

**MONTEREY BAY NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY  
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Final Meeting Minutes  
December 11, 2015  
Heritage Harbor, Monterey CA**

**VOTING MEMBERS**

Agriculture: Kirk Schmidt	CA State Parks: absent
AMBAG: Ed Smith	Conservation: Dr. Geoff Schester
At Large: Dan Haifley	Diving: Brian Nelson
At Large: Margaret (PJ) Webb	Education: Amity Sandage
At Large: absent	Commercial Fishing: Kathy Fosmark
Business & Industry: Jessica Grigsby	Harbors: absent
CA Coastal Commission: Tami Grove	Recreation: Gary Pezzi
CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife: Paul Reilly	Recreational Fishing: Richard Hughett
CA EPA: Maria de la Paz Carpio-Obeso	Research: Dr. John Hunt
CA Resources Agency: absent	Tourism: Michael Bekker

**NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

Channel Islands NMS: absent  
Cordell Banks NMS: absent  
Elkhorn Slough NERR: absent  
Greater Farallones NMS: Max Delaney  
Monterey Bay NMS: Paul Michel  
National Marine Fisheries Service: Dr. Steven Lindley  
U.S. Coast Guard: absent

Alternates present in audience:

Cynthia Matthews: At-Large  
Gary Hoffman: At-Large  
Capt. Jim Moser: Commercial Fishing  
Letise LaFeir: Conservation  
Barton Selby: Recreation  
Robert Chatham: Recreational Fishing  
Deb Wilson-Vandenberg: CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife  
Dawn Hayes: Monterey Bay NMS

**I. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND MEETING MINUTES**

Call to order 9:05 AM

Letise LaFeir welcomed MBNMS Advisory Council to the Monterey Bay Aquarium (MBA) location. MBA has been working with MBNMS and ONMS West Coast Region on policy issues, education outreach and various volunteer programs. Letise gave an overview of key focus topics for the Conservation and Science Division at MBA including ocean plastic pollution, climate change and seafood trade.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

Approval of October 23, 2015 DRAFT Meeting Minutes

**MOTION: Brian Nelson, Michael Bekker seconded.**

(Vote: 11 in favor, 0 opposed, 3 abstentions)

**II. STANDING ITEM: Superintendent's Report**

Paul reported on his experience attending the CINMS Advisory Council meeting. The meeting concluded with graduate students of the Bren School at UCSB conducting a mock SAC meeting. The students were required to reach out to their assigned SAC members and represent their views during the mock meeting. The topic addressed during the mock meeting was the use of drones. All students did a great job of mirroring their assigned seats' point of view. On the national level, Dan Basta, Director of ONMS, retired and John Armor is now the acting as Director of ONMS. There has been great effort in site nomination processes. MBNMS Advisory Council as the first advisory council in the nation to write a letter in support of initiating a site. Several nomination proposals have been declined and several are still in the works. The Chumash Heritage site nomination proposes a new sanctuary from MBNMS to CINMS along the San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties as well as offshore to include Santa Lucia Bank. A decision is yet to be made on the designation of Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary as a new sanctuary. It has been nominated as a designation but not approved.

**III. ACTION ITEM: Appointment to GFNMS Overflight Working Group**

PJ Webb introduced the motion to appoint MBNMS Advisory Council members to the GFNMS Overflight Working Group. PJ Webb, Paul Michel and Barton Selby gave some background information on the working group. The GFNMS Overflight Working Group is looking at the nesting seabirds and overflight in the Devil's Slide/Bird Rock area. GFNMS manages this area for MBNMS and would like a MBNMS Advisory Council liaison on the Overflight Working Group. PJ proposed the appointment of Kirk Schmidt and Barton Selby to this working group

**MOTION: Dan Haifley, Gary Pezzi seconded.**

(Vote: 14 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions)

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

Hannah Francis – The Otter Project

The Otter Project's MPA Watch Program has been collecting human use data the Sanctuary may find helpful to better manage resources.

Advisory Council Member Discussion

Q: Where is data shared?

A: Data are shared at [www.MPAwatch.org](http://www.MPAwatch.org)

Steve Shimick: The Otter Project

Vessel traffic recommendations to MBNMS:

1. Any large vessel transiting the Central Coast inside (shoreward) of the vessel traffic lanes should be contacted immediately and strongly advised of appropriate, agreed upon, procedures;

2. The vessel owner of any large vessel refusing or failing to comply with IMO or industry agreements should be immediately contacted by the US Coast Guard and National Marine Sanctuary and informed of their vessel's non-compliance;
3. The owner and insurance company of any large vessel repeatedly in noncompliance should be contacted immediately by the US Coast Guard and National Marine Sanctuary and informed of their vessel's non-compliance and potential liability;
4. As agreed to by all stakeholders in 1998, if non-compliance continues, the US Coast Guard and National Marine Sanctuary should re-convene the 1998 stakeholder group and work towards mandatory regulation

#### Advisory Council Member Discussion

This topic was suggested to be agendaized for a future SAC meeting. It was also recommended the MBNMS Advisory Council's US Coast Guard member should be present for this information item. Brian Nelson mentioned there are two cruise ships scheduled to come in to Monterey next year, both being in September. There are eight cruise ships scheduled to come in during 2017.

Q: Should this information be factored into the MBNMS Management Plan Review (MPR)?

A: Yes, this could be one of the issues addressed by the SAC for the MPR.

#### **V. INFORMATION ITEM: SAC Recruitment**

Nichole Rodriguez gave a presentation on the SAC member terms ending in February 2016. All members with terms ending in February 2016 will need to reapply if they would like to keep their seat. Recruitment is scheduled to begin on February 1<sup>st</sup> and run through February 29<sup>th</sup>. Because the SAC Charter was revised and approved earlier this year, all primary members and alternates are considered to be serving their first term. A nomination committee will be established among SAC members whose terms are not ending in February 2016.

#### Advisory Council Member Discussion

It was suggested to add an information item to the February 2016 SAC meeting to review the SAC member recruitment and appointment process. It was also suggested to add the ending year of each member's term (excluding state and federal representatives) to their name in Advisory Council communications.

#### **VI. ACTION ITEM: SAC College Seat**

Nichole Rodriguez gave a presentation on the proposed SAC College seat. This seat was added during the Charter revision earlier in 2015. MBNMS would like to begin recruitment at the same time as recruitment for all other SAC seats in February 2016. The College seat criteria presented was pulled from the revised Charter: currently attending a local institution of higher education, live in an area affected by the sanctuary, proven ability to effectively communicate with student peers, possess an interest in sanctuary resource protection and management, experience or knowledge regarding public uses and activities in the sanctuary.

Anna Michel, a current college student, also gave a presentation of her findings and recommended criteria. Her suggested criteria includes: relevant volunteer or internship experience, ability and willingness to communicate to both Sanctuary and constituent interests, demonstrated interest in marine/coastal/sanctuary issues and/or related science, ability to communicate with college constituencies, well-articulated reason for applying/statement of interest, stated commitment to attend and participate in SAC meetings. Applicants should also demonstrate membership in a campus

environmental club, serve in student government, or write for a campus paper, blog or similar activities.

#### Advisory Council Member Discussion

In the southern region of MBNMS, clubs on campuses have motivated students. That could be a good place to start outreach as well as through the MBNMS Research Activities Panel (RAP). There was a lengthy discussion regarding the term for the College seat. Some members felt the term should be one year while others felt it should be eighteen months or a maximum of three years as long as they are still enrolled at a higher institution. There was concern the criteria may limit many acceptable candidates. There was discussion regarding the possibility of staggering the primary and alternate terms so there would be a more experienced member to mentor the new member. However, one SAC member pointed out that would not follow the Charter. There was also discussion about providing some kind of incentive to applicants such as school credits. Dan Haifley moved to initiate recruitment for a College seat primary member and alternate for an eighteen month term.

**MOTION: Dan Haifley, Kirk Schmidt seconded.**

(Vote: 16 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions)

#### **VII. STANDING ITEM: Working Group Updates**

Conservation Working Group:

The Conservation Working Group (CWG) chairs are fostering the CWG to support the MPR. The CWG and the conservation community submitted comments via letter for scoping of the MPR. CWG wants to focus on key issues presented in the MPR. The CWG plans on convening as a standing group when needed.

Sanctuary Education Panel:

SAC Education Chairs Tucker Hirsch and Amity Sandage met with Dawn Hayes, Liz Love, Lisa Uttal and Carolyn Skinder to discuss the role of the SEP in supporting Sanctuary priorities. After gathering input and reviewing current SAC goals, the Sanctuary Education Panel (SEP) is ready to be revived. SEP is going to have a “relaunch” meeting in conjunction with the Monterey Bay Environmental Educators Network’s annual planning meeting in January (1/27 1:00-3:30 at MBARI). The SEP will move forward on a project basis. The first priority will be assisting with the Management Plan Review. The second priority will be projects that support the Sanctuary Exploration Center and MBNMS education staff. Amity and Tucker will work hard in the next month to reach out to former and potential SEP members to invite them to the January meeting where the SEP can be reintroduced.

Research Activities Panel:

- Curt Storlazzi hosted the November RAP meeting at the US Geological Survey (USGS) Coastal and Marine Science Center in Santa Cruz. Curt summarized a number of current USGS programs, including:
  - marine geologic hazards assessment;
  - sediment transport measurement;
  - the California Seafloor Mapping Program;
  - wave and seabed energetics modeling on the California continental shelf;

- future wave and wind energy projections;
- forecasting of El Nino-related episodic and seasonal variation in coastal morphology; and
- nearshore, beach and sea cliff surveys, including some very ingenious and inexpensive structure-from-motion (SfM) mapping tools.

These USGS programs are useful to MBNMS for SESA and ecosystem-based management, hazard assessment and response, baseline monitoring for climate change, and other habitat related management issues.

The RAP requested Curt's presentation to the SAC this afternoon because the MBNMS must authorize any emergency coastal armoring permits before they can be granted by counties and the Coastal Commission. With the potential for coastal erosion this year there may be a need for advanced coordination among permitting agencies.

- Pat Hart of USGS summarized sound source verification studies by USGS, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and other partners that measured acoustic signals and intensities from scientific survey equipment. These data on amplitude, frequency, duration and beam pattern can be used to by NOAA to evaluate the impacts of survey equipment relative to other ocean noise sources and animal sensitivities.
- Dawn Hayes gave an update on the Management Plan Review process.
- Steve Lonhart summarized 40 days at sea for research diving projects by sanctuary staff in 2015. Sanctuary divers were involved in a number of projects, listed below, and the SAC may be interested in getting an update.
  - Seastar Wasting Syndrome (SSWS) surveys
  - Annual surveys with the Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF) for invertebrates, fish, and kelp
  - Marine Protected Area surveys and training with the Partnership for Interdisciplinary Studies of Coastal Oceans (PISCO)
  - Invasive species surveys (with Smithsonian) for *Watersipora* and other high-profile species in harbors and areas outside of harbors
  - GFNMS expansion reconnaissance trip off R/V Fulmar
  - 3-D Catalin Seaview surveys to capture images of iconic locations in MBNMS to be stitched together by Catalin. (The XL Catalin Seaview Survey is a worldwide study of change in coral reef communities, working with some of the world's leading scientific institutions to communicate reef conditions to the global public. The program has seen a 40% loss of corals around the globe in the last 30 years.)
  - Support for Hopkins Marine Station marine science diving training, SSWS, science techniques, and gathering information for MBNMS
  - Working with UC Davis Ph.D. student Olivia Rhodes on fish behavior and diver-related disturbance inside and outside of MPAs. (This work received the Mia Tegner award at 2015 Western Society of Naturalists meeting).
- A more comprehensive summary of the RAP meeting has been provided by Erica Burton of the MBNMS research team, and is available on the MBNMS RAP and SAC webpages (<http://montereybay.noaa.gov/sac/rap/objectives.html>, <http://montereybay.noaa.gov/sac/advisory.html>)

**In other news from RAP members:**

- Fiorenza Micheli of Hopkins Marine Station shared some data and a recent paper entitled "Reconciling predator conservation with public safety" (Ferretti, Jorgensen, Chapple, De Leo, and Micheli. *Front Ecol Environ* 2015; doi:10.1890/150109). It documents a 60-year decrease in the risk of attack from white sharks off California. The paper discusses some potential drivers of this trend, including recovery of pinniped populations, redistribution of sharks near elephant seal colonies, and a decline in white shark abundance. A major statistical driver is the large increase in abalone divers, SCUBA divers, surfers, and swimmers, which decreases the number of attacks per person in the water.

Attack rates from their paper:

- 1 attack per 1.41 million abalone diving days
- 1 attack per 17 million surf days
- 1 attack per 136 million SCUBA diving days
- 1 attack per 741 million beach visits
- The Michelli lab is also researching the effects of multiple stressors (low dissolved oxygen and pH) on abalones, sea urchins and kelp-grazer interactions. Stay tuned for results.

#### Advisory Council Member Discussion

Q: Is there any new research on domoic acid effects?

A: UCSC has been monitoring domoic acid for many years.

Q: But they are not looking at the effect on humans, correct?

A: Correct, there has been no work on the effects on humans.

Recreation and Tourism Subcommittee:

The Recreation and Tourism Subcommittee (RATS) newsletter has been building momentum. RATS will be looking for feedback on the developing Friends of the Sanctuary (FOTS) program. FOTS' purpose is to build the "whale tail" brand. The goal is to have businesses want the "whale tail" and to promote business efforts that are better for the sanctuary and the environment. RATS will send out draft proposal of the FOTS application form to the SAC and would prefer written comments to help document recommendations. The FOTS application form is modeled after existing programs. This document will constantly be evolving to stay relevant.

#### Advisory Council Member Discussion

Q: Will a summary report be provided to the SAC?

A: Yes, FOTS forms will be available for discussion on a future SAC meeting agenda item.

Q: Has there been any discussion on these materials with businesses outside RATS?

A: Yes, it has been discussed with several businesses.

Q: Should we consider a one-time fee or donation for use of the sanctuary logo?

A: Other programs similar to this do not charge. It is free advertising. It is a desirable marketing tool.

Q: Have you considered creating a hashtag and Instagram page to promote FOTS?

A: There are legal issues regarding this.

A suggestion was made to change the name of "Friends of the Sanctuary" to something more eye catching/appealing. A suggestion was also made to change the name of the RATS group to Subcommittee of Tourism and Recreation (STAR).

### **VIII. ACTION ITEM: Advisory Council 2016 Calendar**

Nichole Rodriguez proposed the 2016 Advisory Council Calendar. She pointed out there will be a total of six meetings in 2016. The February 19<sup>th</sup> meeting will be in Watsonville. Topics include SAC recruitment process, Management Plan Review and Friends of the Sanctuary program. The April 21<sup>st</sup> meeting will be in Santa Cruz. The June 17<sup>th</sup> meeting will be in Pacific Grove or Carmel. The August 19<sup>th</sup> meeting will be in Moss Landing. The October 21<sup>st</sup> meeting will be in Cambria. The December 8<sup>th</sup> meeting will be in Monterey.

**MOTION: Dan Haifley, Gary Pezzi seconded.**

(Vote: 13 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions)

### **IX. INFORMATION ITEM: Upcoming El Niño Season**

Dr. Curt Storlazzi, USGS geological oceanographer, gave a presentation on El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) events, erosional processes and storm damage along central California. La Niña stages have been present from the late 1990s until now but it is now shifting to an El Niño event. During El Niños, waves are higher than normal, an average of three feet higher, during the late winter (February to March). These bigger waves are hitting unprotected beaches causing more beach erosion. In the late winter, wave direction and wind is out of the south. Coastal California population centers are mostly along south facing sections of coast. During La Niña events, big waves come from the northwest. These waves lose much of their energy due to refraction. During El Niño events, waves hit the southern facing coastline directly. When wind and waves are from the south/southwest, more water is being pushed higher up on the shoreline, agitating seabeds and carrying sand offshore, causing much more beach erosion. In the spring, beaches are able to recover from these events but seacliffs cannot recover.

#### Advisory Council Member Discussion

Q: What is a typical number of issued emergency coastal armoring permits?

A: California Coastal Commission is the primary agency to issue those emergency permits. They have a longer dataset with that information.

Q: Are there maps showing specific danger zones?

A: Basically the danger zones are wherever it happened before.

Q: What is your sense of the contributions of the sand mine operation's (Cemex) contribution to the coast's vulnerability to El Niño.

A: The southern part of Monterey Bay fairs much better during these events. However, removing sediment from the system removes a soft barrier.

Q: Are we primed on the Pacific Decadal Oscillation cycle for several large El Niño events in the years to come?

A: There is cyclicity but we are not sure. There is higher probability that we are trending towards a warm phase in the next 20-30 years leading to a higher probability for strong El Niño events.

Q: Many lives have been saved by NOAA weather buoys. Is there a website with historic data of El Niño events?

A: USGS publishes quite a bit. There are also many papers and data on the SIMON website.

Q: Are there any theories about how climate change will affect this El Niño?

A: Most climate models don't accurately produce ENSO cycles.

Q: Is the drought going to lead to more damage during this year's El Niño event?

A: It would suggest so but I can't speak about the trees/vegetation.

Q: When will we hit the height of El Niño season and when will we come out of it?

A: Typically the height is late January through February and ending in March. However, that is just the trend.

Q: Can you address the impacts on kelp forests during El Niño events? And does it affect kelp recover rate?

A: Stronger waves will rip off more holdfasts. Warm water and low nutrients will hinder kelp's ability to grow/recover.

Q: We had warm water all last winter and the year before, so what is your explanation of our extraordinarily warm water in the last 1.5 – 2 years? Are these separate events?

A: We had a mild El Niño last year with warmer than normal waters but it never came back to 0 (on the multivariate ENSO index). This year's bigger El Niño is building on the leftover from last year. This is also evident in historic records if you look at events between 1942-1944 and 1981-1984. Bigger El Niños build on smaller ones.

Q: Is there a website with historical data we can go to see what fish were being caught during these events?

A: CalCOFI or NMFS maybe.

Q: Can anything be done (soft armoring) on the beach to protect the seacliffs or are we really just looking at hard armoring and cliff retreat?

A: It boils down to being a cost effectiveness issue. Sand buffers can be used but if 50 meters of material is being eroded during one event it is not cost effective.

There was discussion regarding debris disposal during storm events. MBNMS is working with CalTrans on where debris can be temporarily stored specifically on the Big Sur portion of the highway. From a geological standpoint debris would end up in the sanctuary if the road wasn't there. It is a natural process. It was also mentioned the Cemex sand plant is removing 240,000 cubic yards of sand every year regardless of El Niño or La Niña events. Local beaches would have a larger soft barrier if sand mining was not occurring. Only 10,000 cubic yards are being dredged per year in Monterey by Monterey Harbor.

## **X. INFORMATION ITEM: Management Plan Review**

Dawn Hayes gave a presentation summarizing Management Plan Review scoping comments. Four public scoping meetings were held. A total of two hundred and twenty comments were submitted via the web, letter, email and scoping meetings. From the comments, twenty-six topical categories were covered identifying issues and those issues' suggested strategies and tools. Issue topics included: artificial reefs, beach nourishment, birds, boundary changes, climate change, coastal armoring, desalination, fisheries, management plan update, marine debris, mooring buoys, motorized personal watercrafts/jet-skis, Sanctuary Advisory Council, science & monitoring, Sanctuary Ecological Significant Areas, water quality protection, wildlife disturbance, citizen science programming, education programming, regulatory changes, regulation clarifications. Comments will be reviewed by MBNMS staff and the advisory council. Comments will be incorporated into action plan development, tabled or identified as an emerging issue, or not further considered. MBNMS staff will prioritize the issue topics requiring working group or advisory council workshops. The advisory council will provide input on MBNMS staff recommendations.

### Advisory Council Member Discussion

Q: Does the volume of comments on each of these topics matter when prioritizing?

A: Some comments were solicited by user groups and some were not. The number of comments per issue/topic does not matter in terms of recording the input.



Q: Who will be prioritizing the topics?

A: MBNMS staff will prioritize the comments first.

Q: Comments from cities, Chambers, AMBAG, etc. are also included in the scoping report?

A: Yes.

Q: What is the difference between tabling a topic and not addressing a topic?

A: Tabling a topic is recognizing an emerging issue and it's relevancy but we may not be able to address it right now. Not addressing a topic is knowing it's off the table completely.

Q: Can SAC come up with additional issues?

A: Yes, especially strategies and tools to address these issues.

Q: Will you create non-standing working groups?

A: Yes.

Q: Some topics will lead to working groups, some to workshops, and some will be addressed by staff?

A: Yes, all issues will be identified to the SAC, including ones not requiring a working group or workshop.

Q: In prioritizing issues in general, it would be useful to have the SAC understand the decision making criteria. How will the staff be prioritizing?

A: We do not have the rubric yet. We are identifying the big topics we need input on.

Q: When will staff prioritization be complete?

A: At least two weeks prior to the February SAC meeting. We can create the rubric first and send it out to SAC for review.

Q: Do we know what kind of budget will be available?

A: There is a current budget of 2.7-2.8 million dollars per year for all MBNMS operations.

Discussion followed regarding the scoping report including: clarification of comment being for or against an issue, communication with constituents, value of informed vs. uninformed comments.

#### **XI. STANDING ITEM: Member Announcements**

Barton Selby: After hearing comments today and from attending the GFNMS Overflight Working Group meeting, we, as an advisory council, have work to do.

Gary Hoffman: no new announcements.

Deb Wilson-Vandenberg: no new announcements.

Amity: no new announcements.

Rich Hughett: was contacted a month ago by students from CSUMB doing a survey on human uses in the sanctuary. He has asked to get results when the survey is completed. The students will hold a meeting on December 18<sup>th</sup> to discuss the results. This could be valuable information depending on how far reaching the survey is. He will inform them the SAC will be recruiting for the College seat.

Monterey County Fish and Game Commission is requesting applications for grants supporting various projects on fisheries, wildlife and youth activities. Applications are available from Monterey County Parks Department and must be submitted by January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

#### Advisory Council Member Discussion

Q: What is the dollar range for the grants?

Rich H: Up to \$12,000

John Hunt: There are three big long term events happening in Santa Cruz County: the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail, community based energy distribution system, creating a new open space district. The Santa Cruz portion of Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail extends thirty-two miles from Davenport to Pajaro. One quarter of the trail (Davenport to Santa Cruz) is funded and work will be starting on that soon. Land Trust of Santa Cruz County is raising funds for the rest of the trail. There will probably be a tax on the ballot in June partially to come up with seed money to finish trail along the Santa Cruz County part of the trail. A commuter passenger rail may be coming up in the next twenty years.

#### Advisory Council Member Discussion

Q: Would the tax be statewide?

A: I think it would be a local sales tax.

Q: How much of trail can be used now?

A: There's a rail line along the entire length that was purchased 40 years ago from either Iowa Pacific or Union Pacific. The county owns the rail line. The hiking trail is adjacent to that rail.

Jessica Grigsby: Jessica has had a difficult time increasing constituents. She recently started going to Event Santa Cruz to get together with other young business owners. It's a fun forum. She will be speaking at their next meeting next month. She will use her time to plug her SAC seat to get more input from constituents.

Maria de la Paz Carpio-Obeso: Mariela has been working with statewide trash amendments. The amendments were adopted by the board in April 7, 2015 and approved by the Office of Administration and Law on Dec 2, 2015. They are now waiting for US EPA approval. That approval will make it a statewide trash policy. Desalination amendments to the Ocean Plan were adopted May 6, 2015 and they are expecting approval from the Office of Administrative Law by mid-January. Once the amendments are approved and effective, the challenge will be implementation of the amendments. She is in the beginning stages of development of sediment quality objectives and working with advisory committees. Port of Long Beach and Port of Los Angeles are pilot studies to demonstrate models to get more effective objectives. End result will probably be in 2017.

Paul Reilly:

#### Domoic Acid and Crab Fishery Closures

The recreational and commercial fisheries for Dungeness crab and rock crab remain closed in California from north of Ventura County to the Oregon border due to domoic acid accumulation in the viscera and muscle tissue. Testing continues for Dungeness crab from Crescent City to Morro Bay, with the southerly port areas starting to clean up, but persistent levels remain above the alert level of 30 ppm in northern California. Testing in early December showed that from 10 to 40% of crabs were above the alert level in Crescent City, Bodega Bay, and Half Moon Bay. Testing of rock crab from Monterey to Santa Barbara and the northern Channel Islands shows high levels of domoic acid persisting in those areas as well. The Department of Public Health protocols require 2 weeks of clean samples before considering reopening these fisheries. The Fish and Game Commission has the authority to open and close the recreational fisheries and CDFW Director Bonham has the authority to open and close the commercial fishery.

### Northern Anchovy Fishery Management

The Pacific Fishery Management Council discussed anchovy issues at its November 2015 meeting (anchovy discussed on November 15-16). The Council received public comment expressing concerns with the abundance of the anchovy off of the California coast. After reviewing available information on anchovy abundance and distribution, in part presented by the Southwest Fishery Science Center, it did not recommend interim management measures be implemented at this time, pending results from a stock assessment. The Council approved moving ahead with a stock assessment for the central subpopulation of northern anchovy in late 2016, following a workshop in the spring to consider assessment approaches. The Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team was also tasked with developing alternative management structures for northern anchovy for the September 2016 PFMC meeting. As of mid-November, the commercial anchovy fishery re-opened for human use because levels of domoic acid had been determined to be safe.

### Groundfish Management

CDFW will host public meetings regarding groundfish management for 2017-2018. Attendees will hear an overview of recent groundfish management and science developments and then participate in focused stakeholder discussions on potential changes to recreational and commercial fishery management measures for 2017 and 2018. Several new groundfish stock assessments conducted in 2015 show some previously overfished stocks have been restored, possibly allowing for increased fishing opportunities.

Staff will interact with participants about their preferences for various management measures, including season dates, potential changes to Rockfish Conservation Areas and bag limits – including the possibility of retaining canary rockfish. CDFW is also seeking input on strategies to best minimize interactions with cowcod and yelloweye rockfish, which remain overfished. Groundfish fishing regulations are developed through a collaborative regulatory process involving the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC), the National Marine Fisheries Service, CDFW, other West Coast states, and the California Fish and Game Commission.

The meetings are scheduled from 5 to 8:30 p.m. at the following dates/locations:

Sausalito: Dec. 9, 2015  
Bay Model Visitor Center  
2100 Bridgeway, Sausalito, CA 94965

Monterey: Jan. 6, 2016  
California Fish and Wildlife Office  
20 Lower Ragsdale Drive, Suite 100, Monterey, CA 93940

Los Alamitos: Jan. 7, 2016  
California Fish and Wildlife Office  
4665 Lampson Avenue, Suite C, Los Alamitos, CA 90720

### Advisory Council Member Discussion

Q: what is the anchovy season?

A: anchovy season runs Jan – Dec

Kathy Fosmark: With the El Niño along our coast, there was a sighting of a venomous sea snake in Ventura. It is one of the top 10 most venomous sea snakes and is indigenous to Costa Rica and

coastline of central America. It hasn't been seen this far north in 30 years. Also, it will be at least 4 more weeks before crab fishermen are allowed to deploy their pots.

Paul M: working with Whale Fest people for January 23-24. Looking for venue still but have great speakers lined up.

PJ Webb:

- A local business owner has been recognized for his outstanding stewardship of Sanctuary resources and wildlife. Cubby Cashen, who operates Sea for Yourself Kayaks in the cove at the William R. Hearst Memorial Beach has provided exceptional outreach and education for the numerous visitors to the sanctuary. He teaches people to keep their distance from the wildlife they may encounter in the ocean. He is the eyes and ears for the Sanctuary on the water for over 7 years.
- It is holiday season in the Sanctuary Southern Region
- Elephant Seal Ambassadors – In preparation for the elephant seal season, California State Parks and The Sanctuary are training volunteers tomorrow to assist in outreach and education to mitigate human-seal interactions. This is the second year of this program in response to large male e seals hauling out on a very popular and populated beach at San Simeon cove.
- Piedras Blancas Northern elephant seal rookery - Elephant seal season is here! Huge adult males, as large as 15 feet in length, come to the pupping and breeding areas, located 8 miles north of San Simeon. Females arrive and give birth to pups in December and January. Live action webcam can be seen at: <http://www.elephantseal.org/Rookery/livecam.html>
- Coastal Discovery Center - While you are visiting the elephant seal rookery, stop at the Sanctuary's Coastal Discovery Center, just across the highway from Hearst Castle at Hearst State Beach. Special extended holiday hours - open 11-5 every day during the week of Christmas except for Christmas Day.  
Come for fun family activities: scavenger hunt in the park, Junior Ranger guides, create a "wish upon a star" starfish, use binoculars to watch wildlife from the pier. Regular December hours are Saturday and Sunday from 11-5.
- Hearst Castle – Across the street from the Discovery Center, the Castle is specially decorated for the holidays with handmade garlands, poinsettias, two 18 foot Christmas trees and period ornaments. Special holiday tours are available.

Gary Pezzi: O'Neill Coldwater Classic just occurred in Santa Cruz. In other news, he received a report two days ago that a surfer reported seeing an orca breach with a dolphin in its mouth followed by two white sharks. This occurred eighty yards out off Four Mile Beach.

Mike Bekker: Tourism is up in Cannery Row. Face recognition equipment and software is working really well. The software is able to count faces on four different streets whether a person is walking towards or away from cameras. It is able to give a per hour count. The software has counted over 4.3 million faces in six months. On a separate topic, homeless residents are becoming an issue. He suggested the sanctuary consider providing assistance to homeless people in and in return they can volunteer for the sanctuary by providing services such as beach cleanups. For the MBNMS Advisory Council College seat, he suggested the sanctuary look into using the MBNMS Foundation to provide scholarship money as incentive for students to apply for the seat. The California Coastal Commission recently met regarding desalination intake lines. Also, there is a broker now on site at American Tin Cannery. A Leeds eco-tourism hotel may be going in after all issues are resolved.

Mike mentioned the public telescopes on Steinbeck Plaza make a considerable amount of money and suggested adding more telescopes to help fund Team Ocean. Finally, a roundabout will be constructed on at the intersection of Highway 1 and Highway 68 at the Pebble Beach entrance so he advised to plan commuting accordingly.

Ed Smith: Ed knows of a crab/rockcod fisherman on Wharf #2 who has experienced a \$25,000 loss in the month of November due to the Dungeness crab fishery closure. He hopes there will be new testing on domoic acid in crabs in the next 2-3 weeks. In regards to the homeless issue, food and clothing drives are very active in Monterey County this time of year. Fishermen's Wharf has hired security to assist with educating travelers (homeless) interfering with tourists to inform them the area is state property. Conference center construction started on Del Monte Boulevard. It is a fifty-eight million dollar project and will be under construction for 1 year. It is the largest capital improvement project since 1967 when tunnel was built.

Geoff Shester: Several pilot projects have been initiated to help with the issue of increasing whale entanglements. These projects are delayed due to the crab fishery closure. He suggested whale entanglement be considered as an informational agenda item in the future. NMFS put out a proposed rule to deal with quotas for northern anchovy and other coastal pelagic species. Comment period for this proposed rule ends December 21st. There is a new type of fishing gear being used in the swordfish fishery, deep-set buoy gear. It is being used commercially and primarily off southern California. This gear type has shown promise to be profitable and a low bycatch alternative to other gear types. NMFS is considering exempted fishing permits to allow pelagic longlines in the US west coast as well as using drift gillnet in the Pacific leatherback conservation area. Oceana is supporting a herring festival in Sausalito January 31<sup>st</sup>. It is a way to promote to the public to eat local sustainable seafood. He is learning more about the sanctuary's education branch through the Ocean Guardian program at his child's school. It has been amazing to see and experience how sanctuary resources are applied to education.

Kirk Schmidt: El Niño will impact the land as much as it does the sea. Most farmers are prepared for winter but there are some outliers. Pajaro River and Salinas River both flooded during the last large El Niño event. When the Salinas River last flooded, it had been maintained annually. It has now been seven years since it was last maintained. This will result in large quantities of fresh sediment in the bay if the river floods. Much farm land will be included in that sediment.

Brian Nelson:

- Have been working on and answering individual questions email and telephone from constituents in regard to the Management Plan review.
- Met with Monterey Bay Diving (MBD) on Crab Pot removal program. Below comments from MBD for council report, Ask for NGO's help and support:

Monterey Bay Diving (MBD) has been working on acquiring funding to help with a project we started 1 1/2 years ago. This project is to locate with a Side Scan Sonar derelict crab pots and fishing gear which has been an entanglement hazard for marine life. Once the pots have been located and we get the GPS coordinates for them, MBD as well as other volunteer commercial boaters can grapple hook the pots and get them out of the water.

In the past, MBD has looked down several different avenues for funding and each time we have found road blocks. The main road block we have faced is that MBD is a for

profit organization and has been advised by our tax accountant to stay away from collecting any kind of donations and or grants. Due to this fact MBD has taken this project into our own hands and by our own funding. Currently, in order to get ready for this project MBD has purchased a 200 meter long cable so the Side Scan Sonar can reach the required depths. We have built an A-frame capable of being fitted to nearly any vessel larger than 30 feet in length. In addition we have purchased reels and winches to make this all run smoothly.

- Finished up and sent out diver eNewsletter.
- SAC representative invited and attended Alacosta Dive Club meeting in Orinda on December 7, 2015 – Full presentation and answered questions on management plan process.
- Scheduled for Diver Dans Dive Club in Santa Clara on January 20th for SAC Representative Presentation.
- The dive community is looking for support from the Sanctuary Management Staff to look seriously at the artificial reef and buoy programs.

Robert Chatham: no new announcements but asked for Paul Michel's feedback on the Sanctuary Classic.

Paul Michel: During the Sanctuary Classic the past three years, a fishing photography contest was held. There may not be funding this year to do the contest. There are plans brewing to have a more homegrown, locally focused contest in 2016.

## **XII. ADJOURN**

SAC recruitment will open on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 and will close February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

Next meeting February 19<sup>th</sup> in Watsonville  
Adjourn at 4:35PM