Gulf Stream **[1]**

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Gulf Stream

by William S. Powell, 2006

The Gulf stream [2] is a warm current in the Atlantic Ocean that flows out of the Gulf of Mexico [3] along the east coast of the United States and east in the North Atlantic toward Europe. The Gulf Stream affects North Carolina's climate and economy dramatically, particularly along the coast, where it approaches Cape Hatteras and gives that part of the state a milder winter than would otherwise be the case. Winter temperatures of the surface waters there are approximately 63 degrees, while summer temperatures are about 80 degrees. The current, passing between 30 and 50 miles off of North Carolina's coast, has a strong impact upon the economy of the state, as tourists and residents flock to the coast for scuba diving, surfing, birding, and other activities made possible by the temperate climate. Gulf Stream fishing is an especially important industry, attracting thousands of people in need of charter boats to carry them out into the stream to catch the wide variety of deep-sea fish living there.

The Gulf Stream was first described by Benjamin Franklin [4], and it appears on a map prepared for him in 1770 by Nantucket, Mass., whaler Timothy Folger [5]. Royal Governor Arthur Dobbs [6] of North Carolina on 10 July 1756 wrote to the earl of Loudon urging the construction of a fort to protect trade passing through the "Gulphe stream" off the coast of the colony. Governor William Tryon [5]on 8 Dec. 1764 suggested to the postmaster general in London that by taking advantage of the stream, dispatches passing between North Carolina and the Crown could be received more quickly.

Video Credit:

Ben Franklin and The Gulf Stream. 2008.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=rR5TFWNLtOc [7]

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