



## Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Diver Newsletter

Diver  
April 2017  
Series III

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Dear MBNMS,

Fellow divers thank you for tolerating quite a few emails regarding artificial reefs recently. The listening sessions being organized by California Fish and Wildlife are a series of public meetings whereas members of the public (stakeholders) can come and hear what is going on and push out ideas to the State. In the current state of affairs it appears the Federal Government is ahead of California in the process. California currently has 24 artificial reefs comprised mostly of items other than ships and located in Southern California. [SEE CURRENT REEFS](#) With the States recent personnel changes and paper information in storage they seemed to put up a defense of no funding for the permitting process, not enough people, and not enough resources, these claims despite Ships to Reef and the dive community having offered citizen science assistance in the gathering of data. It is critically important that the State officials see and hear your individual voices. Public support is essential in overcoming this hurdle. Please either attend the remaining meetings, the webinar they have proposed, or write an email or letter to:

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

### Diver Representatives

Your Diver Representatives on the SAC

Nominations for sanctuary advisory council board seats were reviewed and approved for the April council meeting. The Diving Industry seat will be represented for the next three years by Brian Nelson (primary) and Keith Rootsart (alternate).

Phil Sammet and Brian Nelson have been on the board for 6 years and have been instrumental in reaching out to the diving constituency and listening to their concerns. They have spoken at numerous dive clubs and were staunch advocates for the diving community at advisory council meetings.

Brian also serves on the executive board for the council and assists other stakeholder groups with their outreach efforts.

Keith Rootsart is new to the board but is not new to the diving community. While attending San Jose State University he learned to dive in Monterey Bay in 1986 and has seen a lot of changes over the years. He has held various seats on the Monterey Bay Sea Otters Dive Club board of directors. Keith is a PADI Dive Master who regularly helps instructors teach and he crews, guides and leads dives on the local dive boats. He is a trainer for Reef Check California and completes lots of volunteer surveys in Carmel, Monterey Bay, Sonoma and along the Big Sur Coast. Keith is looking forward to the challenge of this larger board and being a conduit for the diving community to the ocean they enjoy. He is very excited about the artificial reef project and will work to make it awesome and epic.

Much thanks to Captain Phil Sammet for 6 years of service on the MBNMS advisory council. His vast legendary experience and wisdom in the formative years of the council have been an invaluable guiding force for the diving community as competing forces vie for access and use of the sanctuary. Phil is now

## Public Listening and Informational Meetings Baseline Assessment for Artificial Reefs in California

### Meeting Dates and Locations:

**Sacramento – April 5, 2017**  
2 – 5 p.m.

Arden-Dimick Library  
891 Watt Ave., Sacramento, CA 95864

**Los Alamitos – April 25, 2017**  
8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

CDFW Los Alamitos office  
4665 Lampson Ave., Los Alamitos, CA 90720

**Oxnard – May 4, 2017**  
8:30 – 11:30 a.m.\*\*

Channel Islands Yacht Club  
4100 Harbor Blvd., Oxnard, CA 93035

\*\*Date Correction: Earlier flyers distributed out had an incorrect date for the Oxnard location.

Note: CDFW plans to stream the Los Alamitos meeting online. Webinar meeting information will be posted at a later date; stay tuned to the Marine Management News blogsite for updates.

Webinar information can be obtained by emailing

[Becky.Ota@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:Becky.Ota@wildlife.ca.gov)

Once again, Thank you for either attending in person or on the webinar for the Los Alamitos meeting. Your attendance at these meetings will help keep the ball rolling. Loose lips sink ships.

### Overview Presentation

Warm Regards,

Brian, Phil, and Keith

Prepared by Brian, Phil, and Keith  
Sanctuary Advisory Council Diving Representatives

## New information about MBNMS dive program



Unit Diving Supervisor Dr. Steve Lonhart recently conducted semi-annual training for NOAA divers. Lonhart supervises several divers from various sanctuary operating units, as well as those of local National Marine Fisheries Groups. In total, 10 divers are part of Lonhart's dive unit, most of whom are based in Monterey, CA.

Divers completed annual training elements required by the NOAA Dive Program, including classroom instruction for an entire day and practicing open water skills at the Breakwater in Monterey on a second day. Divers conducted 186 on-duty dives in CY 2016. This represents the lowest number of annual dives in the last 10 years, despite an increase in the overall number of divers.

Ongoing interest by university students and prospective volunteer divers spurred the development of a flow chart that answers the question "How do I become a NOAA diver?" This chart serves as a decision tree to determine if an existing

focusing on the seemingly endless placement of (plastics) golf balls along our pristine coastline. He will be missed on the council as he continues his ocean adventures.

Written by the SAC Diver Representatives

## Annual San Francisco International Ocean Film Festival

From March 9 through 12, 2017 the 14th Annual San Francisco International Ocean Film Festival, co-founded by the Farallones sanctuary and sponsored in part by NOAA and the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, was a standout success, drawing 3,865 participants in all. The main festival featured independent films, four panel discussions, and a film competition, bringing together 3,280 members of the public, scientists and ocean communicators. An additional 585 students attended the free student festival. Farallones staff took part in panel discussions, handled Q&A on the USS Conestoga shipwreck portrayed in the film, "Three Miles from Safety." Sylvia Earle spoke on marine protected areas - Hope Spots, and women in research. The films covered ocean exploration, sports, climate change issues, and sustainability



## Reef Check Training



Reef Check California is looking for experienced divers to train to be citizen scientists. RCCA is the only volunteer citizen scientist program to monitor the effectiveness of the California State Marine Protected Areas for the Department of Fish and Wildlife to manage nearshore fisheries. Surveys are conducted during the summer and signups for trainings are occurring now at locations from Fort Bragg to San Diego. To join this group of concerned eco-divers: [2017 Schedule](#)

## Two New Sponge Species from Sunken Ship

Conservation Science staff are working with

diver can become a NOAA diver, and how best to achieve that goal.

Major diving projects for CY2017 include MPA monitoring, SVX 360 image captures, and working dives focused on ship husbandry. Maintaining an active dive unit requires annual training on safe diving practices, thereby making our NOAA divers safer and more effective while carrying out their duties.

MORE INFORMATION

## A NOAA Research Vessel Returns After World Wide Deployment

NOAA research ship returns to Charleston home port after worldwide deployment On Saturday, March 25th , NOAA's largest oceanographic research vessel, NOAA Ship Ronald H. Brown, returned to its Charleston, S.C., home port after a 1,347-day deployment - the longest of any NOAA ship ever. During its multiyear voyage, the ship traveled nearly 130,000 miles as it conducted

NOAA Ship Ronald H. Brown



scientific research and serviced buoys that collect a wide variety of environmental data. For full story:

## Sea Urchins Help Combat Invasive Algae



Can tiny sea urchins save a Hawaiian coral reef? In Oahu's Kaneohe Bay, with a little help from scientists, it appears they can. Kaneohe Bay has been plagued for decades by two species of invasive algae that blanket the native coral reefs,

blocking the sun. NOAA and partners developed two methods to destroy the invaders, vacuuming them up, and releasing hungry native sea urchins to munch them away.

Since the urchin program started in 2011, hundreds of thousands of baby Hawaiian collector sea urchins (*Tripneustes gratilla*) have been released into targeted areas of the bay to gorge on the algae invaders. Although native to the bay, the collector sea urchin population was too low to battle the invasive algae. Using funds from a ship grounding a decade earlier, officials developed a sea urchin hatchery...

FULL STORY

## Desalination Project Details

MBNMS staff continued outreach efforts on the release of the CalAm Draft EIR/EIS and met with City of Marina staff to discuss the document in more detail. The City of Marina is the location for the proposed project and the community has

staff from California Academy of Sciences, in San Francisco and the Royal British Columbia Museum (RBCM) in Victoria to complete the taxonomy describing two new species of sponges (a yellow Picasso sponge, *Staurocalyptus* n. sp. and a white vase sponge, *Hyalascus* n. sp.), which were discovered in 2016 living on the USS Independence.

A third species of sponge, *Farrea aculeata* (Schulze), also found on the USS Independence, was only previously known to occur north of California. Dr. Henry Rieswig from (RBCM) is currently performing the measurements and imaging to describe the two new sponge species, and report the range extension and update the taxonomy of *Farrea aculeata*, since it was only described once, in 1899.



USS Independence (CVL-22) was scuttled near the Farallon Islands in 1951 after being a target for atomic bomb testing and contained barrels of radioactive waste.

## 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, diver donations support operations and offset needed repairs that occur from time to time. Please consider a donation to help this much needed, important resource for the dive community that enjoy the sanctuary.

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





[Council Meeting Agendas](#)

[Council Meeting Minutes](#)



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 two marine national monuments, administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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