy town hall briefings and all hands employee meetings in the North Atlantic region in the fall of 2010.

The public town hall meetings were designed to respond to questions about President Obama's new *National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, our Coasts, and the Great Lakes* and were attended by more than 200 ocean stakeholders and partners in the region. NOAA's Director of Policy, Sally Yozell, provided an overview of the national policy, and then joined a Federal panel that included Department of the Interior, U.S. Navy, and U.S. Coast Guard representatives. The public meetings were held at Monmouth University in West Long Branch, New Jersey (November 5), Nauticus in Norfolk, Virginia (November 12), and Faneuil Hall in Boston, Massachusetts (December 9). All hands briefings for NOAA employees were also held in the region in conjunction with each of the events.



Dr. Thomas Noji gives Sally Yozell a tour of the NOAA Fisheries laboratory at Sandy Hook, NJ.

The North Atlantic is already a hot spot for coastal and marine spatial planning (CMSP) activities, and NART members are directly involved in these efforts. New England states and other members of the Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC) have rallied around CMSP as a science-based, proactive process for making ocean and coastal management decisions.

"CMSP is a natural fit for New England," NROC Co-Chair and NART Coastal & Ocean Uses Sub-team Lead, Betsy Nicholson, explains. "The states are leading with their ocean planning experience, and the National Ocean Policy should help us expand the concept to a regional scale. The entire North Atlantic is ground zero for offshore wind development so this initiative is timely."

NOAA has sponsored and organized major meetings with both NROC and Mid Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean last fall to discuss how to advance CMSP in the North Atlantic and strengthen regional ocean partnerships. More information about these workshops can be found at http://collaborate.csc.noaa.gov/nroc and http://www.midatlanticocean.org/, or by contacting Northeast CMSP Liaison Betsy Nicholson, or Mid-Atlantic CMSP Liaison Tom Bigford.

NART Supports Potential Tide Gage Expansion in the Region

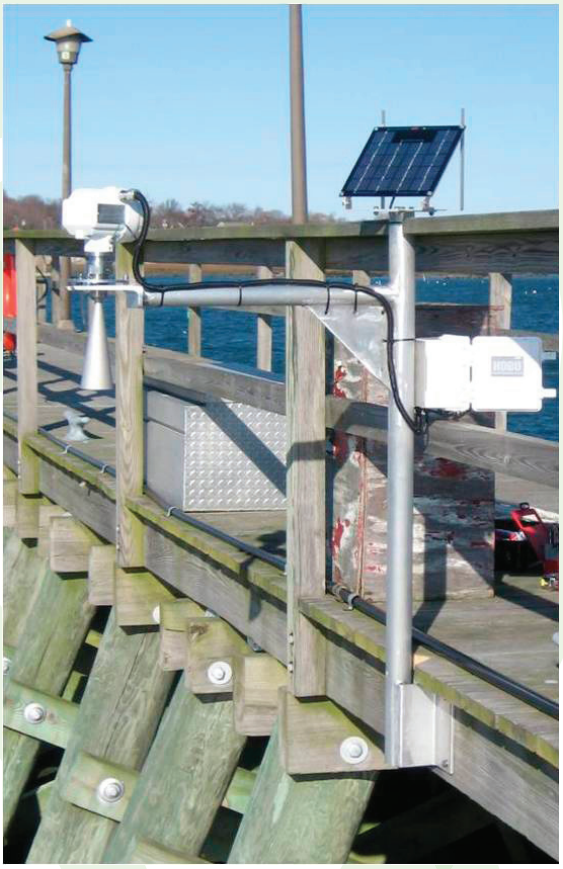
In Fiscal Year 2011, the NART Resiliency sub-team is working with members of the NOAA Storm Surge Team and the National Ocean Service's (NOS) Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services (CO-OPS) to identify a second tier network of tide gages that would complement the existing CO-OPS water level network.

Both NOS and the National Weather Service (NWS) depend heavily upon tide gage data to fulfill their missions. Additional tide gage data, from carefully chosen sites, could be very valuable to NOAA stakeholders as well.

An NWS pilot project in Scituate, MA, has been using microwave radar sensor technology to measure water levels. In a related effort, CO-OPS has conducted an analysis of various microwave radar sensor technologies, which with the exception of gages placed in the open ocean, has proven comparably accurate to the existing water level network. This technology is cheaper and easier to deploy and could open the door for expansion to other locations. The Resiliency sub-team is conducting a "gap analysis" to support this effort.

Coastal weather forecast offices are supplying information on existing gages in their warning area of responsibility. In addition, the sub-team is investigating gage and installation costs, as well as steps needed to include these data as a part of the CO-OPS water level network. Finally, the team is obtaining updated equipment and installation costs from the vendor who installed the Scituate tide gage.

Contact Robert.Thompson@noaa.gov for more information on this ongoing NART project.

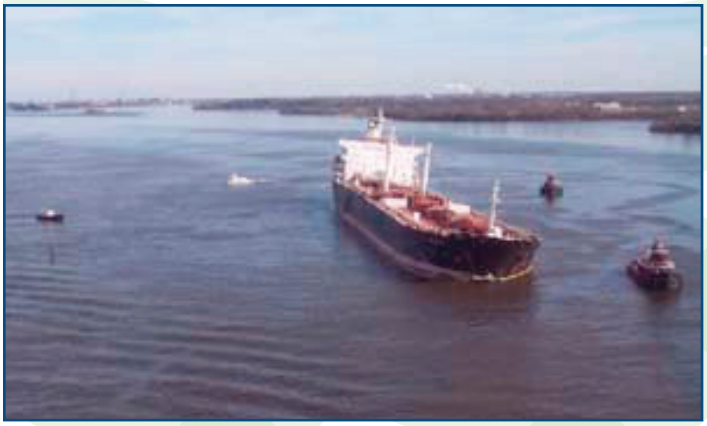


The NOAA tide gage in Scituate (MA) has experimental microwave rader sensor technology.

DID YOU KNOW?

In November 2010, NOAA announced that it was awarding Environmental Literacy Grants to seven entities in the North Atlantic Region to promote science education. The recipients in our region include the University of Maryland, the American Museum of Natural History (N.Y.), the Nurture Nature Center (Pa.), College of Exploration (Va.), Seacoast Science Center (N.H.), and the Science Museum of Virginia.

Included are projects that enhance museum exhibits using data visualization, expand citizen science networks, develop family programs for underserved/underrepresented audiences, and enhance teen education programs.



NOAA Receives Funding to Restore Delaware River Damaged by '04 Spill

On Nov. 26, 2004, the *Athos I*, a large cargo vessel, struck a submerged anchor while preparing to dock in Paulsboro, N.J. The anchor punctured the hull, spilling nearly 265,000 gallons of crude oil into the Delaware River and over 280 miles of shoreline, affecting habitats, aquatic life, birds and other wildlife as well as hindering recreational use of the river.

Under the Oil Pollution Act, NOAA and other state and federal agencies are trustees that evaluate the damage to and loss of natural resources from an oil spill and restore the habitat and resources to pre-existing conditions. Because the damage in the Delaware exceeded the statutory limits of liability of the owners of *Athos I*, the trustees submitted a claim to the U.S. Coast Guard National Pollution Funds Center.

NOAA and the other trustees received $27.5 million from the U.S. Coast Guard Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund for nine projects to restore conditions for fish, birds, sensitive habitats, wildlife and recreational use of the Delaware River areas impacted by the spill.

NOAA's Damage Assessment, Remediation, and Restoration Program (DARRP) was formally created after the Exxon Valdez oil spill. The program provides permanent expertise within NOAA to assess and restore natural resources injured by releases of oil and hazardous substances.

DARRP is made up of three offices within NOAA: the Office of Response & Restoration (NOAA Ocean Service), Office of Habitat (NOAA Fisheries), and the Office of General Counsel for Natural Resources.

"These funds will enhance a number of excellent restoration projects throughout the area affected by the spill," said Pat Montanio, director of NOAA's Office of Habitat Programs. "From wetland enhancements to dam removals to shoreline improvements, these projects are designed to compensate the public for the loss of nature's benefits following the spill."

Contact Ben.Sherman@noaa.gov for more information.

NOAA Presents at Mid Atlantic Habitat-Ecosystem Forum

On December 13-14, 2010, NOAA Fisheries and NOAA Ocean Service staff presented on topics ranging from ocean policy to habitat restoration at a "Habitat-Ecosystem" workshop sponsored by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. The goal of the forum, held in Virginia Beach, was to identify projects and opportunities for the Council to use the latest habitat and ecosystem science, policy, and management to provide healthy Mid-Atlantic fisheries.

Council members heard from NOAA Fisheries representatives on new habitat protection policies and conservation opportunities in the region, including information about deep sea corals and sponges.

NOAA Ocean Service reps briefed the Council members on the current and potential use of marine protected areas to conserve habitat and programs that support land acquisition in sensitive coastal areas which serve as nurseries for many fish species.

Contact Peyton.Robertson@noaa.gov for more information.

NOAA People in the North Atlantic Region

NART Member

Adrianne Harrison

Adrianne Harrison is a Program Analyst with the NOAA Coastal Services Center Northeast Region in Durham, New Hampshire. Adrianne started with the Coastal Services Center in 2005 as an intern for the West Coast Region in San Francisco before returning to her native New England in 2007.

Adrianne focuses on building capacity of New England's coastal management community through technical assistance with climate adaptation and regional collaboration.

Adrianne grew up in Southport, Maine and earned a B.S. in Marine Affairs from the University of Rhode Island and a M.S. in Community Planning and Development from the University of Southern Maine. She currently lives in Portsmouth, New Hampshire with her husband Joe and is expecting their first child in February 2011.

NART Background

The NART is one of eight regional teams created by NOAA's Regional Collaboration effort. It is composed of 23 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

Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (VA)

The Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Virginia (CBNERRVA), is operated by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) and consists of four sites on the York River. It is one of 28 National Estuarine Research Reserves around the country that are protected for long-term research, water-quality monitoring, education, and coastal stewardship through a NOAA partnership with a local university or government agency.

CBNERRVA staff have provided seventh grade students in Gloucester and Mathews County with a hands-on approach to studying the Chesapeake Bay for the past five years through a NOAA B-WET grant entitled "Chesapeake Studies: Linking Field Trips with the Classroom." The reserve has reached over 3,000 local middle school students since receiving its first B-WET grant from NOAA. This fall the program expanded to include two new schools in York County. While many of these students live on or near the water, a large majority have never been to the Bay, never seen a live blue crab, and do not known that seahorses are real creatures.

Students visit the reserve on the VIMS campus where they are exposed to microscopes, classifying animals and plants, collecting organisms both for their classroom aquaria and for diversity studies on the beach. The combination of field experience and relatable classroom lessons ensures that the students retain the knowledge and foster a deeper understanding and respect for the natural environment around them.

For more information on the education program at the CBNERRVA, visit www.vims.edu/cbnerr or contact Sarah McGuire, at mcguire@vims.edu. To learn more about the NERRS and how you can partner with a reserve on education, training, research, or monitoring visit nerrs.noaa.gov.

Students conduct investigations at the Reserve along the York River.