



- The NOAA ships *Fairweather* and *Rainier*, along with the private surveying contractor TerraSond, deployed to the Arctic during Summer 2015, where they collected 875 square nautical miles of hydrographic survey data, working in partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard Ship *Healy* to map a proposed marine corridor into the Arctic via the Bering Strait. NOAA and the Coast Guard will use the depth data to ascertain the safety of this proposed marine transit corridor.
- NOAA released the study, *National Significance of California's Ocean Economy*, which examined the contributions of sectors such as tourism and recreation, marine transportation, and offshore mineral extraction. Marine transportation activities alone, including the transportation of cargo and passengers, as well as port operations and the manufacture of marine instrumentation, accounted for \$14.1 billion, or 31 percent, of the California ocean economy GDP in 2012. California's marine transportation economy is a key contributor to the national economy, providing points of entry and exit for the inland U.S. economy to receive foreign goods and ship good internationally.
- This fall, NOAA will deploy two remote hydrophones within Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary designed to gather acoustic information over the course of one month on the aggregate noise, or soundscape, within this 40 square mile protected area located 60 miles off the coast of Georgia. The information collected by the hydrophones will be used to analyze fish, marine mammal, sea turtle, and invertebrate species diversity, abundance, and incidence, as well as chronic and acute sounds from human activities, to provide baseline information for the Sanctuary. Right whale screenings, for example, will add to a broader-scale east coast migratory analysis.
- Following the new community-generated Sanctuary Nomination Process, NOAA announced its intent to designate two new National Marine Sanctuaries, including a 14 square mile area in Mallows Bay on the Potomac River in Maryland, and an additional site in Lake Michigan off the coast of Wisconsin. Each proposed site includes historic shipwrecks of national significance, with the proposed Mallows Bay area containing the remains of the largest "Ghost Fleet" of World War I wooden steamships. NOAA is accepting public comments for each nomination through January 15, 2016, as part of its public scoping process.



Vessel hull at low tide in the proposed National Marine Sanctuary in Mallows Bay-Potomac River.



Location of the proposed National Marine Sanctuary in Mallows Bay-Potomac River.