



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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GRAY'S REEF NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SPONSORS 'FANTASTIC FISHES' AWARD IN POPULAR SIDEWALK ARTS FESTIVAL

Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary will offer three special awards for the best underwater marine environment scene drawn for Savannah's popular Sidewalk Arts Festival April 29.

Each year, hundreds of students, alumni and prospective students of the famous Savannah College of Art and Design create chalk drawings on the sidewalks around historic Forsyth Park during the one-day festival. The colorful event draws thousands of visitors to the park to view the ephemeral masterpieces.

This year, the sanctuary will award three "Gray's Reef Fantastic Fishes Award" for the most imaginative chalk interpretation of the marine environment in honor of the sanctuary's 25th anniversary. The sanctuary will also offer a best 25th anniversary sea creature award at the SCAD Sand Sculpture contest May 12.

The winning images in the Sidewalk Arts Festival, along with the other Fantastic Fishes Award entries, will be posted on the sanctuary's Web site and may be used to create a special poster following the festival.

For more information on the SCAD Sidewalks Art Festival, see the college's Web site at <http://www.scad.edu/saf>. Gray's Reef is not accepting entries for the chalk art contest.

Designated in 1981, the sanctuary is one of the largest near shore live-bottom reefs off the southeastern United States, encompassing approximately 17 square nautical miles. Gray's Reef sanctuary consists of a series of sandstone outcroppings and ledges up to ten feet in height, in a predominantly sandy, flat-bottomed sea floor. The live bottom and ledge habitat support an abundant reef fish and invertebrate community. Loggerhead sea turtles, a threatened species, also use Gray's Reef year-round for foraging and resting, and the reef is near the known winter calving ground for the highly endangered Northern Right Whale.

The NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program seeks to increase the public awareness of America's marine resources and maritime heritage by conducting scientific research, monitoring, exploration and educational programs. Today, the sanctuary program manages 13 national marine sanctuaries and one coral reef ecosystem reserve that together encompass more than 150,000 square miles of America's ocean and Great Lakes natural and cultural resources

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NOAA's National Ocean Service manages the NMSP and is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department. NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems, NOAA is working with its federal partners and 60 countries to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes.

On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA's National Ocean Service: <http://oceanservice.noaa.gov>

National Marine Sanctuary Program: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>

Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary: <http://www.graysreef.noaa.gov>