



## **Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary Welcomes New Council Members**

The Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary has appointed Dr. Scott Harris to the council seat for university education and Capt. Wendell Harper to the council seat for charter/commercial fishing. The council represents the public's interests in sanctuary matters and provides advice to its superintendent. Gray's Reef is managed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Scott Harris, of Charleston, South Carolina, has been a marine environmental educator for years at the Coastal Carolina University Department of Marine Science, and more recently with the College of Charleston Department of Geology and Environmental Geosciences. He is affiliated with the South Carolina Marine Educators Association and has served on numerous NOAA offshore expeditions.

Wendell Harper, of Darien, Georgia, has been a charter boat captain for more than 34 years. Harper, concerned about the management of marine natural resources, frequently attended Advisory Council meetings and other public meetings and hearings on ocean and fisheries issues.

The Gray's Reef Sanctuary Advisory Council was established in August 1999. The council's role is to provide advice on: (1) protecting sanctuary resources, and identifying and evaluating emergent or critical issues involving sanctuary use or resources; (2) identifying and realizing the sanctuary's research objectives; (3) identifying and realizing educational opportunities to increase the public knowledge and stewardship of the sanctuary environment; and (4) assisting to develop an informed constituency to increase awareness and understanding of the purpose and value of the sanctuary and NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS).

Designated in 1981, Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary is one of the largest near-shore live-bottom reefs off the southeastern United States, encompassing approximately 23 square miles. 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 North Atlantic right whale.

NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources.

### **On the Web:**

NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>

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