



# OFFICE OF COAST SURVEY

*highlights*

*The OFFICE OF COAST SURVEY (OCS) is the Nation's nautical chart maker. OCS collects, manages, and compiles the data and information necessary to maintain the national suite of 1,000 nautical charts, hydrographic surveys that measure water depth, and historic maps and charts.*

In fiscal year 2008, OCS continued critical data collection to maintain nautical charts, developed products to explain the significance of surveying, and maintained exceptional customer service to the navigation community. The OCS Navigation Response Teams supported response requests following extreme storm events and routine survey requests to support safe and efficient maritime navigation.

## NEW VERSION OF GIS WEB MAPPING PORTAL RELEASED

OCS released a new version of NowCOAST (<http://nowcoast.noaa.gov/>), a global information system (GIS)-based Web mapping portal, which provides users with near real-time coastal environmental information, including gridded weather forecasts and high-resolution global sea-surface temperature analyses. Designed to be a planning aid to assist recreational and commercial mariners, emergency managers, coastal managers, HAZMAT responders, coastal ocean modelers, and marine educators, the new version displays the National Weather Service's National Digital Forecast Database forecasts of surface wind velocity, significant wave height, relative humidity, quantitative precipitation, and maximum/minimum air temperatures.



## RAPID RESPONSE TO SURVEY REQUESTS

In 2008, the OCS Navigation Response Teams (NRTs) responded to survey requests near some of the Nation's busiest ports. In December, British Petroleum Inc. discovered a World War II-era German torpedo while laying fiber-optic cable in the Gulf of Mexico. The torpedo, with over 600 pounds of high explosives, was charted and a local notice to mariners was issued by OCS to warn of the hazard. In January, after several incidents of tugs and barges striking submerged objects in the Gulf Intracoastal Water Way, an NRT responded to a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) request to conduct a side-scan and bathymetric survey for potential demolition obstructions. In April, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) contract crew removed approximately 600 tons of rock hazards from the Belle Pass (entrance to Port Fourchon, Louisiana) identified in surveys conducted by an NRT. In May, an NRT stationed in the Gulf of Mexico notified the Pensacola Bay Pilots of a large sunken wreck, observed in local surveys, which could impact deep-draft ship traffic to the Port. In partnership with the USCG, Minerals Management Service, and the State of Louisiana, an NRT aided in the removal of a hazard – a floating pipeline – adjacent to a survey area in South Plaquemines Parish.

## RESPONSE TO HURRICANE DOLLY

OCS was instrumental in responding to Hurricane Dolly's landfall in Brownsville, Texas. NRT personnel and the Navigation Manager for the Western Gulf of Mexico worked with the USACE, USCG, and the Texas Joint Hurricane Team to plan the response. For the first time, NRT personnel were able to utilize a portable "fly-away" survey system, including side-scan sonar and a vessel of opportunity secured at the response site. The Brownsville Shipping Channel and surrounding area were surveyed for debris that would be hazardous to navigation, including granite blocks from the jetty, sunken vessels, and missing aids to navigation. Results were used to help make the determination to re-open the Port of Brownsville to ship traffic.

## UPDATED NAUTICAL CHARTS MONUMENT BOUNDARIES

OCS published new editions of nautical charts that depict the boundaries of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (Chart 540), newly designated Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA) (Chart 19016), Ship Reporting System Areas (Chart 19010), and special zones known as Areas to be Avoided (Chart 19022). The new charts are available in print-on-demand and raster formats as well as traditional paper charts (Electronic Navigational Charts will be available in 2010). The updated nautical charts will serve the needs of mariners as they navigate the waters of this remote and pristine 1,200-mile stretch of coral islands, seamounts, banks, and shoals in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

## NEW TOLL-FREE NAVIGATION INQUIRY LINE

OCS's Navigation Services Division implemented a new toll-free Navigation Inquiry Line. The new line will speed the processing capability of incoming navigation inquiries and greatly improve customer service to the navigation community. The new toll-free number (1-888-990-NOAA) is listed on the OCS Web site (<http://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/>).

## MODERNIZING THE HYDROGRAPHIC FLEET

OCS plans to upgrade and modernize its 30-year-old hydrographic data collection capability by replacing existing vessels. In March, the NOAA ship Rude was decommissioned after 41 years of service and will soon be replaced by the Ferdinand Hassler, a 123.7-foot ocean and coastal mapping survey vessel. The construction of a replacement Bay Hydrographer is also underway. The new vessel will have greater sea-keeping abilities, extended range, and a greater speed of 28 knots. In addition to the two new ships, the NOAA Ship Rainier recently took delivery of the first of two new survey launches. These smaller utility vessels feature increased speed, expanded deck space, and an updated interior layout.

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