MBNMS Research Activity Panel
Meeting Summary
September 11, 2026

Host: Brooke Weigel – Marine Conservation Biology (Hopkins Marine Station)

Location: Agassiz Building (Room 11) at Hopkins Marine Station
120 Ocean View Blvd
Pacific Grove, CA 93950

Date: Friday, September 11, 2026; 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

RAP Members:

Present	Discipline	Member	Name	Institution
X	Research Coordinator		DeVogelaere, Andrew	Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
	Biological Oceanography	primary	Ruhl, Henry	Central and Northern California Ocean Observing System
	Biological Oceanography	alternate	Kudela, Raphael	University of California, Santa Cruz
X	Deep-Sea Environment	primary	Cailliet, Greg	Moss Landing Marine Laboratories (retired)
X	Deep-Sea Environment	alternate	Haddock, Steve	Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute
X	Estuarine Environment	primary	**O'Connor, Kevin†**	Central Coast Wetlands Group
	Estuarine Environment	alternate	Wasson, Kerstin	Elkhorn Slough NERR and Foundation
X	Fisheries	primary	Owens, Brian	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
	Fisheries	alternate		
X	Marine & Coastal Geology	primary	Wagner, Amy	California State University, Sacramento
	Marine & Coastal Geology	alternate		
X	Marine Conservation Biology	primary	Weigel, Brooke	Hopkins Marine Station
X	Marine Conservation Biology	alternate	Micheli, Fiorenza	Hopkins Marine Station
X	Nearshore Environment	primary	**Southall, Brandon***	Southall Environmental Associates, Inc.
	Nearshore Environment	alternate		
X	Physical Oceanography	primary	Orescanin, Mara	Naval Postgraduate School
X	Physical Oceanography	alternate	Connolly, Tom	Moss Landing Marine Laboratories
	Shelf & Slope Environment	primary	Lindholm, James	California State University, Monterey Bay
	Shelf & Slope Environment	alternate		
X	Social Sciences	primary	Pomeroy, Carrie	University of California, Santa Cruz
	Social Sciences	alternate	Scorse, Jason	Middlebury Institute of International Studies
X	Water Quality	primary	Hunt, John	University of California, Davis
	Water Quality	alternate	Melwani, Aroon	Applied Marine Sciences, Inc.

*Sanctuary Advisory Council Member: Research (Primary)
†Sanctuary Advisory Council Member: Research (Alternate)

RAP Coordinator:
Erica Burton – Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

Guests:

Name	Institution
Cooper, Kacy	Lynker in support of Monterey Bay NMS
Crandall, Greg	Sanctuary Advisory Council
Huitt, Christopher	California State Lands Commission
Ivens-Duran, Morgan	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Montalto, Kelsey	Lynker in support of Monterey Bay NMS
Nachbar, Seaberry	MBNMS (Acting Superintendent)
Porter, Robbin	Lynker in support of Monterey Bay NMS
Rootsaert, Keith	Sanctuary Advisory Council
Sherrod, Bill	Hopkins Marine Station
Williams, Darrielle MaJay	Nancy Foster Scholar / University of California Davis

CONSENT ITEMS

Introductions/Modifications to the Agenda (Brandon Southall)

- Add discussion on Advisory Council seat – Maritime Industry (Brandon Southall)

HOST PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Hopkins Marine Station Research Update (Brooke Weigel)

- Brooke provided overview of Hopkins Marine Station infrastructure
  - 12 Stanford University research labs
  - Faculty from Biology and Oceans Departments
  - 50+ PhD students and postdocs
  - 13 staff members
- New faculty in Biology Department
  - Ayelet Voskoboynik, Assistant Professor (Biology Immunology)
  - Vanessa Barone, Assistant Professor (Biology Development)
- New faculty in Oceans Department
  - Kristen Davis, Associate Professor (Physical Oceanography & Coastal Dynamics)
  - Brook Weigel, Assistant Professor (Marine Ecology, Genomics, Algae)
  - Halleh Balch, Assistant Professor (Physics and nanoscale marine sensors)
  - Andres De Lorea, Assistant Professor (Ocean Economics and International Governance)
  - Levi (Veevee) Cai, Assistant Professor (Ocean Robotics & Machine Learning)
- New 23-foot boats: *Isabella* (VITA all-electric) and *Blue Serengeti* (Grady White)
- New Microscopy Imaging Center
- Finalizing plans on Fisher Building Oceans Garage - Wet and dry work area
- DeNault first floor renovation complete (Weigel and Gilly labs)
- Brooke Weigel's research focus includes:
  - Teaching on marine algae, and scientific illustration
  - Microscopic world of kelp forest ecosystems, including research topics:
    - Thermal tolerance
    - Kelp microbiomes
    - Carbon cycling

- Brooke provided research summaries on kelp forest thermal tolerance and ocean warming recovery status; kelp microbiome atlas of giant kelp and bull kelp; blue carbon stored in marine algae.

Reviving the Monterey Bay Crescent Oceans Research Consortium (MBCORC) (Bill Sherrod/Hopkins Marine Station)

- Bill provided brief overview of MBCORC, current effort to revive, and recent survey to research community
- Today there are rising ocean threats, and declining scientific funding
- Need for science based solutions, and collaboration efficiencies
- Community Survey: over 40 responses across the region
    - Majority say we need regional coordination
    - Opportunity to build on a strong foundation with existing network of collaboration: shared student pathways, shared vessels and field operation capacity
- Year 1 focus: from mandate to momentum: building the relationships that make everything else possible
    - 3 relational moves
        - connect people to the network
        - Interconnect the networks that already exist
        - Make convening consequential
- Purpose is to stay connected, create connections, and collaborate

SANCTUARY RESEARCH UPDATES

Seamount Hotspots: Sur Ridge and Davidson Seamount Ecology (Andrew DeVogelaere)

- During August, Andrew participated in collaborative research survey with MBARI on new research vessel, R/V *David Packard*
- Andrew shared expedition website
- Collaborative projects include
    - Deep-sea coral observatory and deep-sea coral restoration at Sur Ridge
    - Octopus garden at Davidson Seamount
        - More than 6,000 nests at warm geothermal springs
        - Sub-seafloor hydrology model research (NSF-funded)
    - Davidson Seamount Hotspot
        - Seabed pits potentially caused by goose-beaked whales
- Characterizing both areas using a wide range of technology, including
    - Benthic Respirometer System
    - Sediment traps and sensor packages
    - CTD sampling for environmental DNA
- Expedition blogs located on the website
- During survey, observed deep-sea bigfin squid *Magnapinna* sp.: see blog and video

Dr. Nancy Foster Scholar - Class of 2026: Darrielle MaJay Williams (University of California Davis)

- The Dr. Nancy Foster Scholar class of 2026 includes two Scholars conducting research in MBNMS:

    - Darrielle MaJay Williams (presenting today)
    - Courtney White (will be invited to speak at future RAP meeting)
- Darrielle is interested in looking at two different microbes in sea otters that cause disease and the impact on human health risks
- Sampling occurring in Monterey Bay and Morro Bay
- Additional interest in microplastics and pathogen movement in Central California

RAP MEMBERSHIP

RAP Suggestions to Fill Membership Vacancies (Erica Burton)

- Several RAP member vacancies need to be filled
- Candidates are nominated by current RAP members on the basis of discipline expertise (per RAP policies)
- Selection of members are by committee (see RAP policies)
- Erica solicited nominations from RAP members for the following seats:
    - Fisheries (alternate)
    - Marine & Coastal Geology (alternate)
    - Nearshore Environment (alternate)
    - Shelf & Slope Environment (alternate)
- Erica provided update on recent attempts, and recent suggestions, to fill seats
- RAP members provided suggestions for all seats
- Suggestion was made to move Brandon Southall from Nearshore Environment to Shelf & Slope Environment (potentially primary seat)
- **ACTION**: Brandon Southall will move into Shelf & Slope Environment discipline
- **ACTION**: Erica will collect CVs of nominees, and share with membership committee for further deliberation.

ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

SAC Update on Upcoming Seat vote (Brandon Southall)

- Some changes are being made to Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC) seat composition, with finite number of total seats:
    - College seat now voting
    - New indigenous community seat in progress
- There are several potential open seats - newest one Maritime Industry seat
    - Shipping industry seat or similar seat on other councils
    - Feedback from SAC meeting:
        - Revised wording using similar SAC seat representation
        - Not too narrow of a seat description that may limit representation
        - Counterbalance with concerns from the SAC including other offshore industries that may be involved in illegal activity
        - Proposal includes wording that is offshore industry opposed to shipping, with descriptions of operable, legal business in the sanctuary (exclusions for oil, gas, and mineral mining as these are illegal)
        - Other wording is intended to be broad for representation and key points with location not being limited to MB office location but more regular use of the sanctuary

- **ACTION**: Brandon email RAP with draft text of seat title, seat description, and seat requirements. Member were asked for feedback prior to September 18th SAC meeting/voting.

ED RICKETTS AWARD

2026 Ed Ricketts Award and Lecture Update

- Erica provided brief reminder of upcoming lecture and award ceremony at Sanctuary Exploration Center November 5th.
- Recipient is Andy Fisher from UC Santa Cruz
- Event advertising coming soon

QUICK UPDATES ON NEW HIRES AT INSTITUTIONS, AND FACILITY UPDATES

- No decisions or actions

SUGGESTED FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- No decisions or actions

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Running List of Future Agenda Items

MBNMS PRIORITIES (FY23-FY27)

- CHANGING OCEAN CONDITIONS
- ICONIC KELP FOREST
    - Student Capstone on Human Dimension on kelp restoration at Tankers Reef at Monterey and Caspar Cove at Mendocino (C.Pomeroy)
    - CDFW kelp management by Dr. Kristen Elsmore (B.Owens willing to invite)
- MARINE DEBRIS
- WHALE CONSERVATION / WILDLIFE DISTURBANCE
    - Update on seal bomb issue (requested by J.Scorse)

OTHER TOPICS OF RAP INTEREST

- OFFSHORE WIND UPDATES:
    - Monitoring framework for offshore wind (requested by B.Southall)
- Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat Review 2025/2026
- Contaminants and impaired water bodies (J.Hunt, A.Melwani)
- New publication and monitoring update of Moss Landing Battery Fire (invite Ivano Aiello)
- Pesticide impacts in Monterey Bay (invite Logan Pallin/UCSC)
- Monterey Bay living shorelines (requested by K.O'Connor)
- Seafloor mining – research and policy (requested by J.Hunt)

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2026 RAP Meeting Schedule

(Quarterly meetings, 2nd Friday of month)

- *December meeting moved to January 2027*

2027 RAP Meeting Schedule

(Quarterly meetings, 2nd Friday of month)

Date	Host / Research Update	Location
Jan. 8	Ruhl	MBARI
Mar. 12		
Jun. 11		
Sep. 10		
Dec. 10		