



**GREATER FARALLONES NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING**

Thursday, May 21, 2020

8:30AM – 1:00PM

Virtual via Google Meet



MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Note: The following notes are an account of discussions at the Sanctuary Advisory Council meeting and do not necessarily reflect the opinion or position of the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (GFNMS) or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Copies to: Bill Douros, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, West Coast Regional Director

Call to Order: Roll call

VOTING MEMBERS: 13 present (quorum met)

At-Large Marin: Dominique Richard (Chair)	Education: Elizabeth Babcock
At-Large Mendocino/Sonoma: Cea Higgins	Maritime Commercial Activities: John Berge
At-Large SF/San Mateo: Joe Fitting	Maritime Recreation Activities: Abby Mohan (Vice Chair)
California Resources Agency: Michael Esgro (for Mark Gold)	National Parks Service: absent
Commercial Fishing: Barbara Emley (Secretary)	Research: John Largier
Conservation: Bruce Bowser	U.S. Coast Guard: LCDR Lee Crusius
Conservation: Richard Charter	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: Gerry McChesney (for Chris Barr)

ALTERNATES PRESENT: 10 present

At-Large Marin: George Clyde
At-Large Mendocino/Sonoma: Nancy Trissel
At-Large SF/San Mateo: Kris Lannin Liang
Commercial Fishing: Sarah Bates
Conservation: Francesca Koe
Conservation: Kathi George
Education: Bibit Traut
Maritime Commercial Activities: Julian Rose
Research: Jaime Jahncke
U.S. Coast Guard: LT Jacob Joseph

NON-VOTING MEMBERS: 4 present

Channel Islands NMS: absent
Cordell Bank NMS: Dan Howard
Monterey Bay NMS: Paul Michel
National Marine Fisheries Service: absent
Youth Primary: Ezra Bergson-Michelson
Youth Alternate: Owen Youngquist

GFNMS staff present: Maria Brown, Superintendent; Brian Johnson, Deputy Superintendent; Alayne Chappell (Affiliate), Advisory Council Coordinator; Olivia Johnson (Affiliate), Administrative Assistant; Karen Reyna, Resource Protection Coordinator; Carol Preston, Education Coordinator; Jan Roletto, Conservation Science Coordinator; Sara Heintzleman (Affiliate), Field Excursions & Social Media Manager; Rosemary Romero (Affiliate), LiMPETS Coordinator; Sara Hutto (Affiliate), Climate Program Coordinator; Taylor Nairn (Affiliate), Research Associate; Tyler Mears (Affiliate), Marine Science Educator

Webinar Technology Check-in for SAC Members

Alayne Chappell, SAC Coordinator

Casual roll call check-in to ensure SAC members have access to Google Meet, can mute and unmute, and show their webcams. This is the first virtual SAC meeting taking place in lieu of an in-person meeting due to Covid-19.

Call to Order, Review Agenda, Swear in new member

Alayne Chappell, SAC Coordinator (SAC Coordinator facilitating in place of the chair due to technical limitations of the virtual platform).

New members sworn in:

- Kathi George, Conservation Alternate
- Ezra Bergson-Michelson, Youth Primary
- Owen Youngquist, Youth Alternate

SAC Business

Alayne Chappell, SAC Coordinator

MOTION: Approve February meeting highlights, with requested edits

Vote: 9 yes, 0 no, 4 abstain

Motion passed.

Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Superintendent's Report

Maria Brown, GFNMS Superintendent

[View presentation](#)

Maria welcomes SAC members, staff, and public attendees to the virtual SAC meeting. Thanks to members for their flexibility around the changes due to Covid-19.

Permits

Today's full PowerPoint presentation, including permit information, was distributed to SAC prior to the meeting. Are there any questions about permits?

None.

Enforcement case

1. Bonanza Plane Crash in Half Moon Bay (HMB). Date of Incident: 8/21/2019. Status as of April 2020: NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) case under investigation.
2. F/V Marian in Tomales Bay. Date of Incident: Ongoing since 5/16/19. Status as of April 2020: OLE case under investigation.
3. SUV Crash into Whale Cove, HMB. Date of incident: 12/30/19. Status as of April 2020: Case closed.

4. F/V Mandy Jane. Date of Incident: 12/18/19. Status as of April 2020: OLE case under investigation.
5. F/V Miss Haley. Date of Incident: 11/13/20. Status as of April 2020: OLE case under investigation.
6. F/V Blind Faith. Date of Incident: 5/10/20. Status as of April 2020: OLE case under investigation.
7. Wetland Vandalized. Date of Incident: 5/13/20. Status as of May 19, 2020: Referring case to OLE.
8. S/V Freedom. Date of Incident: 5/19/20. Status as of May 19, 2020: Referring case to OLE.

COVID-19 Impacts: Operations

All staff are teleworking until further notice. The facilities and Visitor Center are closed to the public. All site-based operations have been put on hold.

COVID-19 Impacts: Ecosystem Protection

Tomales Bay mooring surveys prior to the June inspections have been cancelled. The Seabird Protection Network's major outreach events for both pilots and boaters have been cancelled. The team is pivoting to online events and presentations. The Kent Island volunteer invasive species removal program is on hold until at least September. The Green Crab removal program in Seadrift Lagoon is being modified to a 2-person operation and may be able to occur over the summer.

COVID-19 Impacts: Conservation Science

All Beach Watch surveys are cancelled. Waiting for approval for staff surveys. Beach Watch staff have increased virtual training and enrichment information. Working on COVID-19 alternative scenario planning, PPE procurement, and impact reports to HQ and funders. The May ACCESS cruise is cancelled. The status of future cruises is unknown.

COVID-19 Impacts: Education

All school and public in person programs have been cancelled. Due to program cancellations, about 30-40% of GFA education budget was impacted from loss of program fees. School and public programs, plus volunteer and docent programs, have been moved to an online format.

New Online Educational Programs

Graduated 23 new sanctuary naturalist volunteers. Hosting virtual Visitor Center field trips. Developing virtual family programs.

Office of National Marine Sanctuaries Highlights

Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS) nomination five-year review. Public comment period closes June 15. Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary (FGBNMS) expansion. Public comment period closes July 3. Capitol Hill Ocean Week 2020 virtual conference Tuesday, June 9 (capitolhilloceanweek.org).

Abby Mohan: Are there any staff impacts expected as a result of Covid-19 (furloughs or layoffs?)

Maria Brown: There is no indication that there will be any layoffs or furloughs for federal staff. For Greater Farallones Association (GFA) staff, we will be able to hear about that during the annual GFA report to the SAC. Or, Francesca is a representative of GFA as a board member so she may be able to provide more information.

Francesca Koe: The board, staff, and executive director, Deb Self, have worked really hard to look at budgets and funding to make sure we can accommodate staff during this unusual time. At this time, there are no anticipated layoffs.

Regarding nominations for a new sanctuary site, do all nominations have to sit for a five-year period as pending?

Maria: No. We can look into move the nomination forward at any time during that five-year period.

John Berge: This is outside the sanctuary's mission, but did any parties involved with the sanctuary post comments to the Environmental Protection Agency's "Strengthening Transparency in Regulatory Science" proposed rule?

Maria: No. We didn't make a comment through the sanctuary. If we had, it would have gone through the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS). However, we will inquire to see if there were national comments on that.

Dan Howard: Regarding the FGBNMS proposed expansion, FGBNMS is seeking public comments and is interested in comments from other site councils. Note that the final boundary option that the FGBNMS Advisory Council is recommending includes a larger boundary than previously proposed. It's a controversial topic with push back from the oil and gas industry.

Maria: If the council would like more information on the FGBNMS proposed expansion and/or the CHNMS nomination, we can send out more information by email and schedule another presentation and time for more discussion.

Abby: I would be interested in more information in order to contribute to possibly putting together a comment from the council.

Bibit Traut: I agree that more information would be good.

Richard Charter: I think we should comment on FGBNMS and CHNMS. The CHNMS is an opportunity that will go away if there is insufficient support. It's an excellent nomination package. There is a gap on the coast of San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara County that really needs to be closed, so I would encourage us to comment collectively, and individually.

Cea Higgins: I agree, I think we should comment.

Francesca: I would be interested to hear what MBNMS thinks about the CHNMS nomination.

John Berge: I would support commenting as well.

Barbara Emley: Our Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations had a discussion a couple years ago. As you know, fishermen are not too excited about sanctuaries generally, but particularly MBNMS. There was uncertainty and largely we didn't think we would want to support this. So, as a member of the SAC, I wouldn't be in favor of broad support from the council. Maybe we should have a larger discussion about the pros and cons.

Francesca: I think we need more information before we can make a decision.

Maria: Alayne will forward more information on these topics and we will provide more time for the SAC to discuss.

Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary Superintendent's Report

Dan Howard, CBNMS Superintendent

[View presentation](#)

Dan is back full time. Incredible thanks and gratitude to everyone who stepped in and helped while he was out. CBNMS staff is adapting and shifting to remote activities and trying to do the best they can.

The 2019 vessel speed reduction (VSR) assessment was completed in May and we sent report cards to shipping companies regarding their 2019 cooperation. In the Bay Area and Southern California, we saw significant increases in participation of container vessels. Cooperation jumped from 45% to 58% in the Bay Area. Shipping traffic has slowed overall. Jess Morton was brought on in 2019 and that helped increase our reach. We're preparing to send out annual letters to the companies. This time the letters will be co-signed by the ONMS West Coast Region (WCR) and National Marine Fisheries Service directors, and the USCG. CBNMS is working with the National Ocean Service (NOS) on an economic impact assessment of the VSR program on the shipping industry to evaluate how we want to move forward. The partnerships have really helped in this program, and we have better coordination and communication across the program now. The industry is starting to hear a more consistent message, which will help us increase cooperation.

John Berge: The continued outreach has helped get to a place where word is out there. Getting the USCG Admiral on board was huge because as much as an international company will pay attention to NOAA, seeing the Coast Guard on board will get more attention.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) trap and gear recovery program is effective upon closure of the 2019-2020 commercial Dungeness crab season. Regarding lost or abandoned commercial Dungeness crab trap gear retrieval permit: For two weeks after May 14, anyone can go out and retrieve derelict crab pots left in the ocean. You have to contact the owner and sell the gear back to the original owner at a reasonable price. Or if the owner declines, CDFW will levy a fine against that person to get their crab permit for the following fishing season.

Education programs are shifting online, including a virtual presentation with ONMS: "Exploring by the Seat of Your Pants" in CBNMS and GFNMS. Upcoming webinar: highlights from the *Nautilus* 2019 expedition, geared toward younger audience and families.

The May ACCESS cruise is cancelled, we're standing by for the September cruise, and NOAA research vessels are not operating.

CBNMS staff are working on revising the Condition Report and drafting a report for the remotely operated vehicle (ROV) dives completed in CBNMS during the 2018 *Bell Shimata* cruise in partnership with GFNMS. CBNMS is updating its species inventory database; there is a new entry: *Lamellibrachia spp.*, a tube worm observed during the 2019 *Nautilus* ROV dive.

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Superintendent's Report

Paul Michel, MBNMS Superintendent

[View presentation](#)

MBNMS staff are teleworking, the visitor center is closed, and volunteer and field work has stopped. But everyone is doing well and working hard. We're close to completing the MBNMS Management Plan Review process. Drafts are done and we are waiting on the proposed rule with the Department of Commerce for clearance. We anticipate everything being published in early June, and we want a long public comment period during the summer from July through August. I will present to the GFNMS SAC at the August meeting for your feedback and input. We anticipate a virtual presentation and public meeting on the plan and rule in mid-July.

Francesca: Do you have any insight on what the thoughts and opinions of the MBNMS SAC on the CHNMS nomination?

Paul Michel: One of our SAC members who is working on the CHNMS nomination presented to us. Our SAC did not take any action on it. There was no resolution at the time. We've been tracking comments. The West Coast Region staff have been working on this. There is a meeting next week with the Morro Bay/San Luis Obispo community that I will be a panelist on, which is being coordinated through the WCR office.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Richard James, coastodian.org: The commercial crab fishery loses an enormous amount of gear each year and fisherfolk refuse to clean it up, or pay for others to do so. A large amount of commercial crab gear has been collected off the beaches of Point Reyes during crab season. I want to emphasize that the amount of gear that is here not only entangles whales and mammals, but when it washes onto the beach, it is ground into tiny particles and fish feed on them. A fund needs to be established to prevent this from happening.

There is a recurring problem of off-road driving in a wetland (State property) adjacent to Tomales Bay that is doing great harm.

Maria: GFNMS will be visiting the wetlands site and conducting a damage assessment survey to confirm the wetlands are part of GFNMS.

Presentation: Incorporation of SAC comments on Recreation and Tourism Promotion in GFNMS

Carol Preston, GFNMS Education Coordinator

[View presentation](#)

Maria Brown: To provide context for Carol's presentation: the SAC has been engaged in advising GFNMS on recreation and tourism in the past and we would like continued input. Previously, there was a recommendation for a recreation and tourism SAC seat but that did not pass. In 2016, the sanctuary brought on an intern to research how we can market sustainable tourism, and a SAC subcommittee on recreation and tourism was formed. This is an update from Carol on what the sanctuary is doing to promote and market sustainable tourism, and how it ties into blue economy.

Presentation Highlights: Recreation and Tourism Blue Economy

- A vision for sustainable recreation and tourism: Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary is an international model protecting the health of the North-central California coast and ocean and promotes sustainable sanctuary recreation.
- GFNMS goals:

- Goal 1: People who participate in recreation and/or tourism within GFNMS are aware that they are in a sanctuary.
- Goal 2: People who participate in recreation and/or tourism within GFNMS know the purpose of the Sanctuary is: To protect the wildlife and habitats of one of the most diverse and bountiful marine environments in the world.
- Goal 3: People who participate in recreation and/or tourism within GFNMS are made aware of and practice good stewardship during their activities.
- Biosphere reserve designation: Biosphere reserves are areas comprising terrestrial, marine, and coastal ecosystems are designated “learning places” for testing different sustainable approaches. Each reserve also aims to reconcile biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources.
 - We have reinstated our commitment as a part of the Golden Gate Biosphere Reserve, designated as learning places for testing different sustainable approaches. As being part of the Biosphere Reserve we commit to the following goals:
 - Goal 11: Sustainable Cities: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.
 - Goal 14: Sustainable Life Below the Water: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.
 - Goal 15: Sustainable Life on Land: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
 - United Nation’s Brundtland Commission defined sustainability as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”
- Publications:
 - Created an online storymap with 32 different stops along the shores that go from Point Arena to Año Nuevo.
 - We co-wrote an article with CBNMS for *Marin Sonoma Travel Tourism Guide*, which distributes 40,000 copies twice a year.
- Programs:
 - A year-round Get Into Your Sanctuary series includes kayak trips, boat trips, beach trips, coastal walks and more.
 - GFNMS Visitor Center is located in a major tourist destination area.
 - This past summer, we hosted weekly beach-to-bridge wildlife walk, which were advertised in 12 local hotels.
- Recreation and tourism stewardship programs:
 - Flying and kayaking seabird safe: outreach and instruction for small plane pilots and kayakers
 - Fishing line receptacles for charter boats
 - White shark dive tours education permit program
- Exhibits and signs:
 - Signs at visitor centers throughout the region highlight the sanctuary.
 - Over 70 signs along the coast at trailheads and strategic overlooks inform tourists and people recreating.
- Input and ideas from the SAC:
 - Airbnb Experiences
 - Kelp Restoration Recreation Stewardship Program
 - Blue Star Program for ‘On the Water’ Recreational Vendors with ONMS

- Other?

Discussion:

Abby Mohan: As the representative for maritime recreation, I'm keen on the blue star vendor program. Any way to get the word out about activities that are already happening would be great. Would this expand beyond programs and help broaden greater recreation and tourism within the sanctuary; and would the blue star program be just for the vendors you directly partner with?

Carol: It is to support all recreational vendors, and we would invite SAC members to help get the word out. ONMS headquarters is working to put together criteria for becoming a blue star vendor, so once that is lined up, we will start reaching out to people.

Abby: Great. I'm really excited about the opportunity to help facilitate these connections. It will be really important for the charter industry and coming up with innovative ways to promote the industry will be wonderful.

Bibit Traut: I'm impressed with all of the work that you're doing. It's a very important part of the sanctuary. One thing I want to comment on is the storymap. I think it's a great start to moving people into the sanctuary. One recommendation is that it was missing a lot of biology. Could there be a link to more details for each resource? Or the signage throughout the stops could be linked to a visual of the signs. So that when people visit places virtually, they could get more information and sense for the ecology.

Carol: Thank you. That's all great. We are also doing another storymap with more natural history and science information as a trip out to the Farallon Islands.

Dominique Richard: We have had a couple of Recreation and Tourism Subcommittee meetings. I agree with Bibit that it's important to teach about ecology in the sanctuary so that tourists have an appreciation of why the sanctuary is important. To inspire an appreciation for the ocean no matter where you're coming from, so that when you go home you have that understanding and still feel connected to the ocean. The science is always good to have. Trying to get people to understand the science and how to get that message incorporated into their visit is a challenge.

I don't have anything formal from the subcommittee at this time, but we can meet back and discuss Carol's presentation.

Carol: We have new naturalists, so we have people who are able to go out and convey your messages to the public. We've also been working with artists on newer interpretation signs that have added that emotional connection to natural history and sustainability messaging.

Dominique: We can also have representatives of the sanctuary who are out in the sanctuary convey the message. For example, Beach Watch volunteers can interact with the public while they are surveying.

Bruce Bowser: Thank you, Carol, for the presentation. As a coastal dweller, I'm very interested in this. Bolinas is presently shut down and parking has been cordoned off. There are lots of visitors coming out who want to see the ocean and there's no one there to field questions. The idea of outreach through Beach Watch and marine debris surveys—I second that.

Maria: One suggestion I'm hearing is to potentially offer advanced and additional training to volunteers on interpretation of sanctuary resources.

Bruce: Yes.

Dominique: Yes.

Cea Higgins: It's about promoting responsible and sustainable tourism and looking at how people can become stewards for the sanctuary. I think the suggestions from Dominique and Bruce fit into that.

Richard Charter: Great work, Dominique and crew. Can you provide a potential action for what we might most appropriately do today on this topic?

Taylor Nairn: That's a really good suggestion, Dominique. Let's talk more before the next Beach Watch training. Thank you for your commitment to Beach Watch.

John Berge: I think you are going in the right direction in regard to education and tourism outreach. Great work to all involved.

Bibit: I agree that you are doing great work. I would like to see more of an emphasis on conservation biology in the storymap.

Francesca Koe: Thank you for the presentation, Carol, and for all of the pre-work, Dominique. I would like to join you and Abby for future discussions on messaging. I have specific ideas around messaging and outreach, for example for sustainable food choices. I would also like to revisit diving as a recreational activity.

Ezra Bergson-Michelson: I agree with the thoughts expressed around environmental empathy. I think early age education is extremely crucial for the emotional connection. It is the most formative for long term values and views and provides a base for young people to jump off from, which makes it a priority.

Presentation: GFNMS Response to SAC Tomales Bay Native Oyster Recommendations

Sara Hutto, GFNMS Affiliate, Ocean Climate Program Coordinator

[View presentation](#)

View related document: [Tomales Bay Native Oyster Restoration Sanctuary Response to SAC Recommendations](#)

Presentation Highlights:

- August 2018: Council approved formation of “Tomales Bay Native Oyster Restoration Working Group”
- March – May 2019: Working group met 3 times
- August 2019: Council approved 24 recommendations
- Today: Sanctuary presenting final 26 activities
- 2020 - 2021: Sanctuary to develop action plan to implement activities
- **Breakdown of final activities** (detailed in related document: [Tomales Bay Native Oyster Restoration Sanctuary Response to SAC Recommendations](#))
 - Revisions:
 - 17 retained (minor revisions)

- 5 modified
- 1 removed
- 1 combined with other
- 4 new: 3 research, 1 for permitting language
- Implementation:
 - 9 “Lead” by the Sanctuary
 - 8 “Partner” with others
 - 9 “Forward” to others

Discussion:

Bibit Traut: I really like the re-wording. But under monitoring, why remove “adaptive management?”

Karen Reyna: It was not our intention to remove adaptive management. Our Action Plan will have an adaptive management component. The removal of the term here was based on language related to “ongoing maintenance.”

Karen: Thank you for the suggestion, Bibit. I will defer the answer about potential appendices to Maria. Our goal with the changes to the education section is to take a methodical approach to our messages and materials.

George Clyde: I was an active member of the working group and this is the first time I’ve been able to be involved in a SAC meeting discussion about it because I was not present last August. I just want to say how pleased I am to see how well it’s working out for finalizing the working group’s recommendations. One point I have is on PP5 regarding the artificial substrate: the idea that was stricken there was to put hard artificial substrate into the bay for the purpose of restoring native oysters; I want to clarify that that wasn’t the intention. The intention (or one of the intentions) was to assess the existing artificial that is in the bay, which already serves as a host for habitat for restoration (e.g., derelict piers). But I think the language you’ve come up with is great and still encompasses the ability to do that, so I appreciate that. Lastly, just a point of information is that last year, Marin County established two funded working groups on natural adaptation strategies for sea level rise: one for Stinson Beach and one for Tomales Bay. This is a representative group that is just beginning studies within the bay, and these studies and these recommendations will be very useful for developing strategies for Tomales Bay.

Sara Hutto: Thank you for those comments. We have been interfacing with those projects and ensuring alignment.

Karen: We have all of the maps and we’ve shared them. The maps and all of the associated information that accompanied those maps are already in the process of being discussed with other entities. We’re already very active in PPI.

Bibit: Can we include the outreach messages that the working group identified in an appendix?

Maria: I would love to see your messages and other comments that the working group came up with, I can’t recollect if they were forwarded to the sanctuary.

Bibit: I actually saw later that all the outreach and education material was included later in the list. I just wanted to be sure it was included.

Maria: Yes, thank you. We definitely want to include those messages that the working group developed into our native oyster resiliency planning.

Member Reports

Dominique Richard, Community-at-Large, Marin: Beach Watch surveys have been suspended. I do some sampling for Tomales Bay Watershed Council, but we can't sample in the state and national parks right now, which drops 4-5 sites that we do. We were asked to talk about dealing with Covid-19. My concern is for tourism. Inverness has been closed and beginning to reopen. We still have a lot of people and tourists coming up here, they go to closed beaches and park in areas with barriers. It's been a challenge.

George Clyde: Community-at-Large, Marin: Gray whale have been observed in Tomales Bay. We see that occasionally and it's always exciting to hear. We have a big issue here around boat launching. In Bodega Bay, recreational boat launches have been open for a while, but Marin County's have not been open. In terms of social distancing on a boat, that's difficult. It's tough to comply with standards on a boat. We're trying to figure out how we can cope with that in good faith.

Elizabeth: There is some guidance from other states that have reopened their boating operations. The CDC also has guidance in their new report.

Abby Mohan, Maritime Recreational Activities: Covid-19 has been devastating for the maritime recreation industry. All of the staff have been put on furlough. Charter boats can't operate but are still paying a lot of premiums and PPP loans are difficult to qualify for. There is not a lot of guidance and figuring out how to move forward is going to be very challenging with fewer people allowed on a boat. Companies have pivoted to manufacturing gear. The company I work with is working with the Chamber of Commerce to figure out a way forward, protocols and partnerships. I'm excited about the blue star program because keeping people connected to the sanctuary will be incredibly valuable to small business owners.

Barbara Emley, Commercial Fishing: There has been impact from Covid-19 on selling fish. Restaurants are closed, which is where a lot of our salmon is sold. However, there is not a lot of salmon yet, so it's been more the other way around.

Sarah Bates, Commercial Fishing (written submission): Commercial salmon season is open. Fishing has been slow and the price started extremely low. Seafood markets have traditionally been dominated by the restaurant industry; buyers and processors are scrambling to identify alternative and new markets. Demand appears to remain high, but previous logistic systems have been unable to respond quickly. We've seen lots of whales and sharks this year, which is a good indication of feed abundance.

Recreational salmon season is also open, but charter boats are not permitted to operate due to viral transmission concerns.

Commercial Dungeness crab season closed May 15. The Working Group identified conditions and whale concentrations likely to contribute to whale entanglement. Crab gear should be out of the water by midnight, May 15.

Commercial crabbers in several ports, including Half Moon Bay and San Francisco within the GFNMS, are conducting gear retrieval projects to remove any untended gear from the ocean.

There have been no confirmed entanglements with California commercial Dungeness crab gear during the 2019-20 fishing season. There were 7 confirmed entanglements with unidentified gear in 2020 to date.

Fishing Vessel *Blind Faith* ran aground on May 10, north of Point Bonita. The boat was a total loss, the captain was rescued by USCG.

Joe Fitting, Community-at-Large, San Francisco/San Mateo: The Board of Supervisors for San Mateo County is thinking of dissolving the San Mateo County Harbor District. They have asked the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) to review folding that into the Board of Supervisor's function and eliminating the Harbor District, which will affect these harbors. The San Francisco Zoo is still working with state and city governments to try and develop a plan for reopening. Unfortunately, someone in the state office lumped zoos in with sports arenas. We're not sure why. So we are in phase four. The zoo is really struggling so keep us in your thoughts.

Kris Lannin Liang, Community-at-Large, San Francisco/San Mateo: No update.

Cea Higgins, Community-at-Large, Sonoma/Mendocino: We had a hard closure on Sonoma coast. It just recently reopened for locals to walk on the beach before 11am or after 5pm. We've had complete closure of state parks, and restrooms and trash receptacles also not being serviced. But we're still seeing quite a bit of visitation, with an increase in the to-go industry and plastic packaging for to-go foods. We're seeing people throwing garbage. I'm worried about the impacts to the sanctuary. Collecting trash and marine debris isn't safe right now unless you have the correct gear. I'm working with state and local parks on how we can reduce those impacts. We coordinate the California coastal clean-up walk with the Coastal Commission, which is a very large event with thousands of volunteers. We're looking at how we can do this in the new Covid-19 pandemic reality. We're redesigning it and looking at how we can have a more individual experience over a longer period of time, or how we can create virtual cleanup events. It's scheduled for September 26th but we're trying to get it extended for more participation. We will keep you updated.

Nancy Trissel, Community-at-Large, Sonoma/Mendocino (*written submission*): On May 8, 2020, the California Natural Resources Agency and the California Transportation Commission awarded Redwood Coast Land Conservancy (RCLC) \$845,000 toward the purchase of the 113-acre Mill Bend property, located at the mouth of the Gualala River.

RCLC has applied for a total of \$2.1M in grants and has a private pledge of \$300k to match 1:1 for community fundraising efforts toward the \$600k goal for stewardship, a requirement to qualify for the grants. The grants will be used to repay the Allemall Foundation (the conservation buyer) and to plan for habitat restoration and public access improvements. This project will go a long way to protect these wetlands and estuary and to educate the public.

My husband and I have taken on performing weekly bird surveys to document resident, nesting and migrating visitors. What a treat that has been during this time of Shelter in Place! Our data is recorded in eBird.

Richard Charter, Conservation (*written submission*): In the Sonoma Coast portion of GFNMS, during the pandemic shelter-in-place order, party-boat sportfishing charters have not been operating until this week, while all public beaches in our State and County Parks and all of their beaches have remained

closed throughout the duration of the County of Sonoma “Shelter in Place” Public Health Order. A range of our local wildlife has become less timid during this interval in the absence of human outdoor recreation, with gulls and other seabirds more visible than usual on land-connected coastal rocks and even on beaches. Commercial fishing and crab fishing have continued throughout the pandemic shutdown as essential activities, with lights on boats clearly visible at night and nearshore crab floats apparent during the daytime. Meanwhile, in Washington DC, several federal agencies have been very busy during the shutdown, using the media focus on the pandemic as cover to accelerate the Administration’s ongoing rollback of key environmental policies and regulations and even conducting an Outer Continental Shelf offshore oil and gas drilling lease sale at bargain basement prices in the midst of an oil glut. Under the guise of COVID-19, the Environmental Protection Agency has put in place a blanket policy that states that the agency does not intend to penalize for a number of violations, including compliance monitoring, integrity testing, sampling, and has EPA lifted certain reporting obligations. The Administration has also been rescinding auto emission standards, loosening important controls on toxic coal ash, and relaxing restrictions on mercury emissions. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act, National Environmental Policy Act wetlands rules, and the Arctic Refuge all are under increased attack. Pending economic bailouts for the oil and gas industry, which had been requesting lease extensions, royalty forgiveness, and other financial aid, have instead been limited to granting oil companies the ability to store cheaply-acquired oil in the National Strategic Petroleum Reserve to sell back to the public after oil prices recover, arranging favorable loan terms to try to bail out struggling petroleum companies, and “case-by-case” consideration by the Interior Department of other rescue requests from various petroleum industry players. With virtually all oil storage in global markets at capacity in the context of Saudi-Soviet Union overproduction, and amidst diminished demand due to COVID-19, a host of laden oil tankers has backing up in Southern California waters and elsewhere. Related to the GFNMS waters, the USFWS has been seeking an early agenda item from the California Coastal Commission for reconsideration of the necessary federal consistency determination that would grant state approval to their proposed Southeast Farallones Island Brodifacoum poison drop. The unanticipated sudden transition to online hearing formats by the Coastal Commission necessitated by the pandemic has sensitized the Commission to the uncertainties of taking up controversial items in a virtual online meeting format. This concern over what will almost certainly be a very controversial agenda item has delayed the calendaring of this topic from what had been originally planned for the Commission’s now-cancelled “in-person” June 2020 meeting in Rohnert Park, pushing consideration of this item back to what will likely be a “virtual” meeting, still to be scheduled later in the summer or fall of this year, at the earliest. At same time, a major national controversy has arisen over whether or not the Interior Department’s Bureau of Land Management (BLM) can legally limit testimony to only online public comments about their pending controversial hydrocarbon lease sales in various states, so the conduct of “virtual” meetings on issues of public interest is presently coming under increasing scrutiny amidst a push for congressional intervention in the use of online-only public comment formats.

Maria: GFNMS submitted a request to ONMS to conduct Beach Watch surveys on closed beaches to get a baseline. Unfortunately, we were not given approval.

Richard: Thanks Maria. I figured that the precautionary principle coupled with legitimate liability concerns would likely preclude the use of this unique time to gather baseline data from all of the closed Sonoma Coast beaches and other areas with no human use during this time. But thank you for making the effort.

Bruce Bowser, Conservation (written submission):

- **Bolinas, Agate, and Palo Marin beaches are closed.**

On March 18th, Marin County office of Health & Human Services ordered all parks closed and therefore

parking around parks were barricaded and taped off. Brick 'n Mortar bathrooms were locked and porta-potties brought in. Highway electronic signs along the Lagoon informing that "BEACHES CLOSED." Agate Beach County Park was closed and therefore I personally did not do 3 tidepool excursions during low tide events in March, April and May. Education lost, trampling prevented.

- **Environmental Action Committee, Waters Committee Meeting.**

May 13 First Virtual meeting. 5 in attendance. Attendees from Santa Cruz to Inverness.

Items of discussion were Climate change and impacts to Freshwater. A groundwater report. A discussion on what is going on in a Healthy Tomales Bay Watershed. An update on Tomales Bay aquaculture activities. EAC staff virtually attend Fish & Game Commission Marine Resources meetings that were held March 17 and April 29. A Coastal Development Permit (CDP) Guidance Draft is in the works. Tomales Bay Oyster Co. CDP lease 430-05 is being monitored.

There was discussion of SB 1093 and AB 2370. There is ongoing monitoring of a lease proposal by Brodsky for increased aqua-culture use of tidal land holdings.

There was broad discussion of vast numbers of tourists coming to the coast and encountering restrictive parking, locked restrooms, restaurants closed and generally nowhere to relieve their biological needs. This is a huge concern!!

- **It has been a year since the State of the Bolinas Lagoon**, a public symposium which was held May 2nd, 2019 in Stinson Beach. An annual report to coastal residents about projects affecting the Lagoon. The best attended meeting to date. Presently, there are many projects around the lagoon that have peaked local interest. My constituents eagerly await the next informative meeting.
- **West Marin Whale Watch**
A Stinson Beach couple with a bird's eye view, started a warning system for whale sightings in Bolinas Bay. If you are in the neighborhood 1-415-868-6264 to register, just text "subscribe". A offer to both report and be informed.

Francesca Koe, Conservation (*written submission*): Greater Farallones Association (GFA) is doing a lot of contingency planning to respond to COVID; seeking both NOAA approval and GFA Board approval for restarting field work where safe and feasible. GFA qualified for a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan and is awaiting Board approval; this is very helpful for keeping staff going. GFA Executive Director Deb Self and staff have really pivoted to online program delivery and are developing new curriculum. A recommended kelp project we should support: The Last Forest Project film (www.thelastforestsproject.com). A recommended book coming from Smithsonian in October (curated by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation) is: "Amazing Ocean: Exploring the National Marine Sanctuaries."

Kathi George, Conservation: There was unfortunately a whale entanglement reported this past Saturday, after the season closed in the central management areas, with three sets of Dungeness crab gear. Fishermen were very responsive and cooperative with NOAA on getting details, and the whale was successfully disentangled on Sunday. I'm a member of the whale entanglement working group and we're continuing to make progress to reducing the risk of entanglement to whales in the crab fisheries. The crab season remains open north of Sonoma/Mendocino line through September. There is an option to participate in a meeting regarding the management of the northern fisheries that I will distribute.

Elizabeth Babcock, Education: Museums, zoos, and aquariums have been hit hard with economic impacts. The California Academy of Sciences remains closed. We're hoping for mid-summer reopening, but we have a number of contingency plans. We have essential services workers taking care of the animals and plants. We are delivering most of education programs online including youth internships.

This is my last meeting. My term is ending and I'm not going to renew. In Bibit you have an amazing advocate for the education community. I'm recalibrating what I want to do with my career and free time. I'm excited to continue at the Academy as an advocate for the sanctuary and hoping to still host the SAC retreat in October. The academy remains committed to being an outreach channel for the sanctuary.

Maria: Thank you so much. You've brought an amazing perspective to the SAC, and you'll be missed. You'll be receiving a certificate in the mail for your service!

Bibit Traut, Education: The LiMPETS Scientific Advisory Committee had a virtual meeting that was run very well, and the committee is moving forward. There are some issues with funding, but I'm very happy to hear that GFA received the payroll protection funding. One thing that I'm happy with coming out of the meeting is that they will continue to have algae on the list in general, which I think is great. With Covid-19, it's been difficult teaching multiple biology and lab classes, and I'm grateful for sanctuary and California Academy of Sciences educational resources. I've done virtual field trips. I think there's great opportunity moving forward with these educational resources. Regarding fishing, we now get our fish from a fish monger, so that is something to look for in your communities. There are no public boat ramps in Sausalito but there is a dock that I go paddle boarding from.

Gerry McChesney, USFWS (*not present, written submission*)

- Staff from Point Blue Conservation Science are remaining on Southeast Farallon Island, Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge, although in reduced capacity, as essential personnel for island stewardship. They also are still conducting certain monitoring and research activities.
- Seabird monitoring on the Farallon Islands is showing this to be an early breeding season. Two species, the Cassin's Auklet and Pigeon Guillemot, set record early egg-lay dates. Early breeding is typically indicative of favorable ocean conditions for raising young. The auklet mainly feeds on krill, while the guillemot feeds mainly on small rocky reef fish such as juvenile rockfish and juvenile sculpin. Interestingly, sea surface temperatures at the island were near normal for April (mean of 12.08 °C, 0.4°C above average). In most early and highly productive breeding seasons, SSTs are colder.
- Two new moorings were deployed off SE Farallon Island on April 7 by the U.S. Coast Guard cutter *George Cobb*. These moorings are co-owned by USFWS and GFNMS, and are only for official work servicing the Refuge and Sanctuary. One old mooring was retrieved. The other mooring buoy was lost in heavy seas last year. The moorings were deployed under the Sanctuary Manager's permit.
- The coastal consistency determination proceedings for the South Farallon Islands house mouse eradication project has been postponed while the California Coastal Commission works out details of conducting upcoming meetings virtually.
- USFWS and Humboldt State University (HSU) conduct the monitoring/surveillance component of the Seabird Protection Network, of which the GFNMS conducts the outreach/education component. The start of 2020 monitoring/surveillance work has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, HSU is now preparing to resume work at the Devil's Slide site near Pacifica.

- In other matters, the Pacific Fisheries Management Council is increasing allowable incidental bycatch of shortbelly rockfish (*Sebastes jordani*) in commercial trawl fisheries north of 40°10' N. latitude (near Punta Gorda, Humboldt County, California). The core of this species range is within GFNMS and MBNMS, where it (especially the juveniles) is an incredibly important prey species for seabirds, salmon, and other predators. In just the last few years, large numbers of shortbelly rockfish have been caught as bycatch in trawl fisheries, especially for Pacific whiting, north of 40°10' N. latitude as far north as Washington. As described in their Draft EA titled Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery 2021-2022 Harvest Specifications and Management Measures (March 2020), this change is likely a “result of a climate change-driven distributional shift and/or the effect of large recruitments.”
- See <https://www.pcouncil.org/documents/2020/04/april-2020-decision-document.pdf/> If a distributional shift of shortbelly rockfish results in this species moving out of central California waters, it could have dramatic impacts on the local marine ecosystem. This should be watched closely.

Maritime Commercial Activities Report (*written submission*):

Ship Strike Mitigation Efforts

With the beginning of the seasonal migration of Humpback and Blue whales along our coast, NOAA has re-started the voluntary vessel speed reduction (VSR) program for the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) in the approach to San Francisco Bay (including the precautionary area up to the SF Pilot Station), as well as the Santa Barbara Channel TSS and areas south and west of the Channel Islands. The VSR for San Francisco commenced on May 1, and the southern California VSR commenced on May 15. Both programs are scheduled to run until November 15, although that date has been extended in the past based on locations and densities of whales still in the area. The VSR asks for a reduction in speed to 10 knots or less.

The SF VSR has had increasing compliance, with last year’s data showing approximately 50% compliance. Although encouraging, there is room for improvement.

As a data point of interest, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a significant impact on cargo volumes, and consequently the number of vessel trips into and out of California. Here is data comparing the number of ship arrivals for January 1 through April 30 for San Francisco Bay from 2019 to 2020:

2019	1,126 Arrivals
2020	1,045 Arrivals

This is a drop of 7%.

Based on published container shipping schedules for May and June, there are already a large number of cancelled sailings due to lack of demand, coupled with full warehouses. So, this drop in vessel arrivals will likely increase into summer.

Finally, because compliance with the VSR is measured up to the SF Pilot Station, located about 11 miles outside of the Gate, vessels need to speed up to about 13 knots in that area in order to effectuate a safe pilot transfer. Some ships had expressed concern to the SF Bar Pilots that speeding up for the pilot transfer impacts their compliance with the program. The SF Bar Pilots are supportive of this VSR program and have reached out to NOAA to seek accommodations for this speed increase in their compliance calculations, which are based on vessel Automatic Identification System – AIS signals.

Research Report (written submission):

Research Activities – GFNMS Advisory Council – 21 May 2020

John Largier & Jaime Jahncke

General comment

Most field research has been dormant since March 2020.

ACCESS cruises

May cruise canceled.

July and September cruises still in the works, waiting for NOAA guidance.

Farallon Islands

Operations on the island continue with a reduced crew focused on priority datasets due to COVID-19. Earliest year on record for [Cassin's auklets](#) and [pigeon guillemot](#) breeding.

CeNCOOS activities

Ongoing shore stations (Bodega Head, Fort Point, Santa Cruz Wharf) and offshore moored sensors (Bodega Head, Tomales Bay Hog Island & Inverness, Cordell Bank, Monterey Bay).

Ongoing surface current mapping (HF Radar).

Glider deployed on Stewarts Point line in December – new development.

But recovered March and not replaced until COVID allows operations.

Specific studies

Helen Killeen at BML on nearshore fronts and plankton/larvae: on hold.

Reports & papers published

Krause, J.W., M.A. Brzezinski, J.L. Largier, H.M. McNair, M. Maniscalco, K.D. Bidle, A.E. Allen, K. Thamtrakoln, 2020. The interaction of physical and biological factors drives phytoplankton spatial distribution in the northern California Current. *Limnology & Oceanography*, doi.org/10.1002/lno.11431

Largier, J.L. 2020. Upwelling bays: How coastal upwelling controls circulation, habitat and productivity in bays. *Annual Review of Marine Science*, 12, doi.org/10.1146/annurev-marine-010419-011020

Largier, J., D. Behrens, K. Hewett, M. Koohafkan, M. Robart, D. Dann, R. Roettger, 2020. Managing the mouth of the Russian River Estuary, California. In: *Complex Coastal Systems – Transdisciplinary Learning on International Case Studies*. J.Slinger, S. Taljaard, F. d'Hont (eds), Delft Academic Press, pp 71-86

Need to reach out and list others as well!

Workshops/conferences past

Ocean Sciences Meeting, San Diego, February 2020 – major biennial meeting. See <https://www.agu.org/Ocean-Sciences-Meeting>

Workshops/conferences in the future

Most meetings on hold and many imminent summer meetings have been cancelled.

Anticipate convening a Beyond Golden Gate Symposium in 2021 (Jan Roletto et al)

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security
**United States
Coast Guard**



Commander
Eleventh Coast Guard District

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MEMORANDUM

16004
22 May 2020

From: L.K. Crusius, LCDR
District Eleven Living Marine Resources

Reply to: Lee.k.Crusius@uscg.mil
Attn of: LMR Analyst

To: M. Brown
Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Superintendent

Subj: US Coast Guard Member Report 21 May 2020

Ref: (a) Coast Guard Operations and Federal Marine Protected Area Programs,
COMDTINST 16004.4A
(b) US Coast Guard Operation Ocean Steward
(c) National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Implementation Handbook

1. This memorandum is the US Coast Guard report to the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary for the period of 18 February to 21 May 2020. The following are items of significance:

- a. Operational Hours: In Q2 of FY20, the US Coast Guard executed 54 dedicated ONMS overflight hours with an additional 36 ancillary flights in GFNMS. To date in Q3, 40 dedicated ONMS overflight hours with an additional 62 ancillary hours.
- b. COVID-19 Restrictions: As of the date of this memorandum, the US Coast Guard is not restricting access for commercial fishing or recreational boaters in California. The Coast Guard currently has no stance on restriction of access to Sanctuary or navigable waters regarding COVID-19.
- c. Memorandum of Agreement (MOU): On 15 April 2020, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the Coast Guard entered into an enforcement agreement that expands partnership capability under *state assistance* for state Marine Protected Areas.

2. The May virtual council meeting was attended by LCDR Lee Crusius and LT Jacob Joseph.

3. The contents of this memorandum are authorized for release by the Greater Farallones Sanctuary Council.

#

Adjourn.

Meeting highlights prepared by Alayne Chappell, Advisory Council Coordinator.