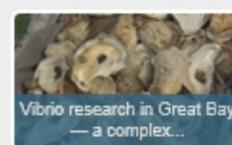
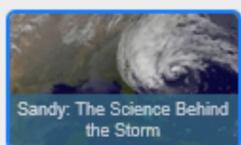


Sandy: The Science Behind the Storm

New York Sea Grant provided real-time information on the track, intensity and aftermath of Superstorm Sandy via social media when other outlet lost power. The program's award-winning year-long "science behind the storm" story series and related YouTube clips reached over 14,300 visitors on Facebook alone.



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Sea Grant concentrates effort in four Focus Areas. These interrelated areas are of critical importance to the health and vitality of the nation's communities and coastal resources.

- Healthy Coastal Ecosystems
- Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture
- Resilient Communities and Economies
- Environmental Literacy and Workforce Development

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Sandy: The Science Behind the Storm**New York Sea Grant provided important, timely, information about Sandy, before, during and after the storm**

Thursday, January 30, 2014

By Paul C. Focazio and Barbara A. Branca, [New York Sea Grant](#)

For seven days in the Fall 2012, Sandy pounded the Caribbean and U.S. East Coast with punishing rain, wind, and waves, at some points being named a hurricane and at others a superstorm or post-tropical cyclone. Along its entire East Coast path, Sandy's force accounted for over \$62 billion in economic losses and caused 140 deaths.



Partially-treated sewage was apparent for weeks in the western Long Island South Shore Estuary ecosystem following the failure of a treatment plant in East Rockaway. Credit: Douq Kuntz, Newsday

[New York Sea Grant](#) (NYSG) provided real-time information on the track, intensity and aftermath of Superstorm Sandy via social media when other outlets, including the Web servers hosting the data of [Stony Brook University](#) (SBU)'s Storm Surge Research Group, lost power.

Our program's award-winning year-long "science behind the storm" story series and related YouTube clips reached over 14,300 visitors on Facebook alone.

In the weeks leading up to the one year anniversary of Sandy's late October 2012 landfall, [NOAA and Sea Grant programs reflected on their response](#).

NYSG-funded researchers – including SBU storm surge expert **Dr. Malcolm Bowman** – have been called upon from before Sandy's landfall to numerous times during the year since the storm to provide information and analysis. An archive of these stories can be found at www.nyseagrant.org/superstormsandy and www.nyseagrant.org/hurricane.



Chester Zarnoch sampling on Cuba Island. Credit: New York Sea Grant

Within a few short months after Superstorm Sandy's storm surge and high winds inflicted extensive damage along New York's coastlines, NYSG funded several new rapid response research projects.

In early November 2013, NYSG's Communications Manager **Barbara A. Branca** (pictured right, second to left in inset photo) visited with a few of the program's funded researchers, led by City University of New York/Baruch College investigator **Dr. Chester Zarnoch**. The team was seeing if Long Island's south shore estuary could handle the additional sewage from a Sandy-compromised treatment plant by increasing the ecosystem's capacity to serve as a "nutrient sink." - <http://www.seagrant.sunysb.edu/articles/r/2382>.



Aerial photo of the breach at Old Inlet, a result of Superstorm Sandy. Credit: C. Flaqq on January 6, 2013.

Sandy's wrath caused three **breaches across eastern Fire Island**, but the one with greatest potential impact was at Old Inlet, a narrow part of the island with a long history of breaches that fronts a portion of the mainland containing 13,000 homes collectively valued at \$10 billion.

Charlie Flagg, lead scientist of our program's funded SBU SoMAS research team, explains why monitoring the breach is important, as its evolution will affect the tidal dynamics and the ecosystem of the Long Island's eastern Great South Bay - [here](#). One of the materials well-referenced during this NYSG-funded study was *Impacts of Barrier Island Breaches on Selected Biological Resources of Great South Bay, New York*,

a highly-regarded 2001 report written by the program's coastal processes specialist **Jay Tanski** on the biological impacts of breaches, demonstrating both benefits and losses.

Tanski and NYSG's Fisheries Specialist **Antoniette Clemetson** were also instrumental in assisting those in, respectively, the marina and recreational fisheries industries hit hardest by Sandy - [more here](#).



Digging out after Superstorm Sandy's damage in Long Beach, New York. Credit: Andrew Burton, Getty Images

Finally, earlier this month, NOAA, NSGO and Sea Grant programs in New Jersey, New York and Connecticut awarded funds totaling \$1.4 million to support 10 projects to improve hazard warnings for Tri-State residents as part of its "Coastal Storm Awareness Program" For more, see <http://www.seagrant.sunysb.edu/articles/r/2397> or www.nyseagrant.org/csap.

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