Conservation Working Group (CWG)

Proposed 2015 Work Plan

Presented to MBNMS SAC by CWG Chair Geoff Shester
February 20, 2015
Recent CWG Activities

• Resolution Supporting Plastic Bag Bans (2011)

• Forage Fish White Paper and Resolution (2012)

• Identification of Sanctuary Ecologically Significant Areas and Essential Fish Habitat Proposal (2013)

• Leatherback Sea Turtle Conservation Summit (2013)

• Acoustic Impacts Presentations (2014)
Proposed CWG 2015 Focus Areas

Leatherback Sea Turtle Conservation

Whale Entanglements

Acoustic Impacts to Marine Life
THREATENED AND THRIVING
IN THE MONTEREY BAY NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY
Western Pacific Leatherback Range and Migrations

Summer nesters
Winter nesters
CA foragers

(Benson et al. 2011)

Tapilatu et al. 2013
Pacific Leatherback Sea Turtle Conservation Summit

DECLARATION

We, the Governments, Leaders, and Organizations participating in the Pacific Leatherback Sea Turtle Conservation Summit

Gathered here in Monterey, California, USA on October 15, 2013

Commemorating the State of California’s inaugural Pacific Leatherback Sea Turtle Conservation Day; and

Acknowledging the ecological and cultural importance of our shared population of Pacific leatherbacks to our respective geographic regions; and

Recognizing the plight of the endangered Pacific leatherback sea turtle populations and the threats facing these ancient turtles from their nesting beaches in the Tambrawu region of West Papua, Indonesia throughout their trans-oceanic migrations to their coastal foraging areas off the west coast of the United States; and

Also recognizing our mutual commitments to recover endangered Pacific leatherback sea turtles throughout their life cycle; now, therefore,

Declare our intent to initiate and build a collaborative partnership to conserve and restore our shared population of Pacific leatherback sea turtles for the benefit of healthy oceans, future generations, and posterity.

Paul astronomers
California Assembly District 28

Mark Stone
California Assembly District 29

Geoffrey Shester
Oceana

Teri Shore
Turtle Island Restoration Network

The Honorable Gabrielle Assem
Tambrawu Regency

M. Amri Muali
Tambrawu Secretary

Ricardo Tapilatu
State University of Papua, Indonesia

Jacobus Ayomi
Marine and Fisheries Division of Tambrawu

Jeselle Beland
California Natural Resources Agency

Danny H. Pattripoline
BBKSDA Papua Barat

Benja V. Mamai
WWF Indonesia

Simona Barti
Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Education Program
Leatherback Educational Exchanges

Students in Warmandi, Indonesia

Save Our Shores Classroom of the Year Mt. Madonna 5th graders in 2014
Proposed CWG 2015 Activities
Leatherback Sea Turtles

• Pursue collaborations with Indonesia, California, and NOAA through existing international agreements

• Organize Leatherback Day 2015 Event

• Produce 10-minute video on Leatherback Summit with Your Sanctuary TV

• Life-size leatherback sculpture

• Continued educational exchanges between local schools and Indonesian schools
Whale Entanglements

Image courtesy of Peggy Staap / Marine Life Studies
(MMHSRP Permit #932-1489, NMFS Permit #1094-1836) 5/10/08
Humpback Whale Population Growth

Humpback Whale Mark-Recapture Abundance Estimates

Darroch 4-yr
Petersen 2-yr
Chao 4-yr

Year

Abundance Estimate

Existing Data: U.S. West Coast

- From 2000-2012, average of 10 entanglements observed and reported per year on U.S. west coast

- “An average of 103 whale entanglements per year may be occurring”

  - Saez et al. 2013
MBNMS is a hotspot of humpback whale density and entanglement risk.
Entanglement Prevention

- Derelict Gear Removal
- Gear modifications
- Identify high-risk areas
- Gear type marking

From NMFS U.S. west coast large whale entanglement information sharing workshop report 2013
Entanglement Response

• Whale Entanglement Team
  – History of CWG involvement
  – Resource needs

• Existing MBNMS Activities

• Outreach (877-SOS-WHALE)
Proposed CWG 2015 Activities

Whale Entanglements

• Support Whale Entanglement Team and existing MBNMS efforts

• Compile existing data/information on entanglements in the MBNMS in a report to the SAC

• Develop recommendations to SAC for potential MBNMS future efforts on entanglement prevention and response

• Outreach to public & fishermen
Acoustic Impacts

• Acoustic impacts are now a major national issue

• MBNMS at forefront of research on healthy soundscape

• Expert presentations to SAC in 2014
Natural Noises
Storms and earthquakes are intense sources. But the animals themselves add to the din—even cod, which grunt a lot in the spawning season.

THE COST OF NOISE
A right whale calling to another faces the twin challenges—intensity and frequency—that noise poses to many marine animals.

INJURY
Intense noises, such as air gun blasts that ricochet off the seafloor, drown out animal sounds and may cause hearing loss and other damage.

INTERFERENCE
Sounds close in frequency interfere, canceling each other. A ship’s propeller miles away can mask a right whale’s call.

Intensity
The higher the decibel level, the more likely a sound is to harm animals. A few sources are shown here.

Frequency
The lower the sound frequency in hertz (Hz), the longer the wavelength. Whale call frequencies overlap the ranges of many other sources.
Proposed CWG 2015 Activities
Acoustic Impacts

• Focus area for Management Plan Update as per Oct 2014 SAC motion

• Monitor and provide national policy updates on acoustic issues
## Draft CWG 2015 Work Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Proposed CWG Activities</th>
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| Leatherback Sea Turtle Conservation | • Compile list of ongoing Leatherback conservation activities at nesting beaches  
  • Participate in Working Group with NMFS to identify Indonesia collaborators and integrate Leatherback Summit concepts under the existing 2010 Science & Technology Agreement (Indonesia/US)  
  • Organize/fundraise for 2015 Leatherback Day event (October)  
  • Continue CWG/SEP collaboration on education/outreach (i.e., turtle camp)  
  • Explore potential to partner with Your Sanctuary TV on a 10-minute video on Leatherback Summit  
  • Develop concept for life-size Leatherback sculpture |
| Whale Entanglement             | • Support for Whale Entanglement Team funding, resources, and equipment and existing MBNMS efforts  
  • Outreach to public & fishermen  
  • Compile existing data/information on entanglements in the MBNMS in a report to the SAC  
  • Develop recommendations to SAC for potential MBNMS future efforts on entanglement prevention and response |
| Acoustics/Noise                | • Monitor for research and national policy updates  
  • Conduct additional work as needed or requested by the SAC  
  • Plan for CWG participation acoustic issues in the upcoming management plan update |