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SWP Newsletter - September 2025

2 messages

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Tue, Sep 23, 2025 at 2:02 PM



Gabrielle Miller, an SWP archaeologist, investigates the site of the wrecked ship L'Aurore in Mozambique.

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SWP Newsletter - September 2025

"A shipwreck hidden off an iconic Cape Town beach reveals the horrors of the slave trade"

In July, the Slave Wrecks Project (SWP) was featured in National Geographic's History & Culture publication. The article details the story of a Portuguese slave ship, São José Paquete d'Africa, that set out from Mozambique and was wrecked in 1794—and finally identified in 2011. Through international collaboration and groundbreaking maritime

archaeological research, SWP and its partners were able to reveal this tragedy, and to "honor the dead and return their story to public memory."

Check out the full story using the button below, and keep reading to find out what else SWP has been working in Mozambique—and beyond.

National Geographic

SWP Fieldwork & Updates

SWP's researchers have been hard at work at sites across the globe this summer, and are gearing up for more research and community engagement initiatives as fall begins.

Investigating the L'Aurore site in Mozambique

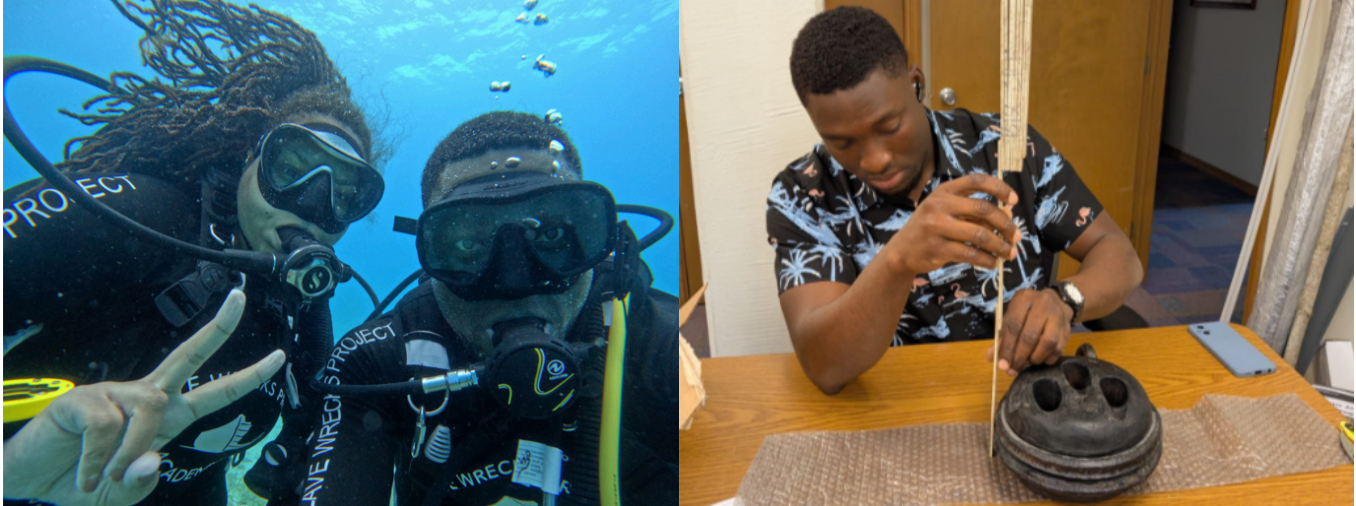


From July 31 to August 16, SWP continued their research of the site of the sunken slave ship L'Aurore, wrecked in 1790 in the north-eastern part of the bay of Mozambique Island. This fieldwork builds on efforts made in collaboration with SWP's international team of partners, as far back as 2015 when researchers used archival resources to locate the site of the wreck.

Now that the L'Aurore wreck has not only been located, but also surveyed and sampled, SWP researchers spent this summer trying to gain a better understanding of the hull remains. This information, among other elements of the fieldwork like mapping and

documenting artifacts, is critical in dating the shipwreck more precisely. Doing so will play a key role in bringing the stories of L'Aurore and of the victims of the transatlantic slave trade to light.

Florida Internship



For the last few years SWP and partners have co-convened an internship targeted toward graduate students and young career professionals in Maritime Archaeology who engage in afro-descendant histories and community education. This paid summer internship for up to two early career professionals (graduate school or recent graduate from graduate school) in maritime archeology or a closely related field. The internship is funded by the Slave Wrecks Project at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture and jointly administered by the Slave Wrecks Project, National Park Service and Diving with a Purpose (DWP). Interns gain experience in underwater archeology, marine field operations, scientific diving, and history interpretation for the public. This year, we were able to welcome Angelo Ayedoun, a doctoral student at UC Santa Cruz, who was a previous participant in SWP-Academy in Senegal. He will take his skills and experience from his time at Biscayne National Park to further his work in Benin and the broader West-African region, hoping to strengthen maritime archaeology in his country.

Heritage Keepers Pathways



In July Slave Wrecks Project partnered with Diving With a Purpose (DWP), the National Park Service and Junior Scientist in the Sea (JSIS) piloted a youth scientific diving program to encourage the matriculation of youth into heritage-based careers. Named “Heritage Keeper Pathways”, this new program invited 6 members of JSIS to Biscayne National Park to receive an introduction in maritime archaeological, conservation, and public interpretation skills and their various applications in heritage management careers. By the end of the course, students were exposed to several pathways toward a career in Maritime Archaeology and adjacent fields, with an emphasis on the history of global slavery and maritime and coastal Black lifeways.

Africatown Swim to Scuba



Throughout the summer the Slave Wrecks Project and its partners, Diving With a Purpose, the Africatown Heritage Preservation Foundation, and the City of Mobile Aquatics Program worked to advance the Swim to Scuba Program. This program seeks to empower communities through proficiency in swimming and scuba diving to become stewards of their own underwater heritage sites. Between June and August 2025, Swim to Scuba has trained young residents of Africatown, Alabama from introductory scuba work through open ocean diving. On Labor Day Weekend Gabrielle Miller and Jay Haigler took six community members to Biscayne Bay Florida where they experience their first boat and open ocean dives, encountering shipwrecks, underwater memorials while increasing their skills. One participant, Nolan Lee in reflection on his experience said “opened my eyes to the role divers can play in preserving history, and I left with a deeper appreciation for how the ocean connects us to our shared human heritage... I left Miami with a new sense of direction. I am determined to continue advancing in my diving career, and I want to share this journey with as many people as possible. I believe that diving has the power to transform lives, just as it transformed mine this past weekend, and I want others to experience the wonder, history, and community that come with exploring the ocean.”

Meet Evelyn Castro, SWP's New Admin Assistant



Evelyn Castro recently joined the Slave Wrecks Project as a Student Administrative Assistant. She is a sophomore at George Washington University, majoring in Political Science with a minor in Business. Evelyn has previously gained experience as a secretary in her high school's Future Business Leaders of America chapter, a shadowing position at Vero Orthopedics, and a hostess at a local restaurant in her hometown, where she developed strong organizational and communication skills. She became interested in SWP through her coursework in anthropology and related fields at her high school and at GW, and is excited to bring that knowledge into her work with the team.

In Memoriam—André Bergeron (1945-2025)



André Bergeron and Blandine Daux. *Photo provided by family to [lapresse.ca](https://www.lapresse.ca).*

The SWP family mourns the loss of our beloved colleague and friend André Bergeron, who passed alongside his wife Blandine Daux just last week while on holiday in Lisbon, Portugal. This sudden and tragic event has sent shockwaves through the archaeological and conservation communities as both leave an enormous hole in these fields through a lifetime of dedication to preserving the past and paving the way for future generations.

André was a dear friend to the project whose dedication to not just his profession, but to also share his wealth of experience throughout the African Continent and the broader African Diaspora. André has helped build conservation capacity in both Mozambique and Senegal and has given countless hours in instruction and mentorship to future conservators throughout our partnership. While the loss to the field is incalculable, an even larger hole is left in the hearts of anybody who was able to be in the presence of a truly kind and gentle soul, and perhaps his character is best captured by his dear friend and colleague Marc-André Bernier, who says:

“André Bergeron was a passionate human being. Passionate about life, music (he played three instruments), and all his relationships. Most of all, he was passionate about archaeological conservation. A true professional upholding the highest standards, he was meticulous and rigorous, curious and innovative. He was also very passionate about sharing his craft, always ready to share his knowledge, particularly to the next generation. It was amazing to see him break down complex conservation concepts so that everyone could understand. We were lucky to have him.”

We offer our condolences to André and Blandine's family and loved ones as the world

mourns the tragic loss of truly remarkable souls. Please join us in honoring their memory and legacy by sharing your fond memories and carrying on the spirit of this work into the future.

La Presse (French)



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Have you explored our newly designed website yet? It's live and ready for you—visit today and keep up our latest projects, research, and updates!

slavewreckproject.org

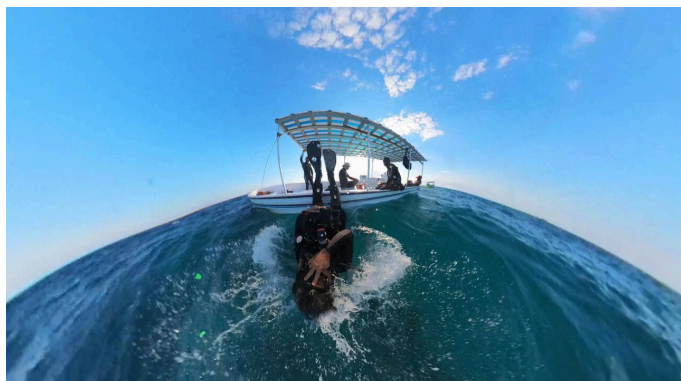
SWP in the Spotlight



In March, Raquel Machaqueiro, a postdoctoral researcher with SWP, gave a talk for the 14th annual TEDxPorto event—and now, a video recap of her presentation is finally available on YouTube. Dr. Machaqueiro's talk explores the importance of continuing to bring the legacies of slavery to the forefront of historical conversations, especially given its lasting impacts. This concept is central to SWP's work and our efforts to reveal difficult histories that might otherwise go neglected.

Listen to the full talk in Portuguese on YouTube.

[YouTube](#)



Video: Documenting a Slave Shipwreck off
Mozambique: A Crime Against Humanity

[YouTube](#)



Video: Mozambique Island,
Echoes of the Past

[ARTE.tv \(French\)](#)

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