

CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

## Sanctuary Advisory Council Meeting

### DRAFT Key Meeting Outcomes

November 21, 2014

**Robert J. Lagomarsino Visitor Center at the Channel Islands National Park Headquarters  
1901 Spinnaker Drive · Ventura Harbor, CA**

*Note: After council approval, this document will be posted online at <http://channelislands.noaa.gov/sac/minutes.html>. Audio recordings of this and other Council meetings are available upon request to [michael.murray@noaa.gov](mailto:michael.murray@noaa.gov).*

**Attendance:** At peak, seventeen of the council's twenty-one voting seats were present (see attached attendance roster). Five seats were absent for the day: Commercial Fishing, Chumash Community, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and U.S. Coast Guard (although non-rostered Coast Guard representatives were at the meeting). Public attendance varied throughout the day, averaging 10 people.

#### ***Pre-Meeting Session: Graduate Student Mock-Council Discussion Period***

Prior to the start of the official Sanctuary Advisory Council meeting, graduate students enrolled in a Coast & Ocean Policy and Management course at UCSB's Bren School of Environmental Science and Management conducted a mock council session. Students took on the roles of stakeholders and agency representatives in a hypothetical discussion about cruise ship visits. An audio recording is available upon request.

#### **Administrative Business and Announcements**

The draft key outcomes from the September 19<sup>th</sup> meeting were unanimously approved as final.

#### **Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Chris Mobley announced that Congressman Alan Lowenthal recently visited CINMS and was impressed by the partnerships and the model used with the Vessel Speed Reduction trial program. Chris also mentioned that a delegation from Indonesia/Coral Triangle Center visited CINMS to learn about education and outreach methods. Chris also mentioned that CINMS staff recently participated in white abalone habitat surveys within the sanctuary/park. Staff did not see any (and were not expecting to), but the group was looking at areas of known historic hot spot populations. One goal is to successfully rear white abalone in captivity, and hopefully someday be able to bring them back into the wild. Chris also said that Princess Cruises will be bringing passengers to Santa Barbara (as they do) and some passengers will be going whale watching on the Condor Express, with Channel Islands Naturalist Corps volunteers aboard. Lastly, Chris mentioned that Stephanie Mutz was recently interviewed on radio station KCRW about sea urchin diving and played a short audio clip of the interview.

#### **Brief Council Member Announcements**

A number of Council members shared announcements (unrelated to meeting agenda items). Audio recordings are available upon request.

#### **Understanding Marine Mammal Stranding Response in the CINMS Area**

Michelle Berman Kowalewski from the Channel Islands Cetacean Research Unit (CICRU) gave a presentation on the organization's history, mission, and research. She was with the SB Museum of Natural History until grant funding ended, so she then established the non-profit CICRU to continue the same research. Michelle and CICRU are responsible for providing NOAA with data on stranded marine mammals, including species, gender, age class, and various types of other information.

Michelle showed a series of charts to illustrate relative strandings by species. She explained the necropsy process as: 1) photograph and measure; 2) human interaction report; 3) collect ecto-parasites and skin; 4) measure and

collect blubber; and 5) collect tissue samples. Routine analyses include: genetics, diet, biotoxins, heavy metals, and age. Specialized analyses can include CT scans to look for possible acoustic effects. Ear bone sampling can be done for this too. Gas emboli work can be done to determine if an animal died from the bends, which could suggest the possibility of sonar impacts or entanglement.

Michelle said when a whale is discovered on a ship's bow, a necropsy can reveal if the broken bones are from impact with the ship or if it was already dead and had been scooped up by the ship. Researchers can also determine if human interactions are responsible for cause of death by analyzing stomach contents (e.g., suggesting fishery gear entanglement that may have been involved). Biotoxins are the main cause of death for common dolphins, such as domoic acid from feeding on baitfish with high levels of it. Michelle mentioned that in years with high domoic acid (DA) levels, 20,000 animals were estimated to have died from the biotoxin's effects. She added that our area has some of the highest DA levels in the world. In cetaceans, females' milk transfers a significant amount of toxins to calves. Analyzing the ear plug of a cetacean is an ideal way to review the history of an animal since many bio indicators leave a record in the ear plug, such as toxin levels over time.

Phyllis Grifman asked if pharmaceutical products are impacting cetaceans. Michelle said CICRU is not working on that at this time since labs are not doing this with marine mammal tissues, but since a lot of tissue samples are archived, this could be done in the future. Donna Schroeder made a specific recommendation for a university lab that may have knowledge of techniques for looking at PAHs in marine mammal tissues. Michelle indicated the high lipids in blubber are problematic when you try to use the same approaches used with fish. Bob Warner asked how CICRU can archive or publish all this valuable data. Michelle said she is now arriving at the point where she feels she has large enough sample sizes to publish on some species. She is also working with some Ocean Observing Systems groups to see about getting data online and mapped.

Justin Viezbicke from NOAA Fisheries gave an overview of the California Marine Mammal Stranding Network. He started off asking, "Why do we respond to stranded marine mammals?" and answered that it is to understand and fix human caused problems in addition to safety and public service. The California Marine Mammal Stranding Network includes the services that he and his team provide. In our area the team includes: CICRU (for dead animals), Santa Barbara Marine Mammal Center (for live animals, rehab), and the Channel Islands Marine & Wildlife Institute (live, rehab).

Justin said the network also responds to large whales with life threatening entanglements. He said safety is a top priority and a common misconception is that all entangled whales should be freed. He said entanglement response depends on resources, conditions, severity, risk assessment, and authorization. From 2000-June 2013, humpbacks and grays accounted for 74% of entanglements. Gear types on the west coast involved in entanglements are as follows: 49.1% pot, 18.4% net, 32.5% unknown. 22 entanglements have been reported so far this year in California. 16 have been confirmed, 14 of which were humpbacks. 4 were rescued and 2 were self-released. The components of large whale entanglement response include awareness and outreach to the public, reporting, assessment, documentation, monitoring (tagging), disentanglement, and follow up. This requires extensive training and coordination. Also, having conversations with fishermen and building relationships with them is a priority. Justin described a recent Santa Barbara Channel whale disentanglement that took place in May and all the steps they had to take. He said he rarely finds out what ultimately happens after a rescue, but this particular whale was re-sighted later and appeared to be recovering well.

Richard Block asked how much that particular effort cost and how NOAA finances it. Justin said there is very little funding and many of the people are volunteers that assist. He said he looks for partnerships with sanctuaries and within NOAA in light of the lack of adequate resources. Michael Cohen said this seems perfect for a reality TV show, which might be a good way to raise funding. Justin said the stranding network needs to be careful because no one wants to demonize commercial fishermen, which a show might try to do. Donna Schroeder asked if buoys are involved in entanglements, and Justin said there have been hydrophone arrays and weather buoy entanglements. Sean Hastings encouraged everyone to download the Whale Alert app.

## **Public Comment**

There was no public comment provided during this morning opportunity (see afternoon comment session below).

### **Shipping and Whales**

Sean Herron showed whale sightings maps from the Santa Barbara Channel area. An interesting recent development is the sighting of several blue whales in November, which is late in the season for them.

For the Vessel Speed Reduction Trial Program, there were 7 participating companies, with 33 enrolled vessels. 26 transited at 12 knots or less and 7 did not comply (with one being rerouted). Non-complying vessels will not be penalized but will also not receive any incentive amount. Issues at the ports of LA/LB contributed to some of the vessels not choosing to reduce speed as planned, such as a shortage of truck drivers causing congestion. Sean Herron said the VSR Program saw an average reduction in speed of 5.1 knots for complying vessels and an overall average reduction in speed of 4.1 knots for all 33 vessels. He said 1 fin whale was struck and killed this summer, but it was not by a vessel enrolled in the VSR program, noting that the vessel was using a different west-east arrival route and was traveling at 14.5 knots. He said the SB County APCD is still analyzing the reduction in air emissions resulting from the trial program. The next steps for the VSR partners include developing a report to summarize the program and findings, seeking sources of long term funding to expand the program, and promoting the program to garner more interest and support.

Elizabeth Petras commented that it's important to remember that 12 knots may reduce lethality of ship strikes, but not necessarily the occurrence of ship strikes. Elizabeth asked if it is possible that there has been a slowing trend across all the ship transits, not just those enrolled in the VSR program. Sean Herron responded that this will be analyzed and addressed in the final report. Kip Louttit said that with these companies, arriving on time is extremely important. He also said it will be interesting to see how stricter fuel requirements (throughout the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone out to 200 nm from shore) beginning in January will affect ship traffic.

Kristi Birney said as reported at last SAC meeting, additional funding was raised to support the Marine Shipping Working Group. She said the council should anticipate moving forward with the group starting in January 2015, so identified members should be ready to be invited to a first meeting. When the key partners went back to the Santa Barbara Foundation to seek the second and third phase of funding, the third phase was not able to be supported, so additional funding is still being sought (but the Working Group will move forward regardless).

### **Public Comment**

Leslie Purcell asked why whales don't get out of the way of large ships. Elizabeth Petras said science suggests that whales don't hear the ships and respond accordingly (i.e. move out of the way), and that researchers are not completely sure why, although it could be because it is difficult to determine the proximity and location of the ship based on sound. Michelle Berman said we should not assume whales consider ships a threat—for the majority of history whales have evolved without the threat of ship strikes.

Cause Hannah (Director of the California State University Channel Islands' new Santa Rosa Islands Research Station) mentioned a new "Crossing the Channel" education program that is underway, funded by a NOAA B-WET grant. The program includes 5 curriculum units for middle school and high school students, and will get the students out to the Channel Islands. Cause said the program's goal is to develop a new group of youth that will become stewards that know and understand the Park and Sanctuary.

### **2014 Advisory Council Recap and Recognition**

Sean Herron reflected that his year with CINMS as a California Sea Grant Fellow has been personally enriching, and provided a great chance for him to get to know so many stakeholders. Council Actions in 2014 included: formation of Marine Shipping Working Group, adoption of Marketing Subcommittee recommendations, supporting the Chair's signature of the MPA Call to Action statement, and an extensive science speaker series (whale experts, MPA monitoring, commercial fishing history, vessel assist, and more). SAC leadership included marketing of the sanctuary and initiatives involving shipping and whales. Sean Herron said the SAC has expressed an ongoing commitment to ocean acidification and MPA monitoring and research. He commended the SAC for their active working groups, high participation all year, their wealth of knowledge and experience, dedicated Executive

Committee, high community interest in joining the SAC, and willingness to take on challenging issues.

Sean Herron also retraced his year with CINMS, telling of how came into the job and was immediately encouraged to get involved in important work and projects. He said he got to wear many hats and talk with many sectors (media, industry, government officials, etc.) while working on the Vessel Speed Reduction (VSR) program, and that he will be co-authoring the VSR final report. He then elaborated on his work organizing SAC meetings and described a mobile enforcement app he is now helping develop for use by California Department of Fish and Wildlife wardens.

### **Working Group Reports**

*Channel Islands Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) on Enforcement* (Bill Struble, NOAA Office of Law Enforcement) – No report.

*Research Activities Panel* (Bob Warner or Mark Steele) – Bob Warner said he’s looking forward to working with Chris Caldwell, CINMS Research Coordinator.

*Marketing Subcommittee* (Michael Cohen) – Michael said the work at hand is still to follow up with the new leads and opportunities that came about when the Council and CINMS staff spoke with the Visitors & Convention Bureau contacts from Ventura County. He said the Council should consider having another meeting about this in the near future.

*Sanctuary Education Team* (Amanda Allen) –There is no SET meeting set up at this time. Amanda and Cliff hope to help bring others, like Cause Hannah, in to the SAC.

*Recreational Fishing Working Group* (Capt. David Bacon) – No report.

*Commercial Fishing Working Group* (Bruce Steele) – No report.

*Conservation Working Group (CWG)* (Kristi Birney) – At the recent CWG meeting, the group discussed the drought and the City of Santa Barbara’s desalination plant (which was built decades ago but never operated). The CWG thought the SAC might want more information about this at the January 23rd SAC meeting. Ben Pitterle from Santa Barbara Channel Keeper addressed the council and spoke about the impacts of desalination plants that have open ocean intake systems, which are detrimental to marine life. He explained that a less impactful alternative being considered, and used elsewhere, is to use a subsurface intake system (under the sand). The City of Santa Barbara desalination plant was constructed and approved many years ago with an open intake system, but has not been in operation. Channel Keeper is asking the City of Santa Barbara to consider and evaluate the feasibility of using a subsurface intake. Given the currents and gyres that connect the mainland to sanctuary waters, Ben said Channel Keeper would like to ask the SAC to discuss and consider approving a resolution of support for this (he provided a draft resolution), and possibly get the SAC's endorsement. Kristi Birney clarified that this is not a CWG request for SAC action at this time, but rather a request that the Executive Committee consider placing this issue on the January 23<sup>rd</sup> SAC meeting agenda.

Greg Helms remarked that he expects that the normal processes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) may not happen as usual because of the emergency situation with the drought. Bob Warner said desalination is actually not a “green” technology and if you’re concerned about emissions, this is not the way to go. Russell Galipeau informed the council that Channel Islands National Park has been looking at portable solar powered desalination options at the islands as a replacement for running water out there via boat, and suggested that maybe the SAC could look at this with that in mind as well. Dianne Black felt that based on the project location (Santa Barbara mainland coast) it seems like a bit of a reach for the SAC to weigh in to the City. Phyllis Grifman expressed appreciation that the subject is being brought up, but questioned if the SAC has a responsibility to weigh in on these types of coastal projects. Debra Herring asked if the SAC could learn more about the different intake systems at the January meeting, and said that the ocean's currents may indeed lead to a direct connection/impact in the sanctuary, so it is potentially an issue the SAC should address. Michael Cohen expressed a similar view. Chair Dianne Black summarized that she is hearing 3 possible options: 1) put desalination on the agenda as an

informational item; 2) put it on the agenda as a possible action item; or 3) don't put it on the agenda at all. She said she has concern about reaching too far, and it is important to use discretion when deciding what environmental issues should be taken up by the SAC. It was understood that the Executive Committee would consider these options as they work to shape the agenda for the advisory council meeting on January 23, 2015.

*Chumash Community Working Group* (Luhui Isha Waiya, Mati Waiya) – No report.

**Meeting Close-Out**

Dianne Black reminded the group about the council-adopted schedule for 2015 Advisory Council meetings:

- January 23: Santa Barbara
- March 20: Ventura
- May 15: Santa Barbara
- July 17: Oxnard
- September 18: Santa Barbara
- November 20: Ventura

**Meeting Attendance Roster (11/21/2014):**

Andrea Mills	Tourism	<i>Present</i>
Garrett Kababik	Tourism – Alternate	<i>Present</i>
Debra Herring	Non-Consumptive Recreation	<i>Present</i>
Stuart Wilson	Non-Consumptive Recreation - Alternate	<i>Present</i>
Michael Cohen	Business	<i>Present</i>
Capt. Kip Louttit	Business - Alternate	<i>Present</i>
Kristi Birney	Conservation	<i>Present</i>
Greg Helms	Conservation - Alternate	<i>Present</i>
Bruce Steele	Commercial Fishing	<i>Absent</i>
Stephanie Mutz	Commercial Fishing - Alternate	<i>Absent</i>
Capt. David Bacon	Recreational Fishing	<i>Present</i>
Merit McCrea	Recreational Fishing - Alternate	<i>Present</i>
Amanda Allen	Education	<i>Present</i>
Cliff Rodrigues	Education – Alternate	<i>Present</i>
Dr. Robert Warner	Research	<i>Present</i>
Dr. Mark Steele	Research – Alternate	<i>Absent</i>
Phyllis Grifman [Vice-Chair]	Public At Large #1	<i>Present</i>
Victor Cox	Public At Large #1 - Alternate	<i>Present</i>
Eric Kett	Public At Large #2	<i>Absent</i>
Richard Block	Public At Large #2 - Alternate	<i>Present</i>
Luhui Isha Waiya	Chumash Community	<i>Absent</i>
Mati Waiya	Chumash Community - Alternate	<i>Absent</i>
Elizabeth Petras	NOAA Fisheries	<i>Present</i>
Shelby Mendez	NOAA Fisheries - Alternate	<i>Absent</i>
Russell Galipeau	National Park Service	<i>Present</i>
David Ashe	National Park Service - Alternate	<i>Absent</i>
CDR Casey Hehr	US Coast Guard	<i>Absent</i>
LT CMDR Joseph Giammanco	US Coast Guard – Alternate	<i>Absent</i>
Donna Schroeder	Bureau of Ocean Energy Mgmt (BOEM)	<i>Present</i>
Dr. Ann Bull	BOEM – Alternate	<i>Absent</i>
John Ugoretz	Dept. of Defense	<i>Absent</i>
Walt Schobel	Dept. of Defense - Alternate	<i>Present</i>
Craig Shuman	CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	<i>Absent</i>
Kai Lampson	CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife - Alternate	<i>Absent</i>
Rich Rozzelle	CA Natural Resources Agency	<i>Present</i>
Amy Vierra	CA Natural Resources Agency -	<i>Absent</i>
Dr. Jonna Engel	CA Coastal Commission	<i>Absent</i>
Kristen Hislop	CA Coastal Commission - Alternate	<i>Present</i>
Dianne Black [Council Chair]	Santa Barbara County	<i>Present</i>
Susan Curtis	Santa Barbara County - Alternate	<i>Absent</i>
Danielle Tarr	Ventura County	<i>Present</i>
<vacant>	Ventura County - Alternate	--
Chris Mobley	Channel Islands NMS [non-voting]	<i>Present</i>
Paul Michel	Monterey Bay NMS [non-voting]	<i>Absent</i>
Karen Grimmer	Monterey Bay NMS - Alternate [non-	<i>Absent</i>
Maria Brown	Gulf of the Farallones NMS [non-voting]	<i>Absent</i>