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Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary

On May 5-8, the sanctuary and the Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF) joined together to conduct visual fish surveys within the sanctuary. Seven divers conducted 67 surveys during the four-day *Shearwater* cruise. This annual monitoring effort supplements the ongoing survey efforts by volunteers who conduct REEF surveys as part of their recreational dives. The field plan was designed to assist in the evaluation of the state marine reserves, with surveys conducted in reserve locations and at comparable reference sites outside the reserves. Excellent weather conditions allowed divers to work at Santa Rosa Island for one day and San Miguel Island for three days.

The Ocean Channel and Santa Barbara Channel Keeper presented the first annual Santa Barbara Ocean Film Festival on May 19, 2004 at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB). Co-sponsors of the Ocean Film Festival were the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, UCSB's Marine Science Institute, PADI Project Aware, Islands Packers and La Cusinga EcoLodge in Costa Rica. The National Marine Sanctuary Program was prominently featured throughout the Santa Barbara Ocean Film Festival, by featuring John Brooks' short vignette on cultural connections, the 60-second Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary PSA, and a 3-minute high definition piece by In Camera introducing the "Jewels of the Pacific: California's Channel Islands" film project.

More than 50 teachers from the Los Angeles Unified School District were hosted by the sanctuary when they went aboard the NOAA research vessel *Shearwater* and dive vessel *Conception* for a floating laboratory experience at Santa Cruz Island and its surrounding waters. During this one-day adventure, participants observed whales, dolphins, and pinnipeds, collected and observed microscopic plankton, explored kelp forest communities, conducted a fish survey, and explored the flora and fauna of Santa Cruz Island.

Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary

The sanctuary manager convened a group of American Samoa local and federal government and local village leaders for a follow-up planning meeting for a coral reef fisheries workshop to be sponsored by NOAA Fisheries. The consensus of the group was to go forward with the workshop, which will focus on local enforcement issues. The planning group will expand to include other enforcement agencies, and additional village leaders and fishermen.

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

The sanctuary is gearing up for a coral transplantation cooperative partnering project with the U.S. Navy, their contractors (Continental Shelf Associates) and REEF MEDIC volunteers, to relocate and re-attach corals displaced by a Navy development project in Truman Harbor and Key West Harbor. Plans are

underway for fieldwork to start in early June due to weather delays. Transplant recipient sites include the *Columbus Iselin* restoration site, multiple orphan vessel grounding sites throughout the sanctuary, and mid-channel reefs off Key West and Stock Island.

Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary

Recreational SCUBA divers are the primary user group of the sanctuary. Dive masters and galley crew on the live aboard charter vessels have extended contact with divers and are the primary source of information about the sanctuary for their customers. The Sanctuary Education/Outreach Coordinator provided a one-hour training session on sanctuary regulations and policies during the annual crew training for one of the charter companies. The company provides trips to the sanctuary for an estimated 2800 to 3000 divers each year. Approximately 50 crewmembers received the training.

The hydrographic survey-cruise aboard the NOAA vessel *Thomas Jefferson* conducted May 12 - 21 was a resounding success. Weather was good and multibeam mapping was conducted in a number of areas within and near the sanctuary. Areas in between the East and West Flower Garden Banks, shelf slope features south of the sanctuary, and Claypile Bank north of the sanctuary were mapped with multibeam for the first time. High-resolution multibeam (Reson 8125) surveys were conducted of the coral reef areas of both Flower Garden Banks and Stetson Bank. Additionally, a tour of the ship for interested parties was conducted in Galveston on May 21.

Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary

The sanctuary convened the first of two workshops to examine the concept of a marine research area in the sanctuary. The workshop brought together broad interests (fishing, diving, research, education, and regional planning) as a working group of the Advisory Council. The idea of marine research in the sanctuary was first raised during scoping meetings for the review and revision of the management plan. Headquarters and Florida Keys staff are assisting the working group, which is chaired by Advisory Council member Dr. Joe Kimmel of the Southeast Regional Office of NOAA Fisheries.

Recent work on the NOAA ship *Nancy Foster* facilitated a comparison of traditional fishery assessment methodologies and allowed scientists access to the Gray's Reef resources. On the first leg of the journey, several investigations were performed to try and determine how these methodologies compare to visual census assessments conducted by divers. Once this information has been "ground-truthed" it should allow for comparison between different "historical" assessment methods. The second leg of the cruise will allow regional scientists to conduct investigations that have already been funded. It will further allow other scientists access to Gray's Reef to be able to develop ideas and hypotheses to address science and monitoring needs outlined in the

sanctuary draft management plan.

A production crew from Turner South's *The Natural South* were onboard the NOAA ship *Nancy Foster* Saturday and Sunday, May 15th and 16th to document research currently being conducted at Gray's Reef. The crew was transported to the reef each day onboard sanctuary support boat *R/V Joe Ferguson*. The crew interviewed scientists, Gray's Reef staff and Foster crew members for the half hour show that will be one of 22 programs produced this year in the on-going series.

Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary

Sanctuary staff and Beach Watch volunteers are doing spot-checks on select beaches for wildlife oiling as a result of a vessel collision and fuel spill. Surveyors will collect information per standard Beach Watch protocols, and targeting species such as endangered marbled murrelets. On May 6, shortly after midnight, the vessel *Clara B II* was struck by the *Rubicon* and sank approximately 16 miles west of Pigeon Point in the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. The incident caused 350 gallons of diesel fuel to be spilled. Two people on board launched a life raft and were rescued by a passing vessel and the US Coast Guard; there were no injuries. The *Rubicon* returned to port. Overflights revealed two sheens, one of which is not dissipating, and may be leaking from the sunken vessel. Officials from the State Office of Spill Response, NOAA Hazmat and other agencies are responding.

Monitor National Marine Sanctuary

From May 17 to 21, The Mariners' Museum conservators and a team of riggers from Northrup Grumman Newport News Shipbuilding removed a large spreader plate, two of the gun slides and the port cannon carriage from the *Monitor's* gun turret. Because of the uncertainty of the condition of the gun carriage, the work proceeded with the utmost caution. The spreader plate and gun slides came out with ease, but the gun carriage required a lot of coaxing to loosen it from the 11-inch Dahlgren cannon barrel. The carriage was successfully freed from the cannon and placed in a conservation tank.

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

The sanctuary held a very successful media event on May 5, 2004 to showcase the results of a 21-day research cruise on the NOAA ship *McArthur II*. The cruise provided some of the most expansive seafloor documentation ever recorded of the Monterey Bay, Cordell Bank and Gulf of the Farallones national marine sanctuaries. The cruise was a collaborative effort involving NOAA and U. S. Geological Survey scientists. All three central California national marine sanctuaries were involved. The event was covered in the San Jose Mercury News, Santa Cruz Sentinel, Monterey Herald, and on KSBW-

TV (NBC affiliate).

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary

Sanctuary staff participated in the Strait of Juan de Fuca Ecosystem Workshop in Sydney, British Columbia, Canada. The workshop was co-sponsored by the sanctuary, Parks Canada, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Canadian Protected Areas and Wilderness Society. This was the first in a series of meetings to discuss transboundary collaboration on this productive and diverse region and to begin discussions on values and management issues for the area. Coordinating the many players involved, including a significant number of tribes (US) and First Nations (Canada), the meeting provided a good foundation for future collaboration and ultimately leading to an improved conservation strategy. Sanctuary staff provided presentations on relevant work in the sanctuary. The Strait of Juan de Fuca is a key transboundary area in the Baja to Bering region targeted by the Council on Environmental Cooperation's North American MPA Network (NAMPAN) initiative.

Under the direction of the Research Coordinator and Chief Scientist, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary staff mobilized and started Cruise Number AR-04-04, Leg 1 aboard the NOAA Ship *MACARTHUR II*. Specific objectives of this project are as follows: to help address resource management questions of the sanctuary by continuing a long-term monitoring program to assess relative distribution and abundance trends of marine mammal and seabird in the sanctuary and surrounding waters; to characterize the diversity, abundances, and health of living marine resources associated with pelagic environments along the continental shelf and slope and to correlate habitat use patterns to oceanographic conditions; to complement the North Pacific effort on Structure of Populations, Levels of Abundance and Status of Humpbacks (SPLASH), scheduled for 2004; to continue efforts to survey and map seafloor features within the sanctuary; and to generate GIS-compatible data on critical habitat, associated species of concern, in basic habitat types in these areas to support future biogeographic mapping efforts.

National Marine Sanctuary Program

On May 3, 2004, Dan Basta, director of the National Marine Sanctuary Program, addressed the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) regarding boating in the sanctuaries. At the symposium, the director spoke to the Regulatory Issues Panel of the American Boating Congress. NMMA and NMSP are partnering on issues of mutual interest.

The National Marine Sanctuary Program's National Education Coordinator has convened the Education Working Group, comprised of regional representatives, to devise the upcoming year's plan and activities for the whole program. The working group has met with Dan Basta and Marlene Kaplan, director for

NOAA's Office of Education and Sustainable Development, to learn NOAA's anticipated educational priorities. The working group presented their recent educational accomplishments/events and formed partnerships in recent months.

Dr. Rick Spinrad hosted an education roundtable on May 18 at the Ronald Reagan Building on Ocean Ethics and Stewardship, which was organized by the National Marine Sanctuary Program. This was the sixth in a series of "Ocean Future" roundtables focusing on National Ocean Service (NOS) programs and initiatives. Key themes for the meeting included ocean literacy and stewardship, formal and informal marine science education for grades K-12, and NOS outreach activities. Approximately 20 constituents attended and an interactive discussion was held.

Communications staff held an initial meeting with National Ocean Service communications staff to discuss NMSP involvement in providing exhibit ideas and content for a 22,000 square-foot exhibit in the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History. This will be a major undertaking and will provide an excellent opportunity for NOAA and the sanctuary program to enhance ocean literacy for the museum's six million visitors annually. The planning efforts will involve input from many sanctuary staff over the next 6-9 months.

On July 30, a ceremony will be held unveiling the geodetic marker and its placement outside the Hawaiian Island Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Kihei, Maui office. Dan Basta will preside over the ceremony. The director of the NOS Office of Geodetic Survey is invited. A local high school class that has studied geodetic science will be present at the event to assist in the calibration and demonstration of the marker.



