

A Finite Resource

Over the course of almost two centuries, much of Ontario's marine heritage resource has been remarkably well preserved. The cold dark waters of the Great Lakes and their tributaries have provided archaeologists, sport divers and dive charter operators a unique opportunity - to discover our heritage. Although the term may be overused, a shipwreck is in fact a time capsule. It represents what its builder believed to be the best technology available at the time of construction. This fact is very important when it comes to the study of earlier ships, as there are very few blue prints available. It is up to us to preserve this time capsule for other to enjoy and explore.



The increased popularity of sport diving has proportionally increased the pressure to which our fragile marine heritage is being subjected. Over time many shipwrecks have literally become worn out, most often inadvertently by divers. It must be remembered, that once damaged, the site is forever altered. It cannot be repaired or replaced. It is a **finite** resource that is forever lost. But **YOU** can do something to help; **YOU** and your buddies can become **LOW IMPACT** DIVERS.

Dive To Preserve

- The goal of the S.O.S. Dive To Preserve program is the preservation of Marine Heritage through participation and education
- The program offers a number of projects such as Adopt-A-Wreck, intended for divers of all skill and commitment levels
- Educational Material such as the Low Impact Diving course material will provide divers with an understanding of their maritime legacy, the impact that they can have, their role in preservation, and the laws protecting heritage sites in Ontario



For More Information

www.saveontarioshipwrecks.ca

If you witness: anything being removed from a heritage site; anything else heritage related like an anchor or ship part being moved or removed from the water; or any damage or digging on a site; PLEASE (it's your duty) CALL:

OPP or CRIME STOPPERS
1-888-310-1122 1-800-222-TIPS

SAVE
ONTARIO
SHIPWRECKS

LOW IMPACT DIVING



Robert Gaskin · May 2007 · BEFORE



Robert Gaskin · June 2007 · AFTER

Low Impact Diving WHAT IS IT?

Low Impact Diving refers to having minimal contact a site. It is an effective procedure to help preserve historic sites. Impact has an immediate and long-term negative effect. There are two key aspects to consider.

Low Impact Diving begins with the most basic skill learned as a diver - proper buoyancy control. This skill alone is vital for the preservation of heritage sites. Long-term documentation has shown the effects of divers constantly bumping or rubbing certain parts of a wreck until they break off or wear down. Improper buoyancy control also leads to the disturbance of silt and other natural protective barriers on wrecks that will accelerate the deterioration process.

The second cornerstone of being a Low Impact Diver is not to touch or remove artefacts from a site. Not only is moving, removing or altering artefacts **illegal**, it reduces the historical value of the site and it takes away from the enjoyment of others. As with improper buoyancy control, uncovering or moving artefacts will disturb the natural biological and chemical protection the artefacts have developed, thus accelerating their deterioration.

By following these two simple rules - buoyancy control and "look but don't touch" you are well on your way to becoming a **Low Impact Diver**.

Don't wreck the wrecks!

Your Marine Heritage

The Great Lakes and their surrounding waterways form a transportation network that played a vital role in the development of inland North America. These waterways provided access for explorers and settlers who sought the rich natural resources of the region.

Beginning with the fur traders and their canoes to the 307m (1000ft) freighters of today, a truly unique shipping legacy was created. The waters that provided the opportunity for prosperity could also be unforgiving. Thousands of men, women and children lost their lives on these waters and it is conservatively estimated that over 4,000 wrecks lay on the bottom. These shipwrecks are memorials to the lives lost as well as to those who built and sailed them. Sunken ships provide us with a direct connection with our maritime heritage. They allow the pages of history to come alive so that we may enjoy a greater understanding of our past. They are **YOUR** history.

Preservation begins with YOU!

Give YOUR past a future

Dive To Preserve!

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The Do's & Don'ts Become a Low Impact Diver

- **Don't** disturb or remove artefacts
- **Don't** remove or disturb protective silt and do not remove Zebra mussels
- **Don't** fin hard or close to the dive site
- **Don't** clutch, grab, rub or hang onto hull, components, machinery or the wheel
- **Avoid** landings, or the careless depositing of equipment on the site
- **Don't** "anchor into a wreck" or "attach a mooring line to a structure" - avoid contact between the boat and shallow sites - avoid prop wash
- **Do** exercise proper dive planning
- **Do** develop your diving skills before visiting a heritage site through practice and additional courses such as Low Impact Diving, peak buoyancy and wreck diving courses
- **Do** stay 1m (3ft) off heritage sites
- **Do** exercise proper buoyancy control
- **Do** look but don't touch
- **Do** use appropriate finning technique
- **Do** streamline your equipment

By following the above simple points,
YOU can make a difference,
YOU are a Low Impact Diver !



HANDS OFF!
poster

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