



Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Sanctuary Council Diver Newsletter

Diver
August 2016

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Dear MBNMS,

The Management Plan Review continues. Coming up is an important topic at the next Sanctuary Advisory Council meeting. Dawn Hayes our Deputy Superintendent attended a meeting on the East Coast discussing and gathering information on artificial reefs. She will be presenting the information on August 19th at the SAC meeting. I hope divers interested in the process may be able to attend. The presentation is not an action item, more so part of the information gathering process. The important next step is working with the State Of California on defining and implementing an artificial reef approval process.

As always please feel free to contact Phil or myself if you would like a MBNMS presentation at your dive club or store, also please share this newsletter with other divers and help build our communication connections. Think good thoughts as Phil and I continue to work on the Sanctuary Management Plan for the diving community.

Brian and Phil

Prepared by Brian and Phil, Sanctuary Advisory Council Diving Representatives

The Rockfish Files

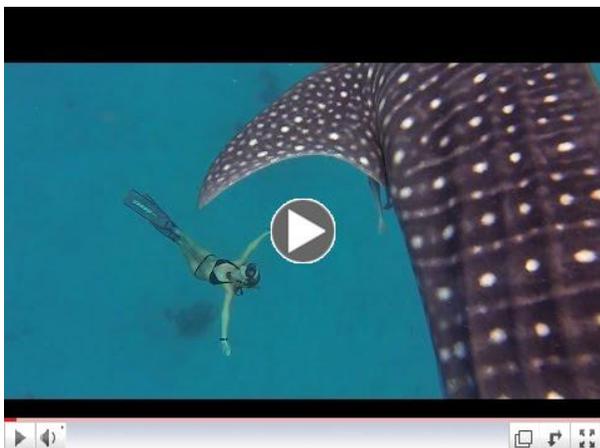
by Capt. Phil

I wanted to write a little something about my recent visits to Point Arena as well as Fort Bragg. I was there as diving support for Reefcheck. I also took some time to do a little diving on my own. I have been diving in the Sonoma and Mendocino for many years as I am sure many of you have. Last season and this season have marked a major change in the north coast environment. Urchins have covered the reefs for over one hundred miles of the north coast. The small purple urchins (*Strongylocentrotus purpuratus*) eat kelp if it is hungry and at this time they have eaten every bit of it, leaving none.



The abalones are desperately looking for food. They have resorted to eating red algae on the backs of their fellow mollusks. Because otters have been removed from the north coast for so long, people have been the keystone species there, removing urchins commercially and abalone recreationally. The problem is we are not doing a good job. The urchins are not commercially viable at present, due to size, and we restrict the take of abalone (unless you are a poaching flash mob at low tide) which I have seen is now doing a fabulous job restoring balance on the reef by taking everything in sight. There is a total system collapse up north that has not yet hit rock bottom. Will kelp grow back? Nope, not until the urchin population is reduced. Will the abalone die? Maybe, I don't know how long they can hold out. Will the urchins eat themselves out of existence?

Describing How We Feel



This video is a GoPro Award Winner, and for good reason. Four years ago we ventured to the [Holbox](#), Mexico to swim with the Whale Sharks. We took some video and pictures but none of them described our Free Dive experience like this video does. We went by boat about 30 miles out to only be sitting in 35 feet of water and free dove with these gentle giants for over an hour. The video brings back those special moments.

Earth Is Blue Magazine Launched



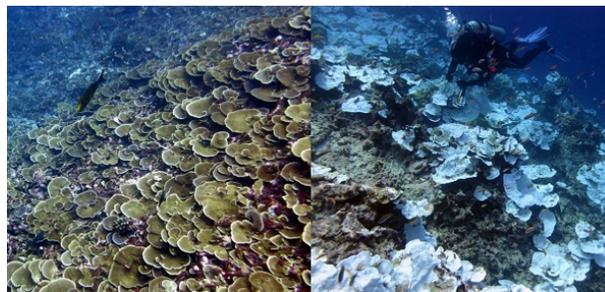
The Headquarters Education & Outreach Division has launched the inaugural issue of Earth Is Blue: The Magazine of the National Marine Sanctuaries. Created in partnership with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, this yearly 80-page magazine uses vivid imagery and engaging articles to showcase the diversity of amazing marine life within national marine sanctuaries and marine national monuments and to tell stories about the people who depend on them. The print version of the magazine was launched at Capitol Hill Ocean Week 2016, while the online version went live on Friday, June 24th. Earth Is Blue: The Magazine brings the Earth Is Blue campaign to a new medium and new audiences. This magazine will enable us to emphasize the importance of marine protected areas to sanctuary visitors, Congressional staff, and Foundation donors alike. Earth Is Blue magazine on the web: [EARTHISBLUE](#)

MBNMS Divers Support NMFS Research

I don't know. I must say that I am happy to be back in a healthy kelp forest with otters that know how to treat an urchin. We as a society choose the environment we work and live within, in MBNMS we have a great balance. A vibrant kelp forest, The great whales and Well managed fish stocks. But remember this is a choice. It requires work

Capt. Phil

Warming Ocean Waters in Pacific Ocean turn Coral Gardens into a Graveyard



New findings show that approximately 95 percent of the coral colonies at Jarvis Island in the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument have died following a massive coral bleaching event. Intense El Niño causes waters to become extremely warm, resulting in coral bleaching. A survey conducted by scientists from NOAA's Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center and partners shows that coral colonies that looked healthy and vibrant a year ago are now dead and dying, due to long periods of being bathed in warmer than normal waters. Scientists found a bit of good news-they sighted for the first time ever a colony of coral species (*Acropora retusa*) at Jarvis Island that is listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Also, a few of the more resilient corals also survived the El Niño event. Scientists in this joint effort between NOAA Fisheries, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and Rutgers University are hopeful that some of the living corals will recover due to the remote location, gradually cooling waters and the biological richness of the area.

[More](#)

Celebrate Shark Week with NOAA Fisheries



Grab your fins, everyone. It's that time of year again: Shark Week. NOAA Fisheries is showcasing shark-tastic science, videos and myth-busting facts all week long on the

web and our social media channels. Grab your fill of shark videos and learn more about how the United States is leading the way to conserve and protect these top ocean predators that are an integral part of healthy ecosystems. Be sure to also follow NOAA Fisheries on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram for great shark photos, features and more. We're using hashtags #SharkWeek and #SharkWeekNOAA.



MBNMS and CBNMS provided diver support to NMFS on June 22 and 23 for tests of an underwater photo/sonar observing platform that will aid studies of remote vehicle impacts on fish at depth. Divers

helped install and manipulate targets and scales in a 35-foot test tank at the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute for calibration tests of the camera and sonar equipment. Assistance projects such as this improve overall awareness of current advances in marine science and help staff anticipate emerging technologies and attendant issues that may impact future sanctuary management.

RESOURCE PROTECTION Bulk Freighter Grounding Near-Miss



On Friday, May 20, the 176-meter bulk cargo vessel ULTRA LASCAR lost power around 1150 hrs (PDT) just after entering the

precautionary area on final approach to San Francisco Bay from the south. The Singapore flagged vessel (36,780 DWT) was about 8 nm west of the shoreline of Daly City when it lost power and began drifting eastward at about 1.2 kts. It was carrying 3,960 barrels of fuel oil and several thousand tons of salt. The Coast Guard notified MBNMS shortly thereafter to alert both MBNMS and GFNMS of a potential for grounding. MBNMS put it's damage assessment team on stand-by and alerted GFNMS and HQ of the incident. NOAA ORR developed a drift analysis for a potential oil spill at the shoreline in the event the vessel were to run aground along its drift trajectory. MBNMS alerted marine research partners that in-water instruments could potentially be impacted by the emergency and that the opportunity existed to collect or retrieve baseline data prior to any potential incident. At approximately 1345 hrs (PDT), the Coast Guard ordered the ULTRA LASCAR to drop its anchor. Fifteen minutes later, the anchor took hold and stopped the vessel's eastward drift 3 nm from shore [MORE](#)

MBNMS SAC REPRESENTATIVES

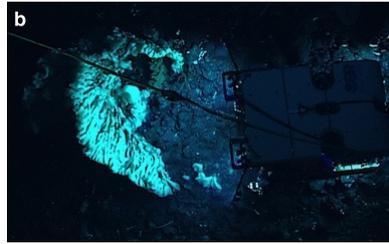
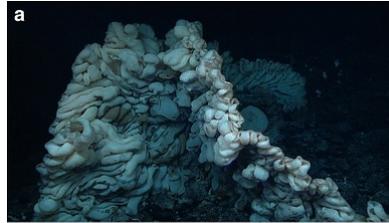
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Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council is your voice to the Sanctuary Management Staff.

[More](#)

PMNM Describes Largest Known Sponge in the World Discovered in PMNM



On May 24, the peer-reviewed scientific journal Marine Biodiversity published an article describing the largest known sponge in the world, discovered during an expedition last summer to explore some of the deepest areas of PMNM aboard the NOAA ship Okeanos Explorer. The massive sponge was captured on high-definition video at a

depth of 7,000 feet during a remotely operated vehicle dive inside PMNM. The sponge was close to 12 feet long and 7 feet wide, comparable in size to a minivan. It is the largest sponge known to date. The article, titled "The largest sponge in the world?" was authored by PMNM Research Specialist Daniel Wagner and Chris Kelley from the University of Hawai'i, and can be accessed online [MORE](#)

Sports Fest 2016 - September



The Monterey Beach SportsFest on September 24-25th is a two-day festival celebrating the ocean lifestyle on Monterey's Del Monte Beach, nestled between downtown Monterey and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Participants and spectators will be inspired to care for the ocean as they directly connect to it through the athletic events in and adjacent to the sea, and through interaction with the educational and conservation resources available at our two-day "Healthy People, Healthy Oceans" Expo.

Chamber Fund Rasing

If you have questions or input please contact your local representative

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Pacific Grove Hyperbaric Chamber
Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary has become a premier diving destination, offering some of the most beautiful and pristine diving areas in the country. The City of Pacific Grove, on the Monterey Peninsula, has provided medical treatment to injured divers with its hyperbaric chamber since 1963. While the City of Pacific Grove provides for many of the chamber's operation needs, the diver donations support the continued ongoing operations that offset needed repairs that occur from time to time. Please consider a donation to help this much needed, important resource for the local dive community.

[Donate to the Pacific Grove Hyperbaric Chamber Fund](#)



[Donate Now!](#)

Donations for the chamber can be made online using a credit card or a PayPal account. The credit card transaction will be securely handled by PayPal and you do not need a PayPal account to make a credit card donation. At the end of the credit card transaction you will be presented with an option to print out a receipt for your donation.

Your tax-deductible donation to the Pacific Grove Hyperbaric Chamber Fund will go directly towards the reopening of the facility and its operations.

Payment can also be made by check mailed to:

Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation
99 Pacific Street, Suite 455 E
Monterey, CA 93940

If you have any questions, please email info@mbnmsf.org

Prepared by Brian and Phil, Sanctuary Advisory Council Diving Representatives

Know your Sanctuary

**Monterey Bay National
Marine Sanctuary**

Harbors

Moss Landing Harbor
Ms. Linda McIntyre - Alternate - (831) 633-5417
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Pillar Point Harbor
VACANT

Monterey Harbor
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Santa Cruz Harbor
Ms. Lisa Ekers - Alternate -
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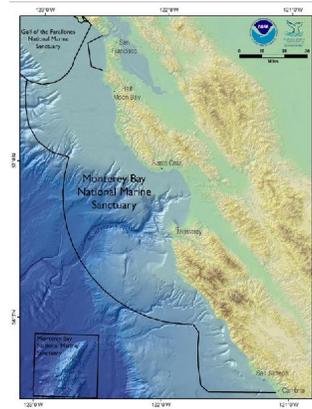
There are additional non-voting and supporting members of the Advisory Council. Go to [Advisory Council Complete listing and Information](#)

2016 SAC Meeting Schedule

The 2016 SAC meeting schedule

August 19 - Moss Landing
October 21 - Cambria
December 8 - Monterey

For more information go to [2016 Sanctuary Advisory Council Meeting dates and Information](#)



Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) is a Federally protected marine area offshore of California's central coast. Stretching from Marin to Cambria, the MBNMS encompasses a shoreline **length of 276 miles and 6,094** square miles of ocean. Supporting one of the world's most diverse marine ecosystems, it is home to numerous mammals, seabirds, fishes, invertebrates and plants in a remarkably productive coastal environment. MBNMS was established for the purpose of resource protection, research, education, and public use of this national treasure. MBNMS is part of a system of 13 National Marine Sanctuaries and one marine national monument, administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Sincerely,

Brian and Phil

MBNMS Advisory Council
Monterey Bay NMS Advisory Council

LINKS

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[Marine Mammal Center - Moss Landing](#)

[Council Meeting Agendas](#)

[Council Meeting Minutes](#)



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