



Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Sanctuary Superintendent's Report



Volume 7, Number 2

A report for the Sanctuary Advisory Council and Sanctuary Constituents

July 2009

ABOUT THE SANCTUARY

Designated in 1980, the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS or sanctuary) consists of an area off the coast of California of approximately 1,470 square miles adjacent to the following islands and offshore rocks: San Miguel Island, Santa Cruz Island, Santa Rosa Island, Anacapa Island, Santa Barbara Island, Richardson Rock, and Castle Rock, extending seaward to a distance of approximately six nautical miles. The islands vary in distance from 12 to 40 nautical miles offshore from Santa Barbara and Ventura counties in southern California. A fertile combination of warm and cool currents in this area results in a great variety of plants and animals including kelp forests, fish, invertebrates, pinnipeds, cetaceans and sea birds. The sanctuary also has a wealth of maritime heritage resources including Chumash Native American artifacts and over 100 historic shipwrecks. Human uses in the area include commercial and recreational fishing, marine wildlife viewing, boating, diving, kayaking, maritime shipping, nearby offshore oil and gas development, research and monitoring, and numerous educational activities.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report highlights a number of accomplishments over the past several months from each sanctuary program area. The report will be provided in March, July, and November to the Sanctuary Advisory Council and is available to the public (see www.channelislands.noaa.gov).

ITEMS OF SPECIAL NOTE

Josh Churchman Awarded Volunteer of the Year by National Marine Sanctuary Foundation

Josh Churchman, a commercial fisherman from Bolinas, California, was named national volunteer of the year by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (NMSF) at a June 9th ceremony in Washington, DC, during Capitol Hill Ocean Week. Josh was a charter member of the Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary (CBNMS) advisory council and has made significant contributions in many areas during his seven years of service. During Josh's multiple terms on the council he represented the local maritime community and contributed to first review of the CBNMS management plan, which is a major assessment of the sanctuary and blueprint for its future management and protection. Josh was also a primary participant in the sanctuary working group to develop an important socio-economic fishing profile for Cordell Bank and Gulf of the Farallones national marine sanctuaries. Josh has made major contributions to the sanctuary by helping to locate and remove of tons of harmful marine debris from Cordell Bank. He provided assistance and the use of his boat for sanctuary efforts to conduct important marine life surveys and an albatross tagging program. Actively engaged in community activities, Josh writes a column for the local newspaper, and was an integral part of implementing the state's marine life protection act in northern California. He regularly attends the Pacific Fisheries Management Council meetings trying to promote sustainable fishing practices and reduce by-catch. His conversations with fellow fishermen on the docks about responsible fishing help promote ocean stewardship with this important constituent group. Volunteers from the other 13 sanctuary sites were also recognized at the event, including Catherine French of the Channel Islands Naturalist Corps. Our congratulations and thanks to Josh, Catherine and the other distinguished volunteers. More information and a photo is available at <http://nmsfocean.org/article/2009/06/18/josh-churchman-named-national-volunteer-year-nmsf>.

West Coast Sanctuary Advisory Council Activities Posted on the Web

The west coast regional office of national marine sanctuaries has added a new sanctuary advisory council section to their web site. Quarterly reports are now being posted that summarize the activities of all five west coast advisory councils. To keep track of what's happening with these other councils, access the reports on line at http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/about/sac_report.html.

EDUCATION, OUTREACH, AND VOLUNTEERS

Water Science Exploratorium Event Reaches 1,200 Underserved Students

On May 21, Rocio Lozano-Knowlton, Coordinator of the Multicultural Education for Research Issues Threatening Oceans (MERITO) Program, along with Warren Glaser and Maria Ornelas, two volunteer naturalists with the Channel Islands Naturalists Corps (CINC), reached 1,200 third grade students during the 4th annual Water Science Exploratorium in Oxnard, California. The students learned about CINMS marine resources and how they can contribute to ocean protection by changing some simple actions at home. Students were also shown ways they can help protect the ocean by demonstrating urban runoff with a watershed model and emphasizing corrective actions. The Water Science Exploratorium is an event organized and sponsored by the city of Oxnard to educate Oxnard School District's 3rd grade unprivileged students on water conservation, science and water resource protection.

Channel Islands Argonaut Students Go Live at Anacapa Island

On June 11, twenty-three 4th-6th grade Channel Islands Argonaut students culminated their school-year experiences as ocean stewards by taking part in a live dive program conducted by the Channel Islands National Park (CINP). The Argonaut students were able to interact with scientific divers during their underwater immersion at Anacapa Island while another 100+ students from Ventura and Oxnard School Districts observed the live broadcast at the CINP auditorium in Ventura. Argonaut students have participated in a number of environmental services throughout the year, including community events, beach clean ups and installing protective signs near nesting areas for endangered seabirds. During their trip to Anacapa Island, the Argonaut students also participated in an interpretative hike and were able to observe hundreds of Western gull chicks, some hatching along the hiking trail. The Channel Islands Argonaut project is part of the NOAA BWET-sponsored Channel Islands Live! Program, a partnership among the CINP, Ventura County Office of Education, and CINMS.

700 Minority Students and 23 Educators Served by MERITO Program at CINMS for 2008-2009 Academic Year

On June 16, the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS) Multicultural Education for Resource Issues Threatening Oceans (MERITO) program completed implementation of the 2008-2009 MERITO Academy academic year. The MERITO Academy is a marine science and conservation education program for under-served students. Between September 2008 and June 2009, CINMS and MERITO Academy staff, along with assistance from CINC volunteers, trained and provided support to 23 minority-serving educators and their 700 students from six cities along the Santa Barbara Channel coast (the cities of Oxnard, Ventura, El Rio, Port Hueneme, Carpinteria and Santa Barbara). This year the CINMS MERITO Academy provided the educators with three days of training on use and implementation of the MERITO Academy curriculum and educational materials. The 700 students received in-class presentations; sponsored transportation to field trips, and instruction during three core field experiences (watersheds connection to oceans, coastal habitat monitoring and exploration, and the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary). Program participation levels and demographics have been closely tracked. 79% of the participating educators are certified teachers working in public or charter schools, while 21% lead after school programs at Boys and Girls Clubs. All 700 students (100%) are enrolled in Title 1, Head Start, or Newcomers' (also known as Magnet) schools. Of these, 85% are minorities, comprised of: 80% Hispanic; 2% Native American (mainly Mixtecos); 1% Asian; 1% African

American; and 1% Middle Eastern. The remaining 15% of participating students are Caucasian. Approximately 40% of the minority students are in English Language Learning programs, or have English as their second language. With grant funds from NOAA's B-WET program, the MERITO Academy contracted an external evaluator to improve the program's current evaluation plan, and to analyze and report evaluation findings from the 2008-2009 program year. Data collection (surveying of teachers and students) concluded on June 16, 2009, and analysis and reporting of the data will occur this summer. The MERITO Academy is a marine education and conservation program grant funded by NOAA's B-WET program and the Amgen Foundation.

Students and Teachers participate in Water Quality Monitoring onboard the R/V *Shearwater*

On Saturday May 30th sanctuary education coordinator Laura Francis led a field trip for students and teachers from The Research and Education for Students and Teachers about the Ormond Beach Restoration (RESTOR) Project to the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary on board the R/V *Shearwater*. During the trip, the group monitored water quality and plankton at two sites, observed an underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle exploring the kelp forest, and skiffed ashore to Scorpion Anchorage at Santa Cruz Island to learn more about the marine protected area at that location. RESTOR educates teachers and students from Ventura County (including the cities of Ventura, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Thousand Oaks and Santa Paula) about wetlands, watersheds and water quality through hands-on education. In the 2008-2009 school year, 15 teachers and over 500 students were involved in the project. The majority of the students come from multicultural backgrounds and from school districts that serve low-income populations. The RESTOR Project includes two teacher workshops, three teacher research days, classroom visits by a local water quality expert and a student field trip to Ormond Beach. Teachers learn about the Ormond Beach wetland restoration project from local scientists and then participate in collecting field data. The project culminates with an essay contest about the journey of a drop of water through the watershed and out to the sanctuary. Fourteen student essay winners and their teachers participated in the cruise aboard the R/V *Shearwater*.

RESEARCH AND MONITORING

NOAA Twin Otter Supports Missions at Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary

Staff conducted 16 survey days and over 40 hours of flight time in the CINMS aboard the NOAA Twin Otter aircraft (NOAA-56) between April and June 2009. The aircraft supported several missions, including the long term Sanctuary Aerial Monitoring and Spatial Analysis Program (SAMSAP) and surveillance of shipping lanes within the Santa Barbara Channel for large cetaceans. Also, the aircraft responded to reports of stranded northern right whale dolphins at Santa Rosa Island in May 2009 and helped to collect stranding location data and photographs for NOAA Fisheries in preparation for necropsies. Additionally, a National Weather Service observer joined the last flight to explore potential future multi-mission flights that could include collecting meteorological data and in-situ pilot reports to verify marine forecasts with real-time conditions. Overall, the support provided by the NOAA Twin Otter has been an integral component to help address CINMS management, research, and monitoring priorities.

Santa Barbara Island Seabird Survey Completed for 2009

An at-sea survey cruise on May 18-21, 2009 completed efforts to survey seabirds at Santa Barbara Island this year. The surveys replicated transect lines from the 1970's to compare changes between the two time periods and to establish a baseline for response to habitat restoration efforts occurring on the island. Researchers conducted seven transects counting seabirds and marine mammals and did plankton tows and CTD casts along the lines to sample prey distribution and oceanographic conditions. Although all species were recorded, alcids were a focus of the surveys because native plant restoration and social attraction on the island is expected to improve Cassin's Auklets and Xantus's Murrelet nesting habitat. Good weather allowed scientists to complete all transect lines and extend and duplicate several lines. Notable sightings included Xantus's Murrelets with

chicks, Northern Fulmars, Pomarine Jaeger, an albatross, blue sharks, and fin whales. At night, scientists banded Murrelets and occasional Auklets and Ashy Storm-petrels. The surveys were a collaborative effort between researchers at Pomona College, California Institute of Environmental Studies, Carter Biological Consulting, and CINP, with support from CINMS and Dani Lipski, Research Specialist, and funding from the Montrose Settlement Restoration Program.

Marine Mammal Biopsy and Acoustic Projects in Sanctuary

Scientists from NOAA's Southwest Fisheries Science Center collected biopsy samples of short-beaked common dolphins in the Santa Barbara Channel on board the CINMS' 41-foot vessel (NOAA-R4107) on June 19, 2009. Scientist Nick Kellar and NOAA Corps officer Fionna Matheson, operating under the proper permits, successfully collected small samples of skin and blubber with darts fired from a crossbow and took photographs for species confirmation. Samples will be analyzed for contaminant loads, biotoxin exposure, reproductive status, and population structure via genetic markers. This is part of a larger study looking at population health relative to various anthropogenic activities. Kellar and Matheson conducted their work in conjunction with the day's primary mission led by Naturalist Corps volunteers John Kuizenga and Dennis Carlson, who collect marine mammal sounds in the sanctuary for outreach and education and correlate sounds with observed behavior. Kuizenga and Carlson deployed hydrophones in the vicinity of blue and humpback whales near Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz Islands. Although no calls were heard during recording, Kuizenga and Carlson were able to identify some sounds during post-processing. Dani Lipski, CINMS Research Specialist, helped to facilitate the cruise and assisted with both projects. Several more cruises are scheduled for 2009.

Monitoring Project Observes Healthy Eelgrass Beds in Sanctuary

Scientists spent four days aboard research vessel *Shearwater* monitoring the health of eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) beds at the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS), June 16-18, 2009. Jessie Altstatt, Science Director of the local non-profit Santa Barbara Channelkeeper (SBCK), along with divers from SBCK, CINMS, and CINP, continued an ongoing project to monitor the eelgrass and associated invertebrate and fish communities at several locations at the islands. Eelgrass is an important but relatively rare habitat for fish and invertebrates at the Channel Islands. Juvenile rockfish, kelp bass, and other species were frequently observed, illustrating the importance of eelgrass as nursery habitat. The divers monitored a site at Frenchy's Cove, Anacapa Island, which had been restored by SBCK several years ago. There is now a lush and spreading eelgrass bed where, before the restoration effort, the vegetation had been absent for about fifteen years. In addition to monitoring, divers continued an effort to map the extent of the beds. These maps will be incorporated into SBCK's campaign to educate boaters to avoid anchoring in the beds, which is destructive and poses a threat to the health of the beds.

RESOURCE PROTECTION

Notice to Mariners Advising of Large Whales in Santa Barbara Channel

Beginning June 15, the US Coast Guard and NOAA Weather Radio began broadcasting a Local Notice to Mariners to warn of the seasonal presence of large whales in the Santa Barbara Channel, including waters of the CINMS. The notice advises the following: "Vessels transiting the Santa Barbara Channel should be aware of large whales including blue, humpback, fin, and sperm whales in the Channel and the shipping lanes between the months of May through November. Mariners should exercise caution when traveling through the Channel and in and out of Los Angeles and Long Beach Harbors, as whales may be distributed throughout the area. Blue, humpback, fin and sperm whales are endangered species protected under federal law. Please report any collisions with whales or any observed injured or dead whales to NOAA at 877-SOS-WHALES (877-767-9425) or the U.S. Coast Guard." Sightings of humpback and blue whales have been recorded lately in these areas by trained Channel Islands Naturalist Corps volunteers aboard whale watching vessels, and from aerial surveys made by Sanctuary staff. Maps of the observed whale locations will be sent to the shipping industry via a

variety of contacts that have been made over the past two years. If conditions change and groups of five or more whales are observed within or near to the shipping lanes, a second notice will request a voluntary ship speed reduction to 10 knots.

Thirty Coast Guard Officers Trained by NOAA, including CINMS

On June 11 thirty US Coast Guard boarding officers and other staff gathered in San Pedro, California to receive training by NOAA representatives. From the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS), Operations Manager Ben Waltenberger and Deputy Superintendent for Programs Mike Murray provided the group with an overview of recently revised sanctuary regulations, and explained the need for coordination within CINMS with respect to vessel groundings and whale survey flights. Other NOAA presenters from the NMFS Southwest Regional Office included Paul Ortiz, Joe Cordaro, Tina Fahy, and Marty Golden. Roxanna Behtash with NOAA Office for Law Enforcement organized the training sessions.

Recovery and Necropsy of Stranded Northern Right Whale Dolphins at CINMS

On May 22nd four dead northern right whale dolphins that had stranded on Santa Rosa Island in the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary were recovered by staff from the National Marine Fisheries Service's Protected Resources Division (Southwest Region) and the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. The initial report of five stranded animals was received on May 21. Aerial survey flights were conducted on May 22nd and 23rd by Sanctuary staff aboard NOAA's Twin Otter aircraft (NOAA-56), but no additional sightings were made. Initial necropsy work was performed on one of the dolphins at Santa Rosa Island, and on the other three at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Initial work did not indicate a clear cause of death, but complete test results are not yet available. Northern right whale dolphins are approximately six to ten feet in length and weigh up to 250 pounds. They typically travel in herds of 100 to 200 and can swim in bursts of speed up to 22 miles per hour. They exist throughout the North Pacific Ocean and are believed to number about 68,000.

MARITIME HERITAGE RESOURCES

Crowd of More than One Hundred Enjoys Lecture on Maritime Archaeological Technology used at National Marine Sanctuaries

On May 13th, Robert Schwemmer gave a presentation at the Thousand Oaks Library in southern California on technology used to survey archaeological sites in California sanctuary waters. As part of the library's Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Series, Schwemmer focused on the Channel Islands but also discussed technology applied to survey the airship USS *Macon* and shipwreck *Montebello* in Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Over a hundred people attended the presentation including students from the local community.

Shipwrecks of the Channel Islands Featured in Ventura County Star

Investigative reporter Brett Johnson of the *Ventura County Star* produced an article on the collaborative work at the Channel Islands to record shipwrecks and aircraft wrecks. The article focused on interviews with the sport diving community, CINMS Maritime Heritage Coordinator Robert Schwemmer, CINP retired Archaeologist Don Morris and volunteer Patrick Smith, VP of Operations for Coastal Maritime Archaeology Resources. The 3-page article with several underwater images of shipwrecks and WWII era military aircraft was featured on the *Star*'s website with an interactive chart of the Sanctuary and Park's maritime heritage resources. Sanctuary HD-video footage of the shipwreck *Winfield Scott* allowed the public to tour the wreck. See article links and features at: <http://www.venturacountystar.com/news/2009/jun/14/what-lies-beneath/> and <http://www.venturacountystar.com/special/shipwreck/>.

CINMS Staff

Santa Barbara Harbor Office

Christopher Mobley *Superintendent*

Todd Jacobs *Deputy Superintendent for
Administration and Operations*

Michael Murray *Deputy Superintendent for Programs*

Amy Cale – *Web and Kiosk Developer*

LTJG Matt Davis – *Operations Officer*

Laura Francis – *Education Coordinator*

Reginald Greenwood – *Vessel Operator*

Sean Hastings – *Resource Protection Coordinator*

Dr. Steven Katz – *Research Coordinator*

Charles Lara – *Vessel Captain*

Dani Lipski – *Research Specialist*

Robert Schwemmer – *Regional Maritime Heritage Coordinator*

Natalie Senyk – *Physical Scientist*

Terrence Shinn – *Vessel Captain*

Ben Waltenberger – *Physical Scientist*

Rebecca Young – *Program Support Specialist*

Ventura County Field Office

Julie Bursek – *Team Leader for Education and Outreach*

Shauna Bingham – *Volunteer Program and Outreach
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Lorri Herr – *Program Support Specialist*

Tina Johnson – *Administrative Support Coordinator*

Rocío Lozano de Knowlton – *Bilingual Education & Outreach
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CINMS Interns

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Jonathan Weber – *Resource Protection Intern*

ONMS West Coast Region Staff

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Matt Brookhart – *Policy Coordinator*

Nicole Capps – *Management Support Specialist*

Dave Lott – *Operations Coordinator*

Local ONMS Staff

Claire Fackler – *West Coast Education Liaison*

Sarah Marquis – *West Coast Media Coordinator*

Matt Pickett – *ONMS Aviation Coordinator*

Learn More About Your Sanctuary

The Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary produces the Sanctuary Superintendent's Report in conjunction with every other bi-monthly Sanctuary Advisory Council meeting. To learn more about the sanctuary please visit our web site at: <http://channelislands.noaa.gov>.

To learn more about the Sanctuary Advisory Council please visit: <http://channelislands.noaa.gov/sac/main.html>.

Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS)

The National Marine Sanctuary System consists of 14 marine protected areas that encompass more than 150,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington State to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. The system includes 13 national marine sanctuaries and the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. The ONMS, which manages the system, was established under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act of 1972. Visit the ONMS web site at: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/>.

Channel Islands National Park

To learn about Channel Islands National Park visit their web site at: <http://www.nps.gov/chis/homepage.htm>.

GET INVOLVED AND STAY INFORMED!

To learn how to get involved in the sanctuary visit: <http://channelislands.noaa.gov/focus/involved.html>

Sign up for the CINMS listserv to receive email notices about upcoming sanctuary events, and public meetings of the Sanctuary Advisory Council and its working groups: <http://channelislands.noaa.gov/focus/list.html>

- CONTACT INFORMATION -

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