

# Scuba & N2O

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION \$20

ADVENTURES MAGAZINE

08 **VISIBLE 247**



24 **EXPANDING THE NEW YORK STATE ARTIFICIAL REEF**



**DIVING INTO HISTORY  
RESEARCH**

**54**



VISIT ONE OF THE  
WORLD'S MOST SPECTACULAR DIVING DESTINATIONS:

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# FLOWER GARDEN BANKS

## NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

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With fertile coral reefs and sponges in kaleidoscopic hues, and visibility reaching more than 100 feet, a dive in the sanctuary often leaves visitors awestruck. Here in the Gulf of Mexico, about 100 miles south of the Texas-Louisiana border, manta rays, loggerhead turtles, hammerhead sharks and hundreds of species of fish and invertebrates, along with the occasional massive whale shark, complete the underwater tableau.

Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary is one of 14 federally designated underwater areas that promote recreation, stewardship, environmental protection and ocean research.

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation thanks Dive News Network Media Group for its support of America's national marine sanctuaries.

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## Publisher's Note

### Take care of those around you

COVID19 has transformed our one bustling country into almost desolate streets, quite roads, and shops with closed signs. In keeping within the government social distancing guidelines many local businesses have had to close up shop, think creatively to stay open, and families and friends have had to rethink life, celebrations, births, funerals, and how to gather up groceries and essentials. This process has been challenging for many, causing hardships financially as well as emotionally.

People want their normal back – but here we are. We suggest reaching out to loved ones through apps like Facebook, skype, zoom, and WhatsApp. Many faith-based organizations offer live stream options for services, many teams and sports leagues are creating fun virtual challenges, and families have opted to celebrate their own versions of missed school proms and other events. Most importantly, students need your support to transition to online only studies, they also need to know they are loved during so much uncertainty.

Many of us are missing the people we can't be with in-person right now. That makes it more important than ever to be there for the people who are near you. Support your household members or, for essential workers, your coworkers. This is the time for courage and compassion.

We're in this together. We're all part of this global team.

*Selene Muldowney*

#### About the Cover:

Photo by John C. Fine: With beaches, boat ramps, dive operations, dive stores all closed visitors to Florida are victimized by the edicts of government designed to keep them from spreading the virus.

SOUND  
BITES

SCUBAH2OMAG

Shout-outs!

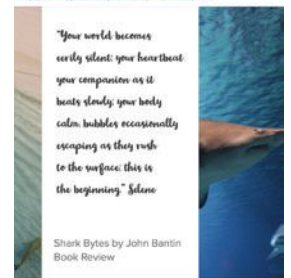
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## FACEBOOK



## INSTAGRAM

Book review on John Bantini's impressive impression on sharks! Shark Bytes is a great read - a must read for any ocean aficionado. John Bantini, Fernhurst Books  
#bookreview #sharkbytes #fernhurstbooks #sharkbitesbookreview  
<http://www.fppubs.com/publication/?v=573820&a=68>



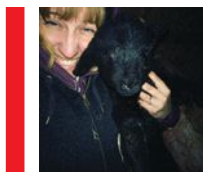
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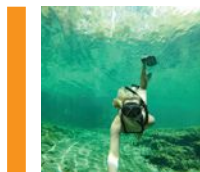
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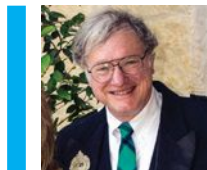


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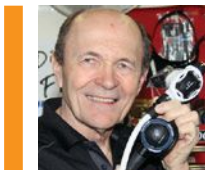


A BEACH IS NOT ONLY A SWEEP OF SAND, BUT SHELLS OF SEA CREATURES, THE SEA GLASS, THE SEAWEED, THE INCONGRUOUS OBJECTS WASHED UP BY THE OCEAN. **HENRY GRUNWALD**



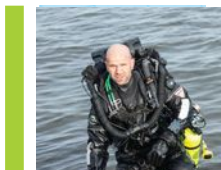
GARY  
LEHMAN

Gary came to diving later than most, and loves to get away when he can – which is not enough! Some of the most memorable experiences ever for Gary have been underwater with his club buddies, turtles and sharks! When not diving or thinking about it, he writes about it!



ALEC PEIRCE

Alec Peirce is recognized as one of the finest scuba diving presenters of his generation. He holds instructor certifications with seven different scuba training agencies plus many honorary awards from the scuba industry including the prestigious "Platinum Pro 5000 Diver".



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Erik is an explorer, author, maritime historian, shipwreck researcher, and technical diver with over 20 years of diving experience. Erik has been featured in dive publications world-wide, is the author of three books, and regularly presents at the largest dive shows and museums in the country.



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I am a recreational and technical SCUBA Instructor whose primary goal is to create divers that are safe, skilled, and competent. I'd rather lose business than certify an unqualified diver. It is my moral and ethical duty to call out unsafe practices, standards, and those who defend or use them.



BONNIE  
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Destined to a life with adventure, Bonnie McKenna took her open water dive in 1955 with no wetsuit or BCD, a J-valve tank, double hose regulator, and fins that weighed a ton. She explored the world, with camera in hand, as an international flight attendant. Now retired, she spends her time working as a photojournalist and conservationist.



JOHN C  
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The author Dr. John Christopher Fine is a marine biologist, Master Scuba Instructor and Instructor Trainer. He is an expert in maritime affairs and has authored 26 published books. His large format coffee table book: TREASURES OF THE SPANISH MAIN contains information and photographs of Spanish colonial shipwrecks.



GENE  
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An accomplished wreck explorer, historian, speaker, instructor, and business owner, Gene is a man who wears many hats, and who has made significant strides in surfacing the deep history of New Jersey shipwrecks. Gene has over 40 years of experience in these fields, and we look forward to sharing his stories and expertise in future editions.



MICHAEL  
SALVAREZZA

Michael Salvarezza and Christopher Weaver have been diving the waters of the world since 1978. In that time, they have spent thousands of hours underwater and have accumulated a large and varied library of photographic images. They have presented their work in many multi-media slide presentations, and have appeared previously at Beneath the Sea, the Boston Sea Rovers Underwater Clinic, Ohio ScubaFest and Our World Underwater.

Eco-Photo Explorers (EPE) is a New York based organization and was formed in 1994 to help promote interest in protecting the environment through knowledge and awareness through the use of underwater photography.



CHRISTOPHER  
WEAVER



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Mark has worked as a diver and dive supervisor for more than 30 years. He works in locations as diverse as Alaska's Bering Sea, the Missouri River and Gulf of Mexico. Mark currently resides in Southern California.

# EXPANDING THE NEW YORK STATE

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY MICHAEL SALVAREZZA & CHRISTOPHER P. WEAVER, ECO-PHOTO EXPLORERS



# ARTIFICIAL REEF PROGRAM



The ocean floor off Long Island's south shore slopes very gradually from the tidal zone to deep water canyons hundreds of miles away. Unlike other marine environments that feature rocky outcroppings, coral reefs, geological rifts and other structural elements, the seabed here is mostly a flat, featureless sandy plain. New York State's Artificial Reef Program changes all of that.

SCUBA Divers everywhere are familiar with the concept of artificial reefs. Anyone who has visited a shipwreck has seen firsthand how nature reclaims man-made objects for its own. Swimming through these shipwrecks, divers observe how marine growth attaches to the hard surfaces of the wrecks while free swimming fish seek shelter in their protective confines. Indeed, soon after a ship has sunk, a thriving marine environment has emerged.

Ocean Pout often make their home in the nooks and crannies of the reefs



Although the vast majority of sunken vessels worldwide have resulted from unintentional sinkings, the idea of creating artificial reefs by intentionally sinking ships has gained popularity in recent years. Programs to deposit obsolete ships and other unwanted material have been implemented in many states and around the world with great success. With these reefs come increased aggregations of marine life, improved fishing for recreational fishermen and better dive opportunities for SCUBA divers.

The New York State Artificial Reef Program was officially created in 1962. It currently consists of 12 different artificial reef sites around Long Island: two in the Long Island Sound, two in the Great South bay and eight in the Atlantic Ocean south of the island. These reefs are constructed of purposely sunk vessels, recycled construction material, clean rock and steel and other material. As with all artificial reef programs, the material was thoroughly cleaned and decontaminated prior to being placed in the ocean.

For years, local divers and fishermen advocated for the expansion of this system of reefs. The Long Island Divers Association (LIDA) was a part of that advocacy effort and in 2018, their efforts were rewarded with a



decision by New York Governor Andrew Cuomo to commence the largest expansion of these reefs in State history. As a result, tons of recycled material, including boats, barges and other material were deployed on the existing reef sites to further increase their profile and footprint on the ocean floor.

Perhaps the most interesting part of this expansion was the inclusion of material from the recently demolished Tappan Zee Bridge in this effort. Steel trusses, pipes, girders, concrete panels and much more have found a new home on the reefs off Long Island. Local divers now have the opportunity to dive on material many of them drove over for years as they crossed the venerable Tappan Zee Bridge.



Crabs and other crustaceans move in quickly

New York State is seeking to continue this expansion significantly by depositing tons of additional material on the existing reefs and by creating four new reef sites.

Part of the current proposal calls for increasing the 14-acre Moriches Reef to 850 acres, taking the Shinnecock Reef from 35 acres to 850 acres and growing the 413-acre reef near Rockaway to 635 acres. The plan also calls for quadrupling the size of the McAlister Grounds off Jones Beach from 115 acres to 425 acres.

New reefs are to be created near the Huntington-Oyster Bay border, off Port Jefferson and near Mattituck. A fourth new site is being called Sixteen Fathom and will be an 850-acre site about 12 miles out in the Atlantic Ocean south of the Nassau-Suffolk County border.

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has studied the effects of creating Artificial Reefs in this area for decades and have documented increases in populations of marine life in these areas. But fishermen and divers can also attest to these increases firsthand. Fishermen report higher numbers of Atlantic Cod,

Blackfish, Black Sea Bass, Scup and other popular sportfish. Divers see more American Lobster, Bergall, Conger Eels, Ocean Pout and Red Hake along with crabs and other crustaceans and shellfish.

At a recent public hearing on this project, Chris LaPorta, the DEC’s reef program coordinator, stressed that this program is not a form of “ocean dumping”, noting that all of the material is carefully prepared prior to its placement in the water. He also sought to clarify that this is not a means to “repair” the environment. Rather, it is best characterized as “enhancing the environment” by creating new places for marine life to inhabit.

LIDA President Barry Lipsky, who has worked directly with Governor Cuomo to represent the diving community’s perspective, says “The artificial reefs create diving opportunities for all divers interested in seeing marine life and exploring new places. This can only help the diving industry and the local economy.”

Artificial reefs have garnered positive reviews across the country and around the world. New York State’s initiative to commit more resources, material and budget to this effort underscores its commitment to both the marine environment and the local economy. Material that would otherwise lay unused in landfills, consuming dwindling resources and space, can now find a new life as part of a thriving underwater ecosystem that benefits marine life, fisherman, SCUBA Divers and the economy.

**That’s what we call a win-win-win-win!**



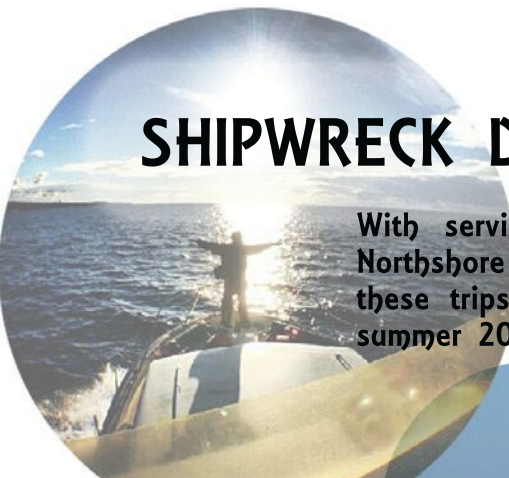
Material from the demolished Tappan Zee Bridge being deposited



LIDA President Barry Lipskt on-site with New York Governor Mario Cuomo and Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone

## SHIPWRECK DIVING AT IT'S BEST

With service to Isle Royale National Park, the Northshore of Minnesota, and the Apostle Islands, these trips are sure to be a 'must do' on your summer 2019 list.



Follow us for your next underwater adventure

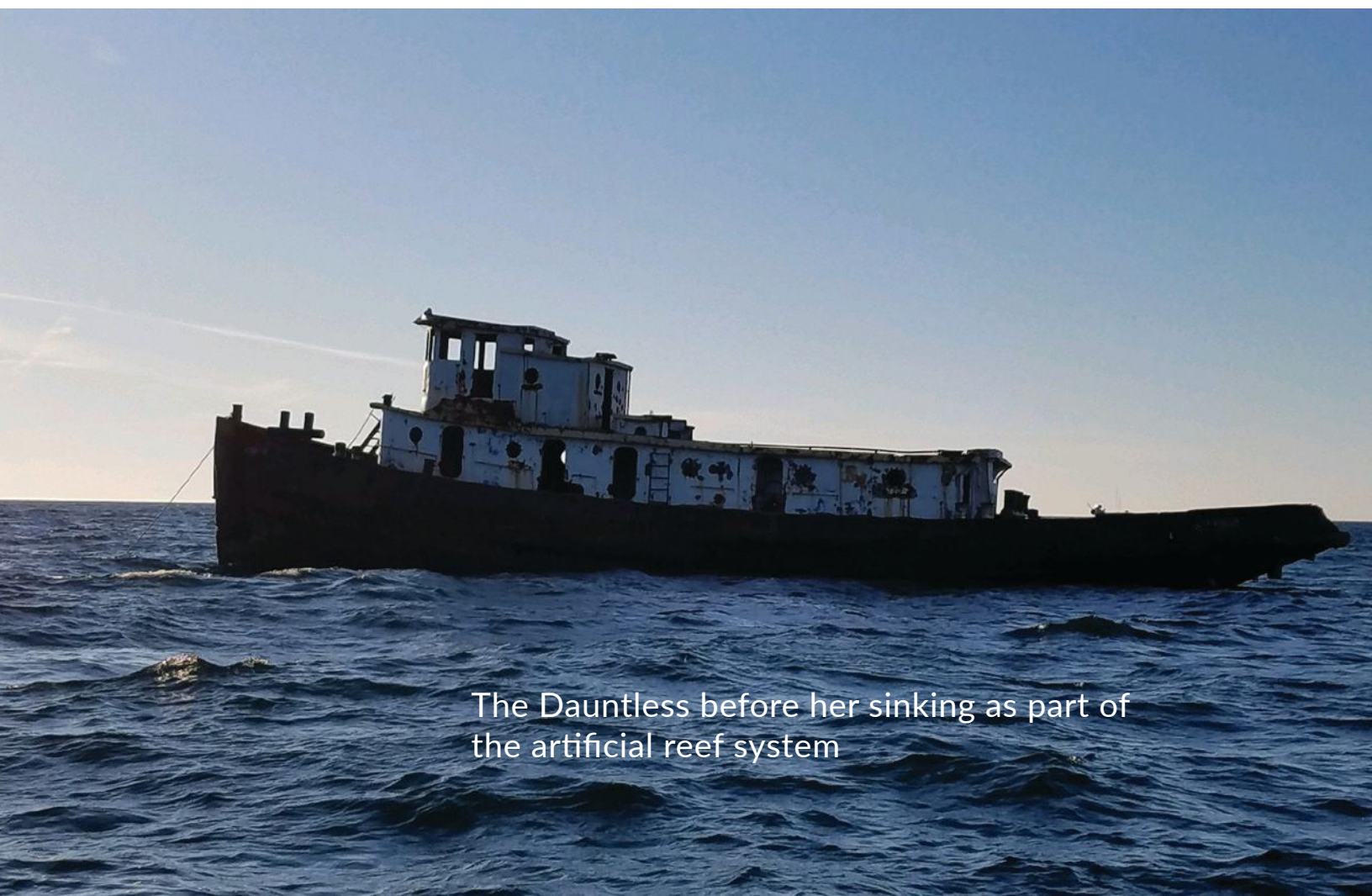


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Depositing reef materials is a large effort



The Dauntless before her sinking as part of the artificial reef system

## New York State Artificial Reef Locations

1. Atlantic Beach Reef
2. Fire Island Reef
3. Hempstead Reef
4. Kismet Reef
5. Matinecock Reef (Long Island Sound)
6. McAllister Grounds
7. Moriches Reef
8. Rockaway Reef
9. Shinnecock Reef
10. Smithtown Reef (Long Island Sound)
11. Twelve-Mile Reef
12. Yellowbar Reef (Great South Bay)

For More Information

Department of Environmental Conservation  
[www.DEC.NY.GOV](http://www.DEC.NY.GOV)  
[artificialreefs@dec.ny.gov](mailto:artificialreefs@dec.ny.gov)

Long Island Divers Association (LIDA)  
[www.lidaonline.com](http://www.lidaonline.com)



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