

## CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

## Marine Shipping Working Group

**Outreach and Education Ideas**

For Discussion at the Marine Shipping Working Group Meeting on October 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>

This document lists initial MSWG member ideas on the topic of outreach and education needs. These ideas were shared on the SeaSketch Forum and/or in webinars leading up to the October 7-8 meeting. They have also been developed in consideration of outreach and education activities that have been conducted to date (per the summary table on outreach and education activities reviewed by the MSWG).

**1. AIS Text Messaging**

Currently only the federal government can transmit messages to ships via Automatic Identification System (AIS). Marine Exchange of Southern California (Mx SoCal) would need permission (from the FCC) to transmit messages via AIS to ships. The technology to do this in LA/LB and SB is already in place, so additional costs to start using the technology would be minimal. At the webinar on September 21, 2015 there was general agreement from the group that they should recommend that MX SoCal receive permission to transmit messages to ships via AIS.

*Follow-up questions:*

1. What information would be transmitted?
2. Is there value in transmitting informational messages, or should message always include a recommended action for mariners to take (e.g. slow down, report whale sightings, etc.)?
3. How often would messages be transmitted?

**2. AIS Monitoring and Direct Communication with Shipping Industry Regarding Cooperation with VSR and other Management Measures**

Monitor individual ship cooperation with management measures via AIS and then mail monthly reports to the shipping company notifying them of their fleet's cooperation with management measures such as VSR zones for that month. Would require 1) regular AIS monitoring 2) analyzing AIS data 3) managing a database of companies and contact information 4) linking AIS data and database of companies/contact information 5) monthly outreach.

*Follow-up questions:*

1. Who is the appropriate audience for this communication (e.g. shipping agents, captains, company mainland offices, etc.)?

**3. Expanded Outreach by the Marine Exchange (Mx) of Southern California**

**Expand Dissemination of Whale Information** – Mx SoCal currently distributes monthly whale sightings maps produced by NOAA. They are transmitted by: 1) radio to ships 2) email to agents and 3) twitter to followers.

*Follow-up questions:*

1. How could this be expanded?
2. What resources would be required to expand this service?

**Pursue More Formal Use of Ship Agent Contact List** - Mx SoCal has a list of ships' agents that they push information to every day. Every arriving ship has an agent. The primary information that is transmitted concerns Naval operations. Information is transmitted in multiple ways (such as email).

*Follow-up questions:*

1. How could this contact list be used more formally?
2. What messages should be delivered to ship agents?

#### 4. International Online Resource for Shipping and Whale Strike Information

Since many countries are working on whale ship strike issues, the MSWG may consider recommending an international web resource. This could possibly exist within the IMO Global Integrated Shipping Information System.

*Follow-up questions:*

1. What type of information would this international resource include?
2. What would it take to get it included in the IMO Global Integrated Shipping Information System?

#### 5. Increase Reach of Presentations

Recommend considering briefs to the Harbor Safety Committees in Port Hueneme, LA/LB, and San Diego. Also recommend briefs at functions by the Propeller Club, LA/LB Harbor Association of Industry and Commerce, and Future Ports. These all have broad membership that includes the shipping lines.

*Follow-up questions:*

1. What is the main content/messages that should be included in these presentations?

#### 6. Collect Whale Sighting Data from Mariners via Multiple Methods and Transmit Whale Sighting Data Back to Mariners

The sanctuary and PMSA produced a poster for the bridge of ships encouraging mariners to report sightings via email. Whale Alert is also available as a way for mariners to report sightings. To date, shippers have not provided much whale sighting data. MSWG members made the following recommendations: In order to get ships to report whale sightings, they need to also receive information back about the sightings that they and others have recorded (they need to get something out of it). This could possibly be achieved in the form of a monthly letter, or including sightings in Whale Alert. Email may not be the best way for mariners to report sightings (lack of internet). The same method of reporting may not work for every ship. It may be necessary to consider multiple ways of reporting (email, Whale Alert, phone, radio, etc.) and integrate those into one database. On the poster, the focus is on reporting distressed, entangled, or dead whales. May be unclear that we want mariners to report sightings of live, healthy whales as well.

#### 7. Integrated Whale Sighting Network and Reporting System for California (also posted as a research idea)

**Background:** Since 1999, trained Channel Islands Naturalist Corps (CINC) volunteers have collected opportunistic marine mammal sightings data while on board participating whale watch and park concessionaire vessels. This dataset informs management actions as well as multiple research initiatives. CINMS and partners recently developed Spotter Pro and Whale Alert, two mobile apps that can be downloaded on smartphones and tablets, and allow users to collect whale sightings in the field and upload data to a cloud server, improving real-time data collection. Spotter Pro has been designed for trained observers and is now used by CINC volunteers in place of paper log sheets. Spotter Pro also collects effort tracklines. Members of the public can also assist with monitoring whales by downloading the Whale Alert app. The *Integrated Whale Sightings Network and Reporting System for California* would build upon these existing programs and integrate them with other related data collection initiatives in California.

**Description:** A joint NOAA program managed by the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and the National Marine Fisheries Service that expands, improves, integrates, and coordinates opportunistic marine mammal observation data collection by mariners, researchers, agency representatives and citizen scientists in California. This program would seek to increase the amount of opportunistic data that is collected by leveraging vessels as platforms of opportunity, including commercial vessels, ecotourism operations and whale watch vessels. Existing funding, resources, and staff time would need to be expanded and dedicated to volunteer

training, data management, and outreach. Outreach would be two-fold: 1) reaching out to stakeholder groups (e.g. boaters, shipping industry, fishing industry, etc.) to recruit volunteer citizen scientists and 2) connecting the data with scientists and managers to ensure the data is being used in research and management. This idea has both education/outreach and research components.

*Education/Outreach:* Volunteer citizen scientists are educated on whale identification, the threats to whales, and the ways that sighting data is used to manage and mitigate these threats. This is an effective education/outreach tool because it gives the audience an *action to take*, rather than just providing them with information.

*Research:* This program would expand the scale and geographic scope of the existing sightings data, with the intent to improve managing ocean users on a regional scale. Whenever possible, effort data would be collected in concert with sightings data to improve the quality and utility of the data for research and management.

**Rationale for MSWG:** This idea primarily addresses goal 1 (reducing the threat of ship strikes to whales) by increasing awareness of the issue and creating a larger dataset of real-time whale observation data to inform management actions.

**Feasibility or Implementation Concerns:** This scale program will require additional funding and dedicated staff. At least one primary program lead, regional coordinators to conduct training, and a database manager will be necessary.

#### Questions for the Marine Shipping Working Group:

1. *All:* Locally, how do we leverage vessels as platforms of opportunity to fill spatial data gaps (e.g. south of the Channel Islands where whale watch vessels don't go)? What vessels exist and how do we get them enrolled?
2. *John Calambokidis, Jessica Redfern:*
3. Is there a way to design a program to make the data more useful and robust (e.g. collecting effort data through SpotterPro, dedicated staff for data quality control, etc.)? Can this type of data be integrated into existing models?
4. *Kathy Metcalf, Sean Kline, TL Garrett, John Berge, Lee Kindberg, Jeromy McConnell, Kip Louttit:*
5. To date, shippers have not provided much whale sighting data. Is there a way to incentivize participation in an opportunistic marine mammal sighting program? What would make this successful (e.g. more training, dedicated hardware for electronic data collection via apps, etc.)?
6. *Jevon James, Brandon Link, John Ugoretz, Walk Schobel, Megan McKenna, Stephen Whitaker:* Do you see Coast Guard, Navy, or National Park Service staff possibly participating in a marine mammal sightings program, either by utilizing their vessels at platforms of opportunity, or assisting with outreach?

#### Relevant References:

Koslovsky, Stacie. "Wandering Whale Watches: The Effectiveness of Whale Watches as a Platform of Opportunity for Data Collection." *Masters project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Environmental Management degree in the Nicholas School of the Environment and Earth Sciences of Duke University.* (2008).