



New York Sea Grant is a joint program of Cornell University, the State University of New York, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

New York State has 3,400 miles of diverse coastline and is the only state in the U.S. bordering both the Great Lakes and Atlantic Ocean. More than 85% of NY's population lives in a coastal region.



New York Sea Grant regional offices provide innovative research, technical assistance, and outreach on such issues as water quality, coastal resilience, marine & freshwater fisheries, invasive species, algal blooms, aquaculture & seafood, coastal literacy, and shoreline community development.

New York Sea Grant
112 Rice Hall, Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853
www.nyseagrant.org

NYSG Focus Area
for this project summary:
Resilient New York
Communities & Economies

Written by
Great Lakes Recreation
& Tourism Specialist
John Cannaday
315-849-4436
jdc378@cornell.edu

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Lake Ontario National Marine Sanctuary Designation

National Marine Sanctuary status will increase tourism and spur economic growth in New York State's eastern Lake Ontario region.

New York Sea Grant (NYSG) successfully worked with multiple community-based partners to promote maritime heritage and safe and environmentally-friendly recreation across NY's Great Lakes region. The region's impressive collection of historic shipwrecks draws divers and history buffs making a substantial economic impact on local coastal communities. The designation of a Lake Ontario National Marine Sanctuary (LONMS) was sought by four Lake Ontario counties to help promote recreational opportunities and provide protection for significant underwater sites along the lake's eastern shore. NYSG collaborates with partner groups to educate the public about the cultural and historic resources along the length of NY's Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River shoreline.

NYSG has participated on the LONMS Advisory Council since its inception and helped facilitate the four-county LONMS Nominating Committee's development of an application to the NMS designating authority, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Officially designated in 2024, the LONMS now has federal protection for this unique maritime historic, tourism, economic, and cultural resource area that spans a 1,722 square mile region from the western Wayne County line east to where Lake Ontario meets the St. Lawrence River. The Lake Ontario National Marine Sanctuary is the newest (and 3rd) National Marine Sanctuary on the Great Lakes (America's 16th). The designation will increase tourism and spur economic growth in New York's Great Lakes region.

Project Partners/Funders:

- Oswego County • Cayuga County • Jefferson County • Wayne County
- City of Oswego • New York State Governor's Office
- NYS Department of State • NYS Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
- Port of Oswego Authority • Pre-designation LONMS Advisory Council
- U.S. Coast Guard

New York Sea Grant: Bringing Science to the Shore Since 1971



Above, an excerpt from a 6-foot interpretive panel developed for NYSG's Great Shipwrecks of New York traveling exhibit. Photos: NYSG