



Ship Strikes of Whales Off the U.S. West Coast



Spyhopper

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Photo © John Calambokidis

by John Calambokidis
Cascadia Research

Ship strikes of whales have become of growing concern for several species. This has probably received the most attention off the U.S. east coast where concern over ship strikes to the highly endangered North Atlantic right whale was shown to be a threat to their recovery. This prompted action to shift the shipping lanes of ships coming through the Gulf of Maine to avoid areas of known right whale concentration.

The risk of ship strikes, however, is not just a concern for right whales on the east coast. A worldwide increase in ship strikes has raised concern for some of the larger Balaenopterid whales, like blue and fin whales. There have been increased incidences of ship strikes based on strandings in a number of areas of the U.S. West Coast and including the Pacific Northwest and California. Cascadia Research and collaborators have been examining large whale carcasses stranded off the Pacific Northwest coast for many years and observed dramatic increase in both the number of whales and the

proportion of deaths attributable to ship strikes (see Figure 1). In the last 10 years, ship strikes have become a major cause of death and account for about a third of the standings. This proportion is even higher if gray whales are not included (they have a lower incidence of ship strikes than fin or blue whales). The fact ship strike deaths have increased as a proportion of all deaths indicates this is not just the result of growing whale populations (though this can be a contributing factor). In the Pacific Northwest, the potential seriousness of this issue and how it was increasing was driven home in 2002 when four fin whales were documented or suspected to have been killed by ships.

Off California it took a similar dramatic set of events to galvanize researchers, conservationists, and managers. In fall 2007, four blue whales were found dead with direct or indirect indications of having been struck by ships. These four were all found in the vicinity of the Santa Barbara Channel or Los Angeles or Long Beach Harbors (one was discovered in the harbor and had almost certainly come in on the bow of a ship). The Santa Barbara

Ship Strikes, cont.

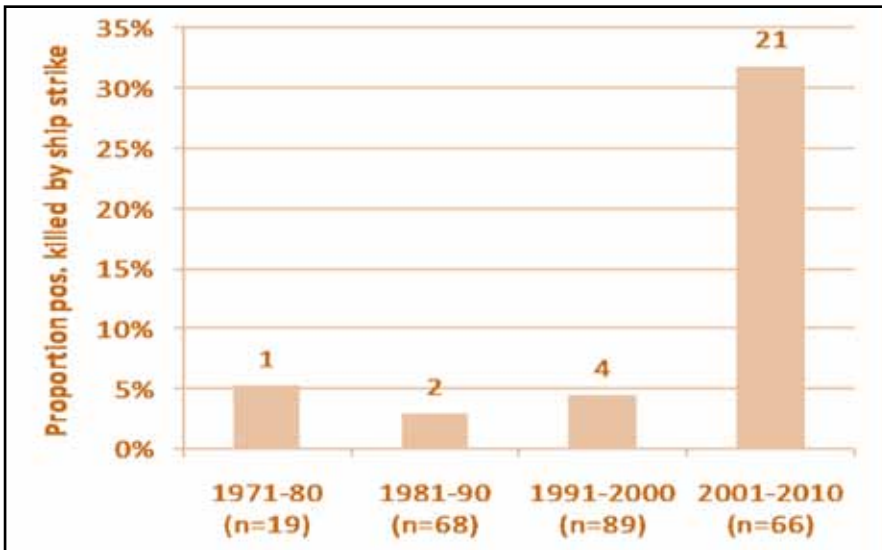


Figure 1. Proportion of large whales stranding with indications of having been struck by ships in the Pacific Northwest. Note that both number of strandings (number shown above bars) and the plotted proportion of strandings showing signs of ship strike have increased dramatically in recent years. The proportion of strandings showing signs of ship strikes from 1991-2000 may in part be low because of the high number of gray whale strandings (a species with lower rates of ship strikes) in 1999 and 2000. Data from Cascadia Research and Northwest Marine Mammal Stranding Network.

Channel shipping lanes are the primary lanes leading to LA/Long Beach Harbor and represent the busiest port on the U.S. West Coast and one of the busiest in the world. Our research since the early 1990s has also revealed that the channel is one of the most consistent and heavily used feeding areas for blue whales on the U.S. West Coast and one of the best places to see blue whales anywhere in the world. The combination of these two factors, busy shipping lanes through a primary blue whale feeding area is clearly a problem, but why the sudden spike in blue whale ship strikes in 2007 in this area and how significant an issue was this?

Cascadia Research has been studying blue and humpback whale populations off the U.S. West Coast since 1986. I first became aware of large numbers of blue whales feeding in the Santa Barbara Channel in 1990 and began conducting work there every season since 1991. Our primary goal has been documenting blue whale abundance and movements with photographic identification. Our catalog of individuals now numbers over 2,200 out of a population that at any moment in time we estimate AT just over 2,000 ALONG the U.S. West Coast. Unlike our abundance estimates of humpback whales that have increased almost four fold since the early 1990s, blue whale abundance has not increased and by one indication has possibly decreased. While our mark-recapture estimates based on photo-ID of blue whales along the West Coast indicate a stable to slightly increasing trend, ship line transects estimates made by the Southwest Fisheries Science

Center has found a sharp decrease off the U.S. West Coast from about 2,000 blue whales in the 1990s to about a third of that in their surveys in the last 10 years. We recently showed that this difference appeared to be the result of many blue whales shifting their feeding to areas to the south and north of the U.S. West Coast and so while the population has not declined the average number present at any one time off the U.S. West Coast has decreased. Even if the population is not decreasing the lack of an increase after the reductions caused by whaling, as being seen with fin and humpback whales, is troubling and makes us concerned that mortality like ship strikes could be posing a threat to blue whales.

Magnitude of the Problem

While examination of stranded animals has been useful in identifying the cause of death of these animals and revealing an increased trend in ship strikes, this method certainly underestimates the true number dying. We recently made this important point in a short publication in Conservation Letters (Rob Williams is the senior author). Specifically, mortality estimates based on stranded animals underestimate mortality by over an order of magnitude. In the case of the Gulf of Mexico, on average only 2% of calculated cetacean deaths were being documented as strandings. Many marine mammals that die, including large whales, would likely sink (many of these whales are neutral or negatively buoyant and if they sink into deeper water would never refloat) or drift offshore and decompose rather than come ashore. The documentation of four blue whale ship strike deaths in southern California in 2007, for example, could reflect a true mortality an order of magnitude or more higher and enough to be responsible for the lack of recovery for blue whales.

Ship strikes of a number of other species, including fin, humpback, and gray whales, occur along the U.S. West Coast but several lines of evidence suggest blue whales are of greatest concern. Unlike blue whales, humpback and fin whale populations have been increasing rapidly and ship strikes do not appear to be preventing their recovery (although they could be slowing the rate of recovery). Gray whales are far more abundant than blue whales and unlike blue or fin whales, ship strikes represent a small proportion of the causes of death of stranded animals. The combination of high number and proportion of strandings from ship strikes, low population, and lack of increasing trend all point to blue whales as potentially being most vulnerable to ship strikes in the eastern North Pacific. A case could also be made that ship strikes of right whales should be of concern in the North Pacific since they have been shown to be vulnerable to ship strikes in the North Atlantic; the lack of ship strikes documented in the eastern

North Pacific is likely just the result of the extremely low occurrence of this critically endangered population.

Potential Solutions

The single most effective way to reduce ship strikes (other than of course eliminating ship traffic) is to reduce the co-occurrence of ships and whales. This was a strategy undertaken with North Atlantic right whales where shipping lanes were moved to avoid high density feeding areas of right whales. Figure 2 shows the occurrence of whale sightings in relation to shipping lanes in the Santa Barbara Channel area. It shows several areas of overlap between these major areas of whale use and the route of shipping traffic. The U.S. Coast Guard is currently conducting a Port Access and Routing Study (PARS) for both the southern California Bight and San Francisco Bay entrances, and they are considering ship strikes among the factors weighed in

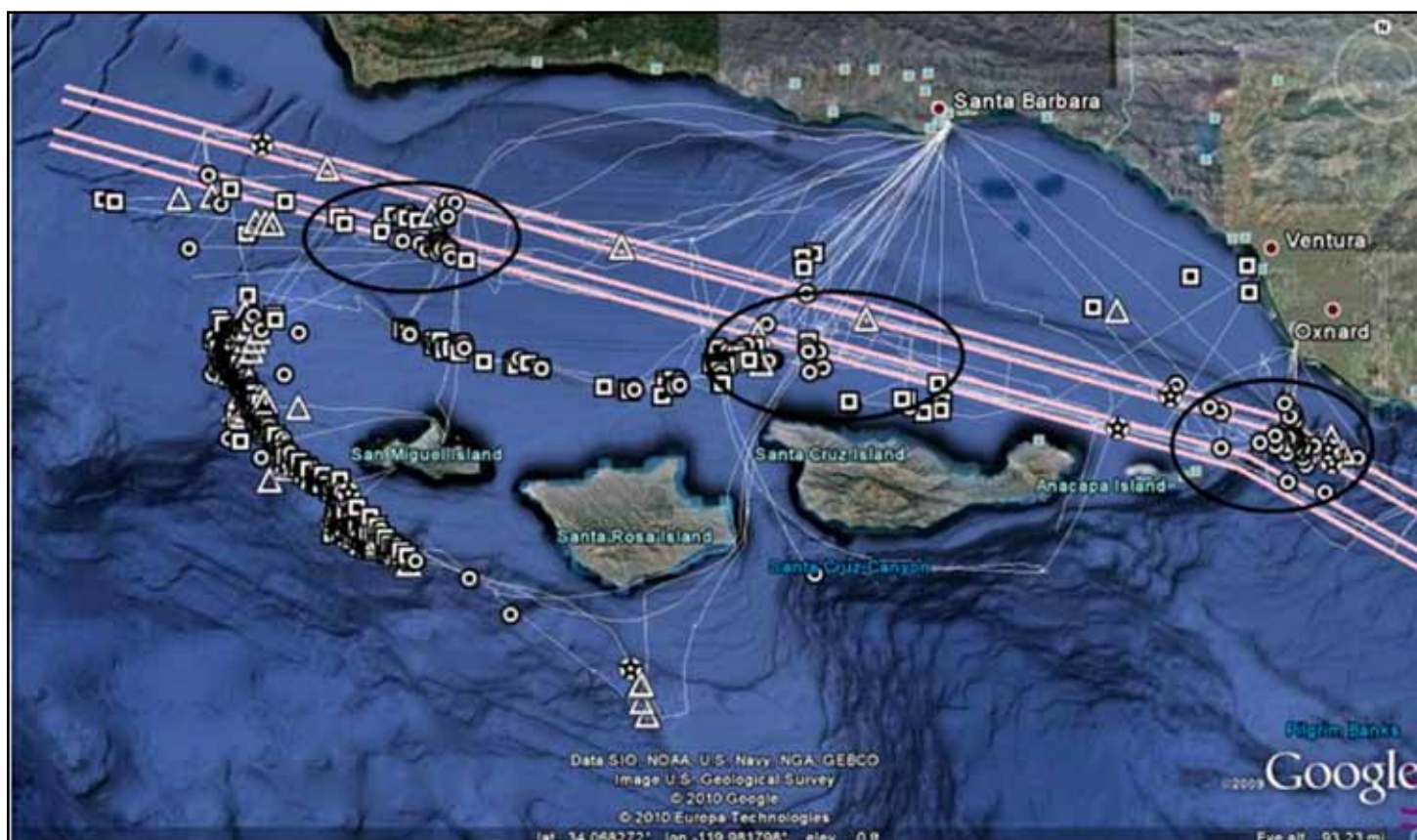


Figure 2. Map of shipping lanes and sightings of blue whales (circles), fin whales (triangles), and humpback whales (squares) from Cascadia Research surveys in the Santa Barbara Channel area in 2009 including those with CINMS aboard the Shearwater. Faint lines show the route of the survey vessels. Circled areas show several locations where whales were feeding in and around the shipping lanes and where ship strikes would be potentially most common.

Ship Strikes, cont.



A fin whale is dwarfed by the large tanker that presumably struck it and carried it into the Long Beach harbor. Photo © Alisa Schulman-Janiger

setting shipping lane locations. While these are encouraging first steps there needs to be continued pressure to make changes to shipping lanes to shift them away from primary areas used by whales.

In one surprising recent twist vessel traffic off southern California and leading into San Francisco has shifted routes somewhat unexpectedly in response to changes in air pollution regulations. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) enacted regulations in July 2009 requiring ships to use cleaner fuel when within 24 miles of the California coast. This prompted a steady shift as ships took new routes that stayed outside the 24 mile zone longer and reduced the amount of time they would need to burn cleaner fuel. In the Santa Barbara Channel, Megan McKenna of Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO) found increasing proportions of ships avoided the Santa Barbara Channel lanes and instead traveled further south and offshore on route to and from LA/Long Beach. This likely benefited the blue and humpback whales that feed in the Santa Barbara Channel but likely put fin whales at greater risk. Similarly, these regulations prompted more ships coming and going from San Francisco to use the western shipping lanes that travel through high whale use areas south of the Farallon Islands. We spent three days in October 2010 working with the whales in this area and found high densities of blue and humpback whales in these busy shipping lanes, witnessing several close encounters of ships and whales during this period. One unfortunate aspect of those lanes is that they terminate just inshore of the shelf break; therefore ships approaching the lanes from the north or south tended to travel right along the shelf edge as they made their approach to the lanes. This

increases the time ships traveled along the shelf edge, one of the most biologically productive and highest density areas for blue and humpback whales. A simple extension of the lanes beyond the shelf edge would result in ships approaching the lanes outside the high density areas then crossing those areas for only a brief section, ultimately reducing the chance of a strike.

Evaluating the Possible Solutions

A number of other strategies have also been suggested and in a few cases implemented to reduce ship strikes of whales besides shifting the location of shipping lanes, and these include slowing ship speed, placing observers on ships, using acoustic monitoring systems to detect whales, and alerting whales of the presence of ships with a sound device on the bow of ships. While some of these may have some merit, they all have untested assumptions or may not be effective. We are trying to address some of these with our research on whale underwater behavior and reaction to ships. This work being conducted in collaboration with Erin Oleson, Megan McKenna, and Jeremy Goldbogen (a collaboration of Cascadia, NOAA, and SIO) involves detailed studies of the surface and underwater behavior of whales in and around shipping lanes using instruments attached to the whales with suction cups. Some of our findings relevant to these proposed strategies include:

1. We have found that blue whales spend almost twice as much time near the surface at night compared to the day. Blue whales are often feeding at depths of up to 1,000 feet during the day, their prey and dives become shallower into the evening, but then at night they seem to shift to largely not feeding and staying close to the surface. This would make them almost twice as likely to be struck by a ship traveling along the surface at night as in the day (assuming they did not react to the ship) and would also make the use of observers a less successfully strategy since they would at best have extremely limited visibility even with night vision tools.

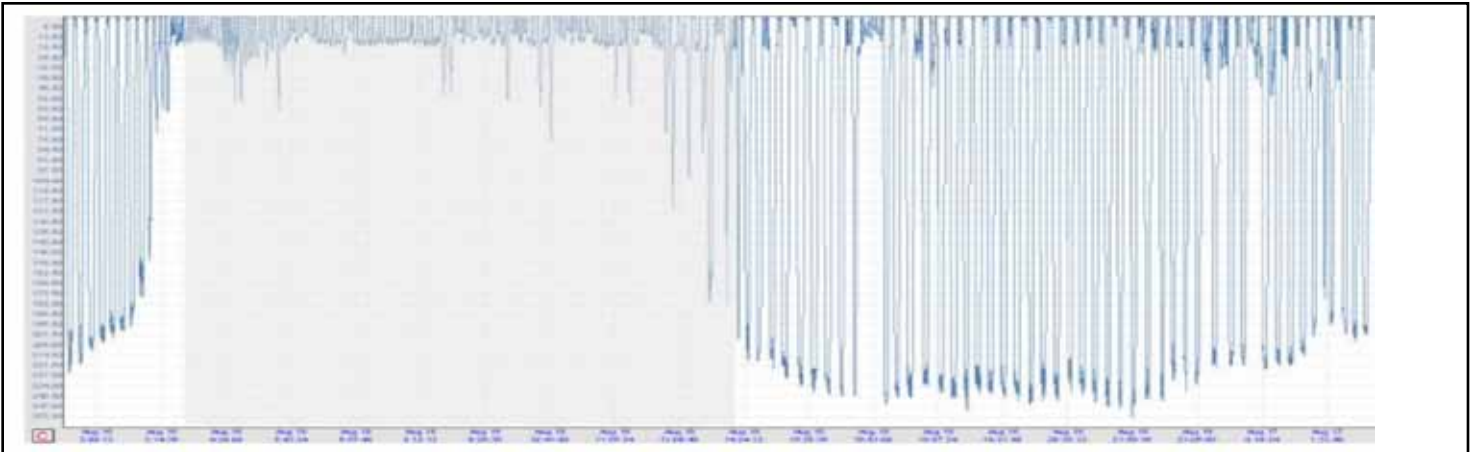


Figure 3. Dive behavior of blue whale outfitted with a suction cup tag showing depth of dives (Y axis) over more than 24 hours the tag was on (along X axis). Note the deeper dives in the afternoon when the tag was applied transitioning to shallower dives at night (shaded area) and resumption of deeper dives the following day.

Even if whales are spotted ahead of the ship, whales most at risk would be those just coming to the surface in the path of the ship too late for the vessel to stop or change course while whales seen in the distance in time for vessels to alter course would likely be the whales that would dive again to feed prior to the arrival of the ship.

2. We found some indications that blue whales may react to threats or the presence of a ship by coming to the surface and spending more time there, something that would make them more vulnerable to ship strikes. This was similar to a finding of a study with right whales reaction to alarm calls that showed such an alarm on a ship might in fact cause a reaction (surfacing) that would put the whale at greater risk. These findings suggest adding alarms or noisemakers on the bow of ships to alert whales of a danger may have the opposite of the desired effect.
3. Our tracking of whales exposed to ship close approaches also did not suggest any clear lateral avoidance by whales as ships passed close. In three of four cases where a whale we were tracking had a ship pass within 500 m, the whale was actually getting closer to the ship rather avoiding it.
4. One of the bigger questions marks is how ship speed related to ship strikes. Many attribute the increase in whale ship strikes to the higher speed of ships as well as increased numbers of ships and whales.



A humpback whale off the California coast reveals wounds from a survived ship strike. Photo © Alisa Schulman-Janiger

strikes to the higher speed of ships as well as increased numbers of ships and whales. For right whales, research also suggests that strikes of whales by ships traveling under 10 knots are less likely to be fatal. One concern that came out of our research on blue whales was whether slower speeds would decrease or increase the occurrence of ship strikes (even though they would be less likely to be fatal at slower speeds). We found that blue whales appeared to respond to ships by spending more time at the surface immediately after the passage of a fast ship. Could such a surfacing in reaction to a close ship be more likely to bring the whale to the surface while the ship is still in the area if it was traveling slower rather than faster? In 2009, a

Ship Strikes, cont.

NOAA-contracted ship traveling at only a little over 5 knots near Fort Bragg had a blue whale surface under their boat that was then killed when hit by the propeller.

We hope to continue our work on this issue examining both the distribution of whales and how best to shift shipping lanes as well as how whales behave underwater and react to ships to further resolve these strategies. In the mean time it is critical that shipping lanes be shifted based on the available best information to reduce the traffic through the densest whale feeding areas.

Engaged Community

Fortunately, there are a number of ongoing studies and efforts on the ship strike issue on the U.S. West Coast underway. Government agencies in addition to the Coast Guard (through the PARS process) have gotten involved in this issue including: 1) The National Marine Fisheries Service regional and national office have been active on the ship strike issue including supporting some of the needed research as well as convening a workshop on this issue (see for example <http://swr.nmfs.noaa.gov/pdf/>

Final2010VesselWorkshop.pdf), 2) Southwest Fisheries Science Center has developed a habitat model for blue, fin, and humpback whales in the southern California Bight to allow quantitative comparison of whale encounters for different shipping lane scenarios (Jessica Redfern is leading this effort), and 3) all the west coast national marine sanctuaries, especially the Channel Islands have taken a strong role in this issue trying to find solutions especially since some of these conflicts occur within sanctuary waters. Several environmental groups have also taken a strong interest in this issue off California: 1) the Environmental Defense Center (EDC) is a California non-profit law firm has worked for several years to address ship strikes within the Santa Barbara Channel, through the CINMS Advisory Council, education and outreach, and legal advocacy, 2) the Great Whale Conservancy, a joint program of the International Marine Mammal Project and the Campaign to Safeguard America's Waters, seeks to inform the public about impacts on whales and to generate sufficient public concern to force federal agencies and ship owners to adopt stronger rules and operational policies for vessels transiting critical great whale habitat.



On May 8, 2011, remains of a humpback whale washed ashore at White Point in San Pedro, CA. Its head was removed apparently due to a ship strike. ACS member, Dinah Garcia captured this photo of the gulls making use of the carcass.



Photo © John Calambokidis

While ship strikes will continue to be a threat to some of these large whales, hopefully, additional insight gained from research combined with the involvement of government agencies, environmental groups, and the shipping industry can help reduce this growing issue. Industry representatives at various workshops have indicated their support for trying to reduce this problem; not only do they care about whales but ship strikes can damage ships, slow down their speed, and are bad publicity. One solution of voluntary speed reductions when whales were present was not effective; ships did not reduce speed, many ships indicating they had schedules to keep for port arrivals. There does not seem to be industry resistance to shifting shipping lanes and the shift that occurred in response to the air pollution control regulations showed and quickly they can make changes. Changes in shipping lanes do require national and international action and the PARS process provides an immediate opportunity to make these changes.

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2011 IWC: Promises To Be A Compelling Meeting



International Whaling Commission, 2011

by **Cheryl McCormick**

This year's meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) promises to be a lively event, with unexpected developments in Japan, Iceland, and Norway unfolding in ways that will likely shape the direction of the commercial whaling industry in the near future. The following overview provides insight into current industry activities in Japan, Iceland, and Norway, and what we can expect at IWC this year.

Japan:

There has been plenty of speculation about Japan's whaling agenda in the wake of the devastating earthquake, tsunami, and partial meltdown of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. In the days immediately following April 11th, it became clear that a portion of the whaling fleet was damaged, though it was not known to what extent. We later learned that none of thirteen warehouses storing thousands of tons of whale meat were reported to have been

damaged. Some predicted that, following the indefinite suspension of whaling operations in the Southern Ocean, the recent tsunami signaled the death knell for whaling in Japan. But the Japanese culture is known for its resourcefulness and resiliency and, sure enough, it has already begun piecing its fractured whaling operations together.

Expanded Coastal Whaling Program

But let's go back even before the tsunami... the announcement that Japan would indefinitely suspend its whaling operations in the Southern Ocean came as no surprise to those monitoring the economics of whaling in Japan. With a price tag of \$50M annually, it no longer made sense to spend more to go farther to catch fewer whales, and continual conflagrations with Sea Shepherd certainly became a liability to the industry. Considering these factors, the conservation community expects Japan to advocate for an expanded coastal whaling program at this year's IWC, thereby circumventing both issues by 1) keeping operational costs relatively low, and; 2) avoiding conflicts with environmental groups by remaining in Japan's jurisdictional waters. In addition, the U.S. is already developing its strategy for renewing its bowhead quota, which is scheduled for renewal in 2012. The U.S. vigorously defends its bowhead quota, and historically, Japan has been extremely savvy in threatening to block the bowhead quota and using its position as leverage in achieving its own goals at IWC, in typical quid pro quo fashion. The strategic confluence of the U.S. bowhead quota, its departure from the Southern Ocean, and the impacts of the tsunami on coastal (whaling) communities, will most assuredly result in a request from Japan for an expanded coastal whaling program.

Small Cetacean Drive Hunts

In Taiji (Wayakama Prefecture), pilot whale ('gondo') drive hunts began in May, a month earlier than usual. Local fisherman received permission from government officials to begin the hunt in May this year, due to the tsunami's impact on the overall season. Many were shocked and outraged at the news that the now-infamous cove and small cetacean drive hunts were being carried out so soon after the tsunami, which devastated the town of Taiji. Advocates from Ric O'Barry's group, *Save Japan Dolphins*, are following trucks to market to test the freshly-killed pilot whale meat for radiation levels in light of reports of leaked radiation directly into the Pacific at the site of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

Somewhat misleading media reports stated that for the first time since 1988, fishermen's unions stated that they would not engage in hunting for small whale species (minke) in coastal waters off Taiji, as a result of damage to coastal whaling vessels. However, coastal whaling operations targeting minkes (Japan has a spring quota of 60 minke whales) merely relocated to an area off of Kushiro, Hokkaido. Following the end of this operation in June, the coastal whaling vessel moves to Hakodate (Chiba Prefecture) to hunt for beaked whales until August. The vessel will then return to Kushiro to embark on fall (minke whale) hunts. The coastal whaling season lasts until the end of September, so it remains a possibility that whaling operations will continue off the coast of Taiji, pending the availability of a vessel. Until that becomes a reality, Taiji fisherman will continue to assist nearby whaling towns "in need".

Japan's Ability to 'Afford' IWC Allies

Perhaps one of the more interesting developments in light of Japan's situation will be whether it will be in a financial position to extend 'aid' and perks associated with alleged vote-buying that it has traditionally extended to its IWC allies – most notably, island nations in the South Pacific and the Caribbean. We will continue to keep our members posted of all activities that influence voting dynamics and issues of integrity and alleged 'vote buying' by the Japanese Government.

While we certainly empathize with Japanese citizens whose lives have been impacted by this terrible series of disasters, we must insist that strong measures continue to be adopted that fortify whale conservation and protection,

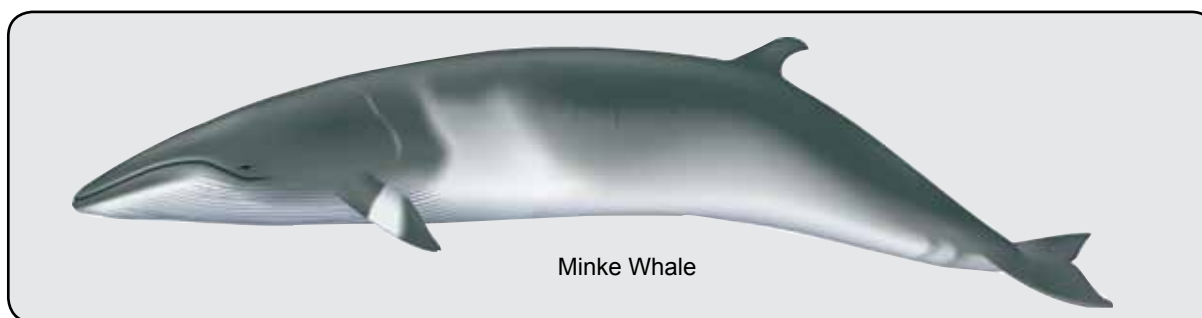
that all aspects of the moratorium on whaling be upheld, and that sympathetic political posturing do not lead to concessions in Japan's disputed whaling industry – including a coastal whaling program, increased quotas, or relaxed policies related to trade in whale products.

Iceland: Under Pressure

After traveling to Japan to assess current trade opportunities, Icelandic whaling magnate Kristjan Loftsson, CEO of Hvalur whaling company, announced to a group of his employees that Iceland's fin whale hunt will be postponed indefinitely. Hvalur employs up to 150 people during the summer whaling season, and an unconfirmed number are expected to lose their jobs at Hvalur. Loftsson cites destroyed facilities in Japan, coupled with limited opportunities for exporting fin whale meat due to a mood of austerity within Japanese society, as the primary reasons for the decision. Japan is the only buyer for Icelandic fin whale meat.

Lagging Japanese exports is not the only troubling front for Iceland's whaling industry. In an attempt to avoid a financial meltdown, the crisis-struck Nordic country is current under review for accession into the European Union, and its escalating whaling and export of whale products is at odds with the EU's staunchly anti-whaling legislation. As late as June 2010, Iceland continued to thumb its nose at the EU's request to cease its whaling operations, but as its economy continues to crumble, Iceland may be forced to reconsider its contentious position on whaling, and instead strategically weigh the long-term political and economic gains of giving whaling up versus continuing to willfully disregard prevailing attitudes of the vast majority of the world's citizenry.

Domestically, we continue to make strides in calling attention to Iceland's escalating whaling program. Buttressed by the support of more than 80,000 emails forwarded to Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke and Secretary of Interior Kenneth Salazar collected by the American Cetacean Society and five collaborating NGOs, the Obama Administration is threatening to impose trade sanctions against Iceland under the U.S. Pelly Amendment (aka, Fisheries Protective Act of 1967). Under Pelly, countries engaging in whaling or trade whale may face trade sanctions against any of their products that enter the United



Minke Whale

IWC, cont.

States. In Iceland’s case, this primarily applies to frozen fish and seafood products (e.g., Icelandic cod). While the U.S. has yet to impose trade sanctions against a nation on account of its whaling activities, the authority to do so is a continuing threat.

In preparation for this year’s meeting of the IWC, Iceland has submitted its quota proposal and as expected, it is ridiculously high. And unlike Norway and Japan, there is no indication that domestic consumption of whale meat is abating; paradoxically, fin whale meat is regarded as ‘exotic’ (relative to minke whale) and consequently domestic consumption (including tourism consumption) is increasing. Meanwhile, minke whale hunting in Iceland continues. Last year 60 minke whales were killed.

Norway: Whaling in Crisis

By far, the most encouraging news on the whaling front is that Norwegians appear to be losing their collective appetite for whale meat. While domestic consumption has been diminishing for a number of years, many supermarkets are now refusing to purchase the meat. Furthermore, Norway cannot export the whale meat it does catch. Japan will not purchase it because it is perceived as “contaminated” and in fact, minke whale meat caught by Norwegian whalers typically has very high levels of bacteria.

Contrary to indicators of environmental attitudes, a spokesperson for the Norwegian Minke Whalers Association contend that Norwegian whaling is threatened more by ready-to-eat processed food rather than by social attitudes towards consuming whales or criticism from environmental NGOs. The Association has requested government assistance to keep the dying industry afloat, arguing that minke whale populations will increase significantly should their hunts end, bringing whales in direct conflict with humans for ever-diminishing fish resources. It is also seeking assistance with government marketing efforts so that supermarket chains will once again embrace and promote the sale of whale meat. It’s uncertain whether they will receive such assistance. Norwegian whalers are allowed to kill 1,286 minke whales between April 1 and August 31 of this year, though it is unlikely that they will take even half of that quota. There are currently 20 vessels in the Norwegian whaling fleet, down from 60 during the 1960s.

Norway’s quotas and catches over the last decade:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Quota</u>	<u>Catch</u>
2000	655	487
2001	549	552
2002	671	634
2003	711	647
2004	670	543
2005	796	639
2006	1052	546
2007	1052	597
2008	1052	536
2009	886	484
2010	1286	464

Average annual catch, 2000-2010 = 557 whales

Source: Kate O’Connell, WDCS

Resurrecting the 2010 “Compromise Plan” to legitimize Commercial Whaling:

The agenda for the 2011 annual meeting of the IWC has been published and much to the surprise of the conservation NGO community, it includes a Resolution by Chile, New Zealand, and the United States to “Maintain Progress on the Future of the IWC” (the ‘Future of the IWC’ being an innocuous name for the “Compromise Plan” advanced during the 2010 meeting to suspend the international ban on whaling for a period of ten years). The Obama Administration, led by IWC Commissioner Monica Medina, spearheaded the initiative, which ultimately resulted in an impasse at last year’s meeting, owing in large part to the advocacy of the conservation community and the nine countries representing the Latin American voting block known as the “Buenos Aires Group.” The language of the Resolution is vague and non-committal at this point, and does not reflect specific recommendations or positions of any IWC contracting government at this time. However, it does sufficiently convey the intent to resurrect a second negotiated ‘deal’ with whaling nations at some point down the line – whether in 2011 or beyond – and consequently, we would be remiss in our mission of protecting whales if we failed to adequately develop a strategy for meeting this challenge again. I will be reporting on developments concerning this important issue.

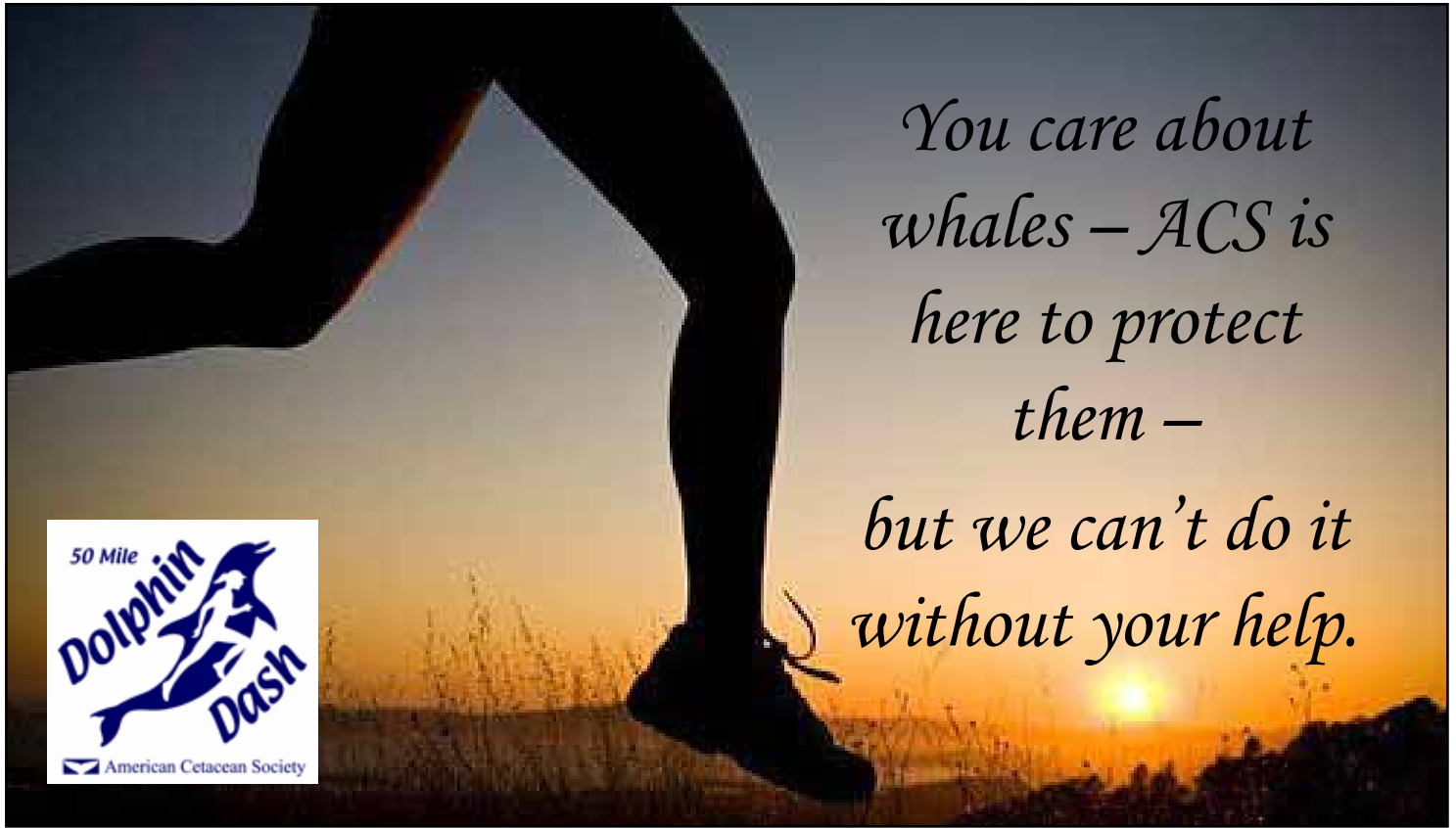


Cheryl observed the Japanese delegation in Agadir last year and will be following their whaling agenda and strategy this year in light of recent events. Photo by C. McCormick

It is a privilege and an honor to represent the American Cetacean Society, its members, and millions of U.S. citizens who care about the protection of whales at this year’s annual meeting of the International Whaling Commission, from Monday, July 11th through Friday, July 15th in St. Helier, Channel Island of Jersey, UK. As is my practice, I will provide real-time updates during the meeting at my IWC blog: “IWC: The World is Watching” (www.iwcblogger.wordpress.com), via Twitter (www.twitter.com/CetaceanSociety), and Facebook (www.facebook.com/AmericanCetaceanSociety).

Thank you so much – for supporting ACS in its mission to protect whales – and for caring about the safety and welfare of whales everywhere!

On behalf of whales, dolphins, and porpoises,



The 2011 meeting of the International Whaling Commission on the Isle of Jersey (UK) will be pivotal in determining the future of commercial whaling. Japan's Antarctic whaling program is languishing, but it's expected to push hard for a coastal whaling program. At the same time, efforts to expand commercial whaling in other parts of the world are being aggressively pursued.

On Wednesday, July 6th ACS Executive Director Cheryl McCormick will complete the 2nd Annual 50-Mile "Dolphin Dash" run to fund her travel to IWC, where she will represent the American Cetacean Society, its members, and millions of concerned citizens in speaking out against commercial whaling and compromises to international whale protection measures. This year's Dash will be held on the Monterey Peninsula. Cheryl's support team will consist of members of the Monterey Bay, Los Angeles, and Orange County chapters – a testament to real team work and dedication toward our goal of ending commercial whaling!

Real-time updates during the run, including start, mid-point, finish, and 10-mile intervals, will be available at the ACS Dolphin Dash Blog (<http://acsdolphindash.blogspot.com/>) and on ACS social media, including Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/AmericanCetaceanSociety>) and Twitter (<http://twitter.com/CetaceanSociety>).

Please help support Cheryl and her efforts to protect the whales that you care about by making a tax-deductible contribution today – and tell a friend: <http://www.eventbrite.com/event/678906628> (or link from the ACS website at www.acsonline.org)

Follow Cheryl's blog leading up to the IWC Meeting, "IWC: The World is Watching" at <http://iwcblogger.wordpress.com>. Regular posts will begin in early June when events begin ramping up.

P.S. Thank you for supporting ACS, and for caring about the safety and welfare of whales everywhere. With every step, I'm grateful for your support!

**Donate Through Eventbrite!
Link from the ACS web site at
www.acsonline.org**

ACS Speaks Out - Seafood Distributors With Ties to Whaling

by Cheryl McCormick

The American Cetacean Society, along with eleven conservation Non-governmental Organizations from the Whales Need US (WNUS) coalition, forwarded letters to the presidents of nine major North American seafood companies expressing our concern and disappointment at their company's decision to purchase frozen fish from Icelandic seafood distributors with direct ties to whaling.

HB Grandi, one of Iceland's largest seafood companies, has played a particularly significant role in Iceland's whaling industry, both in promoting whaling operations and availing its facilities for the processing of endangered fin whale for the export market, primarily Japan.

Each of the companies identified in the campaign was noted to have purchased frozen fish products directly from HB Grandi. HB Grandi has played a particularly significant role in Iceland's whaling industry, both in promoting whaling operations and availing its facilities for the processing of endangered fin whale meat for the export market, primarily Japan.

By conducting commercial trade with Icelandic companies with known links to whaling, these companies inadvertently but directly abet in legitimizing Iceland's expanding whaling operations, providing an economic incentive to the Icelandic whaling industry. Furthermore, providing a commercial lifeline to a dying industry actively undermines the actions of those governments and organizations attempting to effectively eliminate Iceland's rogue whaling.

Company leaders were asked to provide documentation attesting that their company:

1. *Opposes Iceland's commercial whaling and trade in whale products;*
2. *Will refrain from sourcing frozen fish from HB Grandi in the future and will mark HB Grandi as "not approved" on its supplier data base across all its markets; and*
3. *Commits to conducting a complete audit of its seafood supply chain to ensure that no Icelandic seafood product is sourced from individuals, vessels or companies linked to whaling, including fish from third party agents and/or processors.*

We have respectfully requested that corporate leaders communicate their responses regarding these three items to the WNUS coalition at the earliest possible time; we will keep you apprised of our progress in this matter. For those ACS members interested in a list of companies for purposes of an organized or individual boycott of frozen fish products, these seafood retailers comprise the list of contacted companies:

- Arctic Fisheries, Ltd. (Buffalo, NY)
- Coastal Bait & Supply (Portland, ME)
- Entreprises Shippagan Ltée/International Bait and Supply (New Brunswick, Canada)
- Legacy Seafoods (Cranston, RI)
- O'Hara Corporation (Rockland, ME)
- Pubnico Trawlers, Ltd. (Pubnico, Canada)
- Rio Imports (Dartmouth, Canada)
- The Scouler Company (International Proteins Corporation) (Minneapolis, MN)
- Triple "M" Seafoods, Ltd. (Arcadia, Canada)



Icelandic whaling vessels in Reykjavik Harbor. Photo by Wurzellier, 2008

ACS Involvement in Faroe Islands Small Cetacean Hunts

by Cheryl McCormick

In order to effectively influence international issues involving cetacean health and welfare, ACS has become an active member of *Whalewatch*, a global coalition of over 50 NGOs concerned with the killing of cetaceans, including small cetaceans outside of the purview of the International Whaling Commission. Together, *Whalewatch* organizations increase their effectiveness and impact worldwide by focusing resources, casting a wider net of influence at all government and organizational levels, and working collaboratively to accomplish together what would be difficult for any one organization.

Recently, a number of *Whalewatch* organizations released a position statement on the hunting of pilot whales and other cetaceans in the Faroe Islands (below).

I hope that, as ACS members who care about the welfare and protection of cetaceans everywhere, you will support ACS's involvement in this international partnership. ACS is highly regarded by conservation organizations worldwide, and it is a privilege for us to work with so many dedicated, knowledgeable conservation practitioners on issues that are extremely complex and which require all of our collective focus, consistent attention, and resources to achieve positive, long-lasting change.

Whalewatch position on Faroese hunts of pilot whales and other cetaceans:

Members of Whalewatch are opposed to the killing of pilot whales and other cetaceans in the Faroe Islands. We express the following key concerns:

- Hunting methods used in Faroese cetacean hunts cause immense and prolonged suffering to the hunted animals.
- Hunts take place despite unanswered questions over the population status of pilot whales and other small cetaceans in the North Atlantic, particularly with respect to population structure and the impact of factors such as climate change, environmental pollutants and other anthropogenic threats which can cumulatively and seriously impact populations. This calls into question their sustainability.
- Advice issued in 2008 by the Faroese health authorities regarding the unsuitability of pilot whale meat for human consumption is not being acted upon by the Faroese Government. This concern relates both to the lack of review of government policy and official advice on this issue and to the lack of dissemination of information relating to the harmful effects of eating pilot whale products to the general public.

Members of Whalewatch understand that whaling in the Faroe Islands has been considered to be an important part of Faroese tradition for many centuries. We believe, however that in situations where they are no longer necessary for subsistence purposes and where they seriously and demonstrably compromise human health, animal welfare and wildlife conservation, such traditional activities should cease.

Whalewatch collectively represents the views of millions of people all over the world. We wish to highlight the enormous, universal and growing concern and attention that these hunts receive and the consequent negative impacts on the reputation of the Faroe Islands overseas and on growth potential for Faroese tourism.

Members of Whalewatch who are signatories to this statement include: American Cetacean Society (ACS), Animal Welfare Institute (AWI) Campaign Whale, Cetacean Society International (CSI), Dyrenes Venner, Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), Humane Society International (HSI), OceanCare, Society for the Conservation of Marine Mammals, Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS) and the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA).

It May Be The Most Important Thing You Do For the Future of ACS

by Cheryl McCormick

Throughout history, important decisions that affect us all have been made because of very few votes. Even within our own organization, the destiny of the American Cetacean Society lies in the hands of its ballot-casting members.



In the March edition of the *Spyhopper* newsletter (pages 6-7), we announced one of the most important organization-wide initiatives in ACS's history. As you've no doubt noticed over the past year, ACS has greatly expanded its programs, sphere of influence, partnerships, and efficacy from local to international scales in our mission to protect cetaceans and their habitats. We are truly poised on the cusp of a very exciting and challenging growth period. But in order for ACS to continue its growth, impact, and expansion, we need to update the organization's governance documents – Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation – to comply with State and Federal requirements and contemporary best practices in nonprofit management. Our current Bylaws were updated in 1994, while the Articles of Incorporation have not been updated since 1968. *We must have a majority return on the ballots to update these documents! We have an extension period (to mid-July) to receive your ballot.*

The “new” documents allow ACS to have a more flexible national board structure, and they streamline operations – saving time, money, and “people power” – resources that are best directed toward protecting cetaceans. Our current Bylaws require our members to approve the “new” documents by a ballot vote. We must hear from 51% (a simple majority) of our dedicated members. *If you haven't voted yet – that means we need to hear from you! Every vote counts – we are just 75 votes short of our goal of 440 votes – we can easily achieve this goal if you will take this important step!*

Your membership will not be negatively impacted by changes to the national Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation. You'll still continue to receive the *Spyhopper* newsletter and *Whalewatcher*, ACS's premiere publication; you will be eligible for discounts on ACS whale watching trips and merchandise; you will be notified of Action Alerts. If you belong to a local chapter, you will continue to vote for your chapter board and participate in high-caliber monthly programs. Most importantly, you will continue to have the satisfaction of knowing that your membership in the world's first whale conservation organization makes a real and growing difference in the lives of cetaceans worldwide. Both the current and the ‘new’ Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation can be reviewed by members at: www.acsonline.org/members

PLEASE VOTE TODAY! If you have not yet voted for the ratification of new Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation, we encourage you to submit your ballot to ACS National Headquarters at your earliest convenience. Ballots will again be sent out in late June to those who have not responded. Ballot forms can also be e-mailed to you upon request, but please send back the *signed* copy to:

ACS National Office
P.O. Box 1391
San Pedro, CA 90731-1391

QUESTIONS?: If you have any questions about how the new governance documents helps to usher ACS into a new era of growth and organizational change, please don't hesitate to contact Cheryl McCormick, ACS Executive Director, at: c.mccormick@acsonline.org, or (310) 548-6279. See the Frequently Asked Questions on the following page.

Thanks so much! On behalf of whales, dolphins, and porpoises,

Ballots - Frequently Asked Questions

Cheryl McCormick has spoken to ACS members and compiled a list of frequently asked questions about the proposed Bylaw and Articles of Incorporation updates.

What are Articles of Incorporation?

The Articles of Incorporation spell out the legal and financial terms for a business entity to become an official corporation. Each state has different regulations.

What are Bylaws?

The document that contains the ground rules by which a company is run. Bylaws normally establish such matters as the titles and duties of executive officers and board of directors, the timing and procedures for board meetings, and the parameters of board service.

What does the phrase, “No Members” mean in the new (“restated”) bylaws? Does that mean that existing members lose privileges associated with their existing membership?

The term “member” in California nonprofit law has specific legal implications. Under the newly proposed ACS Bylaws, existing ACS members will become “honorary” instead of “statutory.” This just means that ACS will no longer require a quorum (51%) vote of the general membership for issues such as ratifying changes to bylaws and Articles, electing national board members, permission to conduct regular and special meetings of the membership, etc. Members associated with a specific chapter can and will continue to vote for their chapter board leadership – this is an important distinction! The activities of the national organization are separate, in terms of governance, than those of local chapters. This new action at the national organization level does not preclude any member from soliciting a seat on the national board and subsequently serving in the capacity of a national director/officer. Instead of submitting their name as a write-in on the national ballot, s/he need only to contact ACS Headquarters to initiate that cultivation process. Consequently, any existing member of the American Cetacean Society can opt to be fully engaged, proactive, and involved in ACS governance issues at any level that s/he desires.

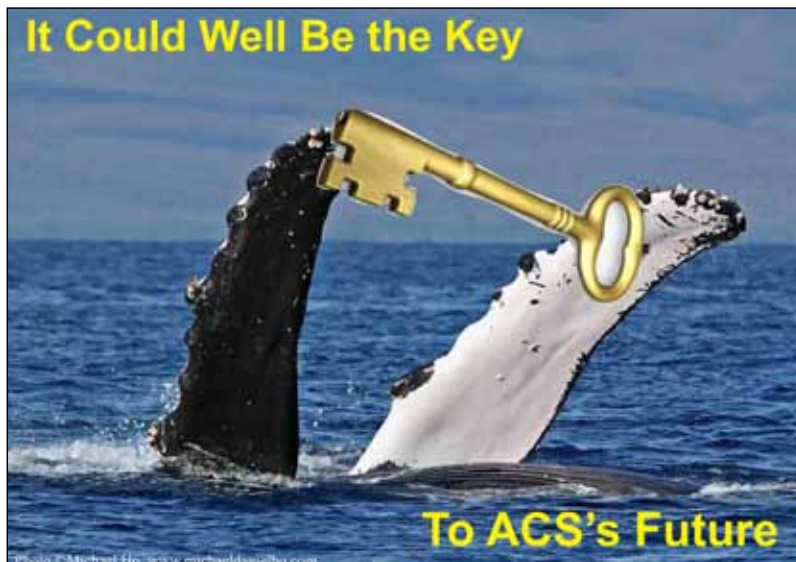
Why Change from General Membership Voting of National Board Members to Directors Being Appointed By the National Board?

As a nonprofit organization grows and evolves to align its mission, strategic vision, and business plan with the realities of contemporary economic conditions and fundraising opportunities, it’s wise for the organization’s national board of directors to reflect the breadth and depth of professional skills, and even geographic and ethnic diversity that ACS needs to remain a competitive, forward-looking organization, and that truly represents the spectrum of ACS membership. Since the national board has fiduciary (financial) responsibilities for the organization and is very heavily involved in defining the direction of the organization and identifying what its needs are - currently and forecasting into the future - that body is highly aware of its needs, from a governance and organizational perspective. For example, say a vacancy arises on the board, and after careful consideration, the board collectively decides that ACS will be best served by filling this ‘gap’ with a director whose professional expertise includes online marketing, finance, and nonprofit fundraising skills. We now have a specifically-defined skill set that we as a board can target in our national board member cultivation and recruitment strategies, and can identify individuals who have these skills and who are interested in serving ACS.

But even with this proposed change, ACS members may - at ANY time - nominate themselves or another candidate for a current or future vacancy on the national board. ACS has always been – and always will be – inclusive to its members and welcomes participation from members in organizational governance. If you’re affiliated with a chapter, you will still vote directly for your chapter board of directors. That is a level of voting participation by members truly at the grassroots level. Chapters, in turn, have a direct and active role in their service on the national board.

Why Shouldn’t the General Membership Vote on Bylaw Changes?

With regard to bylaw passage and ratification, Federal and California nonprofit laws and Corporations Codes governing the ways in which a nonprofit public benefit corporation such as ACS operates are ever-evolving and dynamic. Bylaws should be reviewed on an annual basis, to ensure that this important governance document underpinning the structure and operations of the organization reflects current mandated policies and procedures, as well as contemporary best practices in nonprofit management.



ACS's current bylaws (adopted in 1994) require that the general membership votes to approve changes to bylaws, by a quorum (51%). For example, if ACS has 1,000 members, then every year 510 of those members would have to submit a ballot, and of those ballots cast, 260 (51%) would need to vote "yes" to approve the changes. Researching new and changing nonprofit code, law, and best practices is the job of the ACS Executive Director, who reports his/her findings and recommendations to the Governance Committee of the National Board.

The ability to make changes to the bylaws quickly, at the board level, benefits ACS tremendously - it allows us to devote a significant amount of resources toward mission-related programs - protecting cetaceans - that we would otherwise have to devote to the voting process - energy, staff time, mailing expense, collecting and recording ballots, calling members to remind them to submit ballots to

ensure we receive the 51% quorum, recording results, maintaining ballots for seven years, attorney's fees, and filing with the CA Secretary of State. The current situation drains ACS's limited resources that are better directed toward protecting cetaceans and their habitats.

How do the New Bylaws Improve Board Composition and Structure?

Existing and future chapters will form a Chapter Council, in an effort to encourage and maintain consistency of operational practices at the chapter level, and to ensure unified chapter cohesion, engagement, and equitable representation on the National Board. Under the current bylaws, if ACS had 30 chapters, each chapter would have a representative on the board. With the inclusion of non-chapter representatives, such a board could very well reach an excess of 40 members! The current model greatly stymies organizational growth by new chapter formation. Local chapters continue to be the 'heart' of ACS. We want the organization to grow – by forming new chapters across the country, while still maintaining a manageable board structure.

ACS – Protecting whales, dolphins, porpoises and their habitats through public education, research grants, and conservation actions...

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the American Cetacean Society, I am pleased to announce the 2011 recipients of the ACS Small Grants-in-Aid of Research award. We received many excellent proposals, and lament that we do not have the resources to fund all of the worthy projects that were submitted.

The 2011 award winners are:

Carina Maron, University of Utah, Department of Biology. How does maternal diet affect reproduction of southern right whales (*Eubalaena australis*) at Península Valdés, Argentina? Award Amount: \$500.00

John Wang, Ph.D., FormosaCetus Research and Conservation Group, Ontario, Canada. Estimating the body size of individual Indo-Pacific humpback dolphins of the Eastern Taiwan Strait population using laser photogrammetry. Award Amount: \$1,000.00

Nachiket Kelkar and Mayuresh Gangal, Vikramshila Biodiversity Research and Education Centre (VBREC), T.M. Bhagalpur University. Do 'hotspots' of Ganges river dolphin distribution persist in space and over time? Award Amount: \$500.00

Whale Watching: It's Been Spectacular!



Photo by Dinah Garcia

Blue Whales: Behemoths of the Deep

- Date: Saturday, August 13th, 2011
- Cost: ACS member (early bird, before July 16th): \$88.00
Non-member (early bird, before July 16th): \$93.00
ACS member (after July 16th): \$98.00
Non-member (after July 16th): \$103.00
- Location: Santa Barbara Harbor, CA
- Vessel: Condor Express
- Departure: 8:00 a.m. (please arrive at 7:30 a.m.)
- Return: Approximately 4:00 p.m.
- Meals: Please bring your lunch, or enjoy the many a la carte items and snacks from the full galley, complete with grill.

Like other baleen whales, the blue whale feeds almost exclusively on krill, small shrimp-like organisms that are especially abundant in the Santa Barbara Channel, particularly along the northern edge of the Channel Islands. Blues are frequently seen feeding in the same krill patches as humpback and fin whales. During the peak of the whale feeding season in the Santa Barbara Channel, it is not unusual to see 5 or 6 different species of cetaceans (whales and dolphins) all in the same area at the same time. The Santa Barbara Channel is generally considered to hold the highest concentration of blue whales in the world during the months from June through August. Don't miss this amazing experience!

To reserve your space on this trip, please contact Kaye Reznick at the American Cetacean Society by phone at (310) 548-6279 M-F, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. PST, or via e-mail at: kreznick@acsonline.org. You can pay by credit card or mail a check to: American Cetacean Society, P.O. Box 1391, San Pedro, CA 90731-1391. You can also link to pay by PayPal at www.acsonline.org

Chapters In Action

Diane Alps, Los Angeles

The Los Angeles Chapter of ACS has had an exciting gray whale season! Our “Ultimate Whale Watch” on March 26 was just that – an ultimate whale watch trip! Bow riding Dall’s porpoise, thousands of common dolphins, a bald eagle and a pod of 10 gray whales made the day exceptional! The ACS/LA Gray Whale Census and Behavior Project has had an exciting season as well. In April and May the gray whale cow/calf pairs kept their attention! You can view the daily sightings at www.acs-la.org/seewhales2.htm.

The Cabrillo Whalewatch Naturalist Program is a long-standing partnership between ACS/LA and Cabrillo Marine Aquarium. We reach close to 15,000 school children, families and friends during the gray whale season. Training for the 2011-2012 season will begin October 4 at 7:00 pm at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium in San Pedro. No reservations necessary – come on down!

We have also enjoyed a great season of our monthly speaker series which meets the last Tuesday of each month at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium in San Pedro. ACS/LA’s own Alisa Schulman-Janiger gave a fantastic look at recent developments with Killer Whales – the Four Ecotypes of the North Pacific. March brought us Dr. Brandon Southall of SEA, Inc. discussing New Findings on the Effects of Noise on the Behavior of Whales and Dolphins. This was a report from his latest project “SOCAL-10” which is an interdisciplinary collaboration of experts in marine mammal biology and behavior with extensive field experience in safely and ethically measuring responses to controlled sound exposures. We look forward to continuing the series each month. We hope you’ll join us!

Save the date, or better yet, sign up today! ACS/LA’s annual “Summertime Blues Whale Watch” is July 30th. Last year’s summer whale watching was nothing short of phenomenal, and I can’t wait for this summer! Things are already ramping up with friendly humpbacks and early blue whale sightings! See you onboard July 30th! To find out about our monthly speaker series, to become a Census or Whalewatch volunteer, or to sign up for our Summertime Blues Whale Watch, visit www.acs-la.org. Happy Whale Watching!

Kim Valentine, San Diego

ACS San Diego has enjoyed some terrific speakers during our monthly speaker series. These talks occur on the last Tuesday of each month at Summer Auditorium/Scripps Institution of Oceanography. Our most recent series began with Dr. Lisa Ballance, Director of the Protected Resources Division of Southwest Fisheries Science Center, who gave an exceptional talk entitled: “Hotspots: Cetacean species richness in the oceanic eastern tropical Pacific.” Dr. Barbara Taylor, Leader of the Marine Mammal Genetics Group at Southwest Fisheries Science Center spoke on May 31 about Hawaiian insular false killer whales. Dr. Lei Lani Stelle, University of Redlands, will speak June 28 on gray whale energetics and anthropogenic impacts.

In February, our chapter had a whale watch outing on board the Jada, a beautiful sailboat owned and operated by our Education Director, Brad Maybury. We had whales and dolphins and lots of fun! For more information on trips aboard the Jada, go to www.sailjada.com. April 17 was the annual Earth Day Celebration at San Diego’s world famous Balboa Park. ACS San Diego and Viva Vaquita shared a booth, and we were very successful in spreading the word about our organizations and the conservation of marine mammals. On Memorial Day weekend, Searcher Natural History Tours hosted a ‘Wildlife Weekend’ on board the Searcher. Celia and Art (San Diego Chapter members) generously donated 10% to our chapter for reservation made through ACS. For more information on Searcher trips, visit www.bajawhale.com.

Yet another great day of whale and seabird watching can be had on board The Bright and Morning Star. To learn more about this 6-hour Nature Cruise, visit www.hmlanding.com. Captain Ben, owner and operator of The Bright and Morning Star, has offered ACS members a discounted price for this trip. Please keep checking our website (www.acssd.org) for updated schedules and events.



Photo by April House

LA Chapter Member, April House, Shares Her “MoneyShot”

Anyone reading this has likely already experienced the thrill, the wonder, the goose bumps, the peacefulness, the emotion, and the very difficult to describe feeling that overcomes you when you are fortunate enough to be in the presence of whales. I truly experienced these feelings for the first time the spring of 2010 while watching blue whales with my husband and other Sea Shepherd volunteers, off the coast of Long Beach, California. I could hardly wait to get back out there to see them! I immediately booked another whale watch and invited friends. I’ve been absolutely addicted to observing marine life since then.

This may not be the sharpest image, but it is my most inspirational image of 2010. I’ve been a SSCS member for years and even a pretty active land-based volunteer, but until I attended the 2010 ACS Conference and took a whale-watching afternoon cruise shortly after my flight landed in Monterey Bay, I hadn’t yet realized just how MUCH I love watching, listening to, and photographing whales. I love all animals, especially birds, but there’s something extra special about whales.

I’ve always been a shutterbug. The photographs I shot with my little

10 megapixel point and shoot while whale watching one magical day in November 2010 inspired me to learn more about photography. I was the only whale watcher onboard without a DSLR camera. That incredibly beautiful Monterey afternoon inspired a new interest in photography. I spent our tax return this year on my first DSLR and registered for several photography classes. Thanks to SSCS, ACS, and especially the Cabrillo Whalewatch program, I’ve found an extremely rewarding new hobby that so perfectly complements my “save the whales” activism.

We grew up with a giant baleen in our living room that my father brought down from where he lived in Alaska. Today, I fight my urge to bury the thing and hold a memorial service for it, and I hope to one day donate it to a museum (if I can get my mother to turn it over to me). Having been born in Seattle and raised an hour north, on the Puget Sound in northwestern Washington state, and having taken so many trips to Alaska throughout my childhood to visit my father, step-mother and grandparents, I feel extremely frustrated that I hadn’t ever been whale watching to discover my passion for whales much, much earlier in life. All I can say now is, better late than never! - April

Wellington Rogers, Orange County

Orange County Chapter had an outstanding meeting with the ocean defenders alliance and Heather Hamza on clearing ghost nets from the Ocean. We had an informational booth about whales, dolphins, and porpoises at the Mutch Center in upper Newport Bay and we hosted a meeting with speaker, Kera Mathes, boat coordinator of the Aquarium of the Pacific, to talk about the urban ocean around us.

Bert Vogler speaks at our July meeting on Day of the Dolphin. Our meetings are the 4th Thursday of each month.

Uko Gorter, Puget Sound

It is often stated that higher latitudes are more productive. While this generally refers to marine waters, one could argue that our ACS Puget Sound Chapter is similarly affected by productive influences. Here are some highlights of what is stirring in our Puget Sound area.

Our monthly Speaker Series meetings remain popular as ever, and we are fortunate to be able to draw from an amazing pool of scientist, biologist, and authors here in our Pacific Northwest and beyond:

- May, 18: Frances Robertson, The Bowhead whale in the age of oil: a brief review of research past and present.
- June, 15: Erin Falcone and Greg Schorr (Cascadia Research), Running with a Tough Crowd: Cuvier's Beaked Whales and Fin Whales in Offshore Naval Training Areas.

No meetings July through August

- September 21: Jonathan Stern (Northeast Pacific Minke Whale Project)
- October 19: Ignacio Vilchis (SeaDoc Society)
- November 23: Marilyn Dahlheim, (NOAA Fisheries)

Our Educational Outreach has been somewhat limited so far this year, highlighting the continuing need for volunteers who have both passion for whale and dolphin education and time on their hands.

On April 27 we gave two lectures on the Washington State ferry (Seattle-Bainbridge) to students of Tahoma Middle School (Enumclaw) as part of Sound Off.

The annual Orca Sing was held on Saturday, June 18 at Lime Kiln Point State Park, on San Juan Island. The City Cantabile Choir, directed by Fred West, sang for our orcas. ACS-Puget Sound is one of the co-sponsors and was on hand with a booth. ACS/PS board members Ann Stateler and Odin Lonning performed their Tlingit tribute.

ACS-Puget Sound Chapter is pleased to announce two Student Travel Grants of \$500 each. These travel grants are offered to graduate and undergraduate students living and studying in the Pacific Northwest (WA, OR, ID, AK, and BC), to present their accepted oral or poster presentation at the next biennial conference of the Society for Marine Mammalogy in Tampa, Florida (Nov. 26 – Dec. 2, 2011). For more information go to: www.acspugetsound.org/grants

Please check our website (www.acspugetsound.org) and our new Facebook page for more updates.

Sabena Siddiqui, Student Coalition

The American Cetacean Society Student Coalition has just wrapped up a successful first semester. We are thrilled to begin our transition from our solid base of dedicated and enthusiastic Indiana University members to a coalition that encompasses all members across the nation that are defined as students. With Elizabeth Trevizio's internship at Shedd Aquarium, Sabena Siddiqui's internship with the Dolphin Communication Project, and Tamar Brendzel's limnology research, the officers will return in the fall with a unique and broad set of experiences, skills, and knowledge concerning many relevant issues for the student coalition. This summer the officers and core members will be working together via Skype and telephone on expanding to the national level. Sabena Siddiqui will shift her focus from the inner workings of the Indiana chapter to recruitment and engagement. She will be working with Kasey Leigh Moore with inspiring elementary aged students and dedicated high school students in addition to the college students across the country that are interested in joining our campaigns or starting their own in their home universities and communities. Tamar Brendzel will take over as president of the Indiana chapter and continue working on campaigns focused on the broader marine ecological issues such as sustainable seafood and plastics in the oceans. The student coalition has given out over 500 Monterey Bay Seafood Watch cards in the Indiana community at various hot spots around campus in addition to festivals. William Bobe, an IU member, will be the research coordinator working closely to advance the coalition's skills and experience in policy letter writing on conservation issues. The student coalition plans to organize over the summer to bring guest speakers to Indiana University and continue fund raising in addition to expansion and recruitment.

Chapters, cont.

Diane Glim, Monterey Bay

Excellent presentations were made at recent monthly meetings of the Monterey Bay Chapter, which are held at the historic Boatworks Building of Hopkins Marine Station in Pacific Grove, CA.

Dr. George Somero addressed the chapter in February with a fascinating talk about climate change and its effects on the world's oceans and its inhabitants. With a long history conducting research in the Antarctic, Dr. Somero was able to graphically illustrate the environmental changes taking place there over the last several decades. Photographs of penguins up to their necks in snow when they should be nesting on ice were illustrative of the problems wildlife are facing.

Dan Linehan, an environmentalist representing the Surfriders Foundation, discussed the insidious effects of plastics in the world's waterways. Encouraging the audience to give up plastic packaging whenever possible, Dan showed the horrible results of wildlife and plastic interaction. As plastic particles never really break down completely, fish and birds eat the tiny particles as a food source with no nutritional value. Currents carry discarded plastics to establish gigantic islands of floating waste around the globe.

April was Viva Vaquita month, with speaker Dr. Tom Jefferson giving our chapter an update about recent developments concerning the world's most endangered marine mammal. Unless all gill nets are removed from the vaquita habitat in the northern Gulf of California, there is little hope for the survival of the tiny porpoise. Because the vaquita range is also fished by local residents on a subsistence level, the charismatic cetacean is on the verge of extinction. Find out where your shrimp is caught. If it is wild caught Mexican shrimp from the Gulf of California, there is a likelihood that those same nets have inadvertently captured doomed vaquita.

The Viva Vaquita Task Force, a coalition of concerned conservationists, provided information about the vaquita to 60,000 participants at the Sea Otter Classic bicycle event in Monterey. Vicki Vaquita, a life-sized model, was the first introduction to the highly endangered marine mammal that most visitors had ever encountered.

The Naval Postgraduate School invited local conservation groups to campus on Earth Day. The ACS Monterey Bay booth was a stopping point for faculty, staff and students. A senior officer at NPS commented about the large amount of money spent by the Navy on cetacean research. NPS also conducts acoustical studies, and has tracked underwater sounds for decades off Big Sur. With this historic research, the numbers and types of whales can be tracked.

A small contingent of members scoured the beach around Lovers Point in Pacific Grove on World Fishing Line Clean-up Day, on April 23, 2011. Fortunately, not a lot of fishing line was found, but other trash, including plastic and cigarette butts, were removed.

Hula's, a local Monterey restaurant, donated 10% of its profits on Mondays in May to Viva Vaquita, and we are grateful for the fundraiser and opportunity to tell more people about the most endangered cetacean on earth.



ANTICIPATING A MOVE?

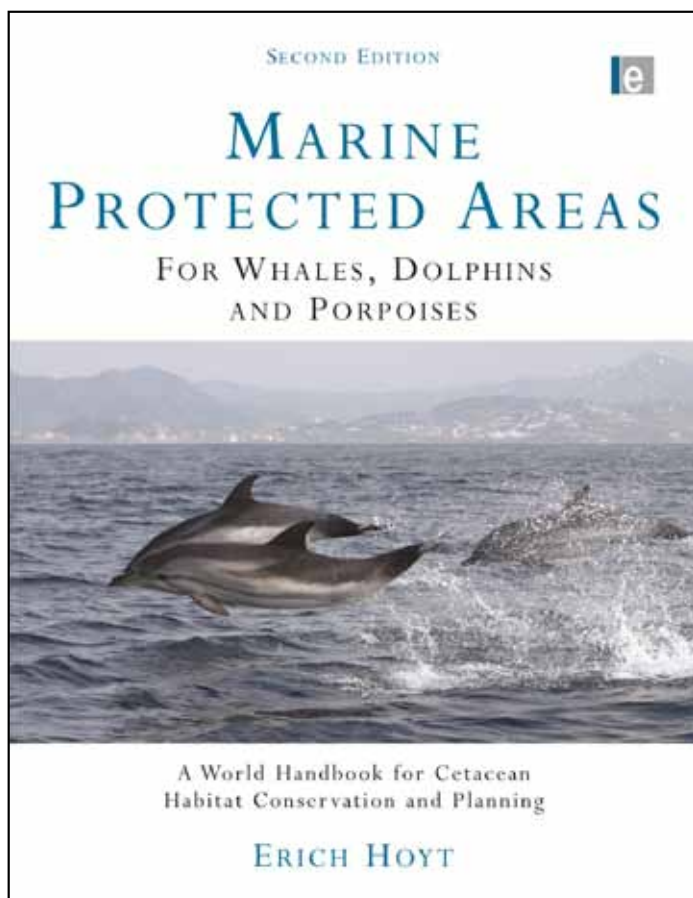
**Please be sure the ACS office has your current
contact information.**

To provide updates, please contact the National Office:

kreznick@acsonline.org

P.O. Box 1391 San Pedro, CA 90733

310-548-6279



Watch for New Book and Poster on Saving Whale Habitat Worldwide

The fully revised, expanded 2nd edition of *Marine Protected Areas for Whales, Dolphins and Porpoises* by Erich Hoyt has now been published by Earthscan (London and Washington, DC) in association with WDCS, the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, and is available through Amazon and other sources. The book has been called a key conservation tool and a springboard for worldwide change in human attitudes toward the world ocean. To celebrate the publication of the book, Erich Hoyt and WDCS have produced a color world map poster showing all 740 proposed and existing areas for cetaceans worldwide, as well as illustrations by Pieter Folkens. The map was designed by Lesley Frampton and Erich Hoyt with the assistance of Calvin Frampton. The poster is available through ACS (thanks to Erich's generously donated copies) or for free download at cetaceanhabitat.org or erichhoyt.com.

Dr. Sylvia Earle said of this book, "In this richly updated and comprehensive volume, Erich Hoyt combines a sense of urgency about the need for action with a clear message of hope. Protecting areas in the sea to give marine mammals a better chance for survival benefits all life on Earth, including humans. As never before, the connections are clear. Never again will there be a better time to act for the sake of cetaceans – and primates, too." ACS will provide a book review in our next edition of *Spyhopper*.

Erich Hoyt is Senior Research Fellow with WDCS, the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, and heads its Global Critical Habitat/MPA Programme. Author of 18 books and more than 500 articles, reports and book chapters, he co-directs the Far East Russia Orca Project and the Russian Cetacean Habitat Project. He is currently a member of the IUCN Species Survival Commission's Cetacean Specialist Group and the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA). He lives with his family in North Berwick, Scotland.



Visit ACS-National on Facebook:

<http://on.fb.me/h5tD7F>

Visit ACS-National on Twitter:

<http://twitter.com/CetaceanSociety>

Join the dialog – See you there!



Kids In Action

Recognizing the Future Leaders at Oak Park

by Cheryl McCormick

Throughout my career as a researcher, college professor, and conservation practitioner, I have had the great pleasure and privilege of interacting with legions of bright, motivated, visionary young people – the “rising stars” and fresh thinkers of their respective disciplines. Even so, some stand out from even this elite group, and represent themselves as paragons of their generation. The students of Oak Park High School – Sam, Becca, Jacob, Kathleen, Justin, and Kayla – are nothing short of astounding and inspiring, not only because of the precocious stage of their active involvement in cetacean conservation issues, but because of the prudent forethought and comprehensive networking they’ve accomplished to ensure that their voice is heard. They have strategically positioned themselves as a force to be reckoned with, and have earned the respect of their peers, practitioners in the marine conservation field, and professionals in maritime traffic and regulation.



Oak Park High School students mentored by Dr. Tony Knight. Photo by Dr. Knight

Additionally, they have independently identified the direct source of virtually all threats to cetaceans and marine habitats – consumption practices and lifestyle choices – and are spreading the word about how the choices we make in our daily lives have an impact on the wildlife about which we care so deeply. Most importantly, they are heralding their message of change from a solid foundation of information and research, and are leading directly by example.

Of course, even wunderkinds can rarely reach their full potential without positive reinforcement, visionary leadership, and encouraging mentorship, and that’s where Dr. Tony Knight, Superintendent of the Oak Park Unified School District, comes in. Dr. Knight is an extremely busy administrator, and yet he finds quality time to devote to these six wonderful students - to cultivate their inquisitive minds, focus their advocacy efforts, and position them into the domain of influence where they will have the most impact among their peers and community. On a personal note, having mentored students myself, I have rarely experienced such dedication to students’ personal and professional development. Dr. Knight is a beloved figure on the Oak Park campus, and his friendly, inclusive style of engaging and reaching out to students is inspirational in itself.

It is one of the greatest privileges of my time at ACS to be working with Dr. Knight and these amazing students to develop education modules focused on cetaceans and marine ecosystems. Many colleagues lament the current state of ocean ecosystems and openly speculate about the future of marine conservation and impacts to cetaceans. I do not share their anxiety to a large extent, because I have glimpsed into the future and have seen the generation in whose hands marine conservation lies – and I am uplifted and confident that they will be much better stewards of the environment than any other generation preceding them.

Mark my words, you’ll be hearing more from this amazing group! And the following article is just the beginning.....

The Whale

By Sam Hirsch, Rebecca Gordon, Kathleen McGeegan, Justin Orens, Kayla Sadwich and Jacob Wyner

A little over a year ago, our group of six high school students and our advisor met to discuss possible topics to explore for a local science competition, the Southern California Edison Challenge, a project in association with the University of Southern California. We had all heard about container ships in the Santa Barbara Channel striking and killing large whales migrating through the channel and decided to somehow raise awareness of this issue. At the time we began, we had no idea that our project would turn into a mission to educate the students in our community, fundraise, and now, a partnership with the American Cetacean Society (“ACS”). The title of the project, *The Whale*, is the subtitle of Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick*, which provides a literary allegory for the undertaking.

We began by attending meetings and conducting research to educate ourselves as best we could on the issue. This research resulted in startling findings: due to an increase in Northwest winds along the Pacific Coast in recent years, a possible result of climate change, upwelling currents are increasing, which is leading to an increase in krill population, the food of large cetaceans. Unfortunately, there is also a huge increase in the amount of shipping in the Santa Barbara Channel due to an increase in imports from Asia, mainly China. Sadly, this is a dangerous combination for whales in our region as the container ships are striking and killing more whales than ever before. We felt we needed to get the word out.

We created a lesson plan for instruction to middle and high school students about our topic. We presented our plan to the seventh grade students at Medea Creek Middle School and incorporated interactive activities, such as looking at our carbon “footprints” by exploring the source of our shoes. Not surprisingly, 100% of the shoes were made in China. This observation reinforced our lesson: the three Ls. By buying Less, Locally, for the Long-term, imports can be reduced, resulting in less shipping traffic and safer whales. Our team stressed the importance of purchasing local and American manufactured goods by wearing matching New Balance shoes manufactured in the United States. We also discussed the issue of global climate change and carbon emissions from these large ships.

Although we did not win the Edison Challenge, we soon came to realize that the real victory would be in increasing awareness of the issue and we hope, inspiring change in consuming leading to a change in import traffic, which would result in a decrease of ship versus whale collisions. How could a group of high school students (and their advisor) match up to huge worldwide enterprises like COSCO? We knew we needed help. Consequently, we sought out local, prominent organizations. We became closely affiliated with the NOAA Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (“CINMS”) and attended numerous meetings held by CINMS. We brainstormed with CINMS to come up with possible recommendations and through our connection with CINMS we were able to visit the Marine Exchange of Southern California Vessel Tracking Center to receive a comprehensive understanding of the Port of Los Angeles’ daily routine. We were also able to join forces with the U.S. Coast Guard and receive valuable information from the Coast Guard about the Port and its traffic. Later in the year, we staffed a booth at our local Earthfest to increase awareness of the topic in our community. The CINMS is now acting on several of our recommendations, including the commission of a study of the issue at UCSB.

We made several voyages of discovery to acquaint ourselves with the issue. On one of our trips to view humpback whales, we were taken by a mother and calf that chose to spend an hour alongside our boat to look at us. This amazing experience last September caused us to redouble our efforts to do what we could to protect these majestic and ancient creatures that share our planet with us.

But the best is yet to come. We met with Dr. Cheryl McCormick from ACS to discuss this topic. She agreed to work with us to redesign the curriculum for middle school and high school students. We are raising funds for this project partly from proceeds from sales of ceramics we have created with the help of our high school ceramics department and partly from an ACS grant. We have planned a “Week of Whales” (approved by the school district) which will include a visit from naturalist Brent Nixon, a recognized expert on whales. We plan to visit all the schools in our district that week to conduct interactive activities such as drawing life-sized whales on the playgrounds. We arranged to screen a movie at the high school that provides a history of the human exploitation of whales. We have also planned a family whale watch charter out in the Channel.

Our ideas are endless and we are so pleased to have the opportunity to raise public awareness of these beautiful creatures and the danger to the whale population posed by human activities—even on shore.

For Kids Who Love Cetaceans

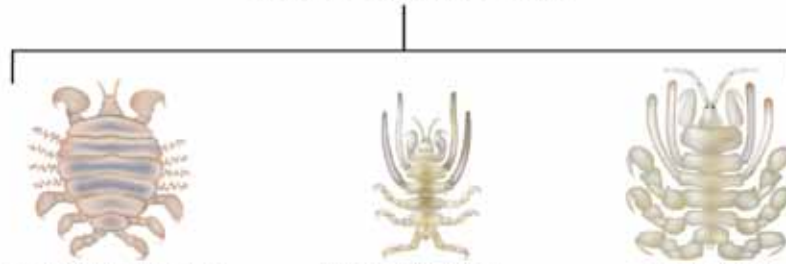
GRAY WHALE RIDERS

Gray Whale Barnacle



Cryptolepas rhachianecti

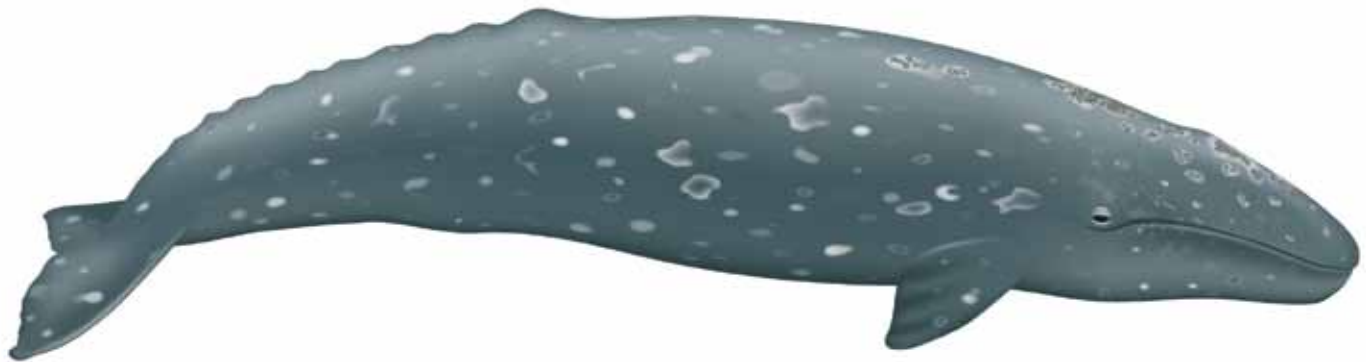
Gray Whale Lice (Cyamids)



Cyamus scammoni

Cyamus kessleri

Cyamus ceti



Some of you may have seen the movie –or read the book– “Whale Rider” (2002), featuring a teenage Maori girl named Paikea, who rode a large whale. While this is a fictional tale based on Maori (New Zealand) legend, there are some very small creatures out there that actually ride on whales for a living.

The gray whale hosts four different kinds of whale-riders. One is a barnacle. This gray whale barnacle (*Cryptolepas rhachianecti*) can only be found on gray whales and nowhere else. Gray whale barnacles attach themselves to gray whales in their larval stage, and quickly grow a hard shell. Their “feet” are the tentacles sticking out to catch tiny plankton. So, barnacles actually stand on their heads.

The others gray whale-riders are whale lice or CYAMIDS. Whale lice are not insects but small crab-like animals, or CRUSTACEANS. The term “whale lice” was given by early-whalers who likened these strange creatures to human lice. Like the gray whale barnacle, two of these whale lice (*Cyamus scammoni* and *Cyamus kessleri*) are unique to gray whales, and cannot be found anywhere else. However, *Cyamus ceti* is also found on other whale species. Whale lice have –besides feet– strange tentacles that are actually gill structures for breathing. In *Cyamus scammoni*, these are curled like a corkscrew.

Whale lice or Cyamids feed on the sloughing skin of whales. Cyamids don’t really hurt the whale, but they are somewhat unpleasant. So, they’re actually not true PARASITES, but more like COMMENSALS, as the whale neither benefits nor is harmed.

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Photo ©Michael Ho, <http://MichaelDanielHo.com>

The American Cetacean Society (ACS) protects whales, dolphins, porpoises, and their habitats through public education, research grants, and conservation actions. Founded in 1967, ACS was the first whale conservation organization in the world.

ACS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit public benefit corporation with national headquarters based in San Pedro, California. We have active chapters in Los Angeles, San Diego, Orange County, Monterey, San Francisco, and Puget Sound, plus a new, energetic Student Coalition chapter made up of college students from all locations. Our members live throughout the United States and in more than a dozen countries.

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