

FROM THE BRIDGE | WESTERN LONG ISLAND SOUND DIVE SITE GUIDE

Dive the Sound. Discover What's Below.

A curated guide to cold-water reefs, wrecks and operator-selected dive areas from the western narrows to the Norwalk-Huntington corridor.

FORMAT	FOCUS	PLANNING	EDITION
Boat-first	Reefs + wrecks	Local charter	September 2026

THE MONTY'S ARK APPROACH

Private by design. Captain-led. Thoughtfully planned. This guide does not publish dive coordinates, substitute for current charts, or replace an operator briefing. Site selection belongs to the captain and dive leader on the day.

Prepared for certified divers. Monty's Ark's trip lead is a PADI-certified Divemaster, and every dive trip will also carry a second PADI-certified Divemaster as onboard crew. Training limits, recent experience, conditions, and operator requirements always control.

How to use this guide

Western Long Island Sound rewards deliberate divers: compact boat runs, maritime history, structured habitat, and the satisfying challenge of cold, changeable water. It is also a working waterway with tidal current, vessel traffic, fishing gear, soft sediment, and visibility that can change quickly.

THE SHORT VERSION

Treat every listing as a conversation starter with a qualified local operator - not a self-guided set of directions. Confirm the exact target, depth, current window, descent/ascent method, surface support, gas plan, and minimum certification before booking.

Site-selection lens

- Official or established public documentation supports the feature and general area.
- Published depths appear only when a reliable source gives a defensible range.
- Coordinates are intentionally omitted; stale or imprecise numbers can place divers on the wrong target.
- Historic sites are look-only: do not disturb, penetrate, attach to, or remove material unless expressly lawful and authorized.
- Public shoreline access is not assumed to permit scuba entry. Local rules, parking, hours, and boundaries must be checked.

Skill labels

FOUNDATIONAL Open-water depth and benign conditions, with operator supervision.

INTERMEDIATE Comfortable in cold water, low visibility, boat procedures, navigation, and controlled ascents.

ADVANCED Recent AOW-equivalent experience; current, task loading, and wreck/reef hazards expected.

SPECIALIZED Technical, decompression, or overhead training may be required; this guide authorizes none of these.

Five western Sound dive experiences

The list is curated, not exhaustive. Two managed artificial reefs provide the strongest public depth data; the remaining profiles emphasize operator verification.

SITE / AREA	DEPTH	BEST FIT	ACCESS
Matinecock Reef	30-40 ft	Intermediate	Boat; NYSDEC
Huntington/Oyster Bay	47-53 ft	Intermediate+	Boat; NYSDEC
Gwendoline Steers	~38 ft bottom	Advanced wreck	Boat; local operator
Execution Rocks	Target-specific	Advanced	Boat only
Norwalk boulder reefs	Target-specific	Intermediate+	Boat; operator-selected
DEPTHS ARE PLANNING RANGES Actual depth changes with tide, exact patch or wreck attachment point, and updated hydrographic information. Use the captain's stated maximum depth for gas and exposure planning.			

Why no shore-site list?

A beach, jetty, park, or kayak landing can be public yet still prohibit scuba, lack safe entry, or sit beside active channels and shellfish areas. Connecticut's public access sheet for Penfield Reef, for example, marks scuba diving "No." This guide uses a boat-first model and treats shoreline access as a separate permission question. ⁶

Where the guide sites sit in the western Sound

Numbered areas are plotted over NOAA's Chart Display Service, which is rendered from current NOAA ENC data. This page is for geographic orientation only - not navigation, anchoring, or finding a dive target. ¹³



- 1 Execution Rocks reef area
- 2 Matinecock Artificial Reef
- 3 Huntington / Oyster Bay Artificial Reef
- 4 Gwendoline Steers wreck area
- 5 Norwalk Islands boulder-reef area

LOCATOR DISCIPLINE

Markers 1, 4, and 5 represent generalized operating areas. Markers 2 and 3 are placed from NYSDEC's published reef information but are deliberately not accompanied by coordinates. Use a current NOAA ENC in a navigation system and the captain's verified target data on the day.

Chart portrayal: NOAA Chart Display Service Viewer Prototype, captured September 1, 2026. ENC imagery is updated by NOAA; this static page will age. NOAA states viewer images are not suitable for navigation.

Matinecock Artificial Reef

A compact managed reef near the western narrows.

DEPTH	SIZE	MATERIAL	LEVEL
30-40 ft	41 acres	Barge + pontoons	Intermediate

Why dive it

NYSDEC identifies a barge and seven pontoons within this 41-acre Long Island Sound reef. The official depth range makes it a practical local reef orientation when visibility and current cooperate. ¹

What to expect

- Low-profile structure can concentrate marine life but may be easy to lose in limited visibility.
- Expect recreational fishing activity and possible lost line or tackle, although fish pots are banned at the reef.
- Soft bottom beyond the material can silt quickly; precise buoyancy and fin technique matter.

Who it suits

Certified divers already comfortable in hood and gloves, controlled ascents, and navigation back to a line. AOW-equivalent experience is a prudent default despite the moderate depth.

Access & charter brief

Boat access. Book a captain who actively runs western Sound reef dives and can identify the specific reef structure selected for the dive, current window, descent line, lost-diver procedure, and recall signal.

PLANNING NOTE

Stay on the designated structure. NYSDEC's reef map is a management reference, not a substitute for captain placement or a current NOAA chart.

Evidence used: NYSDEC Artificial Reef Locations ¹.

Huntington / Oyster Bay Artificial Reef

Structured habitat in open Sound water northeast of Lloyd Point.

DEPTH	SIZE	MATERIAL	LEVEL
47-53 ft	50 acres	Concrete sinkers	Intermediate+

Why dive it

NYSDEC lists this 50-acre reef as concrete buoy-sinker habitat. It steps up from Matinecock in depth, ascent profile, and exposure to open-Sound weather and current. ¹

What to expect

- Dispersed structure demands navigation discipline rather than a simple lap around one wreck.
- Plan for lower ambient light, cold-related gas use, and entanglement from recreational fishing activity.
- A missed line can become a live-boat pickup; understand the operator's DSMB policy.

Who it suits

AOW-equivalent experience is strongly recommended, with current cold-water weighting, line procedures, gas turn pressures, DSMB skills, and buddy-separation protocols.

Access & charter brief

Boat only. Confirm whether the operator moors, anchors, or runs live-boat; whether a guide is in-water; and whether redundant gas, reel, or DSMB is required.

PLANNING NOTE

Depth is manageable, but task loading is the real difficulty. Keep the plan simple: no penetration, conservative gas, close buddy spacing, and a clear lost-reef response.

Evidence used: NYSDEC ¹; DAN low-visibility/current guidance ^{8,9}.

Gwendoline Steers

A documented tug wreck at the mouth of Huntington Bay.

BOTTOM	RELIEF	TYPE	LEVEL
~38 ft	~20 ft to pilot house	Historic tug	Advanced

Why dive it

The 96-foot tug sank in a 1962 ice storm with the loss of nine crew. Public historical summaries place the upright wreck in roughly 38-40 feet and describe meaningful structural relief. It is both a target and a memorial. ^{2,3}

What to expect

- Visibility is reported poorer than on some surrounding Sound wrecks.
- An upright structure can create openings, sharp edges, line traps, and false confidence in shallow water.
- The harbor-approach setting demands surface support and disciplined line procedures.

Who it suits

Recent cold-water boat and wreck experience. This guide supports external observation only; penetration, tie-ins, salvage, and artifact recovery are outside scope.

Access & charter brief

Boat and local-knowledge target. Ask how the wreck was identified, where the line will land, how anchoring avoids damage, and how traffic will be managed.

PLANNING NOTE

Dive it as a memorial: look, photograph respectfully, maintain neutral buoyancy, and leave every object in place. Historical depth is not a guarantee of today's least depth or condition.

Evidence used: Public historical reporting ^{2,3}; NOAA sources control day-of navigation ^{4,5}.

Execution Rocks

A dramatic lighthouse reef at the western entrance to the Sound.

DEPTH	FEATURE	TRAFFIC	LEVEL
Target-specific	Exposed / awash reef	High	Advanced

Why dive it

Execution Rocks is a low, hazardous reef marked by an 1850 lighthouse. The station is not open to the public, and the reef is a navigation hazard - why this is a specialist boat dive rather than a casual stop. ^{4,7}

What to expect

- Rock topography, surge, current, boat traffic, and abrupt depth changes can converge.
- The reef can be exposed at low water and covered at high water; conditions change through the tidal cycle.
- The lighthouse structure and island are off-limits; the dive is about the underwater reef, not landing.

Who it suits

Advanced local experience, excellent buoyancy near rock, reliable low-visibility navigation, and comfort with current and live-boat procedures.

Access & charter brief

Boat only with explicit local knowledge. The operator selects the exact side and verifies depths from current chart and sounder. Historical lighthouse coordinates are not dive waypoints.

PLANNING NOTE

No single depth is given because the feature spans exposed rock and adjacent water. A credible briefing states planned maximum depth, current window, shelter/abort plan, and traffic control.

Evidence used: U.S. Lighthouse Society ⁷; NOAA Coast Pilot/hydrography ^{4,5}.

Norwalk Islands boulder reefs

Operator-selected glacial reef terrain on the Connecticut side.

DEPTH	FEATURE	SETTING	LEVEL
Target-specific	Boulders + reef	Island chain	Intermediate+

Why dive it

Connecticut DEEP and USGS describe glacial-moraine terrain with rock, boulder, reef, and mudflat features. That geology can create rewarding macro habitat and navigation when a local operator selects a safe patch. ^{10,11}

What to expect

- Shallow rock and mud can alternate quickly; visibility may fall with current or poor fin technique.
- Partly submerged hazards and small-craft traffic complicate surface operations.
- Public island access for paddling or landing does not automatically authorize scuba entry or shore staging.

Who it suits

Intermediate divers with solid compass work and close-buddy habits. Sheltered targets may suit supervised newer divers; exposed reefs can require advanced experience.

Access & charter brief

Use a Connecticut charter or club familiar with the chain. Confirm municipal rules, protected areas, shellfish restrictions, vessel route, and anchored versus live-boat procedure.

PLANNING NOTE

“Norwalk Islands” is an area, not one site. The briefing should name the selected sector, depth band, hazards, current direction, and pickup plan without relying on a generic pin.

Evidence used: Connecticut DEEP ¹⁰; USGS seafloor mapping ¹¹.

The Monty's Ark go / no-go framework

A strong local dive begins before the boat leaves the dock. Use this page as the client-side half of the operator briefing.

1 Match the diver to the site

- Certification and recent experience fit the planned maximum depth and conditions.
- Exposure protection has been tested locally; weighting is known with actual cylinders and undergarments.
- Each buddy can navigate, manage a lost line, ascend under control, and deploy required signaling gear.
- Anyone can decline or call the dive without pressure.

2 Match the plan to the water

- Check NWS zone ANZ335, advisories, and real-time buoy observations. ⁵
- Use NOAA tide/current predictions for the specific area; “slack” is site-specific and may not match high or low tide. ⁴
- Ask what wind direction creates exposure and what conditions trigger a site change.
- Treat fog as a marine hazard even when shore is clear; NOAA notes offshore fog can be thick while coastal areas remain clear. ⁴

3 Match equipment to procedure

- Primary and backup light, compass, audible and visual surface signaling.
- DSMB and spool only if trained and permitted; keep a cutting device accessible.
- Redundant gas when required or justified, with practiced deployment.
- Thermal protection that preserves dexterity for clips, valves, mask clearing, and gas sharing.

AUTOMATIC NO-GO SIGNALS

Unresolved equipment fault; unfamiliar weighting; missing required signaling gear; no credible lost-diver or recall procedure; current or visibility beyond the least-experienced diver; seas, fog, thunder, or traffic outside limits; pressure to exceed training.

Western Sound briefing essentials

Low visibility changes communication, navigation, separation risk, gas use, and the consequences of a missed ascent line. DAN recommends planning reference points, signaling and retrieval procedures, and equipment appropriate to conditions. ⁸

CURRENT	Direction at surface and depth; descent strategy; turn rule; response if swept off target.
VISIBILITY	Buddy spacing; light/touch signals; lost-buddy procedure; silt control.
ASCENT	Primary line; contingency ascent; DSMB policy; live-boat pickup.
TRAFFIC	Flag responsibilities; lookout; recall signal; propeller exclusion.
ENTANGLEMENT	Fishing line; reachable cutters; no unsupported penetration.
GAS	Start, turn, minimum and reserve pressures; cold/stress adjustment.
EMERGENCY	Oxygen capacity; first aid; communications; EMS handoff; DAN contact plan.

Cold and decompression stress

DAN identifies cold water, heavy exercise at depth, deep/long profiles, and rapid ascent among decompression-illness risk factors. Dive conservatively, avoid pushing no-decompression limits, ascend normally, and end early if cold or workload rises. ¹²

Stewardship

- Look, photograph, and leave in place. Historic wrecks may be protected even without a buoy or sign.
- Do not remove marine life, disturb bottom habitat, or attach to structure without lawful authority and a low-impact method.
- Avoid contact with soft sediment and reef organisms; good trim improves visibility for everyone.
- Report hazards to the operator; do not attempt improvised salvage.

EMERGENCY REMINDER

This guide is educational, not medical advice. In a suspected dive emergency: provide oxygen if trained, activate local emergency services, and contact DAN Emergency Services using the current number for your location and membership materials.

Questions to ask your charter

The best question is not “How deep is it?” It is “How will you run this site today?”

- 01** Which exact target are you selecting, and why is it suitable for today’s divers?
- 02** What bottom and maximum depth should we plan for, including tide and relief?
- 03** What is the expected current window, and what happens if it is missed?
- 04** What visibility is plausible, and when would you change sites or cancel?
- 05** Is the descent anchored, moored, shot-line, or live-boat?
- 06** What certifications, recent experience, equipment, and redundant gas do you require?
- 07** What are the lost-diver, missed-line, DSMB, recall, and pickup procedures?
- 08** What target-specific hazards apply: fishing gear, traffic, sharp structure, silt, surge, or restrictions?
- 09** Is any artifact, wreck, reef, lighthouse, island, shoreline, or shellfish area protected or off-limits?
- 10** What oxygen, communications, and emergency action resources are aboard?

CLIENT NOTE

Monty's Ark Adventures should complete operator due diligence before presenting any itinerary as bookable. Permissions, insurance, vessel requirements, and site status can change. Publish trip-specific depth and requirements only after the operating captain confirms them.

Suggested progression

ORIENT	BUILD	EXTEND	SPECIALIZE
Matinecock	Norwalk reef	Huntington reef	Wreck / Execution

Conditions and individual readiness can reorder this illustrative ladder.

Dive Participation Acknowledgment, Assumption of Risk & Release

IMPORTANT: READ BEFORE SIGNING. New York law may limit releases connected with fee-based recreational facilities, and no form can waive liability that applicable law makes non-waivable. ¹⁶

Certification and eligibility

I represent that I am a currently certified scuba diver and will provide proof of certification upon request. I understand that participation is limited to certified divers whose certification, training, recent experience, equipment proficiency and medical fitness are appropriate for the selected site, planned depth and expected conditions. Monty's Ark Adventures may require advanced, wreck, drysuit, technical or other specialty credentials; may require a checkout or skills assessment; and may refuse or end participation at any time for safety, weather, operational or documentation reasons. No refund or other remedy is created by this paragraph.

Required PADI paperwork

Before participating, each diver must complete and sign the current PADI waiver or waivers, acknowledgments, safe-diving-practices statement, medical paperwork and any other PADI form applicable to the activity and supplied by the responsible PADI professional or facility. The Monty's Ark acknowledgment is supplemental only: it does not replace, amend, supersede, narrow or contradict any PADI form. PADI forms must be completed without alteration and remain separate controlling documents for their stated purposes. ^{18,19}

Diver responsibility and assumption of risk

I am responsible for my own dive planning, gas management, equipment assembly and inspection, buddy procedures, depth and time limits, buoyancy, navigation, ascent and compliance with instructions, certification limits and law. I voluntarily assume the inherent and other risks of scuba diving and boat-based diving, including cold, limited visibility, current, waves, weather, vessel traffic, propellers, ladders, slips and falls, decompression illness, barotrauma, drowning, marine life, entanglement, sharp or unstable wreckage, separation, equipment failure, delayed rescue, remote medical care, serious injury, death and property loss.

Release regarding participant conduct

To the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, I release and agree not to hold liable Monty's Ark Adventures and its owners, members, officers, captains, vessel owners, crew, employees, contractors, guides and agents (collectively, the "Released Parties") for claims, losses, liabilities, costs or damages arising from my own acts or omissions; my violation of a briefing, instruction, law or certification limit; my equipment; my medical condition; or the acts or omissions of another diver for whom a Released Party is not legally responsible. I agree to indemnify and hold the Released Parties harmless from third-party claims caused by my negligent, reckless, intentional or unlawful conduct.

Limits of this release

This document does not release any person from gross negligence, reckless or intentional misconduct, an unseaworthy condition or other liability that cannot lawfully be waived. It does not reduce the captain's authority or legal duty to operate the vessel safely; federal law separately prohibits negligent operation that endangers life,



limb or property. ¹⁷ Nothing in this guide is medical advice or a guarantee that any site, condition, vessel, equipment or rescue resource is safe.

Agreement and signatures

I have had the opportunity to ask questions, obtain independent legal advice and decline participation. I understand that this acknowledgment is intended to be as broad as applicable law permits; if one provision is unenforceable, the remaining provisions should remain effective to the extent allowed.

PARTICIPANT PRINTED NAME	CERTIFICATION AGENCY / NUMBER / HIGHEST LEVEL
_____	_____
PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE	DATE AND TIME
_____	_____
EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME	EMERGENCY CONTACT TELEPHONE
_____	_____
MONTY'S ARK REPRESENTATIVE / WITNESS	TRIP DATE / VESSEL / PLANNED SITE
_____	_____

Operational note: Pair this form with a trip-specific briefing, diver roster, certification verification, medical/fitness process, emergency action plan and insurer-approved release.

Research notes

Sources emphasize managing agencies, NOAA/NWS, USGS, Connecticut DEEP, DAN, and established historical reporting. Secondary wreck material is clearly distinguished from official depth data. Reviewed September 2026.

[1] NYSDEC - Artificial Reef Locations

Official depth, dimensions, materials, and reef context.

<https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/saltwater-fishing/artificial-reefs/locations>

[2] Public historical summary - Gwendoline Steers

Wreck history and approximate depth/relief; used cautiously.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gwendoline_Steers

[3] Long Island Press - Local Shipwrecks

Regional historical reporting and diver context.

<https://www.longislandpress.com/2010/11/12/local-shipwrecks-dot-the-waters-of-bayville-and-long-island-sound/>

[4] NOAA - U.S. Coast Pilot 2, Chapter 8

Currents, weather, fog, ice, navigation context, and prediction links.

https://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/publications/coast-pilot/files/cp2/CPB2_WEB.pdf

[5] NWS New York Marine Weather

ANZ335 forecast, hazards, observations, and tide/current links.

<https://www.weather.gov/okx/marine>

[6] Connecticut DEEP - Penfield Reef access sheet

Public access; scuba shown as not permitted.

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/gis/coastalaccessmaps/CoastalAccessSite225.pdf>

[7] U.S. Lighthouse Society - Execution Rocks

Lighthouse history and no-public-access status.

<https://archives.uslhs.org/places/execution-rocks>

[8] DAN - Low-Visibility Diving

Planning, navigation, separation, signaling, and retrieval.

<https://dan.org/alert-diver/article/low-visibility-diving/>

[9] DAN - Current Dives

Current, workload, SMB, and pickup considerations.

<https://dan.org/alert-diver/article/current-dives/>

[10] Connecticut DEEP - Norwalk Islands

Glacial terrain, shore character, and access context.

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/coastal-resources/soundout/sojuno2pdf.pdf>

[11] USGS - Seafloor off Norwalk

Sidescan, bathymetry, and surficial geology.

<https://www.usgs.gov/maps/sidescan-sonar-image-surficial-geologic-interpretation-and-bathymetry-long-island-sound-sea-3>

[12] DAN - Decompression Illness

Cold, exertion, depth, ascent, and conservative planning.

<https://dan.org/health-medicine/health-resources/diseases-conditions/decompression-illness-what-is-it-and-what-is-the-treatment/>

[13] NOAA - Chart Display Service / ENC Viewer



ENC-derived traditional chart portrayal; locator imagery and update limitations.

<https://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/NCDSviewer/>

[14] New Jersey Scuba Diving - Long Island Sound Dive Sites Chart

Commercial/independent dive-directory lead used to identify candidate sites; not used as the controlling navigation or depth source.

<https://njscuba.net/dive-sites/new-york-dive-sites/long-island-sound-chart/port-jefferson-inlet/>

[15] PADI - Diving Long Island, New York

Commercial training/travel overview used for regional dive-access context and candidate discovery; agency sources controlled final site facts.

<https://www.padi.com/diving-in/united-states-of-america-usa/long-island-new-york/>

[16] New York General Obligations Law § 5-326

Official New York statute concerning negligence releases connected with certain fee-based recreational establishments.

<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/GOB/5-326>

[17] 46 U.S.C. § 2302

Federal prohibition and penalties concerning negligent or grossly negligent vessel operation.

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/46/2302>

[18] PADI - Certified Diver Experience paperwork

PADI safe-diving practices, liability/risk, non-agency, medical and related certified-diver forms.

<https://www.padi.com/sites/default/files/medical-forms/REACTIVATE-INTL-18Plus.pdf>

[19] PADI Pros - Current digital forms guidance

Current-form selection and administration guidance for PADI professionals.

<https://pros-blog.padi.com/new-digital-forms/>

Commercial publication credits

Long Island Press ³ was used to corroborate the identity and regional history of the Gwendoline Steers. New Jersey Scuba Diving ¹⁴ and PADI ¹⁵ were consulted as commercial/independent discovery resources when assembling the candidate list. They are credited here for that role; they were not treated as substitutes for NOAA, NYSDEC, Connecticut DEEP, USGS, current charts, or a local captain's verification. No publication's coordinates are reproduced.

Scope limits

- No coordinates are reproduced, including agency coordinates.
- No guidebook claim overrides a current NOAA chart, notice to mariners, forecast, local law, or captain's judgment.
- Depth labels are not decompression plans and do not include tide, relief, or accidental excursion.
- Branding is a custom Monty's Ark nautical palette and wordmark treatment; an official logo and contacts can be substituted.

VERSION NOTE

Client edition • September 2026. Revalidate agency pages, access rules, reef deployments, charter availability, and emergency contacts before each season and before a trip-specific itinerary.