

CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY
Sanctuary Advisory Council Meeting

FINAL Key Meeting Outcomes
Friday, July 20, 2018
Channel Islands Boating Center
3880 Bluefin Circle, Channel Islands Harbor, Oxnard, CA 93035

This summary will be posted [online](#). Audio recordings are available upon request from lindsay.marks@noaa.gov.

Administrative Business and Announcements

Twenty-three council representatives attended the July meeting representing 15 voting seats (see Appendix 1). Public attendance included approximately 8 individuals in the morning and 2 in the afternoon. Council chair Phyllis Grifman called the meeting to order and thanked the Channel Islands Boating Center for hosting. The deputy superintendent for programs Michael Murray introduced the sanctuary staff and interns, and announced that recruitment for vacant council seats (Education member, Tourism alternate, and Public At-Large alternate) is underway with an expected application period of August 2018.

May 18, 2018 Draft Key Outcomes

The council unanimously voted to approve the key outcomes from the May 18, 2018 meeting, noting one typographical error in need of correction. Copies of these documents will be posted on the sanctuary's [website](#) and are available upon request from lindsay.marks@noaa.gov.

Sanctuary Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Chris Mobley announced that the sanctuary research vessel *Shearwater* is celebrating 15 years of service, noting that it has helped achieve the mission of the sanctuary and ensured safety by providing reliable service and even saving three other vessels from sinking. He also highlighted some ongoing research on soundscapes and bioacoustics in the sanctuary. Finally, Chris mentioned a recent workshop that took place at Scripps Institution of Oceanography on emerging technologies and tools being developed to help monitor Marine Protected Areas.

Council Member Brief Announcements

Council members shared news and announcements about recent events in their sectors. Audio recordings are available upon request from lindsay.marks@noaa.gov.

Sanctuary Visitor Services Feature: Stardust Sportfishing

Council member Merit McCrea introduced guest speaker Jaime Diamond, owner of Stardust Sportfishing, to share her experiences as a charter fishing boat operator in the sanctuary. Jamie described how her husband, Jason Diamond, started the business in 1996 with the help of Glen Fritzler of Truth Aquatics. Stardust is a family-run business that she and Jason operate with the help of their children. Stardust offers daily trips out of Santa Barbara Harbor, frequently to Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands. Their customers typically fish for rockfish, lingcod, ocean

whitefish, and sheepshead using hook and line. Jaime emphasized the efforts Stardust makes to limit their environmental impact, including: recycling fishing line, using the Seaqualizer to prevent barotrauma to released fish, not littering, using recyclable supplies, controlling engine emissions, recycling oil at the fuel dock in Santa Barbara, and ensuring their customers follow daily catch limits by recording each passengers' catch and only allowing crew to handle and bag fish. Stardust also appreciates being able to actively participate in the growth of fisheries by assisting with scientific research as a charter for sampling trips, and catching fish for tagging. Council members were extremely engaged in Jaime's presentation and asked a range of questions related to her business. Council chair Phyllis Grifman closed the session by asking how the sanctuary can strengthen its partnership with charter fishing companies. Jaime said that Stardust is open to a stronger partnership and suggests that the sanctuary reach out with opportunities to increase visitation to and awareness about the sanctuary, similar to a recent "Every Kid in a Park" NPS program, and fishing and photography contests.

Offshore Energy Updates

Council member Errin Briggs from the Energy, Minerals & Compliance Division with Santa Barbara County's Planning and Development Department, shared information about decommissioning offshore oil and gas platforms and related facilities, as well as the Refugio Beach oil spill settlement. Platforms Holly, Gail and Grace and their onshore facilities are planned for decommission and are currently being assessed by the State Lands Commission to determine the state of equipment required for safely plugging the wells. Following this assessment, equipment will be repaired and the wells will be plugged. The process of plugging the wells is expected to take at least two years. An Environmental Impact Review will then take place before the platforms are dismantled. Part of the cost of decommissioning will fall on taxpayers while the rest should be covered by the platform owners, although this process is complicated by the fact that one of these companies, Venoco, has gone bankrupt. Regarding the Refugio Beach oil spill settlement, Errin shared that the damage assessment phase is complete and a report will soon be publically available that documents the findings. Concurrently, ideas for restoration are being developed. Appropriate projects will be chosen through a public process.

Council chair Phyllis Grifman also announced an upcoming community workshop to be held in Santa Barbara in January. The workshop will focus on oil spill public health effects, habitat impacts, and community preparation for oil spills.

Public Comment Period (#1 of 2) No comments.

Predicting Blue Whale Distribution to Reduce Ship-Strike Risk

Guest speaker Elliott Hazen from NOAA's Southwest Fisheries Science Center spoke to the council about his research predicting blue whale distributions in the Southern California Bight. He is creating a model that uses oceanographic data to predict blue whale habitat at a 10-kilometer scale based on current environmental conditions. Predictions are being validated using data collected on whale presence, and he reported that the model is proving to be highly accurate. This could be an important tool for dynamic ocean management if models can be used to alert ship captains about the probability of whales overlapping with shipping traffic.

Enforcement & Incident Response

Several speakers provided updates about enforcement and incident responses related to the sanctuary. U.S. Coast Guard council seat member CDR Lushan Hannah provided a summary of incidents within and near the sanctuary that the Coast Guard had responded to in recent months. He also acknowledged Paul Amaral of Tow Boat USA for his rapid response to the recent grounding of a small vessel within the sanctuary, and in general for all the fast and effective help he regularly provides on similar incidents. CDR Hannah emphasized how important it is to act quickly and for agencies and other groups to work together to create a faster and more effective clean-up response to groundings that minimizes environmental harm.

Sanctuary resource protection coordinator Sean Hastings described eFINS, a mobile application that allows marine patrol officers to electronically record and reference enforcement encounters, even in offline, remote environments. Sean shared that the app has been popular among enforcement officers and is being used by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) on every large patrol vessel from San Diego to San Francisco. He added that CDFW is working towards creating an interagency enforcement geospatial database that can leverage eFINS.

Guests from the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement shared some brief updates. Greg Busch, assistant director of enforcement on the west coast, said that their greatest priority is increasing staff, and that they are hiring six new agents in the near future. Dayna Matthews, enforcement coordinator for the west coast, described himself as the liaison between sanctuaries and NOAA law enforcement. Dayna discussed an experimental deep-set buoy fishing gear being developed to target swordfish and opah as an alternative to drift nets. In 2018, NOAA enforcement issued permits to anglers for testing this gear. Paul Ortiz, a prosecuting attorney with NOAA's Office of General Counsel, shared that no cases had been prosecuted for Channel Island National Marine Sanctuary in the past year, although he is working on several cases in other west coast sanctuaries. His office is currently re-assessing a penalty policy document to determine appropriate penalties for the most common violations, such as discharge from a sinking boat.

Resource protection coordinator Sean Hastings concluded this session by announcing that CINMS is working on issuing "Report Card" letters to shipping companies that transited the sanctuary during the whale advisory zone period in 2017 to engender more cooperation with voluntary requests for vessel speed reduction to help enhance whale conservation. These letters will be modeled after those sent by the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, which are having an effect on vessel speed reduction in the San Francisco Bay Area.

2018 Get Into Your Sanctuary Events and Social Media

Shauna Bingham, sanctuary Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator, shared plans for the ongoing Get Into Your Sanctuary campaign and upcoming events. She announced a July 28 event designed to bring veterans into the sanctuary, the west coast Get Into Your Sanctuary weekend on August 4-5, and a photo contest in effect through August 15.

Anna Jacobsen of Santa Barbara Adventure Company gave a Marketing Subcommittee report on social media on behalf of council member Michael Cohen, who could not attend the meeting.

Anna shared how she had been promoting material posted on the sanctuary social media sites and encouraged other council members to do the same.

Sanctuary Resource Protection Department Report

Sanctuary resource protection coordinator Sean Hastings and Sea Grant fellow Lindsay Marks shared updates on several resource protection projects. Sean described a new shore-based radar system under development that could be used to monitor visitor use in the sanctuary. He also shared observations of many blue and fin whales recently documented in and around the sanctuary during monthly aerial surveys over the Santa Barbara Channel. Their arrival coincides with a Whale Advisory issued by the sanctuary on June 4 requesting that vessels over 300 gross tons slow to 10 knots or less when transiting the channel to minimize the risk of fatal ship strikes. Lindsay announced that a 2018 incentive-based vessel speed reduction program launched on July 1. This is the fourth year of this highly successful program to incentivize ships to slow down in the Santa Barbara Channel region and San Francisco Bay Area to improve air quality and protect whales. In 2018, the sanctuary and its partners are using a fleet-based approach to scale awards with the percent cooperation of entire fleets with the advisories rather than the per-transit approach used in the past. Lindsay also described a project in progress this summer designed to assess the non-market economic value of a whale by encouraging whale watching passengers visiting the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary to take an online survey. To conclude, Sean announced several Channel Islands shoreline cleanups planned for the summer and fall.

Public Comment Period (#2 of 2) No comments.

Working Group Reports

Council members shared updates on Working Groups and Subcommittee activities and plans:

- ***Chumash Community Working Group***: No report.
- ***Research Activities Panel (RAP)***: No report.
- ***Marketing Subcommittee***: No report.
- ***Sanctuary Education Team***: No report.
- ***Recreational Fishing Working Group***: Capt. David Bacon shared a statement from the Coastal Conservation Association of California, a statewide, non-profit organization working to protect the state's marine resources and interests of anglers. He read the statement aloud and turned it over to sanctuary superintendent Chris Mobley. The statement contains a request that NOAA modify three of the sanctuary's existing marine reserves in federal waters (Gull Island, Footprint, and Santa Barbara Island) to become marine conservation areas open to recreational fishing for pelagic species.
- ***Commercial Fishing Working Group***: No report.
- ***Conservation Working Group (CGW)***: Kristen Hislop reported on topics discussed at the latest meeting of the CGW. She highlighted research shared by Christina Wright, biologist from Toyon Research Corporation, about Infrared (IR) technology being developed by Toyon to detect whales from spouts using shore- and ship-based IR cameras and image analysis software. During pilot testing, the system has proven to be effective at detecting whales with high accuracy. A potential application of the technology is alerting ship captains about the presence of whales in shipping lanes.

Meeting Close Out

- Sanctuary superintendent Chris Mobley closed the meeting by thanking the council members and public for attending, and thanking our hosts at the Channel Islands Boating Center.
- Upcoming advisory council public meetings are scheduled for September 21 at the Santa Barbara Zoo and November 16, 2018 at the Channel Islands National Park Visitor Center in Ventura.

Meeting adjourned.

APPENDIX 1: Sanctuary Advisory Council Meeting Attendance Roster (July 20, 2018)

Name	Advisory Council Seat	Meeting Attendance
Andrea Mills	Tourism	Present
<i>vacant</i>	Tourism - Alternate	n/a
Ben Pitterle	Non-Consumptive Recreation	Present
Dr. Tony Knight	Non-Consumptive Recreation - Alternate	Present
Michael Cohen	Business	Absent
Capt. Kip Louttit	Business – Alternate	Present
Kristen Hislop	Conservation	Present
Greg Helms	Conservation – Alternate	Absent
Stephanie Mutz	Commercial Fishing	Absent
John Hoadley	Commercial Fishing - Alternate	Absent
Capt. David Bacon	Recreational Fishing	Present
Merit McCrea	Recreational Fishing - Alternate	Present
<i>vacant</i>	Education	n/a
Cliff Rodrigues	Education – Alternate	Present
Dr. Robert Warner	Research	Present
Dr. Mark Steele	Research – Alternate	Absent
Phyllis Grifman	Public at Large #1	Present
Judy Willens	Public at Large #1 - Alternate	Present
Richard Block	Public at Large #2	Absent
Eric Kett	Public at Large #2 - Alternate	Absent
Luhui Isha Ward	Chumash Community	Absent
Alicia Cordero	Chumash Community – Alternate	Absent
Laura McCue	NOAA Fisheries	Present
<i>vacant</i>	NOAA Fisheries – Alternate	n/a
<i>vacant</i>	National Park Service	n/a
<i>vacant</i>	National Park Service – Alternate	n/a
CDR Lushan Hannah	US Coast Guard	Present
LCDR Jason Brand	US Coast Guard – Alternate	Absent
Donna Schroeder	BOEM	Absent
<i>vacant</i>	BOEM – Alternate	n/a
Walt Schobel	Dept. of Defense	Present
<i>vacant</i>	Dept. of Defense – Alternate	n/a
Dr. Julia Coates	CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	Present
John Ugoretz	CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife – Alternate	Absent
Jenn Eckerle	CA Natural Resources Agency	Absent
Paige Berube	CA Natural Resources Agency - Alternate	Absent
Dr. Jonna Engel	CA Coastal Commission	Present
Jacqueline Phelps	CA Coastal Commission – Alternate	Present
Errin Briggs	Santa Barbara County	Present
David Villalobos	Santa Barbara County – Alternate	Present
Danielle Tarr	Ventura County	Absent
<i>vacant</i>	Ventura County – Alternate	n/a
Chris Mobley	Channel Islands NMS [non-voting]	Present
Mike Murray	Channel Islands NMS - Alternate [non-voting]	Present
Paul Michel	Monterey Bay NMS [non-voting]	Absent
Karen Grimmer	Monterey Bay NMS - Alternate [non-voting]	Present
Maria Brown	Greater Farallones NMS [non-voting]	Absent
Brian Johnson	Greater Farallones NMS [non-voting]	Absent