

# NOAA, National Association of Black Scuba Divers Explore Shared History

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Divers.

[High resolution](#) (Credit: NOAA)

NOAA archaeologists will be in the Florida Keys this month training members of the National Association of Black Scuba Divers in underwater archaeology as part of a new education initiative to explore the maritime heritage of African-Americans and engage the community in marine resource conservation.

“By telling the many stories about African-Americans in seafaring, naval service, and the maritime trades, the project inspires a rediscovery of African-American maritime roots,” said Tim Runyan, NOAA maritime heritage program manager.

Fifteen participants will be taught the science of maritime archaeology and learn basic underwater surveying, recording and mapping techniques during the May 22-24 training course. The course will include classroom and fieldwork exercises on a shipwreck in [Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary](#), and stress the importance of conservation and preservation of the nation’s underwater cultural heritage.

NABS member Bill Murrain said the dive group’s commitment to education and public outreach aligns perfectly with the African-American “Voyage of Discovery” education and outreach initiative coordinated by the [NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries](#).

“African-Americans have made significant contributions to the country’s maritime history and the archaeological training course will give NABS an opportunity to help bring this history to a wider public,” Murrain said.

The training is also part of a larger NOAA effort to create a cadre of skilled volunteers who can assist with archaeological field work and historic research occurring within the National Marine Sanctuary System.

[NOAA's Maritime Heritage Program](#) and the Nautical Archaeology Society developed the training course to introduce divers to the field of maritime archaeology. Since the training program began, about 20 people have been trained as volunteer divers, seven of whom have become members of the national marine sanctuary volunteer diving program.

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.