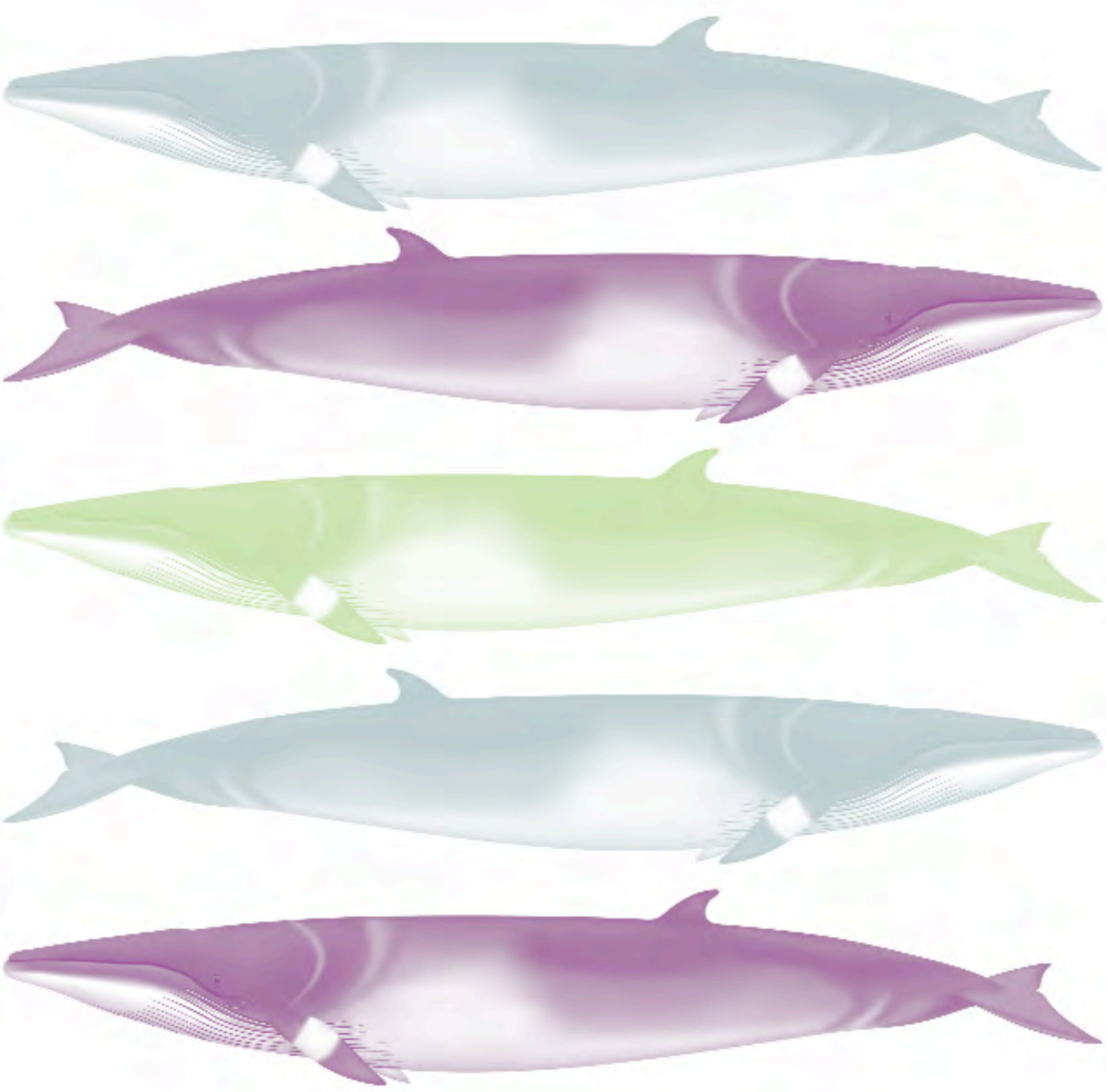
SPYHOPPER

NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN CETACEAN SOCIETY WWW.ACSONLINE.ORG



SPYHOPPER

NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN CETACEAN SOCIETY SPRING 2005

Welcome to our first online edition of Spyhopper.

Welcome to our first online edition of *Spyhopper*. The American Cetacean Society remains dedicated to our original cause — protecting whales, dolphins and porpoises; we have changed and evolved in our methods to fight that cause. The launch of our innovative website last summer allowed us to bring you information more quickly, expand our educational tools and put an old favorite in a modern format — an electronic *Spyhopper*.

One of the benefits of *Spyhopper* on our web is the ability to expand the newsletter and thereby provide more information more quickly to our members. Members may read the information online, print it out, and/or save it electronically for future reference. We believe this format gives our members greater choice and more value for their membership dollars.

Spyhopper's purpose is to inform our members of what is happening inside ACS. In this first online publication we bring you an update from the 2004 International Whaling Commission meeting, news from our various chapters, an account of our very successful annual "Around Catalina" trip, newsworthy conservation issues, and some unique and exciting research projects. We believe you will find this information helpful, interesting and motivational.

We are confident you will enjoy the newly formatted *Spyhopper*, and take advantage of the new features available on our website. In our continuing efforts to protect cetaceans, we want to stay true to our original mission and, at the same time adapt to the complexities of a changing environment. Your support and feedback are critical to our success and we hope you will take part in our ongoing journey.

Patty Geary
ACS National President

Conference a success

ACS hosted our 9th International Conference, Learning from Whales: Education, Inspiration & Action, in November aboard the historic RMS Queen Mary in Long Beach, CA.

In addition to the great social events, including a harbor cruise, a welcome reception, several field trips and a banquet featuring the inspiring works and images of Bob Talbot, we also heard from leading specialists about their work and how we can make a difference.

Unique habitats, such as the birthing lagoons in Baja California, Mexico; critically endangered species, such as the Western Pacific gray whale; and exciting emerging developments, such as dolphins' mirror-self-recognition are just a few of the hot issues presented at the conference.

We also added a wonderful new component to the year's program: "Learning with Whales," an educator's workshop, designed to provide hands-on, practical ideas for teachers and naturalists. Midway through the all-day event, everyone became a part of a life-size gray whale in Whale Dynamics, where everyone takes on the role of a certain aspect of a whale: the pumping heart, the blinking eyes, and even making the whale "healthy" by becoming whale poop!

Our next issue of Spyhopper will be dedicated to this event, so stay tuned.

ACS needs you!

The American Cetacean Society is currently recruiting board and committee members. There are positions available to suit a wide range of interesty. (Details about specific needs are outlined below.) Time requirements vary depending on your availability – just 1 or 2 hours per month can make an enormous difference.

Volunteering for ACS is an opportunity to be involved with the world's oldest marine mammal conservation group. We offer you an opportunity to use your talents and skills to help further the cause of such a prestigious organization, as well as to have a voice in the overall effort to protect cetaceans.

If you are interested, or would like more information, contact Diane Alps at DianeAlps@ACSonline.org or (310) 548-6279.

PUBLICATIONS
Publications Chair:
- Coordinate all printed publications of the American Cetacean Society, including Whalewatcher, Spyhopper and our website
- Supervise a paid editor in the design and layout of ACS publications

Publications Committee:
- Gather materials for Whalewatcher, our annual publication containing scholarly articles on whale research and education worldwide.
- Gather materials for Spyhopper, our official newsletter.

CHAPTER RELATIONS
- Communicate with chapters
- Promote inter-chapter cooperation
- Develop projects, which may involve more than one chapter
- Assist with the development of new chapters.

CONSERVATION
- Research and maintain excellent working knowledge of current issues, laws and political events that impact marine mammals.
- Oversee issues needing to be published, what issues need action and to what degree ACS will become involved.
- Work with Conservation Committee to research conservation concerns, put together articles for ACS publications and expedite urgent matters to the National Board.

EDUCATION
- Manage the translation of our fact sheets into Spanish
- Write lesson plans
- Write more fact sheets on issues facing whales
- Help plan a workshop for naturalists
- Develop new educational projects for ACS National and for the chapters of ACS.

DEVELOPMENT
- Secure funding for the strategic plan organizational goals and objectives.
- Develop projects that bring in both revenue and increase visibility for ACS.
- Use creative "out of the box" thinking to reach new contributors.
- Work in conjunction with grant writers and development committee members to reach as many potential funders as possible.

MEDIA/MARKETING
- Identify ways and methods to enhance the image, identity and visibility of ACS.
- Issue timely press releases.
- Develop relationships and leverage partnerships to further goals.

MEMBERSHIP
- Participate in the development of materials to increase membership.
- Participate in the development of materials to improve member benefits.

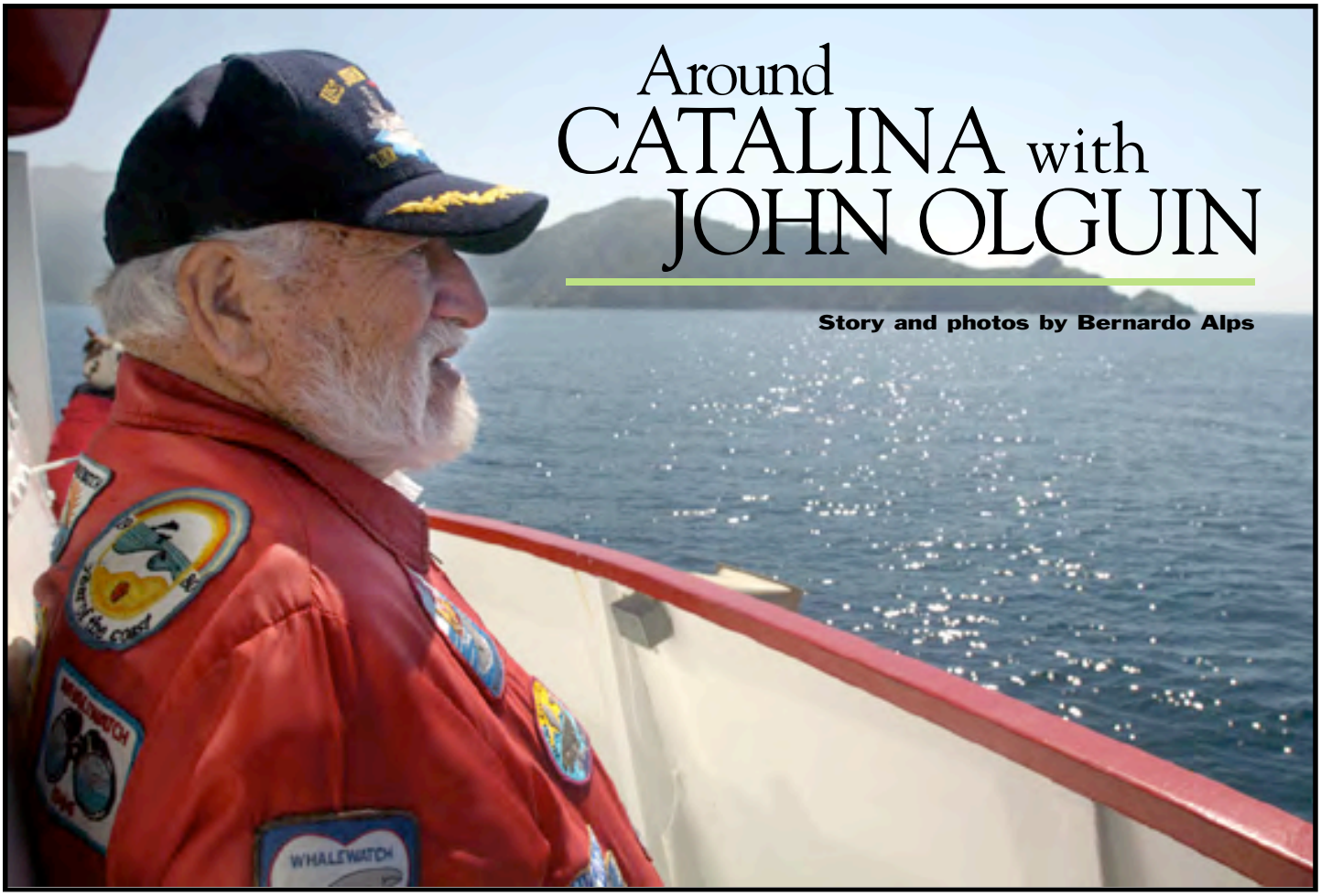
SECRETARY
- Maintain records of the board and ensures effective management of ACS records.
- Manage minutes of all board meetings.
- Distribute minutes to board members within two weeks of meeting.
- Conducts appropriate correspondence and performs other duties, as the National Board shall require.
- Attend all board meetings and make appropriate arrangements for documentation when attendance is not feasible.

OFFICE SUPPORT (FOR OUR SAN PEDRO-BASED HEADQUARTERS)
- Assist with general office duties, including: computer support, database management, special events/programs planning and library assistance

REGIONAL CHAPTERS
Each of our regional chapters is also completely volunteer-based, and always looking for new people to get involved. They have many similar areas that need assistance:
- Membership development
- Scheduling speakers for meetings
- Educational events/outreach

Around CATALINA with JOHN OLGUIN

Story and photos by Bernardo Alps



Olguin keeps an eye out for whales from the bridge of the Catalina Countess as the boat approaches the west end of Catalina Island during ACS's Around Catalina With John Olguin trip.

Don't you hate whale watching trips when it takes forever to see the first whale?

Well, the 25th annual "Around Catalina with John Olguin" cruise on March 6 certainly wasn't one of those.

Eagle-eyed naturalist Bill Samaras spotted our first gray whale of the day while the *Catalina Countess* was still inside the breakwater, just a few minutes after leaving the dock.

On some trips you log your sightings early and have nothing else to look at for a long time, but this wasn't one of those either. As a matter of fact, we never went very long without seeing some kind of marine mammals all day long.

Barely a half hour after leaving the first lone gray whale, we came upon a pod of three, swimming northbound and showing nice flukes. Before we rounded the west end of Catalina Island, we saw another pod of three and two more whales passed close to the boat, as evidenced by two clear sets of flue prints.

But after we reached the south side of the island it became clear why that area is referred to as the "whale freeway."

At first we followed a group of 10 gray whales that were migrating as three loosely associated pods. Then we saw another pod of two. And another. And one of three. And then a pod of at least 14 gray whales. When you have this many whales swimming together it becomes very difficult to estimate their number exactly, there might have easily been twice as many in that pod. The large pod was followed by a single gray whale.

And then we had a change of pace with a pod of playful bottlenose dolphins. And then we saw another two gray whales. And a single gray whale. As we rounded the east end of Catalina, we spotted one of the resident bald eagles sitting on a cliff.

In the channel on our way back to the mainland we saw an elephant seal and then, as the grand finale, a pod of about 1,000 energetic long-beaked common dolphins.

A gray whale shows its flukes during the annual trip.

With so many spectacular sightings, it is no wonder that we got back to the dock almost an hour late.

In all we saw at least 43 gray whales. That is to say, while we saw no fewer that 43 gray whales, it is likely that the actual number was substantially higher. We also saw two species of dolphin, two species of pinniped and 16 species of seabirds, including many rhinoceros auklets and a few Northern fulmars as well as a couple of pink-footed shearwaters.

ACS thanks the captain and crew of the *Catalina Countess* who did a magnificent job keeping us entertained and safe; the staff at Catalina Classic Cruises; main naturalists Bill Samaras, Alisa Schulman-Janiger and Bernardo Alps as well as the many

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California sea lions sun themselves on a navigation buoy during ACS' annual Around Catalina trip. For information about these trips, visit www.acsonline.org.

Around Catalina with John Olguin

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Whalewatch naturalists who helped talk to passengers; sales people Horace Staubley, Katie Garrison and Kristen Kahl who spent the entire trip inside the salon; trip organizer Diane Alps; and of course everyone who came on the 25th annual trip.

And finally, a huge thank you goes to John Olguin who has been treating us to all the wonderful sights of Catalina Island and the surrounding ocean for 25 years.

Participants saw so many marine mammals, *Catalina Countess* was almost an hour late in returing to the dock.

A Heermann's gull flies alongside the *Catalina Countess*.

A cow/calf pair of long-beaked common dolphins porpoises.

BAJA TRIP

Leave a piece of yourself behind

Story and photos by Michelle Berman

Your usual vacation may take a week to recover from when you return to work. This vacation takes at least a week to absorb all the amazing experiences and encounters. At the beginning of the trip, Searcher owner and captain, Art Taylor, explained that this trip would change our lives; that we would take a piece of Baja with us in our hearts and that we would leave a piece of ourselves behind in Baja. Being a skeptic, I was dubious. I have had a lot of incredible, life altering encounters with marine mammals and never felt that I left a piece of myself behind.

The trip began in San Diego harbor and after a brief orientation we set out to sea. A soothing night of rocking ended with an early morning stopover in Ensenada to acquire travelers visas for everyone on board. Following a quick jaunt to Isla Todos Santos to view the birds and pinnipeds, we again set out to sea on to our next destination of Isla San Benito. We arrived early on our second morning and after a full breakfast of pancakes, bacon, oatmeal, scones, cereal and fruit, the crew deployed three skiffs for a tour of the east island to experience the Guadalupe fur seals, California sea lions and elephant seals. An osprey flew overhead with its nest hovered on the edge of a cliff as our excursion drew to a close. What a perfect way to wake up. We then motored over to the larger island where half of the passenger chose to take a hike up to the lighthouse and the others stayed on the

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beach to watch the elephant seals. The hike follows the beach around the island, up a gully, then up the mountain to a beautiful, yet dilapidated, white lighthouse in front of a turquoise blue sky. The bright yellow agaves flowers lined our path and side-blotched lizards scurried under boulders as we passed. The lighthouse provided a perfect stop for lunch before continuing down the mountain to spend time observing the elephant seals.

We awoke on our third morning to Art delicately skirting the sand bar at the entrance of San Ignacio Lagoon. Gray whales spouting and the rising sun greeted us for truly life altering encounters with the whales. By 9 a.m., we boarded the pangas and deployed for our first gray whale experience. It did not take long and before I knew it (and three mother/calf pairs later), I realized we were late for lunch. You do have to set priorities. Another three-hour encounter was to follow lunch but some afternoon showers cut it a bit short.

A panga ride through the mangroves launched our fourth morning with sightings of a variety of wading and shore birds. We briefly hiked along the mudflats to see the crabs, snails and other invertebrates before returning to the Searcher for an enjoyable breakfast with our panga drivers. We then journeyed back out into the lagoon for more whale encounters. Several mother/calf pairs approached us for back scratches, belly rubs and whale lice picking. They seemed to particularly enjoy the scrub brush of our panga driver, so much so that one calf had its mouth open and tongue hanging out with enjoyment. The afternoon trip began with a beach walk where we discovered a gray whale skeleton. Working for a museum of natural history, I was indeed excited to explain the parts of the skeleton. An enormous array of shells littered the beach and although collecting was not allowed, we took many photos. After the beach walk, we encountered our final gray whale mother/calf pair. One of the passengers named the calf Louisa. Louisa, a very active calf, seemed to be playing with us. I will remember this forever. A few more afternoon sprinkles could not cut this trip short and at the conclusion, we re-boarded the Searcher and pulled anchor. On our departure from the lagoon, the sun emerged to the north and radiated a complete rainbow over the entire lagoon. We all saw the pots of gold (or gray) at each end. As the bottlenose dolphins escorted our bow out, it became evident a piece of San Ignacio Lagoon would be with us forever, and we all left a piece of ourselves behind.

The crew led us south as we prepared for another day at sea. The fifth day opened off shore of Magdalena Bay where we spotted a humpback, fin and blue whale. The next day we rounded the southern tip of Baja and traveled out to the Gorda Banks where we spent time with more humpback whales and a pod of common dolphins. We enjoyed lunch with the excitement of our first opportunity to snorkel looming and as we approached Los Frailes we prepared for the adventure. The passengers not interested in snorkeling hiked the dunes while the rest of us submerged into the relatively cool water. Urchins, eels, sergeant majors, puffers and hundreds of other animals welcomed us as we explored their world. The day turned to evening and under a full moon it was time to continue to the next destination.

We awoke on day seven to Punta Colorado on Isla San Jose, a sight to behold forever: the electric orange sandstone in the dawn sunlight. I never knew such colors existed in nature. On our early morning bird walk we found a mother humming bird sitting on her nest guarding her clutch. Even with four cameras in her face, she barely moved a feather. After warming up with a hike through the blooming wildflowers we cooled off with another snorkel in the Sea of Cortez. More abundant marine life enthralled us and the krill engulfed us. The swarms of krill foreshadowed the remainder of the day. While in route to Isla Santa Catalina we encountered approximately 20 blue whales. The abundance of blue whales matched the density of krill. At one point, six blue whales spouted at the same time with the vibrant tropical setting sun as the backdrop, an appropriate way to close the day.

A morning bird walk on Isla Santa Catalina ushered in day eight in a delightful way. For me, the bird walk turned into a reptile chase. Santa Catalina, recognized for its endemic species of chuckwallas, emerald tailed side-blotched lizards, desert iguanas and whiptails, did not disappoint. By sitting quietly on a rock, I observed them all out catching some warm rays. In addition to the reptiles, this island boasts enormous cardon and

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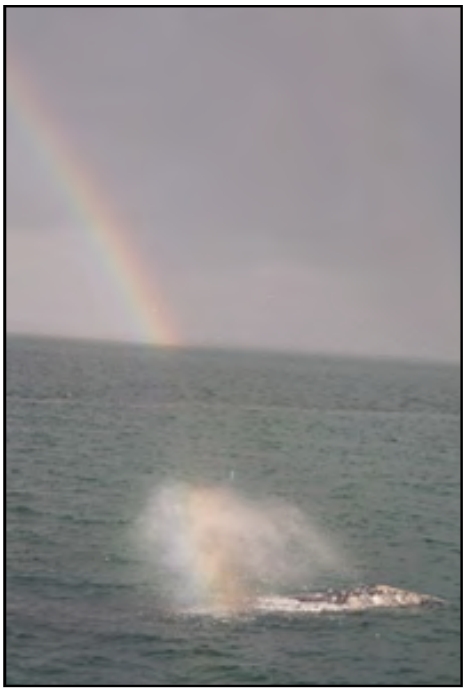
barrel cacti that dwarfs any person nearby. Following our land time, some of us chose a skiff ride around the island to view the sally-lightfoot crabs, yellow legged gulls and many vultures drying their wings. After the morning excitement, we pulled anchor and were once again out looking for whales in route to our next destination. Our next stop, Bahia Tambobiche, provided much needed shelter from the wind.

We woke on day nine to a picturesque lagoon full of water and birds taking advantage of the rare sight. Time allowed for a morning stroll around the lagoon before looking for more whales while in route to Isla San Francisco. Instead of whale watching, we spent most of our transit dolphin watching. A large herd of long-beaked common dolphins encircled the boat and we lost time watching them leap out of the water and crash down on their sides. Directly next to the boat, a frigate bird swooped down and snatched a fish from the water amongst the dolphins, then flew next to our heads for a moment before flying away. We arrived at Isla San Francisco in the late afternoon and the beauty of the aquamarine bay with the white sandy beach was breathtaking. Enough time remained for a quick snorkel with the abundant garden eels as well as beautiful tropical fish and urchins. The crew prepared a fantastic beach barbeque for the passengers and after dinner everyone raced back to the boat for a warm shower.

On the morning of day 10, several residents of



Nopolo, a small coastal village, welcomed us ashore as we strolled up a dry creek bed bird watching. The astonishing abundance of birds within such a concentrated area amazed us all. Birding throughout the trip prepared us for this site and everyone left with life birds; a nice morning before our adventurous afternoon. We arrived at Los Islotes soon after lunch and snorkeled with a new species of animal; sea lions! What fun! The sea lions engaged us in games of tag but it seemed that the humans were always "it." They darted towards and away from us and performed acrobatic dances below like little ballerinas. This was the highlight of the trip for me. The adrenalin and excitement still wells up inside me when I think about it. With the brown and blue-footed boobies flying over head, the setting sun cued us to pull anchor and head toward our last stop.

Our final day, we awoke to Cabo San Lucas off to the south and some humpback whale swam next to us. It is hard to see something like this come to an end. It is like a really good dream just before the alarm clock goes off. Part of me wanted to be home with my fiancé and dogs but part of me just wanted to stay on the boat and do the whole trip over. Art said it best, that we would take a piece of Baja with us and leave a piece of ourselves behind. The photos and memories will last as long as I am around, but the whales, seals, sea lions, birds, reptiles, fish, urchins, krill, cacti, wildflowers and beaches, they will be there for so many more people to experience, in their own way. It is hard to describe how you feel after a trip like this; it is something everyone feels in their own way. It is a very personal journey, one I personally hope to experience again.

(Guyana; Scott 3481; May 2000) Cetaceans can appear in a variety of locations on a stamp/souvenir sheet. On this issue from Guyana, a gray whale appears as the background and a killer whale appears on one of the individual stamps.

Geographic Distribution and Species Diversity of Cetaceans on

Postage Stamps

(USA; Scott 299). In May 1901, the USA was the first country to issue a stamp with a cetacean depiction.

(Republic of Abkhazia, Russian Federation, illegal issue). The philatelic business has grown considerably in recent years with the proliferation of illegal or bogus stamps. An illegal stamp is: (1) an illegal issue for territories which are not entitled to issue stamps, and (2) a false stamp produced by fraudsters in the name of an issuing authority with the intent to defraud collectors. This is a particularly serious problem for various regions of the Russian Federation.

By Dr. Dagmar Fertl

Animals are frequently depicted on postage stamps and are popular issues, particularly with topical enthusiasts. We were interested in assessing the status of cetacean depiction on postage stamps throughout the world. A detailed and annotated list of stamps was compiled containing cetacean images through the year 2003. We included the issuing country, Scott catalog number, cetacean species, description of the issue, and denomination of the stamp. The Scott stamp catalogue and the American Topical Association's list were reviewed, and images/stamps from collectors, articles, books, and the Internet to verify catalogue listings were examined. The popularity of issuing stamps depicting whales, dolphins, and porpoises is evident; our survey yielded 1,478 images (some stamps depicted multiple species on the same stamp) from 173 countries or stamp-issuing authorities. Grenada had the most images (81), followed by Gambia (53), the Turks and Caicos (39), Palau (39), Ghana (31), Sierra Leone (31) and Tanzania (31). Several resource-poor countries produce topical stamps, seeing them as a useful form of income, since they are collected and not used.

In May 1901, the United States was the first country to issue a stamp with a cetacean depiction; it is a stylized dolphin within the frame of the stamp that depicts fast ocean navigation as part of the Pan-American exposition issue. The issuance of cetaceans on stamps has dramatically increased, particularly since the early 1980s, with a noteworthy peak in the 1990s. This also coincides with the general marketing growth of marine mammal images through the 1980s and 1990s.

Many stamps feature cetaceans as the subject, others as part of a composite image on a souvenir sheet or in a stamp's border design. Many images reflect an increased awareness and interest in cetaceans, as well as marine life in general. In particular, International Year of the Ocean (1998) was a multi-national stamp issue that generated many depictions of cetaceans. In our study, some stamps display ancient cetaceans, cetaceans' role in culture (various art forms), and conservation/management-related issues, such as whaling and ecotourism. Interestingly, many stamp issues had no relevance to cetaceans, yet an image of this group of animals was included on the souvenir sheet.

More than 1,260 stamp faces had depictions of cetaceans where species identity could be determined. A number of stamps incorrectly depict a species, often taking artistic license with the animal's image or behaviors, which made verification of species identifications difficult and oftentimes amusing to the experienced cetacean biologist. More than 60 species of cetaceans were represented, with the humpback whale being the most

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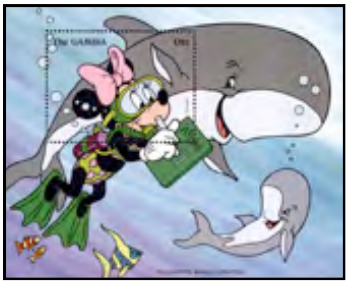
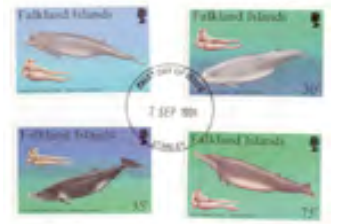


(The Gambia; Scott 1736, April 1996). Cetaceans are sometimes depicted in cartoon form, such as this issue from The Gambia.

(New Zealand; Scott 937; Nov 1998) Cetaceans engaged in feeding are sometimes depicted. Pictured here is a pair of killer whales chasing a pair of penguins.

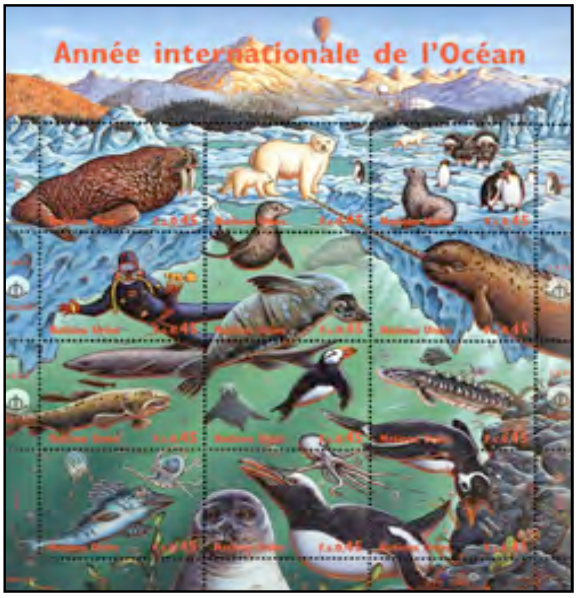


(Falkland Islands; Scott 663-666; Sept 1996) This is a stamp issue depicting various beaked whale species. These are particularly nice drawings of both the bodies and skulls. Beaked whales are not frequently portrayed on stamps.

(TOP: Cuba; Scott 2336; June 1980. BOTTOM: Dominica; Scott 791; Feb 1983) Some illustrations of cetaceans are more fanciful than others, such as this leaping Cuvier's beaked whale, top, or the same species attacking a giant squid, bottom.

(Palau; Scott 289; May 1991) Countries in the South Pacific often generate beautiful stamp issues of cetaceans. One particularly artful issue was provided by Palau in 1991.

(Vanuatu and New Caledonia; Scott 787; July 2001) A souvenir sheet in the shape of a humpback whale.



(UN-Geneva; Scott 322; May 1998) In recognition of the International Year of the Ocean in 1998, many stamp issuing entities, including the various offices of the United Nations, generated sheets to celebrate the event.

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popular species – (featured on 164 stamps), followed by the sperm whale (111), killer whale (106) and bottlenose dolphin (104). Lesser-known species, such as Fraser's dolphin, occasionally appear on stamps. More than 160 stamps were of stylized whales or dolphins where we were unable to determine a species identity. Stylized and heraldic dolphins and whales were sometimes part of a country's coat of arms (e.g., Australia and Barbados), flags (Antigua). Twenty-four stamps featured cartoon dolphins or whales.

Interest in marine mammals continues to grow, and the marketing of marine mammals has proliferated. Such is the case with the depiction of marine mammals as an art form, on postage stamps. Postage stamps offer a novel means of promoting the conservation of whales, dolphins, and porpoises, as well as stimulating an interest in their biology.

Dagmar Fertl has been involved in marine mammal research and conservation efforts for more than 15 years. She also served a term as Conservation Chair for ACS-National. Dagmar currently lives in the Dallas area with a Puli, a border collie and a cat. She works for an environmental consulting firm in the area. Dagmar has published many peer-reviewed and popular articles on marine mammals and two children's non-fiction books on mammals.

CONSERVATION ISSUES

The following Conservation Issues are selected summaries of current news articles on whales, dolphins, porpoises, and their environment. For full monthly Conservation Reports, visit our website (www.acsonline.org). For more information on any of these articles, contact the source cited at the end of the summary.

IUCN Makes Marine Conservation Top Priority

The IUCN World Conservation Congress triannual meeting in Bangkok in November recognized that a number of whale species globally are unacceptably at risk and has called for special protection of their marine habitats. In addition, undersea man-made noise was identified as a significant threat, as was the lack of regulation and conservation on the world's high seas.

The IUCN Congress also expressed its concern for the critically endangered Western Gray whale population — with only 100 individuals remaining, off Sakhalin Island, Russia. This population is facing a fight for survival with major oil developments in process in their feeding grounds in Russian waters above Japan.

The Congress actively encouraged Chile to establish a Marine Protected Area over the critically important blue whale feeding and nursing area recently discovered by Chilean scientists.

Significantly, the IUCN Congress recognized the urgent need for international cooperation to control the increasing amount noise in the world's oceans, as a result of the expansion of oil and gas, military sonar and shipping. This is the third international gathering of scientists, NGOs and governments in the last six months that has identified undersea noise pollution as a significant and increasing threat to the world's whales and dolphins. Earlier this year, both the International Whaling Commission and the CITES meetings issued warnings about sound in the oceans.

The IUCN Congress also expressed its alarm at the rate of degradation of the world's High Seas, which comprise 80% of the Earth's biosphere but which are almost entirely unregulated and without any areas of formal protection.

The High Seas are the highways of the world's great whales and other migratory marine life, and are key to regulating the world's climate, yet the marine life that depend on them are increasingly at risk from indiscriminate over fishing away from the public eye. IUCN called on the world's nations to put in place a network of protected areas on the high seas within the next 10 years. The Congress called for Marine Protected Areas to be established in the Antarctic which is a haven for many of the world's great whales, but which are increasingly at risk from over fishing and other threats.

The Congress recognized the serious impacts caused by climate change, congratulated the Russian Federation for ratifying the Kyoto Protocol and called on those States that have not yet done so to do so as soon as possible. *Whale & Dolphin Conservation Society website*

ACS urges our members to contact your congressional representatives and express your concern that the United States has refused to even consider discussing the Kyoto Protocol.

Rare Blue Whales Sighted in Alaska

Federal scientists have sighted a rare mammal in Alaska waters — endangered blue whales, the largest animal known to live on Earth.

The sighting by researchers on board a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration vessel means the blue whale population may be getting healthier and expanding back to traditional territories. It is the first confirmed sighting in 30 years.

Most recent population estimates show about 12,000 blue whales worldwide, with about 2,000 in U.S. waters off California in summer and fall. Others are found in found in the western Pacific, the North Atlantic, the Indian Ocean and the Antarctic. Blue whales in the Pacific can reach 85 feet long and 100 feet long in the Antarctic.

Blue whales are believed to migrate in the North Pacific in summer to northern feeding grounds, where they eat about four tons of krill per day, putting on fat for the winter. In winter, the eastern Pacific group migrates south to calving grounds off Mexico and Costa Rica.

Blue whales were hunted commercially between 1860s and the 1960s, with an estimated 350,000 killed during that period, including thousands in Alaska. They have been protected since 1965.

The McArthur II cruise is part of NOAA's SPLASH research, which stands for "Structure of Populations, Level of Abundance and Status of Humpbacks." The project involves NOAA scientists and hundreds of other researchers from the United States, Japan, Russia, Mexico, Canada, the Philippines, Costa Rica, Panama, Nicaragua and Guatemala. The SPLASH program is dedicated to assessing humpback whale populations throughout the North Pacific Ocean, and the McArthur II's role has been to assess deep-water populations. *Associated Press*

POLLUTION

Fire Retardant in Killer Whales

A new study shows that same toxic pollutant recently found in B.C. farmed salmon has also turned up in endangered killer whales on the West Coast. The chemical, polybrominated diphenyl ether (PBDE), is used a flame retardant and is found in everything from carpets to computers.

Dr. Peter Ross of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' Institute of Ocean Sciences is one of the authors of the new report. He says BPDEs are similar to PCBs.

"We did ban PCBs 30 years ago for these very same qualities," says Ross, a leading expert in marine mammal toxicology.

PCBs are a known threat to the 85 killer whales that live in the waters between Vancouver and Seattle. Ross says this new chemical could push them closer to extinction.

"We've now discovered they have detectable levels of a new generation of flame-retardants PBDEs similar to PCBs but we have not regulated them," he says.

The chemicals were found in samples of orca blubber taken between 1993 and 1996. Ross says the levels are probably much higher now.

Across the border, Washington State is fine-tuning its plan to clean up PBDEs in the environment. But Canada still has no regulations to deal with the problem.

Ivy Sager-Rosenthal of the People for Puget Sound says it's time Canada did something, because the chemicals don't restrict themselves to one side of the border.

"We can do all we can here in Washington State, but if Canada continues to allow these chemicals out into the environment, the orca whales that feed up there are going to be just as contaminated," she says.

Ottawa is expected to have a policy in place this winter. But the critics say the ubiquitous compound will continue to spill into the whales' environment for years to come. *Orca Sighting Network website*

Whales Threatened by Chemical Contamination

Chemical pollution is threatening whales with extinction in parts of Canada and the Pacific Ocean, and is poisoning their food source in the Antarctic.

Beluga whales in the St Lawrence River, Canada, have been dying of cancer, local scientists have found. The local population of Belugas is estimated to be around 650 animals, but 14 or 15 of them are dying each year. When local veterinarians became concerned about the number of dead Beluga whales that were being washed up, they decided to investigate. Between 1983 and 1999 Daniel Martineau and his team from Montreal University carried out autopsies on 100 of the dead whales found on the shores of the river.

What they found shocked them: 27% of adults and 17 percent of the juvenile Belugas examined had died of cancer. "In dolphins and terrestrial animals, the figure is closer to two per cent. The cancers found in Saint Lawrence Belugas represent about 40 percent of all cancers ever reported in cetaceans worldwide," said Dr Martineau(1). Most of the cancers were of the gastrointestinal tract (intestine or stomach), but there were also cancers of the mammary gland, skin, ovaries and uterus.

The autopsies showed that the whales had been exposed to carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). PAHs are persistent chemicals that do not break down easily in the environment and accumulate in the sediment of rivers and near shorelines. Beluga whales eat by diving deep down to the bottom of the river and feeding on the organisms living in the sediment and the PAHs accumulate in their blubber.

There are approximately 70,000 Beluga whales worldwide. Most live in the Arctic Ocean, but there are occasionally groups of them in rivers with cold water temperatures, like the St Lawrence River, and this group has been there for the last 10,000 years.

The scientists also noticed that none of the females over 21 years old seemed capable of reproducing, while Belugas living in the Arctic can produce calves until the end of their lives (i.e. between 35 to 50 years old). Veterinary pathologist Sylvain DeGuise from Connecticut University found that, in addition to the cancers in the St Lawrence Belugas, 36 percent of the females had lesions (i.e. abnormal tissue) in their mammary glands.

The researchers believe that an aluminum plant upstream, which is a source of chronic PAH pollution in the river, could be to blame as the incidence of human cancer in the area is also higher than for Canada as a whole and some of the cancers have been related to PAHs. In addition, river pollution is so severe that environmental officials have warned residents not to eat fish caught from the river more than once a month.

Killer whales or "Orcinus orca" in the

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Northeast Pacific Ocean are also being polluted and threatened by chemicals. Researchers reported that "a recent computer viability model suggests a high risk of extinction within 150 years unless habitat improvement measures are taken" and that High levels of PCBs were cited as one reason for the listing of killer whales as "endangered" and communities as "threatened".

Researchers Sierra Rayne and Dr. Peter Ross carried out a study of the level of pollution by a number of chemicals including polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs), polybrominated biphenyls (PBBs) and polychlorinated naphthalenes (PCNs) in the killer whales which frequent the waters of the western coast of North America between Vancouver and Seattle. PBDEs are suspected of causing hormone disruption and damaging the immune system in the whales, while some PBBs are suspected of being carcinogenic and some PCNs are toxic.

These whales are some of the most vulnerable wildlife to chemical pollution.

The team analyzed the levels of the chemicals in three different whale groups in the region: northern residents; southern residents and transients. The team found high concentrations of the PBDEs in male southern residents, and male and female northern residents. PBDE concentrations were much higher than those for PBBs and PCNs and evidence suggests that PBDEs and related compounds may pose a serious risk to the whales' health. The levels of PBDE concentration are 2-10 greater than PBDE concentrations in North Atlantic sperm whales and in the range of PBDE concentrations found in North Sea pilot whales, showing that persistent chemicals are accumulating in the coastal food chain off Washington State and British Columbia.

Previous studies have demonstrated that female killer whales significantly reduce their toxic burden by transferring persistent organic chemicals, such as PCBs, to their offspring, either via the placenta during pregnancy or in their fat rich milk during lactation.

It is considered one of the most contaminated marine mammals in the world, and the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) has upgraded the southern residents of the northeastern Pacific killer whale populations to endangered, meaning that there is the threat of "imminent extinction". Transient and northern resident killer whale populations have been upgraded to the status "threatened". In both these cases this is because of the effects of persistent toxic chemicals and a reduction in suitable food sources.

A third piece of recent research has revealed that whales living in the Antarctic during the summer months are being contaminated by chemicals in krill, an important food source. Although the Antarctic is one of the most remote regions in the world, toxic chemicals are being carried through the atmosphere and marine currents to pollute the food chain and hence whales and other marine mammals.

A group of researchers from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science looked at the level of chemicals found in both ice algae and phytoplankton being passed up the marine food chain. Chemicals travel thousands of miles to the Antarctic where they are accumulated by the SIMCO (Sea Ice Microbial Community) and phytoplankton. These are then eaten by zooplankton (tiny marine animals) including krill, small shrimp-like organisms, which are then consumed by whales.

The research team analyzed the ice algae and found concentrations of hexachlorobenzene (HCB) and brominated diphenyl ethers (BDE-47, -99, and -100).

Dr Ross, who carried out the work on the killer whales in the Pacific has described the whales as being "sentinels of a contaminated planet and indicators of global contamination". The level of chemicals present in these whales and their food sources indicate that measures need to be urgently taken to ensure the whales' long-term survival and to reduce the threat of chemical pollution worldwide. *Associated Press*

NOISE

Whales at Risk in British Sonar Exercises

It is one of the loudest sound systems devised by man, capable of sending a sonic boom so thunderous experts warn it can rupture the brains of whales hundreds of miles away.

Despite growing evidence that naval sonar testing is harming and killing cetaceans around the world, U.K. defense chiefs have earmarked £340m for a new submarine sonar system. Experts condemned the decision to press ahead without even a public meeting into its effects. A single ping of the new low-frequency technology can affect animals across 3.8 million square kilometers of water, roughly the size of the Pacific Ocean.

The noise, far greater than any natural sound, has been linked to ear damage and harm to body tissue, and can trigger intense confusion. Startled whales surface too quickly and suffer the bends, a decompression sickness that affects deep-sea divers but was thought an impossible condition in whales.

Environmentalists believe the introduction of the new radar violates marine laws to which the UK has signed up. They point to a series of whale strandings that coincided with naval exercises involving sonar, to support their concern. During the latest, in July, two dead whales being washed ashore on the nearby Canary Islands followed a Nato exercise off Morocco.

Unlike the UK, the US has staged a number of public hearings over the use of low-frequency sonar and 12 months ago a judge banned the American Navy from testing a similar system to that which the UK is eager to introduce. The judge concluded that the booming sounds could damage marine life, yet his comments have done little to deter Britain from entering the low-frequency race in which powerful speakers on a metal post are lowered into the sea. An intense burst of noise designed to detect enemy vessels floods the ocean, causing panic among whales, which use similar sonic booms to find food and mating partners.

Despite such concern and the recent defense spending cuts, negotiations for the sonar sets to be fitted to six UK vessels have just begun. The Defense Department admits that if the technology performs well in secret trials, it will be officially accepted in 18 months. *The Observer*

Commission Acts to Stop Cetacean Deaths

In early November the European Commission unanimously voted to adopt a moratorium for naval sonars until an environmental impact study has been carried out to ascertain exactly how much man's noise affects marine mammals and fish. The resolution was passed with 144 votes in favor and just 15 against with 14 abstentions.

A recent study carried out by 18 scientific bodies and printed in "Nature Magazine" has helped to raise concern about this issue and confirms that the noise produced by ships' sonars is a serious threat to marine species and commercial fishing.

In particular the document refers to the Canary Islands as the European region most affected by the death of cetaceans, and blames the dramatic increase during 2002 and 2004 on the NATO naval operations that were proceeding at the time. European Parliament members are now demanding that member states introduce alternative technology instead of the high intensity naval sonars used now. Other issues of concern surround the impact that the growing tourist industry has on the archipelagos coastal waters.

The large variety of whales and dolphins that can be found in Canarian waters are one of the most attractive of the islands' natural resources. Throughout the archipelago some forty boats carry over half a million passengers a year on excursions. While this type of "eco-tourism" generates more and more income for the islands each year, some environmental groups feel that more needs to be done to educate those involved in the excursion industry. To address this concern, the Tenerife Conservation organization will launch an awareness campaign to inform locals about the diversity of cetaceans present in Canarian waters and to explain the dangers they face while underlining the importance of preserving these fundamental members of the Canarian underwater eco-system. *PR Web*

HABITAT PROTECTION AND DESTRUCTION

Madagascar Fights to Protect Humpbacks

Hundreds of humpback whales come to Madagascar for the winter and the whales have given rise to a major tourist industry in the past 10 years. An island of only 19,000 inhabitants off the northeastern coast of Madagascar, Sainte-Marie has more than 50 hotels, including three opened this year. Not surprisingly, local authorities and hoteliers are determined to protect both the singing cetaceans and their livelihood, but say the Madagascar government is coming under strong pressure by Japan and other whale hunting nations to allow the whales to be hunted. They see developing the tourist industry as the best way of saving the humpbacks.

Hotel owners and tour operators are supporting efforts to ban hunting to help their tourist economy. The whale safaris have grown in importance in July and August each year since 1993. There are few places in the world where visitors can be more certain of getting within shutter-snapping distance of the giant mammals. Local authorities and hoteliers this year have organized several events to popularize the humpbacks, including a painting contest in schools and a four-day whale festival. The hoteliers also fund the activities of a French

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research association, Megaptera, which seeks to identify and follow the whales on an annual basis.

Megaptera is working to educate the people of Sainte-Marie to understand the importance of this sanctuary to resist the pressure of Japan and others who seek to expand whale hunting around the world. There is the danger of the local fishermen beginning to see the whales as a source of profit. For the time being, Madagascar supports the international moratorium on hunting in force since 1986, said Didier Cabocel, president of Saint-Marie's whale commission, "above all because hunting whales is not at all traditional here."

Isabelle Ortolo of Megaptera said the tourist industry wants to turn the offshore waters into a nature reserve, like Nosy-Be, an island off Madagascar's northwestern coast, "so that hunting is definitely banned." *Agence France Presse*

Whale Critical Habitat Listed as World Heritage

An area key to the survival of the gray whale has been listed on the World Heritage register by UNESCO. The Wrangel Island Reserve in Russia, which includes the mountainous Wrangel Island, Herald Island and the surrounding waters, is well above the Arctic Circle.

Wrangel did not have glaciers during the Quaternary Ice Age, so there are exceptionally high levels of biodiversity in this region. The Island boasts the world's largest population of Pacific walrus and the highest density of the ancestral polar bear dens. It is a major feeding ground for the gray whale migrating from Mexico and the northernmost nesting ground for 100 migratory bird species, many endangered.

This, along with the Ilulissat Icefjord listing, is the first natural nomination from the Arctic to the World Heritage List, and is one of the few marine sites on the World Heritage List. Of over 800 sites, only around 50 are either entirely marine or have a marine component. UNESCO recognizes they must address this. *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)*

Oil Project to Be Vetted for Whale Threat

A top environmental group said in late August it had agreed to probe an oil and gas project led by Royal Dutch/Shell off the Russian far east coast because of fears it threatens endangered whales.

The World Conservation Union said the Sakhalin Energy Investment Company had requested an independent study into its plans to expand production around Russia's Sakhalin Island near feeding grounds of the Western Gray Whale. The independent scientific panel is expected to complete the review by the end of November. Until then, Sakhalin Energy has postponed certain development work.

The union, known as IUCN, said it was guaranteed "full autonomy to ensure the credible, objective review expected."

Plans for the panel come after the International Whaling Commission last month warned energy exploration could kill off the 100 or so remaining gray whales on the oil-rich shelf near Russia's Pacific coast and asked for surveys.

Sakhalin Energy aims to build pipelines linking offshore platforms in the multi-billion dollar Sakhalin-2 project to land.

The Western Gray Whales, which appear near Sakhalin Island in summer and withdraw to deeper waters in winter, can only feed from the seabed. That restricts their feeding ground to within a few kilometers (miles) from the Sakhalin coast - the area where the underwater pipeline is due to be laid.

The Sakhalin venture, which includes Japan's Mitsui & Co. Ltd. and Mitsubishi Corp, says much of the knowledge about the rare mammals is the result of their research and monitoring programs conducted in the Pacific since 1997.

Shell also plans to build the world's biggest liquefied natural gas plant near Sakhalin Island by 2006 and start gas shipments in 2007. *Reuters*

WHALING & IWC

Japanese Store Ends Whale Meat Sales

Tesco PLC, a large Japanese department/grocery store, has announced that it has decided to stop selling all cetacean (whale, dolphin and porpoise) products in its Japanese supermarkets, following a joint campaign by WDCS, the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) and Greenpeace.

As part of an ongoing campaign to make leading supermarket multinationals aware of the issues related to the hunting of cetaceans by Japan, WDCS, EIA and Greenpeace met with Tesco representatives twice in May and October 2004. They called upon the United Kingdom's leading retailer to immediately withdraw all whale meat products that were being sold in at least 45 of their supermarkets stores in the Tokyo area.

Tesco was made aware that the Japanese government sanctions the killing of more than 800 whales in the North Pacific and Antarctic, under the guise of "scientific research," and in direct contravention of the expressed will of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and its ban on commercial whaling. More than 20,000 small whales, dolphins and porpoises are also killed in Japan's coastal waters. A significant percentage of cetacean products on sale in Japan have been shown to be highly polluted, posing a potential health threat to consumers.

The groups demonstrated that there was an increasing concern among Japanese consumers, and that falling prices and growing stockpiles of whale meat indicated a significant decrease in domestic demand for the products. The groups pressed Tesco to consider this wealth of evidence and cease selling whale meat.

Tesco made its decision to stop selling whale products shortly after the second meeting, and indicated that it had immediately stopped purchasing whale meat. According to Tesco they made the decision "due to a lack of customer demand."

Willie MacKenzie, Greenpeace Oceans Campaigner, said, "This is an important decision, illustrating clearly that the market for the products of whaling in Japan is dying. This can only have a positive effect on whale conservation. We are certain that the vast majority of Tesco customers will applaud this action."

WDCS Chief Executive, Chris Stroud, said: "Tesco has a responsibility to its customers, in the UK and in Japan. The sale of potentially contaminated whale products is a human health threat, and for this reason alone, Tesco is right to stop selling any such products".

Japan's so-called "scientific" whaling fleet set sale for the Antarctic in November to hunt protected minke whales in the Southern Ocean Sanctuary. Tesco's decision will help to reduce the market for these protected species within Japan, ultimately building pressure on Japan to abide by the worldwide ban on commercial whaling. Tesco's decision is a clear indication that this hunt is unnecessary and that decreasing demand for whale products in the Japanese market makes a mockery of Japan's ongoing commercial whaling. *EIA*

Whale Meat Back in Japanese Schools

Japan's whaling heartland will resume serving whale meat to schoolchildren after a gap of 20 years in a bid to preserve the whaling culture under attack from environmentalists, an official said.

Elementary and junior high school students in southwestern Wakayama prefecture will be served whale meat twice a month starting in January, local education board official Yoshiki Tachibana said.

It is the first time the province has served the meat since international whaling was banned in 1982. Although no figures are kept, nearly all of Japan's schools have also since stopped serving the traditional food.

"It is important for people in Wakayama to maintain the whale culture as we had long been engaged in the whaling industry here," Tachibana said, adding there has been no complaint about the meal plan from teachers or parents.

"Also, the plan was realized as prices of whale meat declined thanks to an increase in the quantity of catches in recent years," he said. Whale meat is now available in Japan at $1.17 dollars per 3.5 ounces.

Since 1987 Japan has used a loophole in the global moratorium on whaling and killed whales for what it calls research. The estimated 2,000 tons of meat from each year's cull ends up in supermarkets and restaurants.

Japan says the global ban on whaling is disrespectful of its national culture. The country failed in October to persuade a UN convention in Bangkok to ease the total trade ban on some Minke whale populations.

Japan's research whaling fleet left the Wakayama port of Shimonoseki in mid-November on a mission to the Antarctic Ocean. Another fleet heads each summer to the North Pacific, where endangered sei whales are killed. The annual cull totals about 700 large whales a year. *AFP*

Norway Increases Whale Kill Quotas

The Norwegian government has received a green light for a considerable increase of whale quotas. The increase could well amount to 100 whales, the Magazine of Fishery (Fiskeribladet) reports.

The government has received a green light from the Parliament to increase whale quotas for the next couple of years. It is expected to be a limited increase for next year. A number indicated is 877 animals. This figure includes a rest quota from this year. From this year's quota of 670 animals, 128 whales at Jan Mayen were never caught. The quota will be increased by approximately 80 animals.

One point is that this will make it possible to still keep within the boundaries of what the

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IWC Report 2004

The 56th annual meeting of the International Whaling Commission took place from June 29-July 22, 2004 in Sorrento, Italy. The Scientific Committee met prior to the plenary session (the primary meeting), as did the various subcommittees—Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling, Conservation, Infractions, Budgetary, and Finance & Administration. ACS representative Katy Penland spent twelve days attending all subgroup meetings that allowed NGO (non-governmental organization) observers and various other strategy meetings. This year there were 27 voting anti-whaling countries, 25 voting pro-whaling countries, and two swing vote countries.

The first order of business was to introduce U.S. Commissioner Rolland Schmitten as the temporary Chair and Japanese Commissioner Minoru Morimoto as temporary Vice-Chair, thus symbolizing the polarization within the IWC. Dr. William Hogarth, NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, served as acting U.S. Commissioner. Early on in the meeting, Japan led a controversy objecting to a press packet that contained articles claiming that Japan was vote-buying. The packet was produced by several NGOs and distributed to all members prior to the plenary. This controversy resulted in almost a day of discussion and brought the meeting to an immediate halt. To conclude the matter, the Chair stated that next year the IWC will introduce a code of conduct for NGOs. This code may include penalties as severe as NGOs losing credentials to attend the IWC. NGOs were furious and questioned whether the IWC was authorized to do make this code. The Chair's statement could have an impact on meaningful NGO participation in the IWC in the future.

Curiously, Japan had fewer outbursts during the meeting this year and seemed almost jovial at times. This behavior was later explained when Japan claimed they will bring up many issues at next year's meeting, when they expect to have a majority of pro-whaling votes. There is a real reason to fear this outcome. Japan has already been extremely busy holding "development aid" meetings with a number of governments in Africa and the Caribbean. Unless the effects of Japan's vote-buying are countered by diplomatic, if not economic, pressure, pro-whaling countries could very well have a majority in the IWC at next year's meeting in Korea.

At one point during the meeting another country's Commissioner said that "the U.S. used to be the leader of the conservation-minded [governments] at the IWC" and that "if the U.S. doesn't take the lead on some of these issues, Japan will eventually win." Unfortunately, the Bush Administration, speaking through a State Department member of the U.S. delegation, stated that, "…whales are not on the radar."

But they are still very much on the U.S. Navy's sonar. At the Scientific Committee meeting, the Subcommittee on Environment "noted the importance of the emergent threat of anthropogenic [human-made] sound to cetaceans and other elements of marine ecosystems (e.g. fishes, pinnipeds)." It also put forward 22 recommendations involving the use of high-intensity, mid-frequency military sonar and seismic surveying for oil and gas exploration, as well as possible mitigations and increased multi-national research efforts. This detailed concern for noise pollution in the marine environment signals the rising global awareness of the harmful effects of loud, underwater sound. Perhaps influenced by this concern, the Environment Committee of the European Parliament just adopted a draft resolution calling for a moratorium on the development of high intensity naval sonar. The resolution will come before the full Parliament in October, 2004.

Turning back to the IWC… Japan was tenacious and unyielding in its attempt to continue and expand its "scientific" whaling efforts in the Antarctic and the western North Pacific. They proposed two new amendments that would allow them an increased quota of 150 Bryde's and 150 minke whales. Next, for the 16th year in a row, Japan proposed a resolution to help "alleviate the continued difficulties caused by the cessation of minke whaling to the communities of Abashiri, Ayukawa, Wadaura, and Taiji." (This is known as "community-based whaling," a new category of commercial whaling recognized by the IWC.) The U.S. delegation amended the wording to make the resolution more palatable and it was allowed to pass by consensus. The U.S.'s surprising acceptance of Japan's resolution may be related to the U.S. Administration's desire to obtain support for continuation of the aboriginal bowhead hunt in Alaska.

A month after the IWC meeting, according to an article in the Sanriku Kahoku News, Japan announced an increase in its "scientific research whaling quota from 50 to 120 minke whales per year." Disturbingly, the article stated that despite Japan's proposed quotas for Bryde's and minke whales being defeated at the IWC, Japan was encouraged that "a resolution to try to save the coastal whaling was adopted." As a result, Japan decided to increase its "scientific research" quota of minke whales. The 120 minkes are going to be taken off the coasts of former whaling station Ayukawa and Kushiro. The latter city is hardly a community in need

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International Whale Commission finds acceptable in relation to the scientific estimates that are still operative in the area. The authorities stated clearly, when treating the Sea Mammal Report, that it is time for the Norwegian government to reconsider other organs to administer the Minke whales. NAMMCO and the other North Atlantic hunting nations are more than willing to do the job.

However, it was announced from a more or less united Parliament that the guidelines to be followed should be those of the Norwegian scientists. They have for a long time pronounced that the Norwegian quotas for whale, both should and could be greater, based on traditional biological parameters.

Another reason to move cautiously is that there are still few buyers of whale meat. Promises from the Norwegian Parliament of increased quotas will make it more interesting for new traders to establish themselves in this type of production.

Increased quotas will with time entail new allocations of the right to hunt whales.

Today there are only about 30 ships that are licensed to capture whales in Norway. *The Norwegian Federation for Animal Protection*

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of revitalizing, but rather one of Japan's largest seaports and the country's only year-round, ice-free trading port. Did the U.S.'s actions related to the "community" whaling directly contribute to Japan doubling the number of whales it will kill under the guise of research?

Another distressing outcome of this year's meeting was the passage of a resolution that will make it easier for "subsistence" hunts to begin. Since 1997, only hunts "whose traditional aboriginal subsistence and cultural need have been recognized" have been allowed. This year, a proposal to remove this phrase was adopted by consensus, meaning that now any country can claim they have a traditional or aboriginal need. Surprisingly, the U.S. co-sponsored this proposal, which went directly against the thinking of most other conservation-minded countries and NGOs.

A key closing issue at this year's IWC meeting was the Revised Management Scheme (RMS). The RMS is the plan for how whaling operations would be internationally managed and controlled. An agreed upon RMS would be required prior to lifting the moratorium on commercial whaling. The RMS has been discussed for years with little progress. This year, after much conversation and anxiety, a resolution was passed to move the RMS forward. The details of the proposal will be developed from a series of meetings over the next year, most of which will be closed to all but official delegates. This secrecy is worrisome because we will have no way of knowing what is being discussed prior to the 2005 meeting. Of even more concern is that the U.S. supported this resolution, which most conservation organizations and anti-whaling governments did not. While ratification of the RMS may not automatically lead to lifting the moratorium on whaling, it is an important step in the process.

Katy felt that for the first time since she represented ACS at the IWC, we are in very real danger of losing the fight to prevent the resumption of large-scale commercial whaling. The whales are the ultimate victims. According to Katy, "If concerned organization and individuals—and most importantly, governments—do not respond immediately, we will be witnessing the beginning of whale slaughter on a global scale within the next two years."

ACS's motto is "they're not saved yet" and as the results from this year's IWC meeting show, the whales have never needed us more. Here's what you can do to help be more proactive in preventing the lifting of the moratorium.

1. Vote pro-conservation.

2. Write letters to your elected representatives urging them to support measures to prevent the lifting of the moratorium on whaling.

3. Speak for the whales. Talk to your friends, family, neighbors and colleagues. Share your love of whales, dolphins and porpoises. Inspire them to spread the word, write letters, etc.

4. Support ACS and other conservation organizations.

Addendum

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species CITES) wrapped up their meeting in mid-October. Overall, the news is very good for marine mammals. Japan tried yet again, but failed to get a majority vote to have the CITES delegates pressure the International Whaling Commission on the Revised Management issue, failed to get minke whales downlisted (less protection) to Appendix II by a stronger majority, and were even more soundly voted down when they tried to bring these issues up again at the end of the meeting. These are resounding defeats for Japan on whaling issues, which is good news for marine mammals world wide. In addition, many of the poor countries that Japan has been targeting with "aid" to pressure them to vote their way at the IWC meetings voted against Japan at the CITES meeting. This too is encouraging for the future of the on-going battle to keep the commercial whaling ban.

Photo courtesy International Wildlife Coalition

Acting Chair for this year's meeting was U.S. Delegation Commissioner, Rolland Schmitten, preparing for the Opening Day of Plenary.

Photo © Chris Johnson/Ocean Alliance

Crates line the dock of Betio Harbor, addressed to Kiribati Fisheries from "Japan Aid" – obviously a gift to Kiribati from Japan to help them develop their fisheries. In addition, there is a new commercial fishing market being built on the Kiribati dock to which these crates were destined. This is a familiar pattern: Japan makes a major investment in the fisheries of some small country like Kiribati, then gets that country to support them in the International Whaling Commission. They have done this in at least six island nations of the Caribbean. It is usually referred to as "Vote Buying," according to the Ocean Alliance.

BEST QUOTES FROM IWC

Japan

"Let us put ourselves in the position of the whales. They would like to be harvested and used in a sustainable manner."

UK's delightful Cowan

"The SciComm's recommendations are not a bag of sweeties from which Commissioners can pick and choose those items they do not want."

IWC RESOLUTION / SCHEDULE AMENDMENT **Resolution:** Requires simple majority **Schedule Amendment:** Requires 3/4 majority	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	ABSENT (All pro-whaling)
To use secret ballots at IWC **(Change to Rules of Procedure; requires simple majority)**	24	29		
To abolish the Southern Ocean Sanctuary **(Schedule Amendment)**	19	30	2	2
To create the South Pacific Whale Sanctuary **(Schedule Amendment)**	26	21	4	2
To create the South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary **(Schedule Amendment)**	26	22	4	2
To reconvene the Whale Killing Methods working group in order to advise the Commission on: establishing better criteria for determining the onset of irreversible insensibility and death; methods of improving the efficiency of killing methods; and reducing times of death and other welfare issues. **(Resolution 2004-3)**	29	22		3
To re-categorize two "small countries" (Monaco and San Marino) to more accurately reflect their average per capita, income-based contributions to IWC. **(Resolution 2004-4)**	20	15	17	2
To establish high-level contact with the Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility to explore possible synergies between GEF and IWC for securing funding for IWC-related projects. **(Resolution 2004-5)**	30	8	14	2
To allow Japan to take 150 Bryde's whales from the western north Pacific as "coastal whaling" (another attempt at commercial whaling). **(Schedule Amendment)**	22	29	2	1
To allow Japan to take 150 minke whales from the Okhotsk Sea-West Pacific stock as "coastal whaling" (i.e., yet another commercial whaling attempt). **(Schedule Amendment)**	24	28	1	1
To affirm the Commission's commitment "to alleviate the continued difficulties caused by the cessation of minke whaling" in four Japanese communities ("community-based whaling") and "encourage IWC members to cooperate towards a resolution of this matter." (Third time's the charm for getting endorsement of de facto commercial whaling, this time with direct US help.) **(Resolution 2004-2)**	**Adopted by consensus with U.S. amendment**			
To amend Paragraph 13 by deleting the words "...whose traditional aboriginal subsistence and cultural needs have been recognized" to "be fair" to the Russian Inuit (the wording deliberately added in 1997 at IWC-49 to block the US from securing a quota of gray whales for the Makah, who has no such need) **(Schedule Amendment)**	**Adopted by consensus with U.S. as a co-sponsor**			
To request that the Secretariat urgently offer its services and scientific expertise to all organizations concerned with oil and gas development projects in the Sakhalin area and affecting the critically endangered north western Pacific gray whale. **(Resolution 2004-1)**	**Adopted by consensus with two reservations (Japan and Norway)**			
To re-establish the Working Group on the RMS that will meet in the week preceding IWC-57, open to observers, to discuss the Small Drafting Group's Draft RMS, with the goal of having a finalized RMS ready for consideration, including for possible adoption, at IWC-57. **(Resolution 2004-6)**	**Adopted by consensus after two show-of-hand votes on amendments to change wording.**			
To explore the possibility of IWC meetings being held less frequently (i.e., biennially) and to establish a working group to investigate and make recommendations. **(Resolution 2004-7)**	**Adopted by consensus with three reservations (Japan, Iceland and Chile)**			

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Effects of whale watching on sperm whales

Sperm whales (Physeter macrocephalus) are the subject of whale watching efforts in the area of Kaikura, South Island, New Zealand. Whale watching in this area involves year-round boat and aircraft viewing trips. Whale behavior was recorded from boat-based and shore-based observations over four years of the study. It was determined that whale behavior was significantly affected by the presence of whale watching vessels. Blow interval, or time between breaths, decreased in the presence of either whale watching or the research vessel. Whale watching vessels and aircraft led to and increase in the amount of time the whales stayed at the surface, as well as in the number of direction changes. Vessels also led to a decrease in whale vocalizations. There are two "types" of sperm whales observed in this area: residents (stay in area for weeks or months and often return to the area) and transients (seen on one day only). Behavioral changes correlated to the presence of whale watch vessels were more noticeable and more frequent in transient whales, though there was significant variation between individuals. *Source: Richter, C.F., Dawson, S.M., and Slooten, E. 2003. Sperm whale watching off Kaikoura, New Zealand: effects of current activities on surfacing and vocalization patterns. Science for Conservation 219. Department of Conservation, Wellington, New Zealand. 78 pp.*

North Atlantic right whale population update

There are 328 right whales listed as "alive," 99 listed as "presumed dead" (due to lack of sightings), and 16 known dead in the catalog. The 328 live right whales include 102 adult females, 122 adult males, 25 juvenile females, and 26 juvenile males. There is an average of 65-75 percent of the population that is resighted every year. The average age of first time moms was 11 years, which has increased since the previous estimate of 9.5 years in 2001. There were at least 19 new mothers in 2003, six of those were first time mothers. The average calving interval was determined to be 5.8 years, which again increased from the previous report of approximately three years. *Source: Pike, B. 2003. The North Atlantic right whale catalog: an update on mor - tality, reproduction, and population status. Proceedings from the North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium.*

Bottlenose Dolphin mud plume feeding

Bottlenose dolphins throughout the world exhibit a wide variety of feeding styles. These behaviors differ depending on human activity, environmental variables, and other factors. For instance, bottlenose dolphins in some areas focus on fisheries by-catch when foraging, while others living in shallow, estuarine habitats, and intentionally strand while chasing prey. In the lower Florida Keys, another unique feeding style, mud plume feeding, has been discovered. This behavior was first witnessed in 1999 and since then has been seen more than 186 times. The first sign of this feeding activity is a thick cloud of sediment that rises to the surface and grows in size linearly. The feeding dolphin can sometimes be seen moving just ahead of the mud plume. After a few seconds, the mud plume stops growing in size and then the dolphin lunges through it, creating a great deal of surface disturbance. It is thought that the dolphin creates the mud plume with a purposeful downward motion of the tail near the bottom. The exact prey species being used in this feeding behavior was not determined, but in many cases fish were seen jumping in front of lunging dolphins or out of the plume. The mud plume may help the dolphin concentrate prey, which may use the plume either for protection or for foraging possibilities. *Source: Lewis, J.S. and Schroeder, W.W. 2003. Mud plume feeding, a unique foraging behavior of the bottlenose dolphin in the Florida Keys. Gulf of Mexico Sci. 21(1): 92-97.*

Three forms of Killer Whales in Antarctic waters

There were three forms of killer whales identified by morphological (physical) characteristics. Type A animals look like "typical" killer whales from throughout the world; they have medium sized eye patches that are oriented parallel to their body axis. They primarily hunt minke whales in open water and have a mean pod size of 13.6 animals. Type B animals have a larger (twice as large) eye patch that is oriented parallel to their body axis and a "cape" of white behind their dorsal fin. These animals have smaller group sizes, on average 12 members, and hunt primarily seals in pack ice. Type C animals have a narrow, forward- slanted eye patch, a "cape." smaller pectoral fins, and commonly have diatoms. They form much larger groups, on average 46 animals, and have only been documented hunting toothfish in the pack ice. Further analyses have to be conducted to determine whether these killer whales are genetically distinct and may actually be three different species. *Source: Pitman, R. and Ensor, P. 2003. Going with the floe: three forms of killer whales in Antarctic waters. Presentation at the Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals.*

Paternity and polygyny in Humpback Whales

Humpback whales use the Revillagigedo Archipelago in Mexico as a mating and calving ground. The sex ratio of the whales in this area is two to three males for every one female. Within humpback whales, there is strong competition amongst males for mating access to females, and consequently, variable reproductive success. Whales in the Revillagigedo Archipelago were biopsy sampled for genetic and subsequent paternity analyses. There were two methods used to identify paternity of calves: one was considered "conservative" and the other "relaxed." In both methods, the paternity assignments differed significantly from random. Most males (47) could only be assigned paternity of one calf, but several males were assigned two (5) or even three (3) paternities. Overall, it was only 37 percent of males that accounted for all calves sampled. This finding suggests that the majority of males are not successful in siring offspring. Assigned fathers were observed in a variety of behavioral types, such as escorting mother/calf pairs, actively competing with other males, and singing, indicating more than one successful mating strategy. *Source: Cerchio, S., Jacobsen, J.K., Cholewiak, D.M., Falcone, E.A., and Merriweather, A.D. 2003. Paternity, polygyny and alternative mating tac - tics in humpback whales. Presentation at the Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals.*

Abundance of Blue and Humpback Whales in the Eastern North Pacific

Abundance estimates of blue and humpback whales off the U.S. west coast were made using photo-identification mark-recapture and line-transects between 1991 and 1997. Line-transect counts were made off of large, government vessels, which were able to remain at sea and travel offshore for extended periods. Photographs of whales were taken from small shore-based boats, or opportunistically from whale watches. Photo-identification estimates were corrected using several mathematical models. The most accurate population estimate for humpback whales was made using photo-identification mark-recapture, followed by a mathematical paired year comparison. This methodology was most accurate because humpback whales have a clumped distribution and most animals are found within 30 miles of shore, allowing easy access by shore-based boats. The humpback whale population between 1991 and 1997 was estimated at 687 individuals. Blue whales, on the other hand, have a broader, more offshore distribution and are harder to sample from small boats; therefore, the line-transect estimate was the most accurate. The blue whale abundance during the study period was 2,997 animals. The population estimates for both humpback and blue whales in this study were much higher than post-whaling numbers and humpback whales demonstrated a clear increase throughout the study. However, the estimates made in this study are still far below pre-exploitation estimates. *Source: Calambokidis, J. and Barlow, J. 2004. Abundance of blue and humpback whales in the eastern North Pacific estimated by capture-recapture and line-transect methods. Mar. Mamm. Sci. 20 (1): 63-85.*

Trans-Atlantic migration of a North Atlantic Right Whale

A North Atlantic right whale was sighted in the Kvaenangen fjord in northern Norway in the fall of 1999. It was first seen on Sept. 17, and was observed numerous times until its last sighting on Oct. 22. The photos of this animal were sent to the New England Aquarium, where the North Atlantic right whale catalog is maintained, and the whale was identified as an adult male, named "Porter." Porter was last seen in Cape Cod Bay, Massachusetts, in May of 1999. This animal traveled 5,700 kilometers in only 117 days, which was an average swimming speed of two kilometers per hour. Porter was resighted in Cape Cod Bay in March of 2000, 131 days after its appearance in Norway. This sighting is the first confirmed account of a North Atlantic right whale in Norway since 1926, when one was killed during whaling efforts. In the interim, there have been only unconfirmed reports from fishermen or local residents of right whale presence in the area. Most North Atlantic right whales winter in the U.S. southeast, and summer in the Bay of Fundy; however, there is a portion of the population that do not complete this migration and it is unknown where they spend the winter months. This trans-Atlantic migration of a right whale may begin to shed light on this question. *Source: Jacobsen, K., Marx, M., and Oien, N. 2004. Two-way trans-Atlantic migration of a North Atlantic right whale (Eubalaena glacialis). Mar. Mamm. Sci. 20 (1): 161-166.*

Humpback Whale singing recorded on a North Atlantic feeding ground

Six bottom acoustic recorders, called "pop-ups," were placed in western Georges Bank in the Gulf of Maine, a feeding ground for North Atlantic humpback whales. These pop-ups were primarily used for the purpose of detecting North Atlantic right whales, but they also recorded sounds from hump-

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Coastal Bottlenose Dolphins in Southern California

Unusual 'nursery' behavior, 'birthing circle' formation

By Dennis Kelly

It is well documented in the scientific literature that coastal bottlenose dolphins inhabit the southern California Bight (Norris and Prescott, 1961, Leatherwood and Reeves, 1982, Hansen, 1990, Kelly, 1990, and Defran, et.al.,1999). Coastal bottlenose dolphins are found from the surf zone to within one nautical mile offshore, between San Quintin, Baja California, Mexico, to the south and Santa Cruz to the north (Wells et. al. 1990). The dolphins occur in groups of one to more than 50 individuals (typically about 20). They can be observed foraging along the beaches, traveling up and down the coast, playing in the waves, and occasionally interacting with human inhabitants (surfers and swimmers)(Norris and Prescott, 1961, Kelly, 1990, Weaver, 1987, and Defran, et. al. 1999). Estimates of their population size vary from as few as 173-250, by scientists of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Southwest Fisheries Science Center(Hanson,1990, Carretta,1993, Carretta,1995) to 404 by scientists of the Cetacean Behavior Lab (CBL), San Diego State University (Defran, et. al. 1999).

On Dec. 21, 1982 the author observed an unusual behavior, never before observed by the author or reported in the literature for coastal bottlenose dolphins (Tursiops truncatus). This behavior was documented during a survey along the Orange County coast **(Fig. 2)** at Crystal Cove State Park in Southern California as part of the Coastal Dolphin Survey Project (CDSP) of Orange Coast College (Kelly, 1990). The dolphins spotted were observed oriented towards each other in a circular formation, with one individual in the center of the group **(Fig. 1)**. In this report, I theorize that this behavior and configuration was exhibited during the process of birthing. The other dolphins, presumably, were providing assistance to the pregnant female. This behavior, each with births or neonates present, has been observed a total of ten times at the original location (Crystal Cove State Park) and four instances, with births or neonates present, at three other locations **(Fig. 2, table 1)**.

The behavior of coastal bottlenose dolphins of southern California has been well studied (Norris and Prescott, 1961, Weaver, 1987, Kelly, 1990, and Wells, et. al. 1990). However, only one other researcher (Weaver, 1987) has previously reported a behavior similar to the nursery and birthing circle formation observed here. Weaver (1987) termed this behavior "spoke" formation and described it as follows: "a number of animals oriented toward the middle form a circle that may surround an individual." She further described a dolphin "conference: When Tursiops held a conference, a group of dolphins hung at the surface with their fins, and others, their melons and backs exposed for several seconds. They were oriented with their rostra toward one another in a tight circle or semi-circle. Occasionally, one dolphin was seen lying prone in the center of the circle with all the conferees touching it." Weaver reports that this behavior was rarely observed and she does not report observing a birth. A behavior similar to Weavers "spoke" formation was also observed and reported along the coast of Texas in the 1970's (Shane, 1977). Additionally, a very interesting and similarly oriented defensive behavior of sperm whales (like a spoke formation) has been reported in the literature (Arnborn, et. al., 1987). A behavior somewhat similar to the one described was also observed and report for killer whales (Morton, 2002). The author proposes that "spoke" formation, as described by Weaver and Shane, was a precursor to, followed, or was an actual incidence of, the formation of a "birthing circle" and the "nursery" behavior that is described in this report.

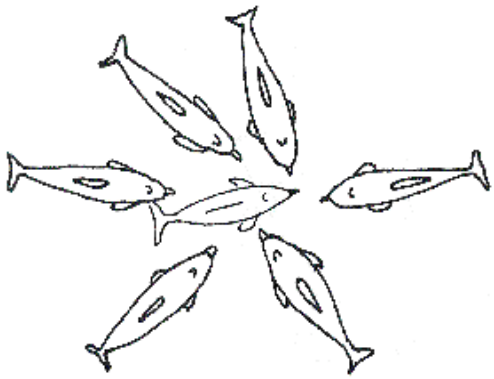

Fig. 1: Birthing circle pattern

The following is an account of this new behavior during the author's initial observations made on Dec. 21, 1982. The subsequent eight observations, at Crystal Cove State Park, were similar enough not to warrant additional description **(Table 1)**. In the initial observation of a birthing circle, there were eight dolphins involved for duration of an hour and 40 minutes. The group was observed from a cliff-top vantage point less than one hundred meters above the beach in front of which the behavior took place. The group of dolphins was very close to shore (less than 20 meters), in water less than four meters deep. The group of dolphins was clustered together, in an approximate oval configuration **(Fig. 1)** with seven of the dolphins pointing their rostra into the center. An eighth dolphin was positioned in the center of the oval; the beaks of the other seven dolphins were either very close to the central dolphin or were actually touching that dolphin. During four years of previous observation and study of these same coastal dolphins, the author had never been observed this formation. The author's initial hypothesis was that this behavior was a form of epimeletic (care-giv-

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back whales. From 14 May 14 to June 7, 2000, humpback whale song was recorded on every day. During the period 14 to 30 May, song was detected during every hour of the day. The percentage of hours of song decreased to 58 percent by June 7. The 21 May had the highest number of singers, with 12 hours of recordings with one singer, 11 hours with two singers, and one hour with three singers. The number of singers also decreased by 7 June. Aerial survey data verified the presence of humpback whales during this period. Humpback whale song appears to be more common in the feeding grounds than originally thought. A commonly accepted hypothesis is that song is produced by males to attract females for mating purposes. Perhaps the use of song during the feeding season indicates mating continuing past the end of the breeding season in the Caribbean. Whaling data shows that there are some outliers in fetal length, suggesting mating outside of the breeding season may occur on a low level. On the other hand, singing is affected by testosterone levels, so it is possible that fall and spring singing is simply resulting from residual hormone levels. *Source: Clark, C.W. and Clapham, P.J. 2004. Acoustic monitorinig on a humpback whale (Megaptera novaeangliae) feeding ground shows continual singing into late spring. Proc. R. Soc. Lond. B 271: 1051-1057.*

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ing) behavior being administered by the seven dolphins to a sick, injured, or dying comrade. The author made 10 individual counts of this group as they drifted close to shore over a one-hour period. During this observation, the centrally positioned dolphin was observed to move, thus eliminating the possibility that it was a dead comrade. After an hour in this formation, all of the dolphins in the circle, including the dolphin at the center, were seen to suddenly convulse, dive, resurface, roll, and then slowly move (less than 10 meters down the coast). This was the first ever sighting by the author of this behavior and there were no previous sightings to compare it to. At this time a neonate dolphin (less than two meters long — a visual estimate based on the size of the adjacent adult dolphins) was observed at the center of the oval, next to and touching the flank of the central dolphin. The author was able to confirm that this was a neonate, using binoculars to view it closely for several minutes, and observed the calf nursing, at least once, from the mother following its birth. The author suggests that the central dolphin was the mother. At this time, the remaining dolphins began to touch the neonate with their beaks, flanks, and pectoral fins. A half hour after the neonate was first observed, all of the dolphins began swimming together down the coast and disappeared from view in ten minutes **(Fig. 3, photos 1 and 2)**. Unfortunately, no observations of swimming behavior or respiratory behavior were made during this first-ever sighting of this behavior.

This behavior has also been observed at three other sites along the southern California coast, including Three Arch Bay, Laguna Beach (one sighting); South San Onofre State Beach (two sightings); and White's Point, Palos Verdes Peninsula (one sighting)(Ryono, 1996)(see Figure 2 and Table 1). Sites where the behavior has been observed have significant similarities. They all have narrow beaches (approximately 30 meters wide at low tide) and abrupt, nearly vertical cliffs (approximately fifteen to thirty meters high) immediately adjacent to the beach. At all but one location (San Onofre State Beach) there are rocky reefs projecting out almost perpendicular from the shore — thus creating sheltered, partially wave-blocked, calmer areas. For all beaches, the average daily human usage appears to be far less than at other city, county, and state beaches in the vicinity, based on the authors 25 years of previous observational experience (i.e. Huntington Beach, Newport Beach, and Bolsa Chica State Beach). These factors may combine, or individually be prerequisites in determining whether or not a site is suitable for birthing, and thus displays of such behavior. Lack of previous reports of this behavior may be due to the remoteness and rarity of such areas.

An occurrence of this behavior was documented by video recorder on Dec. 14, 1985. The video excellently captured several elements of this unusual behavior and formation and was used to obtain the photographs that accompany this article **(Fig. 3, photos 1 and 2)**(Newman, 1985). The author has already shown the video to researchers at the CBL — Cetacean Behavior Lab — San Diego State University (1999) — (who found it unusual and interesting and had neither observed or recorded similar behavior within their study area in San Diego (R.H. DeFran, personal communication, 1999) and would be pleased to allow other interested dolphin researchers to view it as well. Furthermore, the author invites readers of this article to report sightings of dolphin behavior similar to that described in this article directly to him at the telephone number at the end of the article.

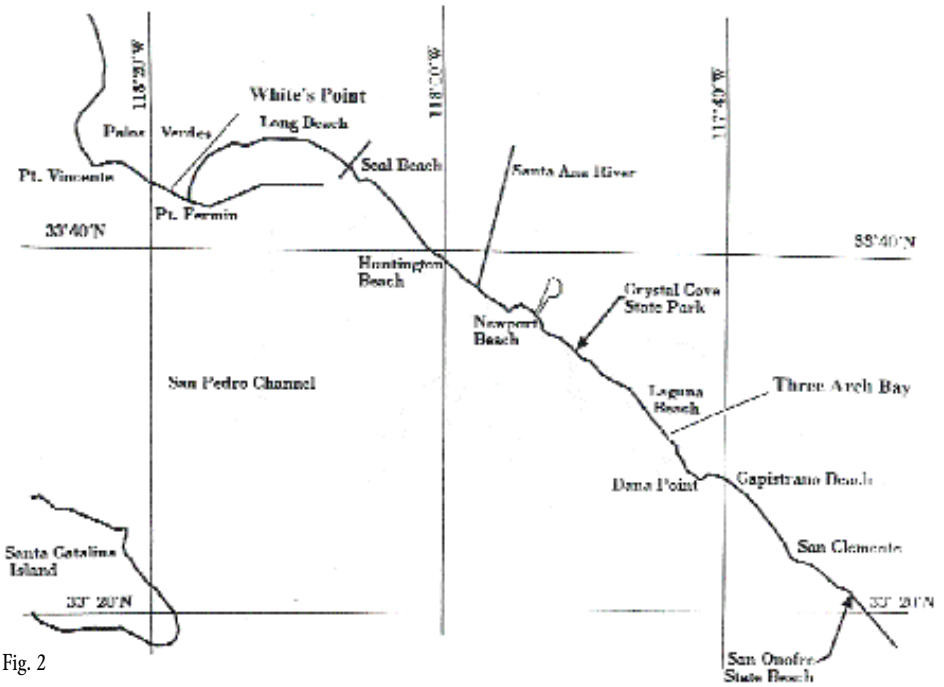

Fig. 2

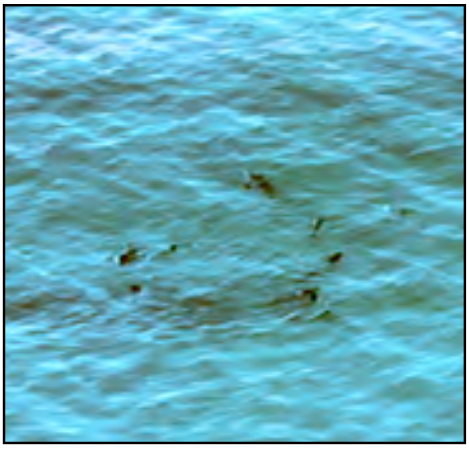

Fig. 3, photo 1

Fig. 3 photo 2

In conclusion, based on the above information and descriptions, the author proposes that this behavior is yet another component in the behavioral repertory of the coastal bottlenose dolphin and is a method by which these dolphins have adapted to living along the crowded coast of southern California. This may be why coastal bottlenose dolphins appear to be thriving here while many other species of local marine life have either been significantly reduced or have been eliminated all together. Coastal dolphins have apparently found a way to reproduce, successfully, in a very crowded coastal environment. The author hypothesizes that by utilizing this behavior bottlenose dolphin may have significantly reduced the stress on the mother giving birth and increased the protection of the neonate by assisting in the birth and, in affect, acting as the equivalent of mid-wives to the female giving birth.

Acknowledgements: The author wishes to thank Patty Newman of Three Arch Bay, Laguna Beach for providing him with a copy of the very clear and well-focused video (2.5 hours long, beta format) of this behavior that she recorded on Dec. 14, 1985. Newman made the recording from the deck of her patio overlooking Three Arch Bay. The author also wishes to thank the American Cetacean Society, Orange County Chapter and Pacific Life Foundation for generous funding for this project. Finally, the author would like to thank his wife, Laurie Poore Kelly for her endless encouragement.

Dennis Kelly has been a Professor at the Marine Science Department, Orange Coast College, Costa Mesa, CA since 1974 and has been the director of the Coastal Dolphin Survey Project since 1978. His research focus is principally the ecology and population biology of coastal bottlenose dolphin and other sea life. He has a Web site at: www.dkatantarctic.com/CoastalDolphinSurveyProject.html and can be reached by e-mail at dkelly@occ.cccd.edu. Kelly can be reached at (714) 432-5564.

Photo by Bernardo Alps

Offshore bottlenose dolphins delight participants in ACS/LA's Super Whalewatch trip near Catalina Island aboard the Monte Carlo on Jan. 31, 2004.

MONTEREY

We have granted three students funds totaling $2,500 for Marine Mammal research for 2004. This was possible due to the success of our whale watching trips with Monterey Sport Fishing, and grants from Randy Puckett and David Zaches. We continue to have good attendance at our monthly meetings because of the excellent speakers arranged by Alan Baldridge. We had our annual BBQ this summer on Aug. 28 in honor of Jud Vandervers 80th birthday and a fall Blue and Humpback trip on Sept. 26 with Monterey Bay Whale Watch. We have had a very successful year as a chapter.

On the Web: *www.starrsites.com/acsmb*

LOS ANGELES

ACS/LA had two summer whale watching trips in the Santa Barbara Channel in search of blue and humpback whales. We sailed aboard the Condor Express on July 10 and again on Aug. 14.

The ACS/LA Gray Whale Census and Behavior Study concluded another successful season, thanks to the many volunteers that put in countless hours bundled up against the cold and fighting the glare from the sun, atop the cliffs of the Palos Verdes Peninsula. This season the observation stations were split between the Coast Guard Reservation, the fishing access parking lot and the grounds of the Point Vicente Interpretive Center. A grand total of 1,620 gray whales were counted this season, 672 on the southbound leg of the migration, and 948 northbound. But the big news were the calves, 60 of them were counted southbound and 178 northbound. They represent the highest percentages of calves per counted whales for both legs of the migration, and the number bodes well for the upcoming whale watching seasons in Southern California, since the younger whales are usually the ones that travel closer to shore.

The Whalewatch program that ACS/LA runs in partnership with the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium also had a successful season. A total of 111 volunteers naturalists signed up for the training classes and gave 87 lectures and staffed 208 whale watching trips. The Whalewatch naturalists interacted with 10,356 passengers on boats. Unfortunately, this number is lower than in previous years because state budget cuts in California limit the ability of schools to go on field trips.

Our General Meeting lecture series featured a lineup of distinguished speakers that lectured on a variety of topics. In January, explorer James Dorsey showed pictures and shared stories about "Whale Encounters." In February, ACS trips chair Bernardo Alps followed suit with "Baja Adventures." In March, Tim Gerrodette from the Southwest Fisheries Science Center updated us on "Dolphins and the Tuna Fishery: Recent Studies." Wild Dolphin Project board member Chris Traughber showed his "Portraits of Wild Atlantic Spotted Dolphins" in April. Our May speaker was Dr. Carolyn Heath from Fullerton College who spoke on "California Sea Lion Behavioral Ecology." Also in May, we were treated to a special lecture by John Calambokidis of Cascadia Research, whose presentation was titled "Making a SPLASH, Recent Studies of Blue and Humpback Whales off the California Coast."

We added a 5-foot plywood gray whale that lets children create a realistic spout, and a set of "baleen" salad tongues that allow children to filter "krill" out of a container of water to the exhibits that travel with our education table. Thanks to our many volunteers, the education table visited many events around the area this spring, including Earth Day events at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium in San Pedro, the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, the City of Carson, the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica and SEA Laboratory in Redondo Beach.

On the Web: *www.acs-la.org*

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Perhaps the first thing to report is that our Santa Barbara-Ventura Chapter is now known as ACS Channel Islands. The California Channel

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Islands play a huge role in our local marine ecosystem and we decided that the name change more effectively reflects our unique geography.

In March, we hopped aboard the Condor Express and cruised the Santa Barbara Channel for excellent Gray Whale and Bottlenose sightings. Local wildlife photographer Eric Zimmerman provided a slideshow in the galley detailing the history of whaling in California, which offered an interesting and poignant underscore to the activities of the day. An awareness of whale tragedies and triumphs enhanced the appreciation of our cetacean encounters.

Spring was filled with chapter outreach events, including participation in the Oxnard Celebration of Whales Festival, the Santa Barbara Tenth Annual Whale Festival and the Santa Barbara Earth Day Festival. Our booth made quite a splash with a hands-on demonstration of whale filter feeding techniques with our very own, first-ever "baleenamajig" designed by Education Chair Neal Shults. The baleenamajig, allows participants to scoop and filter our unique, not-yet-patented krill alternative (all right, never-to-be-patented, but awfully fun).

Continuing on the subject of baleen, John Heyning, curator of marine mammals at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, provided a fun and informative lecture on the "Evolution of Filter-Feeding Baleen Whales." While our monthly lecture series is always well-appreciated, we don't typically laugh nearly as much as we did during John's presentation. This May, we were proud to present a special screening of Capt. Dave Anderson's award winning "Wild Dolphins and Whales of Southern California" in conjunction with the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.

Finally, Research Chair Michael Smith, who returned from a month working with John Calambokidis and Cascadia Research in Washington, is preparing for our Gray Whale Census, a new project our chapter is very excited about. We'll be sure to keep you informed as we work out the details, especially since information is the name of the research game.

On the Web: *www.acssb.org*

PUGET SOUND

By far the most exciting moment for our chapter has been the installation of the hydrophone on Vashon Island on Jan. 10. The Vashon Hydrophone project is the brainchild of Ann Stateler, our chapter vice-president. With the hydrophone in place we can now get recordings of our Southern Resident Killer Whales in fall and winter, when these wonderful animals frequent our waters. It is our hope to eventually get the recorded sound clips onto our Web site.

Our Speaker Series started strong with Mads-Peter Heide Joergenson talking about the mystical narwhal, and bringing a real tusk for us to see. In February, Stefanie Hawks-Johnson presented her research on the diving behavior of our Puget Sound orcas, while in March, our newly elected fundraising chair, Darcie Larson gave her lecture about how wild salmon can be saved by removing the dams on the lower Snake River. Robin Baird transported us to Hawaii with his talk about research done on the lesser known toothed cetaceans in the Hawaiian archipelago. We will continue our free talks every third Wednesday of the month.

We started to work on some fundraising events. We had a fundraising concert on June 13. This concert hosted by the City Cantabile Choir and the ACS/Puget Sound Chapter was titled "Green Concert for a Blue Planet." It benefitted not only these two organizations but also the People for Puget Sound and Save our Wild Salmon.

More money is needed to fund our Vashon Hydrophone Project, Grants, and educational tools such as a power point projector. Stay tuned for more exciting Puget Sound Chapter news in the near future.

On the Web: *www.acspugetsound.org*

SAN FRANCISCO

The American Cetacean Society's San Francisco Bay Chapter had an interesting slate of lecturers this spring. Our speakers included Dr. John Calambokidis from Cascadia Research, who spoke in February about blue whales and also showed some exciting "crittercam" footage. In March, we heard from Dr. Murray Dailey with The Marine Mammal Center, who presented fascinating information about marine mammal parasites. We'll never eat sushi again! In April, Pieter Folkens from the Alaska Whale Foundation discussed global climate change and implications for marine mammal survival. In May, Jim Nahmans from Nature's Spirit Photography shared his beautiful photographs and talked about marine mammals in Alaska.

Our summer schedule of events included tidepooling in June, a behind-the-scenes tour of the San Francisco Zoo in July, two whalewatch trips to the Farallon Islands in August, and a behind-the-scenes tour of the Aquarium of the Bay. For more information about these and other upcoming events, and to sign up for any of our chapter activities, visit our Web site.

We were pleased to receive several excellent proposals for our spring research grant. With the recommendation of our scientific advisory panel who reviewed the proposals, we awarded our spring research grant to a student looking at genetics in humpback whales. Mary Beth Rew, a doctoral student at UC Berkeley, is studying reproductive outcomes within and between family lineages in a humpback whale pedigree.

Our education programs are always popular, and we presented our "Funtastic Whales" program at several local primary schools and at the "Expanding Your Horizons" fair. We also staffed informational booths at Pacifica's Earth Day celebration, and Save Our Shores "Toast to Coastal Stewards" fair. At these events, kids were able to paint plaster whales, make origami whales with a message to the IWC, and learn more about protecting whales, dolphins, and porpoises. If you are interested in helping out at these booths in the future, we are always looking for enthusiastic volunteers. The benefits are: it's fun, you get to talk about your favorite subject, and there is usually a lot of great food around!

We are continuing our "Make a Splash, Pick up Trash" conservation campaign, to teach people not to litter. Reception to our campaign is positive, and people enjoy the giveaways of pencils, stickers, and vehicle garbage bags that we distribute at chapter meetings and events. If you are interested in receiving campaign materials, please contact our chapter president, Shari Snitovsky, at shari@acs-sfbay.org.

On the Web: *www.acs-sfbay.org*

ORANGE COUNTY

The year started out with our very successful whale watching program, where we send docents to schools and, in cooperation with Davey's Locker in Balboa, send them aboard whale watching trips to talk about the whales, dolphins and porpoises in our region. Our first Day of the Dolphin of 2004 was held in January and continues through the year on a quarterly basis. The project director is board member Bert Vogler. Bert recruits volunteers which are positioned on Orange County beaches to count sightings of the coastal bottlenose dolphins.

General meetings are held monthly in the Costa Mesa Community Center on the fourth Thursday of each month. This year, we have had lectures on whale watching by Toni Nichols; a panel discussion on water quality by speakers from the Orange County Sanitation District, Orange County Coast Keepers and Capt. Charles Moore, from Algalita Marine Research Foundation; Martin Hall of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission; and Capt. Dave Anderson of Dolphin Safari shared his new award-winning documentary entitled "Wild Dolphins and Whales of Southern California." And this is naming just a few! We have had a wonderful array of speakers talking on many interesting subjects.

The chapter's "Around Catalina" fundraiser on the Catalina Flyer was a big success. We saw many dolphin, Dall's porpoises, and gray whales every where we looked as we headed along the seaward side of the island toward the west end. We also caught glimpses of bald eagles, sea lions and an elephant seal on the east end of the island.

We have attended many events, including the Dana Point Festival of Whales, Ocean Awareness Day, and Estuary Awareness Day on Shell Island.

On June 30, 2004 our beloved President Jack Kidwell made his transition from complications due to heart troubles. Jack generously willed all whale-related collections to the ACS National Library. The memorial services were held August 26 aboard the Western Pride out of Davey's Locker (Balboa). Jack had an endless passion for whales, the ocean and for ACS. He will be missed.

Our thanks and support go to Jay Burdick, our Vice-President, who stepped right in as Acting President. We welcome new board member, and long-time ACS/OC docent, Toni Nichols to our ranks.

On the Web: *www.acsonline.org/orangecounty*

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Toothpaste is one of many things we cannot go without. We're constantly buying it.

Imagine this: buying toothpaste, beauty essentials, books, CDs and all your everyday items online, only now it makes a difference for your favorite worthy cause. At www.iGive.com/ACS, you can shop for just about anything, from the smallest tube of toothpaste to the biggest L-shaped couch, and a percentage of every purchase generates a donation too.

Turn your perpetual good hygiene habits into acts of kindness toward others by becoming a member of www.iGive.com/ACS. It's FREE, no extra costs or compromising obligations. Shop for everyday items at more than 500 stores at the Mall at iGive.com, like Drugstore.com, L.L.Bean, Barnes & Noble, Eddie Bauer, Lands' End, QVC, and PETsMART. Up to 26 percent of each purchase is donated to American Cetacean Society.

Though you're likely to find dozens of items more enticing than toothpaste, a simple purchase is a good way to start giving. So get shopping!

Join now at www.iGive.com/ACS

Visit www.iGive.com for the latest details.

DONATE using JustGive.org

JustGive.org — donate online via Just Give — simply enter the "American Cetacean Society," and click "Donate Now."

Wish list:

- **FILE CABINETS** (desperately!) Any and all shapes/sizes welcome, but prefer lateral four-drawer file cabinets.
- **BOOKSHELVES OR BUILT SHELVING FOR STORAGE**
- **RUBBERMAID PLASTIC TUBS FOR STORAGE**
- **40 FT. OF SHELVING FOR WALL DISPLAYS**
- **WHALE ART, KNICK KNACKS AND OTHER WHALE ITEMS FOR DISPLAY**
- **WHALE BOOKS/MAGAZINES FOR LIBRARY COLLECTION**
- **RAFFLE PRIZES**
- **MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS:** In order to continue to make our library a useful tool for students and researchers, we need to continue receiving important publications. For just a few dollars a month, you could "adopt a subscription." Call ACS headquarters for details.

We always need:

- **OFFICE SUPPLIES:** Paper, pens, envelopes, shipping labels, poster tubes. These items all get purchased with monies we could use to continue the fight to help protect our oceans and its inhabitants.

Calling all cars!

Donate your car, truck, RV or boat to benefit the American Cetacean Society.

Just call to say you want the proceeds to benefit ACS. We receive the donation and you receive the tax deduction!

Cars 4 Causes
The Charity that gives to Charities
(800) 766-2273

Remember, your donation is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law (check with your tax consultant). The American Cetacean Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. How can you help?

Thanks
A MILLION

Volunteers

Many thanks go out to our hard working board of directors, for without them, we could not meet our goals, and continue to work hard to protect cetaceans. Their guidance and foresight help us to achieve great things, and develop new ideas to meet the challenges of today.

Our chapters, and their dedicated boards of directors are also deserving of our undying gratitude, for without them, we would not have the powerful local presence that brings whales, dolphins and porpoises to the forefront of the public's mind. We also have many volunteers, that at times, may feel they are "behind the scenes" — those people that fold, stuff and seal every single mailing that leaves the office of the National Headquarters. They file, and sort, copy and organize. They put in several hours every week; at times, they've even been caught stuffing until the late hours of the night! Thank you to: **Gwen Metzger, Carol Harrison, Sheryl LeBlanc, San Pedro High School Magnet students, and all others who have assisted on projects to keep our main office running.**

Donors

The American Cetacean Society would like to thank the following donors for their generous contributions. These contributions are essential for ACS to continue its efforts to sponsor research, conservation and educational programs that protect whales, dolphins, porpoises, and their habitats. Thank you to: **Las Candalistas, Pacific Life Foundation, anonymous supporter, AngelNet, California League of Conservation Voters**

Matching gifts:

Thank you to: **Microsoft Giving Campaign and Harris Bank Matching Gifts program.** Ask your Human Resources or Payroll Department about your company's matching gifts program.

IN MEMORY OF MURIEL ANDERSON AND CHARLES (CHUCK) WALDAU

Remembering...
JACK KIDWELL & HERB YELLIN

JACK KIDWELL, ORANGE COUNTY CHAPTER PRESIDENT

The value of our organization lies with the people who volunteer their time and share their passion with others. Our National Board consists of just these type of people, and so it is with great sadness that I must share the news of our Orange County chapter president and National Board member, Jack Kidwell, passing away this last June. Jack's enthusiasm for cetaceans and his positive personality were contagious. He had a truly unique sense of humor and could always bring laughter to the board no matter what the discussion. He was always looking for ways to share our mission at ACS and the members and general public of Orange County greatly benefited from his service as president. I can say in all honesty that I will truly miss Jack and I know ACS has lost a valuable member.

Patty Geary
ACS National President

HERB YELLIN, FOUNDER AND FIRST PRESIDENT NEW YORK/NEW JERSEY

My old and best friend, a life-long resident of Park Slope in Brooklyn, called me one evening to tell me he had seen an obituary for Herb Yellin in a local paper. I was shocked to hear of this untimely passing. My friend had met Herb, as had I, back in the 1980s, when the New York/New Jersey chapter of ACS was "getting off the ground." He remembered Herb from a Revolutionary War re-enactment of the Battle of Brooklyn (Long Island) a few years ago. Herb was an officer in his re-enactment group.

My first memory of Herb was meeting him in Brooklyn after I had missed a scheduled meeting of the new NY/NJ chapter. From our first meeting we became friends and began our work for cetacean conservation. We had many adventures along the way like a trip to Provincetown, Mass. to a meeting that featured the first whale watch trip in that area! Our chapter's annual whale watch trips out of Provincetown were organized by Herb. I cherish a video that Herb gave me titled "The Best of Whale Watching." Most of the video was recorded on a trip chartered by the NY/NJ chapter. Humpback whales were everywhere. The soundtrack features the naturalist's description of what is going on; but in the background you can hear us "oohing" and "aahing," and very clearly you can hear Herb talking to my daughter (then age 2) about the great "whale show."

Herb put his heart and soul into building the NY/NJ chapter. For example, he arranged for us to have our monthly meetings at the American Museum of Natural History on Sundays. I don't think you could do that today. As the first president of the chapter, he arranged for speakers and programs for our meetings. We had some excellent programs including talks by Richard Ellis who became a member of our chapter. I also remember the times when meeting attendance was low, Herb would send one of our attractive female members out to canvas the Hall of Oceans with a sign saying "Whale talk in Room 319." We usually filled the meeting room.

Herb could be serious, but never at the expense of his sense of humor. He was truly dedicated to whatever cause he was following, be it cetacean conservation or the Revolutionary War re-enactment. We'll miss you Herb!

Guy D'Angelo