

CINMS CONSERVATION WORKING GROUP
3/18/15 REPORT
Environmental Defense Center Conference Room,
906 Garden Street, Santa Barbara

Present: Kristi Birney (EDC, SAC Conservation Seat), Stewart Willison (SAC Non Consumptive Alternate), Greg Helms (Ocean Conservancy, SAC Conservation Alternate), Vic Cox (SAC Public At-large Alternate), Jenna Driscoll (SBCK)

Via Phone: Walt Schobel (Air Force, SAC DOD Alternate)

CINMS Staff: Sean Hastings and Morgan Visalli (Sea Grant Fellow)

I. INTRODUCTIONS

II. MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

- A. MPA implementation activities:
- a. Jenna mentioned that SBCK has printed 2,500 copies of the MPA Explore Brochure to distribute to tourist visitor centers, the Sea Center, hotels, visit Santa Barbara, and other places tbd in Ventura and Santa Barbara. Printing was done by Rockwell and they kindly offered a discounted printing rate. The brochure provides information about MPAs and lists businesses that provide services for the community to get out and enjoy the MPAs.
 - b. SBCK is planning future subsidized trips with local businesses (e.g. dive trips) to MPAs. Stay tuned for more info.
 - c. The South Coast Collaborative Forum for the MPA Collaborative members will be held on April 29th at Cabrillo Marine Aquarium. Several members of SB Channel MPA Collaborative plan on attending.
 - d. It was noted that a four page booklet “Ten Years of Change at the Channel Islands” summarizes findings from 10-years of monitoring the network of MPAs at the northern Channel Islands is available on PISCO’s website. The latest 10-year results indicate that the initial positive trends seen in 2008 are continuing. The five-year review showed that abundance (numbers of fish) and biomass (total weight of fish) of fish species targeted by fishermen in the region were both greater inside the reserves relative to the outside reference sites. Non-targeted fish species did not show these same differences between MPA and open areas. This ten-year review now shows the same patterns with even larger differences between protected and unprotected sites. The brochure and other finding can be found [here](#).

III. WHALES & SHIPPING

- A. Vessel Speed Reduction (“VSR”) Trial Update: The results are in, and they are good! The EDC, the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, and the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District successfully executed a VSR trial incentive program in the Santa Barbara Channel to slow cargo ships down to reduce air pollution and increase protection of endangered whales. Seven global shipping companies made 27 transits at a reduced speed of 12 knots or less. This reduced speed resulted in a 50% reduction from baseline emissions and increased the likelihood of survival of a whale that may be struck by a ship by 50%. The VSR Report and supporting materials can be accessed [here](#).
- B. Marine Shipping Working Group: At Friday’s SAC meeting Kristi will provide a review of the Outcomes from the first Marine Shipping Working Group (MSWG) meeting that was held on Feb 25th. Outcomes and summary notes will be made public within the next few weeks. The second MSWG meeting is scheduled for April 30th and will most likely be held at the Marine Exchange. MSWG website with materials can be found [here](#).
- C. Bren School Proposed Project: Sanctuary is still waiting to hear back from the Bren selection committee regarding the UCSB Bren group proposal; “Economic Incentives for Vessel Speed Reduction in the Santa Barbara Channel.” The proposed project will explore the value of the whale watching industry and value of whales to our region. This will be the first study of this scale to explore the financial benefit of whale conservation. There will also be an evaluation of benefits associated with air emissions reductions.

Sean noted that the Sanctuary has received internal funding to partner with National Center for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) to support 3 graduate students to work on the Bren Group Project should it be selected.

- D. Cruise Ships: Michael Smith (Gray Whales Count) contacted Kristi and Sanctuary staff prior to the CWG meeting and alerted us to his recent observation of a cruise ships transiting the area just offshore going back and forth several times in an area that he knows overlaps with the gray whale migration corridor.
- a. Sean mentioned the NMFS is interested in bringing the program [Whale SENSE](#), a whale education program, to the west coast. This voluntary education and recognition program already exists on the east coast and is offered to commercial whale watching companies. NMFS is expecting to expand and tailor the program to different user groups including boaters and the cruise ship industry.
 - b. Kristi shared that perhaps the best avenue to address this concern is through the Santa Barbara City Council or Harbor Commission. We know that the Harbor Commission and City Council discuss and approve the contracts for the Cruise Ships that visit the area. In the past conditions have been placed in

the contract that address community concerns. SBCK and EDC offered to help Michael with this.

- c. Jenna also noted that Cruise ships now have to report and connect with the USCG when they visit the harbor. On the day when this particular incident was observed it was the first time that this reporting took place. It is possible the Cruise ship was killing time before connecting with the USCG.

IV. SAC AGENDA ITEMS

These items will be discussed in more detail at the Friday SAC meeting.

- A. NOAA Ship Bell M. Shimada
- B. Santa Cruz Island Shoreline Cleanup
- C. Center of Excellence for Unmanned Technology.
 - a. NOAA website with more information can be found [here](#).
- D. Sanctuary Tourism Outreach
- E. SAC Recruitment:
 - a. Kristi mentioned the Sanctuary is seeking applicants for appointments to the Sanctuary Advisory Council for specific positions listed including: Business (Member & Alternate (M&A)), Non-consumptive recreation (M&A); Commercial Fishing (M&A), Research (M&A), Conservation (M&A), and Public at-large (2 M). Applications are due March 31st more info here.

VI. OTHER ISSUES

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