

Getting Your Feet Wet

an introduction to noaa's national ocean service

The National Ocean Service (NOS), an office within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, works to preserve and enhance the nation's coastal resources and ecosystems along 95,000 miles of shoreline and 3.5 million square miles of coastal ocean. NOS works to protect, restore and manage resources in our oceans and coasts; understand climate change and variability; fulfill weather and water information needs; and support commerce and transportation. NOS strives to be a global leader in integrated management of the ocean.

TO CONSERVE OUR OCEANS, NOS works to –



- **conserve the nation's coral reefs as part of a multi-agency effort**
- **reserve marine resources and reverse losses by implementing the Marine Protected Areas Program**
- **Manage a network of national marine sanctuaries**
- **explore the vast ocean depths**
- **Respond to, assess and remediate oil and chemical spills**
- **facilitate international partnerships to fulfill common ocean-related goals**

ALONG OUR COASTS, NOS works to –



- **Identify how ecological processes and human activities inter-relate in coastal ecosystems**
- **Monitor and observe physical, chemical, biological and meteorological phenomena**
- **Evaluate and address contaminants, and monitor cleanup efforts**
- **Forecast ecological impacts of chemical, biological and physical changes on ecosystems and people**
- **Manage and conduct research and educational activities in 27 National Estuarine Research Reserves**
- **Assess the effects of natural hazards such as hurricanes, tsunamis, erosion, harmful algal blooms and others**
- **Provide tools and information needed to restore damaged natural resources**
- **Train coastal managers to make good decisions about managing resources**

FOR CHARTING AND NAVIGATION NEEDS, NOS works to –



- **Provide accurate aerial photography and coastal survey maps to aid in coastal management and ensure safe navigation**
- **Coordinate more than 1,000 global positioning reference stations to ensure reliable transportation and communication systems**
- **Provide continuously updated nautical charts and hydrographic surveys to navigators and mariners**
- **Monitor and predict tides and currents, and provide real-time information through the Physical Oceanographic Real-Time System and National Water Level Observation Network**



THE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

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MBO is the focal point for all planning, management, budget, internal and external communication, and education activities.

OFFICE of COAST SURVEY (OCS)

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OCS is the nation's nautical chart maker. OCS collects, manages, and compiles the data and information necessary to maintain the national suite of 1,000 nautical charts, hydrographic surveys that measure water depth, and historic maps and charts.

<http://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov>

OFFICE of OCEAN and COASTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (OCRM)

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OCRM provides leadership and direction to state and territorial coastal programs and estuarine research reserves; works with coastal managers to develop a scientifically-based national system of marine protected areas; and supports effective management and sound science to protect coral ecosystems.

<http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov>

NOAA COASTAL SERVICES CENTER (CSC)

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CSC provides skills and information resources to state and local coastal resource managers. Its primary support initiatives involve those issues considered most important to managers — hazards, habitats, sustainable communities, and data and information access and usability.

<http://csc.noaa.gov>

OFFICE of NATIONAL GEODETIC SURVEY (NGS)

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NGS develops and maintains a national system of positioning data needed for transportation, navigation, and communication systems, land record systems, mapping and charting efforts, and defense operations.

<http://geodesy.noaa.gov>

NATIONAL CENTERS for COASTAL OCEAN SCIENCE (NCCOS)

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NCCOS conducts and supports research, monitoring, assessment, and technical assistance for managing coastal ecosystems and society's use of them. These activities fit within a framework of five environmental stressors: climate change, extreme natural events, pollution, invasive species, and land and resource use.

<http://coastalscience.noaa.gov>

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY PROGRAM (NMSP)

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NSMP protects and manages 13 sanctuaries and one marine national monument encompassing more than 150,000 square miles of U.S. ocean. Important habitats like breeding and feeding grounds, coral reefs, kelp forests, and historical shipwrecks are represented within the system of sanctuaries.

<http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>

CENTER for OPERATIONAL OCEANOGRAPHIC PRODUCTS and SERVICES (CO-OPS)

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CO-OPS collects and distributes oceanographic observations and predictions to ensure safe, efficient, and environmentally sound maritime commerce. The center provides water level and coastal current oceanographic products, measures and predicts tides throughout the nation, and is responsible for disseminating this information to the public.

<http://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov>

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM OFFICE (IPO)

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IPO is the focal point for NOS's international activities to enhance U.S. and international capabilities for integrated ocean and coastal management. IPO facilitates international partnerships, capacity building, scientific and technical exchanges, and access to NOS products and services.

<http://international.nos.noaa.gov>

OFFICE of RESPONSE and RESTORATION (OR&R)

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OR&R works to prevent and mitigate harm to coastal resources. It is the primary NOAA office that responds to oil spills and hazardous material releases. OR&R also works with federal, state, and tribal natural resource trustees to restore damaged coastal resources.

<http://response.restoration.noaa.gov>