

Member Reports 8-24-20

Below are written member reports submitted for the August 24, 2020 SAC meeting. A record of verbal member reports are also available in the meeting highlights at https://farallones.noaa.gov/manage/sac_meetings.html

Josh Russo, Maritime Activities/Recreational

The ongoing projects have been the Red Abalone Fishery Management Plan with CA DFW and the urchin removal project.

Abalone:

I expect the DFW to ask for a 5-year extension on the abalone closure to complete the management plan. I don't see much resistance since no one believes that take is responsible at this time. I did submit a petition to the department that received nearly 3,000 signatures to include a di minimis fishery in the plan. In meetings with the department they had indicated that their intention was to propose a plan that would allow fishermen to take the animals biologists needed for samples. This is approximately 60-100 animals per year. They intended to leave the level of take at this number until the fishery could handle a small fishery of 5,000 or more animals and their estimates were that it could take as long as 30 years to get to that point. My petition was to say that fishermen find value in a smaller fishery that could open sooner so we asked that they allow opportunity at much smaller numbers when it would be responsible. The department accepted the petition and in discussions with the biologists they intend to write the plan now to allow smaller opportunity when it can be done responsibly and at a level that would not affect the overall recovery of the fishery. This would be a highly regulated and restricted fishery. The intention is that the biologists could say they need animals from a certain area to know what's happening there or they need animals of a certain size to check reproductive activity. Divers may be required to dive on a specific day and report to a DFW location for biologists to take samples. There was also discussion during the creation of the management plan of using harvest data to manage areas like Humboldt Del Norte but the reliability of this information was considered unreliable or not accurate by the department so this is an opportunity to experiment with regulations and data collection in a highly regulated manner so that we have more confidence in our decision making when the fishery eventually reaches a higher, less regulated level.

Urchin:

I believe this is reported in another area of the agenda so I'll keep this brief. The state allocated \$500,000 to our commercial effort in Mendocino this year and \$600,000 for statewide Kelp restoration effort. Our Mendocino project is the pilot project for how to proceed in the rest of the state. Reef Check got the contract for study design and monitoring. Our recreational efforts have continued as well. The DFW is allowing us to crush at Caspar Cove in Mendocino as part of the study with Reef Check and the commercial divers. This means the recreational divers can crush in the water. Previously we were collecting them in bags and removing them before crushing and discarding them. A new study is set to begin in Monterey as well and will also be designed and monitored by Reef Check.

Richard Charter, Conservation

The current Administration is rushing to accomplish as much environmental mischief as possible prior to the November election:

Offshore Oil Drilling:

A resumption of the implementation of the Five-Year Outer Continental Shelf Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing Plan is anticipated three weeks after the election, regardless of the outcome, see

<https://www.politico.com/news/2020/06/10/interior-drilling-florida-waters-november-election-310595>

The Five-Year OCS Plan includes a total of six new offshore drilling lease sales off of the California Coast, and two of those lie offshore the Central California OCS Planning Area. A recent announcement by the President that he will not pursue offshore drilling off of Florida and had already “signed an order” to that effect, was not accompanied or preceded by the referenced order. California was not included in the reprieve, see

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/trump-offshore-drilling-florida_n_5f2c7050c5b6b9cff7ef13f5

The Marin County Board of Supervisors on August 18, 2020 held their first reading of a new local ordinance that would reinforce an existing county ban by precluding the siting of any onshore facility serving offshore oil and gas drilling from any coastal lands in Marin unless supported by a vote of the electorate. This would align Marin with nine other California coastal counties and nineteen other California coastal cities who adopted similar ordinances between 1986 and 1990. The final adoption of this ordinance by the Marin County Board of Supervisors is anticipated on August 25, 2020, see

<https://www.sfgate.com/news/bayarea/article/Supes-Approve-Requiring-Voter-Approval-For-15495597.php>

And

<https://www.ptreyeslight.com/article/marin-adds-protection-against-future-oil-drilling>

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge:

On August 17, 2020 the Interior Department in conjunction with the US Fish and Wildlife Service issued a Record of Decision (ROD) formally opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling. The ROD represents the “worst case” scenario in terms of maximizing damage to the Refuge and the ensuring the largest possible geographic footprint for industrialization, see

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2020/08/17/trump-drilling-arctic-national-wildlife-refuge-alaska/>

Floating Offshore Wind Arrays in Sanctuary Waters?

Continued discussions at various levels indicate that there are those affiliated with the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary who might consider allowing the siting of floating offshore wind arrays *within* Sanctuary boundaries, a precedent that, if adopted, could someday erode protections in other Sanctuaries, including GFNMS, see <https://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/explorations/19express/background/wind/wind.html>

“Closing the Donut Hole”:

The Marin Independent Journal noted that an agenda item related to “Closing the Pacifica Exclusion Zone” was to be considered on the August GFSAC agenda and their reporter started making a series of calls, resulting in this story about this topic, see

<https://www.marinij.com/2020/08/13/farallones-national-marine-sanctuary-expansion/>

Upcoming Plans for New Offshore Drilling Lease Sales Off of California:



Kathi George, Conservation

The California Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear [Working Group](#) continues to meet. CDFW is targeting November 1, 2020 for new regulations in the Dungeness crab (D crab) fishery. Cascadia Research Collective, SR3, and The Marine Mammal Center will be conducting vessel surveys throughout the D crab fishery range (Oregon border to Point Conception) starting this fall to inform the new RAMP regulations. The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation is leading efforts to test gear innovations (low-tech (e.g. yale grip sleeve) and pop-up gear) in the D crab fishery. Lastly, there was 1 reported entanglement of a gray whale in August.

Nancy Trissel, Community-At-Large Sonoma/Mendocino

1. The campaign to buy Mill Bend is less than \$50k away from the goal of \$2.7 million. The management of this property on the Gualala River will, among many other things, facilitate the preservation and increase of Coho salmon and steelhead populations and will extend the California Coastal Trail from the Gualala Point Park northward.
2. Beach Watch resumed surveys in July for teams comprised of a single individual or team members who cohabitate. We missed nesting this year, but it is very interesting to see evidence of much increased foot traffic on the trails. In my 12 years on the Mendocino coast, I have never seen so many people on every beach - large or pocket - or on the bluff trails in the Sea Ranch, consistently, for so many months.

Sarah Bates, Commercial Fishing

Pier 45 fire

On May 23, 2020, an early morning fire destroyed most of the contents of Shed C at Pier 45, Fisherman's Wharf. The 10,000 SF warehouse contained storage spaces for 31 fishermen, 1 processor, the Red & White fleet, and the Jeremiah O'Brien. The building and contents are a total loss and there does not appear to be insurance coverage for any of the contents. This is a huge loss to the fleet; we estimate 2/3 of our collective fishing capacity was lost. Rebuilding the gear and capacity will take years. Cause and origin have been determined as unknown and accidental.

Salmon

Salmon season is still underway south of Point Arena. It's been a relatively slow season, though there was a large body of fish at the "football" in late July, which you will remember from the GFNMS rover footage! Salmon are starting to morph out of their summer bodies into dark, hook-nosed breeders.

Crab gear retrieval

The San Francisco fleet is still working to recover untended gear from Pacific waters. We have retrieved over 300 traps and the fishing grounds are essentially free of vertical lines during the summer when whale concentrations are high. We have seen huge numbers of humpback and blue whales this year.

Kris Lannin Liang, Community-At-Large San Francisco/San Mateo

[Rare, giant bluefin tuna off Half Moon Bay have turned the fishing world upside down](#)

Partner/Constituent Groups

California Department of Fish & Wildlife

- Numerous reports (and at least one connection made) of fishing in the Montara MPA
- Working with CDFW, County Parks and San Francisco State University to prevent a repeat of an incident involving a SFSU investigator breaking multiple rules, regulations and laws at Fitzgerald during a sculpin egg sack collection event.

Development



- Big Wave Development [Update](#) (63 residents housed in a tsunami zone, across the street from an airport behind the industrial area north of Pillar Point that'll contribute to the growing gridlock on the San Mateo County coastside)

MBNMSAC

- Barton (Entanglement Subcommittee) and I picked up two [entangled gulls](#) (one survived)

San Mateo County Harbor District/Commission

- West Trail project proceeding quickly
- Meeting scheduled with management to discuss:
 - o Lights (buildings and squid boats in the harbor)
 - o Sand management plan (they don't have one)
 - o Enforcement

San Mateo County Parks

- [Tunitas Creek Beach Improvement Project – Design Alternatives](#) (ADA Access, Boardwalk through snowy plover habitat (Joanne weighed in from CSP), Ranger housing, Camping)
- Fitzgerald Marine Reserve
 - o All beaches closed (Ross' Cove not monitored or enforced – jurisdictional issues)
 - o High harbor seal count = 73 (which is high!)
 - o [#1 on the Beach Bummers list FMR was #1... Pillar Point was also on the list \(as usual\)](#)

California State Parks (San Mateo and Santa Cruz Counties)

- Largely devastated: Big and Little Basin in ruins, Rancho Del Oso ravaged. Holding the lines at Ano Nuevo historic structures. Tons of staff displaced, fighting fires and exhausted.
- Beaches are closed between Pescadero and Santa Cruz, in Half Moon Bay, Pillar Point Harbor and Pacifica – swarms of people wanting to picnic on a beach right now is at Montara, Moss Beach and Miramar – lots and lots of trash

Legislative Action(s)

- HMB banning single-use plastics!
[SB 54 \(Allen, et al.\) / AB 1080 \(Gonzalez et al.\)](#) The California Circular Economy and Plastic Pollution Reduction Act
Significantly reduces the amount of single-use, non-recyclable, and non-compostable packaging and products that burden taxpayers and local governments with cleanup costs and litters our neighborhoods, parks, rivers, and beaches. SB 54 and AB 1080 are identical bills that establish a comprehensive plan to address plastic pollution and the waste crisis.

While you're cooped up:

[Sharks w/ Dr. Sylvia Earle](#)

[Shipwrecks of San Mateo w/ Mark Hylkema](#) (Aug 28)

Bruce Bowser, Community-At-Large Marin

- During the Pandemic, Marin County Parks and GFNMS have suspended invasive plant removal from Kent Island in Bolinas Lagoon
- I have attended 6 Virtual meetings for the Greater Farallones Sanctuary. Committees that have met are the Recreation & Tourism and the Exclusion Zone Committee as well as one SAC virtual meeting. Good for Sanctuary business and allowing essential updates. It is nice to be able to see everyone and still feel in touch.
- Graffiti and tagging on the Bolinas seawalls and revetments seem to be on the rise since the Pandemic. The Seawalls are still being actively rolled over with a new and better adhering paint that seems to be holding up well.
- Rocky Shore docents and supporters of Duxbury Reef in Bolinas have been called upon to react to pandemic visitation that surpasses all expectations. EAC put a call out to docents and others to volunteer to host reef visitation as there have been numerous reports of large scale collecting of snails and urchins beyond previous experience. This spring and summer there were few student groups but a vast increase in coastal tourism.

Ezra Bergson-Michelson, Youth

The Youth Advisory Council met, and we would be happy to help spread the word for recruitment for the GFNMS Advisory Council.

Research Activities – GFNMS Advisory Council – 24 August 2020

John Largier (also see report from Jaime Jahncke)

ACCESS cruises

July and September cruises cancelled.

Farallon Islands

Operations on the island continue with a reduced crew focused on priority datasets.

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 re-deployed on Stewarts Point line in June.

HAB monitoring at BML.

Specific studies

CCFRP ongoing <https://www.mlml.calstate.edu/ccfrp/> ...

Living shorelines scoping for Tomales Bay (County of Marin)

Planning for study of beach dynamics in Tomales Bay

River plume analysis (OPC sediment plumes, CeNCOOS outflow from SF Bay)

Numerical modeling of SF Bay outflow in context of biogeochemistry (OAH)

Kelp forest analyses in context of restoration (Sea Grant)

Working group to understanding seastar wasting disease ...

Nancy Foster scholars Kate Hewett (CC deoxygenation; see mosaic and short-term variability),
Carina Fish (deep-water corals & oceanography/productivity)

Workshops and conferences

No conferences/workshops in recent past or foreseeable future – although weekly seminar series continue, e.g., EOS, BML.

Anticipate convening a Beyond Golden Gate Symposium in 2021