

Member Reports 11-19-20

Below are written member reports submitted for the November 19, 2020 SAC meeting.

Richard Charter, Conservation

1) *Highway One Realignment at Gleason Beach*: Caltrans has received concurrence from the California Coastal Commission for their plan to build an 850-foot-long concrete bridge over Scotty Creek at Gleason Beach on the Sonoma Coast with associated realignment of the highway. The project is to include some areas of rock-faced coastal hardening along the remnants of the present route of Coast Highway One which lie within Sanctuary jurisdiction. Caltrans has promised to restore tidal action to Scotty Creek to hopefully benefit fisheries, but complex site issues related to multiple types of wetlands, ongoing streamside erosion, and commitments to enhanced public access and the Coastal Trail remain to be worked out in detail.

2) *Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing*: The Department of Interior has reportedly been planning to greenlight their new Five-Year Outer Continental Shelf Five-Year Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing Plan, in spite of still-pending legal challenges, and this proposal includes a total of six federal offshore OCS lease sales off of California, virtually surrounding all of the California National Marine Sanctuaries. Indications are that this offshore drilling plan may still be approved by the White House in the coming six weeks in spite of the legal entanglement and in spite of the election outcome. Off the Gulf Coast of Florida, a near-term reversal and removal of offshore drilling protections was discussed by Rep. Scalise in the news media two days prior to the election for waters off the Florida Panhandle that had supposedly been granted a ten-year OCS moratorium by a Trump Executive Action last month. It appears unlikely that the Biden Administration will pursue these offshore drilling initiatives.

3) *Sonoma County Local Coastal Plan Update*: The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors on November 10, 2020 conducted a virtual online workshop on the update of the Local Coastal Plan. Among issues raised during this workshop were requests from the public that improved interactive mapping that correlates onshore features in the Local Coastal Plan with offshore marine protected areas like GFNMS be included in the updated LCP, and this is hopefully being done by Permit Sonoma planners.

4) *State MPA Compliance Workshops*: A series of online public workshops to discuss a range of issues related to compliance with state Marine Protected Areas continues, with an online workshop on this topic focused on the Sonoma Coast region on November 16, 2020.

Kathi George, Conservation

The Marine Mammal Center participated in vessel surveys with Cascadia Research Collective and SR3 to document whale occurrence and distribution for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW's) Risk Assessment and Mitigation Program (RAMP) for the commercial Dungeness crab fishery. The data was used (along with other data and sources) to inform relative risk of entanglement. (You can view all data [here](#)). Following the data review and recommendations by CDFW and the Working Group, the Director delayed the season until December 1st, with another review prior to that date. New data has been collected and is currently being reviewed by CDFW. The Working Group will meet on November 23rd to evaluate the risk and recommend a management action to the CDFW Director, who will make his final decision regarding the opening of the season.

Barbara Emley, Commercial Fishing

For the second year running the local Bay Area community has lost its Thanksgiving Crab.

This means that for the second year running the local fishing fleet has lost its Thanksgiving Crab.

Crabbing was the remaining viable fishery for our local fleet. Salmon has been slow and variable, but we could always depend on crab. Now we are being told that we may not crab until January. We haven't had any decent income since August.

This is because of potential entanglements with Humpback whales. A sub-population of Humpback whales from Mexico is endangered. They are indistinguishable from our local humpback whales which are experiencing healthy populations. Populations so healthy in fact that it's hard to avoid them when their food (anchovies) is abundant in areas where we set traps.

We have been working to do what we can to adjust our gear so that it's less likely to entangle whales. Last year one whale was entangled.

At the same time, the recreational crabbing has been able to continue uninterrupted. This doesn't make sense. Their gear is the same as ours.

Bibit Traut, Education

- Continued to reach out to diverse groups to advertise open education/alternate seat shared information about virtual opportunities to get "Into Our Sanctuary with current and past students.
- One student was so excited about the work on deep sea corals, that they are presenting a report on them to our course.
- continued to work with students remotely and to engage them in the work of LiMPETS by developing online field trips.

Bruce Bowser, Community-At-Large Marin

- At a most recent Bolinas Lagoon Advisory Council (BLAC) meeting held October 16, 2020 there was considerable comment given with regards to visitation to the Coast during the Covid- 19 Pandemic. Visitation has increased exponentially to both Bolinas Lagoon, Duxbury Reef and other coastal sites and beaches under the purview of Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (GFNMS). Personal accounts were given by members of the Committee with regards to increased clamming activities with-in the Lagoon mud-flats and the poor management practices exhibited by individuals doing clam digging and piling of sediments in mounds that are not easily smoothed by tidal activity. This practice disrupts the sediment and substrate to the degree that it is detrimental to the ebb and flow to Lagoon sediment transport and therefore to marine life. Ask: Note to County Parks that additional attention is required.
- Committee members of the BLAC spoke of unauthorized and illegal collecting of mollusks and invertebrates from Duxbury Reef. Violations occur on a daily basis and only involved and activated intertidal educators are aware of these misdeeds. Some have tried in vain to stop these practices. While fishing is allowed on Duxbury reef the removal of invertebrates and shellfish is strictly prohibited. In both instances Marin County Parks and Open Space District has jurisdiction over Lagoon and Reef management and violation enforcement is needed.
- Recreation & Tourism Committee and the Exclusion Zone Committee meetings are ongoing.

- SAC virtual meetings **Rock**. Good for Sanctuary business and allowing for essential updates. It is nice to be able to see everyone and still feel we are all looking out for our Sanctuary. Great to be in touch.
- On Thursday 11/12 the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin (EAC) organized a Webinar as part of their Our Coastal Climate: Rising Waters in West Marin, series on Sea Level Rise (SLR) with key presenter Charles Lester former ED of the CA Coastal Commission and expert witness on how the dynamic effects of SLR are affecting the CA coast. This was the most informative and best presented lecture I have seen to date. One can access the recorded Zoom webinar on the EAC website, www.eacmarin.org within a few days. Well worth the hour +
- EAC, Rocky Shore docents and supporters of Duxbury Reef in Bolinas have been stepping up over-site due to King Tides visitation. Rocky Shore EAC Docents and others are hosting reef visitation at peak low tides to thwart collecting of snails, urchins and all invertebrates. This Pandemic has caused a vast increase in coastal tourism with very little supervision.

Nancy Trissel, Community-At-Large Sonoma/Mendocino

The Fall report from Mendocino area:

1. Dogwood Timber Harvest Plan in the Gualala River watershed - In September, the Center for Biological Diversity joined Friends of Gualala River to file a federal lawsuit against Gualala Redwood Timber Company, citing violation of the Endangered Species Act.

[excerpt from an article in The Mendocino Voice, by Lana Cohen, September 25, 2020:]

“This logging plan would log over 340 acres of river floodplain, a very, very important stand of forests remaining along the Gualala River and would have real negative impacts on the river’s wildlife and the recovery of the river,” Peter Galvin, program director and co-founder of the Center for Biological Diversity said over the phone.

...

Friends of Gualala River (FoGR), a nonprofit dedicated to protecting the Gualala River watershed and the species that rely on it, and the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD), a nonprofit focused on habitat and wildlife protection in the United States are seeking a court order to stop a logging venture, called the Dogwood Timber Harvest Plan, that would take place in the Gualala River floodplain, a river-adjacent Redwood forest which is inhabited by multiple species listed as threatened or endangered.

2. The campaign to buy Mill Bend successfully raised their goal of \$2.7 million to close escrow on the 113 acres. Next steps include a complete conservation assessment of the property and the installation of a gate to the lower river area to prevent motor vehicles from entering the rocky beach and riverbed. Pedestrian traffic is welcome and the gate will not impede them nor those carrying watercraft such as kayaks or stand up paddle boards.

3. Beach Watch surveys are now mostly covered. Solo surveyors and teams living in the same household (given permission in July) have been joined by non-same-household teams able to maintain proper social distancing. The remaining beaches have been covered by substitutes who fit the approved surveyor categories. Brown Pelicans are the recent exciting sightings - we had hundreds at the mouth of the Gualala River in October. This is something even longtime residents don't recall seeing. There continue to be regular sightings of Humpback and California Grey whales.

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

Partner/Constituent Groups

California Department of Fish & Wildlife

- Friends of Fitzgerald Marine Reserve collaborated with SMC Parks to monitor access points during low tides on 11/13-15, particularly at Ross' Cove, to prevent poaching during the extreme low tides. CDFW was alerted to [poaching occurring on 11/4](#) but did not respond (apologies for the *shake* and commentary).

Green Foothills

- Victory over the Trump Administration! GF [won their suit](#) against the EPA's decision to abandon the Clean Water Act jurisdiction for the Cargill salt ponds!

MBNMSAC

- Seabird Entanglement Subcommittee
 - o Preparing to present recommendations by early 2021
 - o Bart Selby and I have rescued several entangled/injured birds, some of whom have been rehabilitated by IBR and released
 - o Pelican numbers in Pillar Point Harbor appear to (continue to) be low
 - o Entanglements appear to be increasing taken 11/16/20)
 - o 32 bands spotted this week



San Mateo County Harbor District/Commission

- Met with GM to discuss:
 - o Lights (buildings and squid boats in the harbor) causing seabird injuries
 - o Sand management plan (they don't have
 - o "Snaggers" tossing nets from the public dock and ensnaring marine mammals, seabirds and people(!)
 - o Enforcement



(these are photos

one)

San Mateo County Parks

- [Tunitas Creek Updated Project Design](#)
- Fitzgerald Marine Reserve
 - o All beaches remain closed (Ross' Cove not monitored or enforced with any regularity)
 - o LIMPETS and Beach Watch surveying again

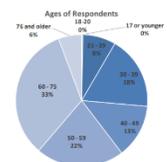
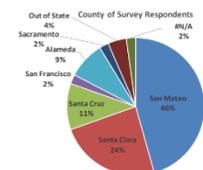
California State Parks (San Mateo and Santa Cruz Counties)

- Año Nuevo Preserve will remain closed through (at least) 2020/2021 winter pupping/breeding season



- 366 respondents
- People come to Tunitas to **walk, relax, picnic, and enjoy the views**.
- Most people get to Tunitas by **car**, a few by bike, even fewer by public transit.
- Most people go with **1-2** other friends and family.
- Nearly 90% of respondents prefer **peace and quiet** to excitement and activities.
- Respondents prioritized **preserving the landscape (86%)** and **birds and wildlife (63%)** over good parking and access (40%) and amenities like picnic tables, visitor center, and benches (25%).
- Respondents would largely like to **keep the site natural** but do see potential for improved accessibility, safer trails, and historical educational about the site.

WHAT WE HEARD: GENERAL SURVEY



While you're cooped up:

[Uncovering Ships and Secrets at Pigeon Point](#)

[Amah Mutsun People, History and Projects with Valentin Lopez](#)

[In the Land of My Ancestors with Canyon "Coyote Woman" Sayers-Roods](#)

[The Indigenous History of the Bay Area with Mark Hylkema](#)