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THUNDER BAY NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES

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Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary

For more than 12,000 years, people have traveled on the Great Lakes. From Native American dugout canoes to wooden sailing craft and steel freighters, thousands of ships have made millions of voyages across the Inland Seas. The last 150 years have seen enormous growth, and today Great Lakes shipping remains critical to our national economy.

However, with extraordinary growth comes adversity. Fire, ice, collisions and storms have claimed nearly 200 vessels in and around Thunder Bay, including pioneer steamboats, majestic wooden schooners and huge steel freighters. Today, the 4,300-square-mile Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary protects one of America's best-preserved and nationally significant collections of shipwrecks. Over 90 shipwrecks have been located in the sanctuary, and there may be as many as another 100 yet to be discovered. These historic sites capture dramatic moments from centuries that transformed America. As a collection, they illuminate an era of enormous national growth and remind us of risks taken and tragedies endured.

Managed jointly by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the State of Michigan, the sanctuary preserves our rich maritime heritage through education, research, and resource protection. NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries Program serves as the trustee for a system of 14 marine protected areas, encompassing more than 150,000 square miles of ocean and Great Lakes waters from Washington State to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. Learn more at thunderbay.noaa.gov and sanctuaries.noaa.gov.