

## **Seeking Sable's Lost Wrecks: Following a Digital Paper Trail**

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Sable Island is renowned for its long history of shipwrecks. Early documenters of these events included the Superintendents of the Humane Establishment. Others chronicled the growing list of wrecks by placing them on charts of the Island. At the 2015 Sable Island Conference Aaron Mior presented work collating these earlier records; the results provided estimates in the vicinity of a little over 200 "documented" wrecks on Sable.

On review of the compiled wreck lists, perhaps the most notable features are the very few known wrecks in the three centuries prior to the creation of the Humane Establishment. This appears contrary to the very argument in support of funding and staffing a lifesaving organization on Sable in 1801. This observation prompted brief research related to the author's work on island as co-leader of archaeological surveys seeking evidence of early settlements and shipwreck survivor camps.

Indeed, research using period documents, newspapers and naval journals has added several named wrecks with, in some cases, significant campsites. Some of these wrecks have not appeared in other modern literature. Recent advances in online availability of period journals and documents, such as the effort of the Nova Scotia Archives announced at the 2015 Sable Island Conference, is advancing our capabilities at exploring Sable's past and further justifies continued archaeological investigations.