

OLYMPIC COAST  
NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY  
Meeting Notes

OCNMS Advisory Council Meeting  
March 13, 2020

Virtual GoToMeeting

<https://www.gotomeet.me/NOAANational-Marine-Sanctuaries/hold-for-ocnms-sac>  
1-872-240-3412 access code 514 225 621.

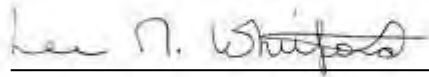
Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary  
NOAA, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries  
115 E. Railroad Avenue, Suite 301 Port  
Angeles, WA 98362-2925

Reviewed by OCNMS Superintendent:



Carol Bernthal, Superintendent

Approved by AC Chair:



Lee Whitford, Chair

**Advisory Council (AC) Members/Alternates in Attendance:** Casey Dennehy (Vice Chair, Department of Ecology), Dan Ayres (Department of Fish and Wildlife), Hannah Blackstock and Josh Peters (Department of Natural Resources), Cindy Kunz and Jackie Queen (US Navy), LCDR Kedo Velasco (US Coast Guard), Steve Shively (Tourism and Economic Development), Rich Osborne (Conservation), Jan Newton and Tom Mumford (Research), Jennifer Hagan (Quileute Tribe), Joe Schumacker (Quinault Indian Nation), Julie Ann Koehlinger (Hoh Tribe), John Veentjer (Secretary, Maritime Industry), Joel Kawahara and Mark Gleason (Fishing), and Tammy Pokorny (North Pacific Coast Marine Resource Committee)

**Presenters and Others in Attendance:** John Calambokidis (Cascadia Research), Elizabeth Petras (US Coast Guard), Tommy Moore (Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission), and Jim Vail

**NOAA/OCNMS Staff in Attendance:** Dwayne Hawes (NOAA Fisheries, Office of Law Enforcement), Carol Bernthal, Kevin Grant, George Galasso, Jenny Weddell, Nicole Harris, Jacqueline Laverdure, Katie Wrubel, Melanie Swick, and Chris Butler-Minor (NOAA/Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary).

---

The meeting was opened by Casey Dennehy. Members and OCNMS staff on the call announced themselves to other participants.

### **Internal Affairs**

- The draft agenda was adopted by consensus after a motion by Dan Ayres and second by Rich Osborne. <https://olympiccoast.noaa.gov/media/docs/20200313-sac-agenda.pdf>.
- Notes from the January meeting were approved with a motion by Steve Shively and second by Rich Osborne. <https://olympiccoast.noaa.gov/media/docs/20190124-sac-notes.pdf>.
- Proposed meeting dates and locations for 2020 were discussed. It was agreed that further discussion was warranted around the timing of the Joint SAC/IPC meeting and the science focused meeting. September is commonly the science focused meeting, however this year it is also the tentative date of the Joint meeting. An updated draft will be distributed to SAC members before the next meeting.
- Recruitment efforts for the primary and alternate positions for both positions of the Research and Citizen at Large seats as well as the conservation alternate resulted in recommendations being submitted for national level vetting. A final decision has not been made yet on approving the new seats nor the request for term limit waivers. Additional recruitment efforts will be planned within the 30 days of the decision on current recommendations.
- Recent steps related to the Sentinel Site for Ocean Acidification (OASes) were bringing on a new staff member, Katie Wrubel, Resource Protection Specialist. She will work with IPC partners to invite 18 organizations to participate, facilitate selection of steering committee members, as well as engage a SAC working group providing education and outreach related to OASes efforts.

## Information, Discussion, and Action Items

### Vessel acquisition update

Kevin Grant provided background on components of replacement efforts for the R/V *Tatoosh*. The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries has designated a large portion of annual procurement and construction (PAC) funding toward moving forward with the vessel replacement. OCNMS staff are working to finalize specifications for the new vessel which will lead to releasing the documentation publically for bids for the contract. This will be a multi-year process with the expectation of a new vessel being completed and on the water in two and a half to three years. In the meanwhile, the R/V *Tatoosh* will continue to be maintained in operational condition. SAC members were thanked for weighing in on the need, which was very helpful in making the case for a new research vessel.

### Whale conservation and research in Olympic coast national Marine sanctuary

<https://nmsolympiccoast.blob.core.windows.net/olympiccoast-prod/media/docs/202003-JCalambokidis-sac.pdf>

John Calambokidis, Senior Research Biologist with Cascadia Research, presented a status review of the organization's long-term studies on a variety of parameters including monitoring of abundance and movements for humpback, blue, and gray whales.

Use of NOAA ships, inflatable boats, and drone surveys have allowed a photo identification catalog to be compiled thus improving abundance estimates. Population changes along the U.S. west coast since 1986 indicate a seven to eight percent increase and then stabilization for whale populations. Results from three models suggest many whale populations may have reached carrying capacity between 2009 and 2014.

Habitat-based models are still in the process of development - population structures are currently a major gap. These models will help update information related to biologically important feeding areas. Observations indicate whale migration routes seem to be changing: recently humpbacks are seen more frequently in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, a sub-group of the eastern North Pacific Coast Feeding Group (PCFG) of gray whales known as Sounders have been sighted near Whidbey Island, and several blue whales have been sighted off the shore of Washington state in the past year.

John also spoke about the threats to large whales and highlighted activities of higher risk to them by species. Blue whales are particularly susceptible to ship strikes, especially at night as they rest near the surface. Entanglements in fishing gear, underwater sound, and changing ocean conditions are common threats to gray and humpback whales. 2018 was a peak year of entanglements and strandings. John concluded with illustrating the many collaborative and coordinated efforts aimed at improving responses and reducing threats to cetaceans along the west coast.

### US Coast Guard (USCG) update on the development of Area Contingency Plans for each sector.

<https://www.rrt10nwac.com/> (outside link)

Elizabeth Petras, Regional Response Team Coordinator for USCG District 13, provided background on recent revisions recommended for the Northwest Area Contingency Plan (NWACP) as an outcome of a national level review of the National Contingency Plan. Nationally there was a recommendation for greater conformity in response plans across the country.

Ms. Petra described the process employed by the NW Area Committee (NWAC) and their goals. As required by the Endangered Species Act, the Environmental Protection Agency and USCG initiated a Section 7 consultation on the NWACP with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service. A biological assessment was completed and submitted to those services.

Goals of NWAC include: 1) meet legal requirements, 2) create plans that address and instruct partners in aiding responses, and 3) enable nimble response to oil and hazardous substance spills in the region. NWAC meetings are ongoing and now held virtually. International responses for marine pollution control are also being addressed.

### **Future Agenda Topics**

Members are encouraged to contact AC Chair and/or Coordinator with suggestions for topics of interest to the council

- Salmon Ocean Behavior and Distribution (SOBaD) project
- Condition Report progress
- Acoustic monitoring in OCNMS
- Status of National Science Foundation Cascadia plate seismic survey

### **Location of Next Meetings**

<https://olympiccoast.noaa.gov/involved/sac/meetings.html>

Friday, May 29, 2020

Location is:

- 1) If in person, Makah Marina Meeting Room,
- 2) If virtual, GoToWebinar (details will follow)

Neah Bay, WA 98362