



Ari Friedlaender. Photo taken under NOAA Fisheries Permit #981-1707

Off the Beaten Path Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, Massachusetts

Summer Feeding Ground for Whales

Ocean Wildlife Viewing: A boat trip into sanctuary waters can allow visitors to witness the acrobatic behaviors of humpback whales during their summer feeding visit to the mouth of New England's Massachusetts Bay. [Whale watching](#) vessels depart from various ports during the months of May through October – including [several companies](#) committed to a higher standard of marine mammal conservation. In addition to over a dozen kinds of whales, passengers can enjoy observing many species of seabirds and other marine life, making this a winning destination for nature enthusiasts!

Fishing: Recreational vessels, party and charter boats leave from dozens of ports along the Massachusetts coastline for Stellwagen Bank where fishermen seek bluefin tuna, bluefish, sharks, haddock, cod, and other species. A [federal](#) or [state](#) fishing license is required.

Diving: Explore one of the many shipwrecks that echo this region's maritime heritage, and marvel at the variety of underwater habitats accessible to divers. About 15% of the sanctuary is within [recreational diving](#) depth (less than 130 feet, 40 km), much of it on top of Stellwagen Bank. Dive moorings at three sites allow for safe and secure attachment.

For those who prefer to stay dry, the sanctuary also supports exhibits at several shore-side locations including, New England Aquarium, Maritime Gloucester, Cape Cod National Seashore's Province Lands Visitor Center, Boston Museum of Science, Halibut Point State Park and Scituate Maritime Museum.

Learn more about America's lands and waters in the area: [Cape Cod National Seashore](#), [Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge](#), [Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve](#), [Parker River National Wildlife Refuge](#), [Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area](#).

Known For

- One of the world's top whale watching destinations
- Fishing
- Maritime heritage



Nearby Cities

- Boston, Massachusetts (2 hours);
 - Gloucester, MA (0.5 hours);
 - Plymouth, MA (1 hour);
 - Provincetown, MA (0.75 hours)
- [Based on vessel speed of 14 knots]

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