

## Volunteer Newsletter

Winter 2014/15

### *Belated Season's Greetings from R/V Tatoosh, research and monitoring vessel for OCNMS!*



Office of National Marine Sanctuaries  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
OLYMPIC COAST NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY



### **Holiday Party/ Movie Night**

Our annual volunteer holiday party was held on December 19 with a Movie Night. Popcorn and festive holiday treats filled the tables as we watched the film, "Lightning Strikes Twice: The Real Life Sequel to *Moby Dick*". The interpretive film tells the story of a whaleship lost on a remote reef, one very unlucky captain, and a team of archaeologists with the discovery of a lifetime.



In the middle of the night on February 11, 1823, the seafaring career of Captain George Pollard, Jr. came to a dramatic end in the remote Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Having already survived the tragic disaster aboard the *Essex*, Captain Pollard optimistically set sail for the Pacific Ocean again believing the old adage that "lightning never struck in the same place twice."



Unfortunately for him, his whaling career came to an end in what is now Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. In 2008 a team of NOAA maritime archaeologists discovered the first clues of the sunken ship, *Two Brothers*, and began to piece their findings back to the mysterious disappearance of the Nantucket whaling vessel. Thanks to all who came to spread holiday cheer (Rob, Jim, Sarah, Leslee, Pat, Bruce and Gerri, Sharad and Danny!

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### Earth Is Blue Campaign

Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) launched a social media campaign on its 42<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary to kick off a new effort to share the beauty and wonder of the sanctuaries with the world through powerful photos and video imagery. The "Earth Is Blue" campaign can be found on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Explore each of the fourteen national treasures managed under ONMS and find inspiration from the amazing photos and videos you'll find. A new photo is shared every day from across the sanctuary system, as well as a weekly video highlighting the resources, places and people that make sanctuaries worth protecting. You don't have to be a social media guru to enjoy- you can also find them at:

<http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/earthisblue.html>



### Docent Exchange Trip to Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary!

From February 21-27 Karlyn, Rob and seven Olympic Coast Discovery Center (OCDC) docents traveled to Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) on a volunteer exchange with one of our

Californian sanctuaries. After hosting MBNMS volunteers last July during the week of OCNMS' 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, it was rewarding to be on the reciprocating side of the exchange and to embark upon a new learning adventure that we could bring back with us to OCNMS! Our jam-packed itinerary spanned ~165 miles from Santa Cruz down to Cambria, and focused on the diverse natural resources, programs and partners of MBNMS. The six-day tour of MBNMS made us appreciate the sheer size of their coastline and boundaries, requiring us to move every two nights to a new set of generous hosts as we headed south. The plus side of our mobility was that we met many new Californian friends in each of the three different areas of MBNMS!

The learning exchange consisted of diverse activities and highlights including:

- Guided tour of Sanctuary Exploration Center by MBNMS staff and docents
- Interpretive hike to Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park with their docents
- Talk on marine mammals and marine mammal research at UCSC's Long Marine Laboratory with a visit to Seymour Marine Discovery Center
- Guided sea kayaking with MBNMS volunteer interpreter in Elkhorn Slough with sea otters, harbor seals and other wildlife
- Presentation on MBNMS Research Program by Dr. Andrew DeVogelaere
- Exploration of Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve's Visitor Center and guided hike by Dawn Hayes
- Rocky tidepooling in Monterey with Dr. Steve Lonhart followed by brief visit to Pacific Grove Monarch Butterfly Sanctuary for the tail end of migration
- Visit to Monterey Bay Aquarium
- California Condor educational trip with Joe Burnett of Ventana Wildlife Society at their Discovery Center in Andrew Molera State



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Park, followed by radio telemetry use and condor sightings along the Big Sur

- Scenic picnic and overviews from Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park along Big Sur
- Elephant seal rookery at San Simeon during the pupping season
- Guided walking tour of Piedras Blanca Light Station by MBNMS docent
- Visit to Coastal Discovery Center with overview of education activities by Carolyn Skinder and hike to San Simeon Point with CDC docent



Windless, sunny days were perfect for whale-watching, and wildlife appeared as if on cue, from butterflies to dolphins to condors. Tour guides and scientists enthusiastically shared their knowledge, hosts shared their love of place, and all of the experiences left the following impressions on our Olympic Coast participants:

*"I was struck by how productive the California Current Ecosystem is there, in spite of such large human impacts and population. MBNMS is truly the 'Serengeti of the Sea'."*

*"Being on the water with all the animals at Elkhorn Slough was amazing!"*

*"Seeing the size difference between male and elephant seals and being so close to these massive animals was exciting."*

*"I did not like Elephant seals before. I was totally mistaken and wrong. Now I know better."*

*"Watching a Condor circle over the mountains to her nesting site - wow!"*



*"Enthusiasm conveys knowledge like nothing else can!"*

*"Many of our visitors live in or are going to visit California, so I can encourage them to stop and see many of the places we saw and educate them about MBNMS projects."*

*"As a docent I find very few people who know about National Marine Sanctuaries. It's my job to change that, on or off the 'job'. Only through education can we get the public to help us protect these special places."*

*"Staying with hosts made the experience so much fuller. We had extra opportunities to learn about how they served and of other worthy organizations. It was a great way to explore more of the surrounding area that just wasn't feasible as a group."*

*"By staying with hosts, I was able to compare sanctuaries and talk about local issues. There are many similarities."*

*"Before becoming a docent, I didn't know about the National Marine Sanctuary system, so I'm even more excited to share my new knowledge with people."*

*"I will now look for ways to make my volunteering as useful as these colleagues in California do."*

*"By volunteering as a docent, I hope to inspire others to learn about and protect our wonderful sanctuaries."*

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*"This was one of the best trips I've ever been on. I feel so fortunate that I had this opportunity. There is nothing better than going from place to place and finding an enthusiastic naturalist, guide, interpreter, biologist, eager to share his or her knowledge."*

Overall the volunteer exchange facilitated a better understanding and connectedness to the National Marine Sanctuary System as a whole, while providing experience-based learning of our Californian sister sanctuary. Of course we couldn't see or do it all, but what a better excuse to have to go back for more on our own someday, right?



### Olympic Coast NOAA Kiosk Now Featured in Seattle's Pacific Science Center

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary is now featured at Seattle's Pacific Science Center with a newly installed NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Interactive Touch Screen Kiosk. The kiosk was installed in late February and offers a high-impact visual and auditory showcase of all the treasures the sanctuary has to offer. With the click of a button, you and other users can learn about the various activities of the sanctuary; educational and outreach programs, research projects and resource protection programs as well as extensive information about species, habitats, history and culture. Visitors can also use the kiosk for up-to-the-minute reports on weather and ocean conditions. Next time you're in Seattle, consider making a visit to check out the new kiosk. Pacific Science Center ranked as one of the Top Ten Science Centers worldwide with visitation at 1.6 million people.





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### COASST / News from the Field



#### Cassin's Auklet Wreck

Beginning in late October 2014 and at least through January 2015, Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team (COASST) members and staff witnessed an uptick in Cassin's Auklets. These small, fist-sized birds have a dark bill (pale spot at base), dark back and wings and white belly. Fresh specimens show blueish feet characterized by 3 webbed toes and no hind toe. In collaboration with West Coast beached bird partners Beach Watch in San Francisco (Gulf of Farallones National Marine Sanctuary), BeachCOMBERS in Monterey Bay (of Monterey Bay NMS), and British Columbia Beached Bird Survey it is known that the event extends from Washington State south to Monterey Bay.

Preliminary estimates suggest that tens of thousands of these birds are washing ashore, at rates 10-100 times "normal." To date, the majority of these birds are young-of-the-year, hatched in 2014. High breeding success put more than usual numbers of young-of-the-year on the water and may be contributing to the increase in normal seasonal mortality during this time of year. Cassin's Auklet colonies in British Columbia (80% of the North American population) fared well this season with one of the highest reproductive output recorded from decades of monitoring, resulting in many young-of-the-year in the Pacific Ocean this season. Storm activity on November 15 and 16 preceded a wave of beaching which is not unusual; the combination of young birds and difficult conditions predictably lead to wrecks, like those that are common most years at the end of a good Common Murre breeding season.

Necropsies on some individuals indicated emaciation and starvation as the proximate cause of death. There is currently no sign of disease, poison, or other contagion. Environmental conditions, including a shift in prey availability, and/or location are distinct possibilities exacerbating this event.

Read more on the COASST blog at <http://blogs.uw.edu/coasst>

### Washington CoastSavers Coordinator Presents on Japan Trip

Washington CoastSavers Coordinator Jon Schmidt presented at an international marine debris symposium hosted by Japan Environmental Action Network, or JEAN, last fall. His presentation in Japan covered tsunami debris in Washington State and local, volunteer efforts to clean shoreline debris. During his trip to Japan, Jon was able to witness first hand some of the beaches decimated by the 2011 tsunami. Although he witnessed significant environmental devastation and listened to many tragic stories from tsunami survivors, the experience changed him in positive ways. On January 17 in Port Angeles, Jon shared his personal stories and experiences from that trip. The overall take home message was how enormous of an impact the tsunami had on local residents, while better understanding the scale of marine debris in the western Pacific.

OCNMS is a WA CoastSavers partner and helps lead twice annual statewide beach cleanup efforts in April and September, recruiting up to 1,600 volunteers for both events. The talk was co-hosted by the sanctuary and Feiro Marine Life Center with proceeds benefiting WA CoastSavers.



**Due to high level of content this issue, we will be back with the Creature Feature column next issue.**