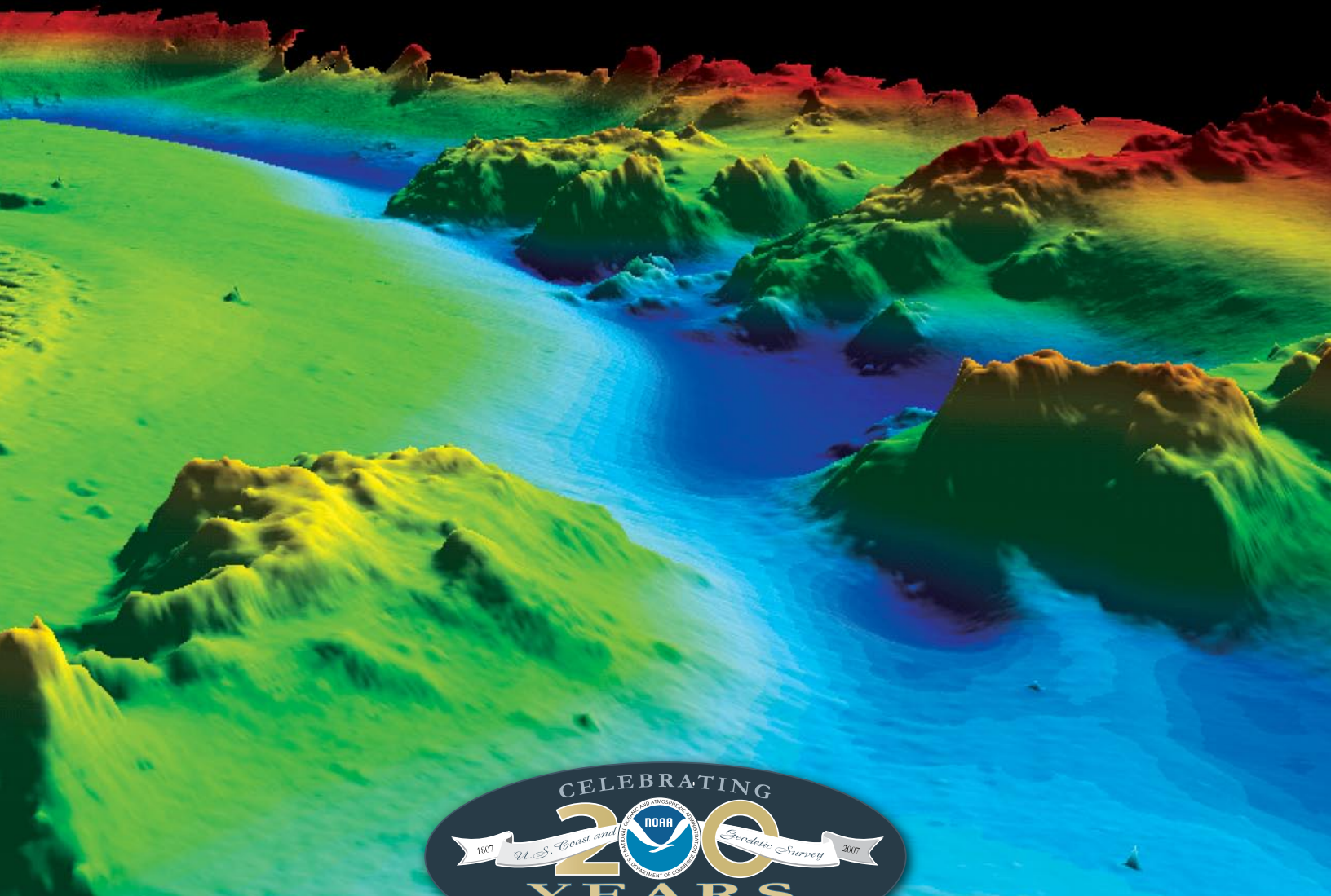
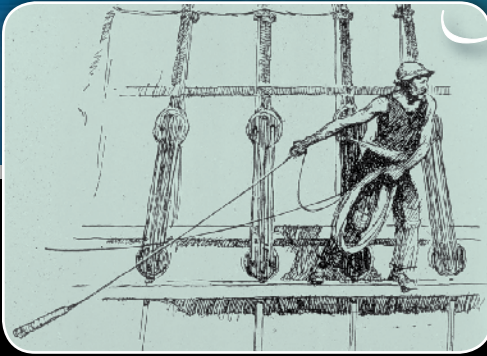


NOAA

Celebrating 200 Years of Science, Service, and Stewardship



For centuries, weighted lines were lowered by hand to measure ocean depth. Today, NOAA ships and underwater robots measure depth with hi-tech sonar. NOAA scientists turn the data into maps of the sea bed, like this image of the underwater world at the entrance to Portsmouth Harbor, New Hampshire. The data can be used for many purposes, including safe navigation, fisheries research, and flood evacuation planning. This image may be downloaded for free as a screen saver at: www.celebrating200years.noaa.gov

TOP LEFT: Sailor sounding from merchantman—19th century, sketch by Gordon Grant from Herbert Warden's "In Praise of Sailors."

Living Marine Resources

The U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries became, in 1871, America's first federal conservation agency. But U.S. involvement lay deeper, in the 1783 Treaty of Paris and 1822 Treaty of Ghent that granted fishing rights to U.S. fishermen, and in the writings of Thomas Jefferson and others about the federal interest in fisheries. Since its founding, the Commission's name changed to the Bureau of Fisheries, then the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, and finally, in 1971, the National Marine Fisheries Service—also called NOAA Fisheries Service. Other NOAA organizations—the National Ocean Service, and Oceanic and Atmospheric Research—also provide important research and public education on America's living marine resources.

These three NOAA organizations work cooperatively to ensure healthy and productive coastal and marine ecosystems. The NOAA Fisheries Service Ecosystem Observations Program collects, manages and disseminates data on the status of living marine resources to provide managers with information for informed decisions; the agency's effectiveness can be traced to a long history of alliances with the Regional Fishery Management Councils; Interstate Marine Fisheries Commissions; other federal, state, and tribal governments; industry; academia; and non-governmental organizations. NOAA Fisheries and the National Ocean Service work jointly to protect and restore habitat and coral reefs.



Salmon conservation is a top priority of the Fisheries Service. Credit: NOAA Fisheries Service.



19th century fishermen bail menhaden from a purse seine into a steamer's hold. From a sketch by J.S. Ryder in "The Fisheries and Fishery Industries of the United States, 1887. Credit: NOAA Library.

The Ocean Service is also responsible for the 13 National Marine Sanctuaries, National Estuarine Research Reserves, and National Hazards Assessment. Both agencies also collaborate with NOAA's Oceanic and Atmo-

spheric Research (which manages the National Sea Grant Program, Undersea Research Program, and Joint Research Institutes) to study the effects of climate on marine ecosystems.

Major conservation laws guiding NOAA are the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Endangered Species Act, and National Environmental Protection Act. Such complex man-

dates require a broad array of activities: information on fishery stocks (and protected resources that are sometimes taken by fishermen); development of fishery management and enforcement measures; coastal fishery habitat protection; and development of marine aquaculture. The work results in a massive amount of resource survey data; plans and regulations for more than 200 fishery stocks and almost as many stocks of marine mammals and sea turtles; fishery licenses and permits; shipboard observer data; consultations for protected resources and coastal habitats; enforcement patrols and investigations; habitat restoration; conservation fishing gear development; seafood safety research and monitoring; and public education and outreach. The outcome? Coastal economies strengthened as stringent new regulations help recover depleted fish stocks and reduce bycatch. Increased recreational opportunities for millions of anglers and boaters. Thousands of habitat acres conserved or restored. A host of marine mammals and other protected resources that are beginning to flourish. And, each year, more coastal communities that incorporate ecosystem and sustainable development principles into their planning and management. ■



A NOAA Fisheries Service Enforcement officer helps Gulf of Mexico fishermen understand fisheries laws. Credit: William B. Folsom, NOAA Fisheries Service.