



# Spyhopper

ACS Newsletter  
September 2010

## Brave New World

### Marine Mammals, the Gulf Disaster and Beyond



*Idled shrimping boats in Venice, LA. Photo by Jessica Lass, NRDC.*

**By Michael Jasny, Senior  
Policy Analyst with the Natural  
Resources Defense Council  
(NRDC)**

For the first few weeks it seemed that the Gulf of Mexico oil spill was on a virtual collision course with spring. Nesting season had just begun for the myriad of migratory birds that return each year to the northern beaches and barrier islands, and the nesting season for sea turtles was rapidly approaching. Small populations of dolphins were calving nearshore, and virtually the entire western Atlantic stock of one of the world's most prized (and endangered) commercial fish was in the Gulf that month to spawn. It was hard to imagine a worse time of the year for what was happening.

I was particularly concerned about the Gulf's small population of sperm whales because BP's oil happened to be gushing directly into their neighborhood. For more than one hundred years, mothers

and calves have congregated in the Mississippi Canyon, a large submarine valley that extends south into the ocean from the Mississippi Delta. Male whales like to range across the northern Gulf, but for mothers and calves the canyon is prime nursing habitat, and they're not often seen outside of it. Now their home is encompassed by oil; one young animal has already been found floating dead in the water (a rare find); and the government is launching a special research cruise to find out what is happening to them and to another small, imperiled population of whales to their east.

Bottlenose dolphins are also at particular risk from this spill. The National Marine Fisheries Service has identified more than 30 individual populations in the northern Gulf, some consisting of little more than a few dozen animals. Many of these small groups prefer coastal and inshore waters, like the sounds and bays that break up the rich Louisiana shoreline and in late spring they were calving,

## Oil Spill, Cont.

bringing many of the dolphins closer in. Given their low abundance and coastal habitat, the spill could devastate some of these dolphin populations if it flows the wrong way.

In early May, a few of my NRDC colleagues who are down in the Gulf to document the disaster watched some two dozen bottlenose dolphins swim in the emulsified oil and sheen that surrounded the Breton National Wildlife Refuge. A few of the animals were calves.

Biologists who have seen bottlenose dolphins blunder through much smaller spills say that the species isn't particularly adept at avoiding oil sheens and other messes, leaving the animals at risk of serious exposure. That would seem to be the case here. There was nothing clearly unusual about their behavior on the video we posted on YouTube – except for their presence in the oil itself, which my colleagues said was potent enough to make the humans on the boat feel woozy.

Closer to the water, the fumes were likely to be worse. Some toxins found in crude oil evaporate quickly in warm temperatures and then remain in a heavy layer just above the surface. That's bad news for dolphins and other species that have to breathe there. Hundreds of harbor seals and possibly killer whales died simply from inhaling toxic fumes during the Exxon Valdez spill, and some marine mammals are particularly prone to ingesting or inhaling oil directly. My colleague, Jessica Lass, reported that a few of the dolphins emitted a low-pitched gasping noise, which was strange and worrisome. As a friend of mine says, whales and dolphins do very well at hiding the fact that they're dying. I have no idea what happened to that pod of dolphins off the Breton refuge, but breathing the fumes above that toxic soup can't possibly be good for them.



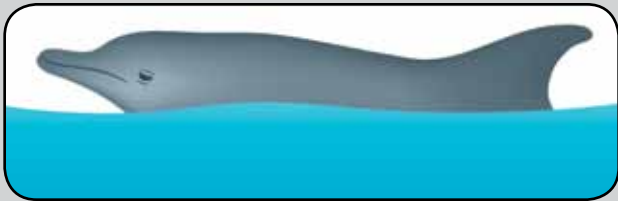
*NRDC's Dr. Gina Solomon measuring benzene and volatile organic compound air levels at South Pass in LA. Photo by Jessica Lass, NRDC.*

### Responding to the “Ring Around the Bathtub”

Historically, oil spill response efforts (and research) have focused on impacts to coastal ecosystems and wildlife. This focus is understandable because the surface destruction is visible and our reaction to it visceral.

Also, we've learned from previous oil spills that impacts to our shoreline can be devastating to a diversity of animals over long periods of time. This is especially the case for salt marshes, which can act like sponges, soaking up the oil and sequestering it in its toxic form for decades. Long-term contamination of marshes on the Gulf Coast—which comprise fully 60% of the coastal marshes in the United States—could cause substantial ecological and economic harm, as these wetlands serve as nurseries for commercially important fisheries such as shrimp, oysters, and crab.

Protecting the coast is the rationale behind the heavy use of dispersants in the disaster. The reigning response strategy is to do everything possible to keep the oil off coastlines.



***When air-breathing species like whales and dolphins come to the surface, they may inhale toxic, volatile chemicals leading to respiratory irritation and absorption of the toxins, which can cause organ damage, reproductive failure, and/or death. Animals that die are likely to sink offshore, and many casualties will remain uncounted.***

But it's important to keep in mind that the oil that hits the shoreline is what ecologist Jeremy Jackson calls the "*ring around the bathtub*." This oil is merely the oil we can see. And in the case of the Gulf disaster, it represents only a small fraction of the hundreds of millions of gallons that erupted from the Macondo riser. The majority of it remains dissolved or dispersed and largely out of our sight.

### Offshore Impacts

So what are the impacts of this offshore contamination? Scientists know surprisingly little because they are grossly under-studied; but we do know that oil is toxic and that it will harm just about everything it encounters before it degrades via chemical oxidation or microbial degradation. Ultimately, the damage done will depend on how large an area it contaminates, how dense it is, and where it goes.

Oil slicks at sea cause serious harm to animals that need to spend a portion of their time at the surface to breathe, feed or rest. When air-breathing species like whales and dolphins come to the surface, they may inhale toxic, volatile chemicals leading to respiratory irritation and absorption of the toxins, which can cause organ damage, reproductive failure, and/or death. Animals that die are likely to sink offshore, and many casualties will remain uncounted.

In the Gulf spill, natural mixing—and the extensive use of dispersants—caused much of the floating oil to dissolve or be dispersed into the upper layer of water below the surface, where life is concentrated in the ocean.

This is where sunlight penetrates and plants grow. Invertebrates like copepods graze on the plants and small forage fish eat the invertebrates. This chain of life could prove highly susceptible to the chemically dispersed oil. What is not wiped out by acute short-term exposure will be contaminated by toxic hydrocarbons. These toxins will then transfer up the food chain, with cascading impacts to top predators like dolphins. Past research shows that exposure to hydrocarbons through the food chain can result in reduced survivorship, reproductive failure, and lost reproductive capacity.

Scientists are especially worried about the eggs and larvae that arrived with spring and float in this layer. Many have no protective covering and are essentially permeable, making them especially sensitive to toxins. Fisheries experts predict significant death rates for these juveniles, attrition that could translate into diminished prey availability for cetaceans in the future.

### NRDC & Long-term Change - Will We Learn?

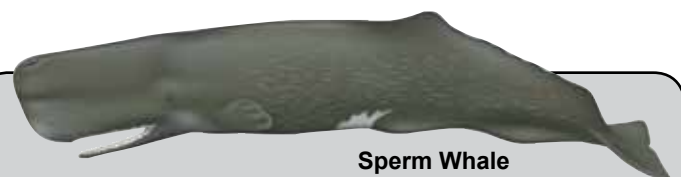
NRDC has been working over the past weeks to improve the science essential to helping wildlife populations in the Gulf recover. But we are also seeking to reverse the oil-mad policies that led to this mess in the first place and that continue to doom the sperm whales and every other species in the industrialized Gulf.

One policy that must be changed is the government's astonishing disregard of its own wildlife laws. Each year the Interior Department approves hundreds of drilling plans and exploration permits for the northern Gulf without taking step one to comply with the Marine Mammal Protection Act and Endangered Species Act. These laws are important because they require the government and industry to take every practicable measure to reduce harm to wildlife. In the Mississippi Canyon, this could well have meant capping the sperm whales' exposure to seismic blasting and taking additional precautions against the risk of an oil spill in their nursery.

In early July, we filed the first of several lawsuits to restore the rule of wildlife law in the region. We began by challenging the government's free-wheeling approach to seismic surveys—what my colleague Cynthia Sarthou, from the Gulf Restoration Network, calls "Exhibit B in how the Gulf of Mexico is suffering from the abuses of the oil industry."

Thousands of endangered animals live in the Gulf and are subjected to harassment and injury by seismic exploration in the form of air gun explosions as oil and gas exploration companies search for black gold at the bottom of the Gulf.

To search for deep deposits of oil, industry trolls the ocean with high-powered airguns that, for weeks and months on end, regularly pound the water with sound louder than virtually any other man-made source save explosives. These surveys have a vast environmental footprint,



Sperm Whale

***It is intolerable to think that the same species now dying in the massive spill will have to contend in the brave new world that follows with the industry's constant pounding, without any serious attempt to mitigate the harm.***

## Oil Spill, Cont.

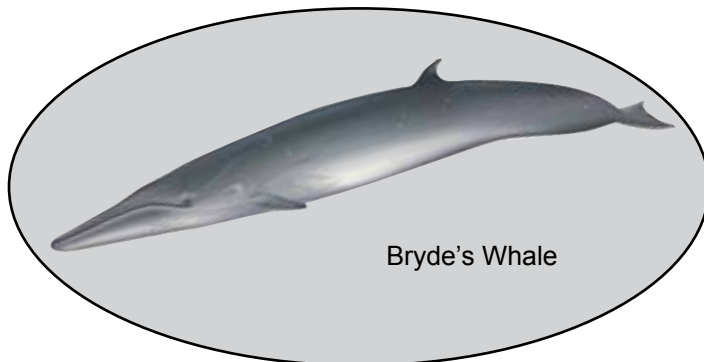
disrupting feeding, breeding, and communication of some endangered species over literally hundreds of thousands of square miles. For the Gulf's sperm whales, they mean less food: even moderate levels of airgun noise appear to seriously compromise the whales' ability to forage.

BP's Deepwater Horizon explosion and oil spill has led to a thorough disinterment of how safety and environmental laws and regulations have been enforced (or ignored) in the Gulf and elsewhere. During the first four months of 2010 alone, the Interior Department approved nine seismic surveys in the same Mississippi Canyon that the sperm whales need for their survival—all without complying in the most fundamental ways with our environmental statutes. It is intolerable to think that the same species now dying in the massive spill will have to contend in the brave new world that follows with the industry's constant pounding, without any serious attempt to mitigate the harm.

### Didn't Do Homework

One of the great absurdities of this disaster is the lack of meaningful baseline information on many of the species at greatest risk. Federal law requires the government to collect these data, financial recovery from BP depends on it, and you can't exactly say we didn't have time to get it. The northern Gulf of Mexico is literally the most intensively developed offshore oil field on the planet. If the Feds couldn't be bothered to do its homework there, one fears for the future of ocean science.

As poster species for our ignorance, I nominate the Bryde's whale, which in the northern Gulf has been sighted almost exclusively within a discrete submarine canyon between Mobile, Alabama and Panama City, Florida. The government's latest and best estimate puts the Gulf of Mexico stock at 15 animals, down from the whopping



*Fishermen handling dirty boom without protective equipment. Barataria Bay near Grand Isle on May 26, 2010. Photo courtesy NRDC.*

total of 40 it calculated about a decade ago; but uncertainty runs high. To begin with, the National Marine Fisheries Service appears not to have obtained any Bryde's whale tissue samples, and lacks the basic genetic, behavioral, and morphological information needed to prove them distinct from the Atlantic population. A few years ago I thought of filing a petition to list them as a population segment under the Endangered Species Act, but quickly despaired at the lack of essential data.

We don't know how much the spill has degraded the whales' habitat, but we have some idea of how vulnerable they might be. Bryde's whales are filter feeders, of course, which would seem to put them at substantial risk of oil ingestion. And so it is that this miniscule group of animals – a group that might very well constitute the only resident baleen whale population in the entire northern Gulf, a group whose numbers would surely warrant an endangered species listing if their demographic isolation could be shown – could be freely ingesting oil as you read this.

NOAA is listening for their calls with hydrophones, and searching for them on its research cruise. If they spot one, let us hope it's healthy – and that NOAA gets a tissue sample.

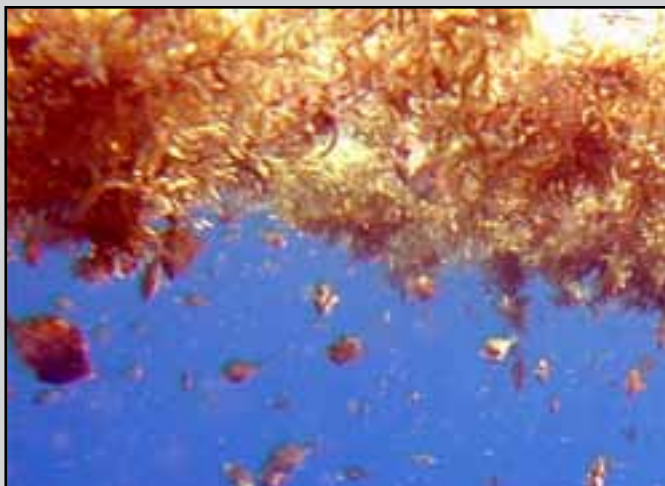
As for the Gulf's sperm whales, no one knows where they're foraging these days. They're suffering the loss of a substantial part of their canyon habitat, and, like virtually everything else that lives in the area, they'll go on consuming contaminated prey long after BP's well is capped for good.

# Gulf of Mexico Sea Turtle Response

by Kate Sampson, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

The Gulf of Mexico oil spill had a huge impact on local marine life, including endangered and threatened sea turtles. Most of the sea turtles that were affected in the Gulf oil spill were young animals in their pelagic (open ocean) life phase. When sea turtles leave the nesting beaches, they travel offshore and spend the next few years associated with sargassum (sea weed) floating at the surface (see below). The sargassum provides protection from predators for the young turtles and also a habitat for invertebrate animals that the turtles use for food. The sargassum, and unfortunately also the spilled oil, is aggregated at the surface by ocean currents, often leading to areas of heavily oiled sargassum. The turtles hiding within the sargassum become externally oiled, but also ingest oil in their prey.

The NOAA Fisheries Service, in cooperation with state agencies and non-profit sea turtle research groups, organized boat-based rescue efforts to rescue sea turtles negatively affected by the BP oil spill. I had the unique opportunity to assist in these efforts for two weeks in June and July. Each day, the boats traveled offshore, sometimes fifty miles or more, to search for turtles in the sargassum. These searches involved hours of slowly surveying sargassum and searching for turtles that may



*Turtles and other marine life use the brown sargassum for protection and the food sources within its shelter. Photo courtesy NOAA.*



*Dr. Brian Stacy, NOAA veterinarian, cleans a young Kemp's ridley turtle. Photo courtesy NOAA/GADNR*

be as small as 15 cm long. It truly was like looking for a needle in a haystack! When a turtle was located, the boat approached it closely so that it could be captured using a large net. Once on board, the turtle was given a health assessment and the level of external oiling was evaluated. If it appeared to be in good condition and there was no evidence of oiling either externally or in the mouth, the turtle was released. However, if the turtle was oiled or in poor condition, it was brought to shore and transported to a medical facility. Oiled turtles received initial cleaning on the boat, but went through two more thorough cleanings once in the facility. These turtles will be treated and ultimately released back into the wild.

Boat-based sea turtle rescue efforts are still going on, even though the oil flow has now been contained. NOAA will continue to monitor and study the effects on sea turtles and other marine life from the oil spill, which may continue to be seen for months and years to come.

# Help Stop The Faroe Island Dolphin Drive



Photo courtesy of Shame on Denmark Facebook group.

**By Darragh Worland**

Reprinted with permission from *Tonic*, June 9, 2010

“The Cove” has brought worldwide attention to an annual dolphin hunt in Taiji, Japan. But the very same thing is happening in another cove, thousands of miles away in Europe. For years, a graphic e-mail petition featuring several stomach-churning photos of dolphins and small whales being slaughtered in an island cove has been making the rounds on the Web with the provocative subject line “SHAME ON DENMARK.”

The e-mail, written in bad English, claims that an annual dolphin drive in the Faroe Islands, an autonomous province of Denmark situated halfway between Scotland and Iceland, is a cruel ritual intended as nothing more than a rite of passage for teenage boys on the cusp of adulthood. Urging readers to “Please hit forward and sign,” the campaign also claims that “the dolphin cauldron, like all the other species of dolphins, it’s near extinction.”

The photos included with the e-mail depict a horrific scene of water stained deep red with dolphin blood and young, fit men slashing their throats. “In this big celebration, nothing is missing for the fun. Everyone is participating in one way or the other, killing or looking at the cruelty ‘supporting like a spectator,’” says the e-mail. If you’ve seen the e-mail

(or one of several Facebook pages devoted to the topic), you’ve no doubt recoiled in horror and wondered;

- a) how can something like this actually be happening; and
- b) what, if anything, is being done to stop it?

## **Yes, It’s True**

Dolphin drives, as anyone who has seen the Oscar-winning documentary “The Cove” now understands, are a means of hunting dolphins by essentially herding them with boats into an enclosed bay where they are then killed one by one with a single slash to the throat, which severs the main artery to the brain. The dolphins are helpless to escape because access to the open ocean is closed off with boats and nets.

However shocking the drives may seem to people who regard dolphins as sentient beings they’d like to swim with and protect, the Faroese hunts present several challenges to conservationists – challenges that can’t be met with a simple e-mail petition.

“It’s an issue that has a lot of nuances that make it difficult to regulate,” said Cheryl McCormick, Executive Director of the American Cetacean Society, the oldest whale conservation organization in the world. “You’re not going to get politicians to care enough to change policy based on an e-mail that circulates around the globe with nameless faces on a mission.”

The first hurdle is cultural. The hunts are non-commercial indigenous subsistence hunts with a long history dating back to the 9th century. The whale meat and blubber has long been a staple of the Faroese diet: In the 1970s, school doctors would write notes to parents to make sure that blubber was included as part of a nutritious breakfast.



**Leading American neurologist Dr. David Permuter, a recipient of the Linus Pauling Functional Medicine Award for his research into brain disease....** “This practice of serving dolphin meat is tantamount to poisoning people,” he told *The Japan Times*. “They may as well serve them arsenic; it would be no less harmful.”

**Photo by Eric Christensen via Wikimedia Commons**

“Because it’s an indigenous subsistence hunt, the meat can’t be sold on the market,” explains McCormick. “Every family gets an allocation of whale meat that is determined ahead of time by the [Faroese] Minister of Fisheries and that dictates the quota. They have 27 whaling districts, and four sanctioned lagoons where the drives are held.”

### **Not Endangered**

The cetaceans killed are actually a combination of long-finned pilot whales, Atlantic white-sided dolphins and bottlenose dolphins. The majority are pilot whales, which belong to the ocean dolphin family, but are not generally thought of as dolphins because they’re bigger (males are 20 feet and females are 16 feet), and their behavior is more like that of larger whales.

As those who have seen “The Cove” will remember, a major issue in protecting dolphin species is that the International Whaling Commission (IWC) does not establish regulations on the management of “small cetacean” stocks (such as dolphins and porpoises). Even if it did, the IWC’s ban on commercial whaling makes allowances for indigenous/aboriginal whaling rights.

A website maintained by the Faroese Ministries of Fisheries and Foreign Affairs, which addresses widespread criticism of the hunts, acknowledges that while the pilot whale drive is “a dramatic and bloody sight,” the throat slashing is the most “efficient and humane” means of killing the animals. The site also says that the whale meat provides about 30

percent of all meat consumed on the islands and is an important part of the economy.

Also, contrary to the “Shame on Denmark” e-mail, the long finned pilot whales are not endangered. The IWC and organizations such as the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (IEC) and the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO) have concluded that, based on a population of approximately 778,000 in the eastern North Atlantic and about 100,000 in the vicinity of the Faroe Islands, the annual hunts pose no threat to current stocks. And yet, in 2008, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUNC) lists the long finned pilot whales with “Data Deficient” on its Red List of Threatened Species. In other words, conservationists — forgive the expression — have bigger fish to fry.

“Of course we oppose [the drive] and it’s horrible and I’ve seen the pictures, but we don’t do much work in that area,” said Lee Poston of the World Wildlife Fund. “Our work is in conservation and endangered species.”

### **Failed Campaign**

Despite the uphill battle, anti-whaling groups have nonetheless done their part to stop the Faroese drives. In 1992, the Environmental Investigation Agency, the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS) and the World Society for the Protection of Animals formed a coalition called the Pilot Whalers Association to investigate and publicize the hunts. The coalition made undercover visits

## Faroe Islands, cont.

to the Faroe Islands and led a successful boycott campaign urging Europeans, the islands' biggest import market, to avoid buying Faroese fish products.

The response in the Faroes? An increase in their annual kill. "Trying to find the right response is a subtle balancing act," admitted Sue Fisher, policy director for WDCS North America.

What has seemed to have had an impact on the annual kill, however, is increasing awareness of the toxicity of pilot whale meat and its potentially devastating effects on the health of the Faroese. It's been known for some time that whale and dolphin meat can contain harmful levels of mercury and other organo-chlorides, such as cadmium. The most telling research has even been conducted by Faroese scientists themselves.

### Toxic Meat

In December of 2008, Dr. Pal Wiehe, Chief Physician in the Department of Occupational Medicine, Public Health in the Faroe Islands recommended, despite harsh criticism from his countrymen, that residents discontinue consumption of pilot whale meat altogether. Pregnant women and children had long been warned of the potential risks, but not everyone was heeding the advice or even fully aware.

But Wiehe's advice was based on a long-term study of the health effects observed directly in Faroese children and teenagers who consumed pilot whale meat. The pediatric studies started in 1986 with newborns, then followed up with the subjects at seven, 14, and finally last year when the subjects were 23 years old. A doctor specializing in occupational medicine and neurology, two psychologists and a pediatrician specializing in neuropsychiatry all contributed their expertise. The study revealed significant levels of organo-chlorides such as PCBs and DDT and other pollutants among the subjects, resulting in a wide range of health effects including attention-deficit problems, memory retention disorders, immune system effects and other neurological symptoms that remained permanent. The cardiovascular system was also affected, with heart rate variations caused by high levels of methyl mercury (MeHg).

"We don't consider pilot whale meat proper human food,"

Dr. Wiehe, who himself participated in the drives in his youth and consumed the meat throughout his childhood and adolescence, told *The Japan Times* in an article published late last month. "Health issues are more important than tradition."

Leading American neurologist Dr. David Permuter, a recipient of the Linus Pauling Functional Medicine Award for his research into brain disease, seconded the notion. "This practice of serving dolphin meat is tantamount to poisoning people," he told *The Japan Times*. "They may as well serve them arsenic; it would be no less harmful."

And yet, a representative from the office of Laurie Fulton, US Ambassador to Denmark, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands, at NAMMCO, who declined to give her name or go on record, said she was unaware of the negative health effects of eating the pilot whale meat and said she'd be surprised since the Faroese are health conscious people. The fear is, of course, that word of Dr. Wiehe's study is just not making to the Faroese people. "What mother would feed her child whale meat if she knew it was killing her?" asked McCormick.

### Progress Is Slow

According to Birgith Sloth of the Society for the Conservation of Marine Mammals in Denmark, the dolphin drive photos that are being circulated in the e-mail and on Facebook are actually from the end of 1970s and early 1980s. She says increasing awareness of Dr. Wiehe's advice has indeed resulted in a significant drop in the numbers of pilot whales caught per year from 2,000 to just a few hundred a year. From August 2007 to January 2009, no whales were taken at all. In 2009, however, three drives took place, with a total kill of 300 pilot whales. "It is 300 too much, but the islands are moving in the right direction," writes Sloth in an e-mail. "It will take a while as there has to be a shift in mindset of everyone there, and that takes sometimes a generation." Sloth warns that pressuring the Faroese with photos from decades ago is not the way to go. "Putting a lot of pressure on the islands using totally outdated information can have the opposite effect," said Sloth. "There are strong, politically-rooted people there who feel that no one from outside should decide what they do."



Still, there are those who would rather not see any dolphins killed. “My job and my goal is to avoid cetaceans being killed for unnecessary human use,” said Fisher. “[The Faroese hunt] may be sustainable, but it’s not humane. We’re keeping it constantly under review.”

Others take a more pragmatic approach, saying we should care about dolphins and whales, “not only because they are charismatic and because they are so much like us as mammals that they really pull at our heartstrings,” said McCormick. “but because, from an ecosystem standpoint, they are a keystone species. As top predators, they are bellwethers of the state of ocean health.”

### What You Can Do

Clearly, signing a petition and circulating disturbing photos of the slaughter is as ineffective as inaction. A more effective approach is to help empower those who dedicate their lives to protecting the species. “If every one of those people who signs that meaningless petition gave \$5, that would be a million dollars at least,” says McCormick. “I believe in contributing financially. I give and I give until it hurts, because I know [NGOs] are putting their passion into action. No one gets into this for the money. We feel compelled to do it for our values.”

McCormick suggests donors divvy up their donations to these four organizations: Greenpeace, for their ability to attract public attention to issues; the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW,) for their international presence and savvy leaders; the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, since they are directly involved in the issue; and of course her organization, the American Cetacean Society, for its ability to really target and lobby stakeholders. She also suggests getting on the phone and calling Laurie Fulton, the U.S. Ambassador to Denmark, and telling her directly that you don’t support the Faroe Island dolphin drive and you want it stopped. Her number is (+45) 33 41 71 00.

Also, inspired in part by this article, McCormick is mobilizing students at campuses across the country to work with Ric O’Barry of “The Cove” on further raising awareness of the negative health effects of the pilot whale meat and ending the Faroe Island dolphin drive once and for all.

#### FROM “THE COVE” WEB SITE - INSIGHTS ON DOLPHIN CAPTIVITY - DO YOU AGREE?

*Dolphins have evolved over millions of years, adapting perfectly to life in the ocean. They are intelligent, social and self-aware, exhibiting evidence of a highly developed emotional sense.*

- *Captures of dolphins are traumatic and stressful and can result in injury and death. The number of dolphins that die during capture operations or shortly thereafter are never revealed in dolphinariums or swim-with-dolphins programs. Some facilities even claim their dolphins were “rescued” from the ocean and cannot be released. This claim is almost invariably false.*
- *Training of dolphins is often deliberately misrepresented by the captive dolphin industry to make it appear as though dolphins perform because they like it. This isn’t the case. They are performing because they have been deprived of food.*
- *Dolphins in a tank are severely restricted in using their highly developed sonar, which is one of the most damaging aspects of captivity. It is much like forcing a person to live in a hall of mirrors for the rest of their life - their image always bouncing back with no clear direction in sight.*

# Preliminary Member Survey Results

The ACS National Headquarters and Board of Directors would like to thank our members who took the time to fill out and return the 2010 survey. We gained valuable information through this feedback that will help us better understand our members, their perceptions of ACS, what they want to gain through membership, and where our focus and planning should be. Below we provide a brief summary of your input, and in future issues we hope to tell you more about what we've done in response to your feedback.



We had a 14% return rate, which is very good for a survey of this nature. About 72% were returned by hard copy. Here are some overall general conclusions:

- Satisfaction with the organization is strong and members consider it a good value.
- Our publications top the list of membership benefits received, followed by chapter activities, whale watching trips, the web site, and ACS conferences.
- Needed improvement high points were for more activity, communication of successes, and more chapter locations.
- The research and current issues information were the most important aspects noted for the web site, with a great need to update them and keep them current.
- Nearly all responding members plan to keep their membership. The highest reason for this is personal belief in our mission and objectives.
- About half of our members feel that the web site meets their needs.
- A small portion of our membership uses social media - Facebook is the highest, used by about a third of our membership. Even fewer knew that ACS uses Facebook and Twitter to disseminate current cetacean information.
- Most members like receiving information by e-mail, but a strong preference was noted for continuing publications by conventional mail.
- IWC issues and habitat protection topped the list of preferred priorities.
- Although most listed activities were seen as relevant, education programs were the highest.

Once again, thank you for your responses, and for your continued membership and involvement in the American Cetacean Society. We will be working hard to make it a worthwhile investment of your time and much appreciated support!

**More to Follow!**

# Going to Great Lengths to Save Whales

June 17th, 2010, 5:30 a.m.: In the pre-dawn darkness of Point Fermin Park, San Pedro, CA, in the company of supporters from the L.A. Chapter Board, a three-member support crew, and a past National President, ACS Executive Director Cheryl McCormick set off to begin the first of 50 miles of the first annual Dolphin Dash run.

The grueling 50-mile run raised funds for Cheryl to attend the 62nd Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in Agadir, Morocco, where ACS and other conservation organizations from around the world were meeting with leaders of IWC member nations to stop a “compromise package” proposing to suspend the international moratorium on commercial whaling for a period of ten years. The package was being advocated by US IWC Commissioner Monica Medina, with the support of the Obama Administration.

An avid distance runner who has competed in several national and international marathons and ultra-marathons (races with distances greater than a marathon), McCormick had been training for the event since February. “The longest run I’ve done in one day was 100 miles; but it’s not something I’d like to repeat,” says McCormick, who lives in San Pedro.

To cover so much distance in a single day, McCormick had assistance from a support team and wiener-dog mascot, Luscious Lilly. Equipped with Advil, salt tablets, glucose,



*Lilly hydrates for the big run (ride) and, yes, recycles!*



*Ah, the shaded trails of Palos Verdes before the heat set in.*

food and drink, and spare gear, among other necessities, the support team, comprised of Carolyn Kraft, Kaye Reznick, and Cynthia Woo, worked together with race pit-crew efficiency to dole out provisions on the fly, take photos



*Carolyn, Kaye, and Cynthia - the support team.*

and videos, and upload progress reports to ACS’s blog, Facebook, and Twitter page.

“I find it hard to describe what it was like to see her approach us at each point – moving at the same steady pace for over 50 miles on a day that grew increasingly warm and required her considerable will and determination,” said Kaye Reznick, ACS Business Manager.

Despite the unseasonably warm temperatures, sunburn, the occasional ingestion of bugs, and a “face plant” due to underfoot squirrels, it was a fun day characterized by an indomitable spirit of teamwork, positive energy, and lots

## Dolphin Dash, cont.

of laughs. Carolyn Kraft, L.A. Chapter Vice President said, “We shared stories in the car as we followed Cheryl and were in constant amazement that Cheryl sometimes beat us to our next stop along the route as we furiously tried to load video at Starbucks.”

As the miles ticked off, support for Cheryl’s effort came from all over the country and as far away as Brazil, Australia, and Canada, thanks to updates provided along the route at local Starbucks shops by the team while Cheryl continued her run.

“Cheryl got to do all the hard work while the rest of us got to hang out in Starbucks, enjoy the scenery of Rancho Palos Verdes and listen to folk songs written by Kaye,” joked Cynthia Woo, a veteran of the L.A. Gray Whale Census and Behavior Project.

The lightheartedness and camaraderie of the day belied its purpose and the gravity of events that awaited Cheryl in Agadir. Scheduled to depart the next day for Morocco on an early morning flight out of LAX, Cheryl reflects on the important work she saw ahead of her. “The current threat to the moratorium on commercial whaling is the most significant challenge to whale protection in the past twenty years,” says McCormick. “The US Delegation and other proponents of the package were rallying strong support for their position. Nobody in the non-governmental organization (NGO) community expected that defeating this proposal would be easy, but we knew which countries were sympathetic to our message. The commissioners of those nations listened to us when we discussed the reasons why this package was a bad deal for whales and untenable for



*The finish line Cheryl would leap over minutes later!*

the IWC in the long-term. We knew exactly where to focus our efforts in the most strategic ways to eventually deal a death blow to the proposal.”

Waiting for McCormick at the finish line, Reznick, Kraft, and Woo speculated about the next day’s 20-hour flight and how Cheryl would deal with the inevitable soreness, fatigue, and other complications associated with pounding out so many miles in a single day, such as blisters, chafing, and sunburn.

5:26 p.m., almost exactly 12 hours after starting from the same location, McCormick entered Point Fermin Point, picking up speed as she approached – and leaped over – the finish line. Energized by the enthusiasm of her support crew, McCormick smiled, wolfed down a cereal bar, and turned her attention to the next order of the day – packing for Morocco. Cheryl says, “This event was enormously successful in building support for a cause that we all believe in very strongly. The Dolphin Dash was not about me doing something extraordinary. It was about a network of people rallying around one of their own in order to accomplish something extraordinary together. I could not have possibly have completed this if not for the help and support of the entire ACS community. We all did it together!”

Visit Cheryl’s blog at <http://acsdolphindash.blogspot.com/> to see all the photos taken during her run. Thank you to all who contributed to this important fundraiser. We are still accepting donations in recognition of Cheryl’s amazing feat/feet! Please send your donations to ACS National Office, P.O. Box 1391, San Pedro, CA 90733, or call the office at 310-548-6279.



*Hmmm...why is this ambulance following us?*

# The Road To Agadir Ends at an Impasse

by Cheryl McCormick

JUNE 21st, 2010: Amid scandal, innuendo, and the gracious hospitality extended by the Kingdom of Morocco and the historic city of Agadir, the plenary session of the 62nd Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) opened with all of the pomp and circumstance one would expect from an international gathering of politicians – welcoming statements from the Mayor of Agadir, congratulatory remarks from the Moroccan Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Forests, and a procession of lively traditional Berber dancers and musicians. This interesting, albeit brief 20-minute prelude was immediately followed by a 40-minute coffee break, thus initiating the infamous rhythm of a typical IWC meeting - a few precious minutes of work and discussion followed by a minimum 40-minute coffee break.

## A Question of Integrity

Even before the onset of the first day, the IWC was permeated with drama and scandal. *The London Times* reported the previous day that IWC Vice Chair Anthony Liverpool (Antigua and Barbuda) had his airfare and luxury hotel bill fully paid for by a Japanese company, to the tune of £4,000 (US \$6,000). Along with the Vice Chair, Japan was also reported to be picking up the travel and lodging tabs for delegates of five other countries traveling to Agadir.

The scandal couldn't possibly have come at a worse time. The IWC was already in the throes of allegations of corruption and vote buying, underscoring the need for a serious organizational overhaul to restore its credibility and transparency. The *Times* article states that the Vice Chair's travel tab was picked up by Japan Tours and Travel of Houston, a company said to be linked to Hideuki Wakasa, who had previously been identified as the middleman who makes secret payments to pro-whaling Caribbean countries such as Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts, and Nevis.

When the story broke, Vice Chair Liverpool acknowledged the accuracy of the allegations, which he then recanted,



Lights carve Arabic words, "God, Country, King" into the hills behind the Agadir Marina. Photo courtesy C. McCormick.

and then suddenly fell ill with a serious throat infection that apparently inhibited his ability to further discuss the matter at all. Indeed, there seemed to be an "IWC bug" going around, because Chair Cristian Maquieira (Chile), widely regarded as the chief architect of the so-called "compromise package," had also fallen ill with an unspecified malady, prohibiting his attendance at this year's critical and contentious meeting.

Maquieira, as it turns out, had been under a tremendous amount of pressure from all parties within the Chilean Parliament to resign his position as Chair. They felt that through his strong advocacy of the compromise package, Mr. Maquieira was not acting in a way that reflected the will and values of the Chilean people. In 2008 a poll of the general public found that 99 percent of Chileans supported the formation of a whale sanctuary within their jurisdictional waters. The Chilean government and its citizenry had made it very clear where they stood on the position of commercial whaling. Since they unveiled the package, both Chair Maquieira and Vice Chair Liverpool had admitted to taking a lot of heat from both sides of the issue. Chair Maquieira was also notably absent from the March intersession meeting in St. Petersburg, Florida. As this meeting took place just after an earthquake struck Chile hours before his scheduled departure, it was widely assumed that his absence was due to this tragedy. As it turns out, his part of the country was not affected at all, and the timing of the disaster and his absence was largely coincidental.

What is not coincidental is that Mr. Maquieira has resigned from the post as IWC Chair as of August 4th and will be replaced by Ambassador José Luis Balmaceda, also from Chile. We are hopeful that Ambassador Balmaceda will

## Agadir, cont.



The Agadir Convention Center - scene of each session and many long coffee breaks in Agadir. Photo by C. McCormick.

exhibit firm and moral leadership during his tenure at IWC, and that he will navigate the organization in the direction of a new paradigm of governance, integrity, and transparency.

During the first of many early morning meetings between NGO groups and members of the US Delegation, we addressed the issue of the Vice Chair's alleged transgressions. Commissioner Monica Medina responded by stating that, "The US has every confidence in (Anthony's) integrity; that he is innocent until proven guilty," and that "...members of the US Delegation would inquire about the matter during the meeting." To my ears, this sounded like the equivalent of saying, "Stop; or we'll say 'stop' again." We were also told that, "At this point in the process, any *one* administrator's power is greatly diminished," as if to further minimize the gravity of the situation. Whether the Vice Chair is actually able to sway the direction of leadership in the plenary or the voting process wasn't the point. The perception of transparent, unbiased, and integrity-based leadership is of utmost

importance at this critical juncture in the deciding the "Future of the IWC." UK Commissioner Simon Gooding requested to bring the matter up on the plenary floor for discussion, a proposal for which I thanked him in his efforts to hold IWC Chairs fully and immediately accountable for their actions.

Back in the Monday morning plenary, barely one hour after it had begun, the session abruptly ended, for what Vice Chair Liverpool stated would be one and a half days of closed-door bilateral discussions among pro- and anti-whaling nations on the now-infamous compromise package.

### Speed Dating: IWC Style

The discussions took place in private, closed-door sessions, round robin style, with several countries grouped together in every conceivable combination to allow exchange and negotiation of as many perspectives as possible. The groups involved included the African nations, the Buenos Aires Group (eleven Latin American countries, including

Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru and Uruguay), the European Union, Iceland, Japan, Republic of Korea, Norway, small island developing states and two other groups – one comprising Australia, Israel, Monaco, New Zealand, Oman, and the U.S., and the other comprising Denmark, the Russian Federation and Switzerland. Each group appointed a *rapporteur*, who would consolidate the group's progress and submit his/her report directly to Vice Chair Liverpool. The process was designed to intensify consensus efforts among all attending governments in order to finalize a package by the end of the week - a goal developed during the 2009 meeting in Madeira, Portugal. I became fond of referring to the negotiations as "IWC speed dating," given its similarity to the social networking scheme.

Working toward the lofty but improbable goal of consensus, the Vice Chair, along with the Small Working Group (SWG) led by the US Delegation, incorporated new comments and negotiation points resulting from the closed-door sessions into a final draft of the package, which commissioners would then send back to their respective governments for comment and await their official marching orders. If consensus couldn't be reached (and no one reasonably expected that it would), then the package would be voted on late in the plenary schedule – very likely on the final day. While no one could be absolutely certain, based on information we observed and heard, many of us in the NGO community predicted that the compromise package, as it stood, would fail.

ACS, along with many other conservation organizations, believed firmly that the package was destined for failure from the beginning. The proposal did little to improve the conservation status of whales. As it stood, it would set catch limits and legitimize whaling for Japan, Iceland and Norway (the only countries currently whaling on a large scale) for a ten-year period. Whalers would achieve what is essentially a suspension of the current IWC moratorium on commercial whaling, effectively legitimizing so-called "scientific whaling" and introducing a new form of whaling (Japanese Coastal Whaling) for the suggested interim 10-year period, in return for some fairly limited promises of greater global conservation. In principle, the higher goal of 'fixing a broken' IWC and restoring its credibility is a noble one and should be encouraged. However, the means to achieve that lofty goal isn't by sanctioning the killing of more whales. In short, the proposal was a bad deal for

whales – but a good deal for whalers.

The negotiation process represented a new paradigm in IWC procedure and protocol – the meetings were private and governed by "Chatham House Rules," whereby participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed. ("You can be quoted, but not fired.") ACS and other conservation organizations had no direct access to the delegates during this time (even during their numerous and protracted coffee breaks), which greatly handicapped our ability to learn about emerging developments from which we could strategize the next move at a moment's notice, if needed. Aside from discussions over late dinner or early breakfast meetings, the only way to reach a number of commissioners was via e-mail, which proved to be untenable and frustrating to those who found their e-mail accounts overrun by formatted, pre-written e-mail from advocacy groups and their constituents. Several commissioners expressed their vehement objection to the electronic deluge, which they stated was "unhelpful and irritating," and which they summarily deleted without review.

While we waited for developing news from the negotiations, the NGO groups developed press releases, strategized together and identified commissioners whose countries had yet to adopt a firm position on the package. We spoke to the media, blogged, and posted updates on social media outlets, and tapped away furiously on iPhones and laptops. And of course, we met with our own commissioners and delegates outside of the meetings to express and discuss our opinions and expectations about the package and the disappointing lack of transparency that characterized the process.

### **Negotiations Breakdown**

In all, 30 negotiating sessions were held, with all groups reporting that their discussions were valuable and had been conducted in a very cordial and respectful manner, despite the fact that in a number of cases their fundamental positions remained very far apart. The Commission agreed that while it was very close to agreement on a number of issues within the proposed consensus decision, there remained major issues upon which more work was required, including such matters as the question of the moratorium, the numbers of whales that might be taken, special permit ("scientific") whaling, indigenous whaling, international trade of whale meat and products, and eliminating whaling

## Agadir, cont.

in the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary (SOWS). Despite encouragement from Vice Chair Liverpool and US Commissioner Monica Medina to work toward consensus on critical issues, movement toward compromise positions proved to be impossible.

Each country (or in some cases, block of countries) had taken a firm position on at least one issue and was unwilling to compromise. The US had two objectives:

- 1) Secure long-term subsistence bowhead quotas for indigenous Alaskan tribes, and;
- 2) Establish quotas that are determined by the IWC based on scientific data, rather than by whaling countries setting their own quotas unilaterally.

In the pro-whaling camp, Iceland refused to accept limitations on the export of whale meat and products. Japan rejected Australia's proposal of completely eliminating whaling in the SOWS. South Korea stated that since it has, up to now, abided by the terms of the moratorium, it should be rewarded with a quota for minke whales. On the anti-whaling side, Australia dug its heels in over whaling in the Antarctic sanctuary, and Latin American countries advocated the creation of additional sanctuaries where no hunting would occur as well as increased non-consumptive use of whales (such as whale watching) as a way of increasing ecotourism.

The degree of polarization among IWC member nations makes it difficult to envision how consensus could ever be achieved. That fact became evident when the plenary reconvened on Wednesday, during which statements from several commissioners of both the anti- and pro-whaling camps cited a lack of political will to compromise. Fabio Pitaluga (Brazil) stated that the process "...lacked political maturity. You have to put this document aside for the moment. We need a pause." Speaking on behalf of the Japanese Delegation, Joji Morishita stated, "The IWC remains polarized and Japan has engaged in the process in a sincere way and accepts the fact that, in effect, there is no prospect for consensus on the proposal. Not allowing the take of a single animal in the name of 'conservation' is not based on sound science and is unacceptable. It is clear that among whaling and anti-whaling nations, it has become impossible to rise above narrow-minded political and philosophical differences." Ole Samsing, (Denmark) added, "While the dialog has been polite, it has lacked substantive discussion. I don't expect anything to change

in the next day or so, or in the near future. Time is running out for the IWC. I speak for the future interests of the Faroe Islands."

The general view was that, while the Commission made progress on some of the issues on reform during negotiations at IWC 62, there was a consensus that an impasse had been reached and a divergence of viewpoints remained on some of the key issues. This does not mean that further attempts to reform the IWC through compromise packages will not take place in the future. In fact, we were assured that the process will be resurrected in 2011, though hopefully that effort will proceed in a more transparent, multi-lateral, sincere attempt to actually protect whales, and not the interest of whaling nations.

### Civil Society Speaks out on Taboo Issues

For the second time in the history of the organization, Vice Chair Liverpool permitted NGO representatives (aka, "Civil Society") to issue their interventions during the plenary session. Despite having over 80 NGO representatives from the world over in attendance, we were allotted a total of 30 minutes, beginning at 7:20 p.m.

A total of eight NGO groups representing a spectrum of views on the status of the protection of whales were selected to present their positions to the Chair and the Commission. Collectively, they spoke out decisively and pointedly about taboo issues that delegates had been hesitant to address on the floor, including allegations of vote buying (or "vote consolidation" in Japanese delegation terms), exclusion of Civil Society from the negotiation process associated with the "Future of IWC" (whaling package), and dwindling public support for whaling operations in Japan and Norway. We hope that the Commission remains amenable to hearing the voice of Civil Society and will facilitate the spirit of uncensored free speech that represents the vast majority of the will and values of the global citizenry.

### Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling (ASW)

The compromise package wasn't the only controversial issue slated for discussion during the plenary. During the final hours of the week, with the negotiations over commercial whaling at an impasse, the Kingdom of Denmark, acting on behalf of Greenland, and the US submitted proposals on aboriginal subsistence whaling (ASW). In it, Greenland proposed an increase in its humpback quota from 10 to 16. The US was seeking a



seven year bowhead quota in an effort to block other countries (namely, Japan and Iceland) from continuing to use Alaska's indigenous peoples and their whaling rights as a 'bargaining chip' in future negotiations. Though it had submitted proposals for increased quotas in the past, Greenland had failed to secure the votes needed for adoption of their proposals, in part due to questions about lack of scientific data on yields, serious skepticism about Greenland's outdated 'needs' statement, and concerns about selling whale meat and products to Iceland and Japan.

These concerns remain; nevertheless, as part of their ASW hunt the Commission agreed by consensus to award Greenland an additional quota of nine humpbacks, with a reduction in the fin whale quota to 16 (with agreement that they will only take 10 in any year). In effect, there will be no increase in the number of whales that Greenland can take in any one year.

During discussions on the US proposal, Doug DeMaster, Alternate US Commissioner, stated "I am pleased that the Commission was able to reach consensus on the Denmark proposal. However, despite all contracting governments professing to support ASW activities, through consultation I realize that as a body there may not be support for a seven-year bowhead quota." And with that, the US proposal for long term quotas on bowheads was withdrawn. The Greenland quota will be re-evaluated for renewal in 2012. Several nations, including the UK, expressed concern over the humpback whale limit, and will continue to advocate for a significant improvement in the data on which Greenland's needs statement is based in support its ASW quota requests.

### **What Does it all Mean?**

If it is to seriously reform itself, the IWC must commit to evaluating systematic breaches in governance issues, ethics, codes of conduct, and conflicts of interest, preemptively as they arise. Perhaps the best way to achieve substantive reform is through an external audit and review of organizational practices since, at this point, internal evaluation in the name of organizational reform will be met with understandable skepticism.

Despite the proposal ending in an impasse, our work at ACS is far from being done as long as Japan, Iceland, and Norway continue to hunt and kill whales under the guise of 'scientific whaling' and in direct contravention with the moratorium on commercial whaling. However, at least for now, the moratorium on commercial whaling

remains intact, and we can return to our work confronting the challenges that face whales on other fronts – bycatch, entanglement in gear, ocean noise, pollution, and ship strikes, among others.

On a larger scale, the level of public outcry against this package was unprecedented. As a society, we must continue to leverage public support that translates into public policies that protect whales and their habitats, support and encourage scientific pursuits that deepen our understanding of whales and the environmental and human-caused challenges they face, and prevent them from becoming pawns in global geopolitical affairs like the one we recently encountered. We should also be willing to hold our elected leaders and appointed leaders accountable to their obligation to serve the will of their constituents who voted them in positions of power and influence, and who also have the power to vote them out.

We must remain vigilant and informed about all issues that influence the health and safety of whales and their habitats, be willing and eager to work collaboratively, and to realize that every one of us can do something directly and effectively to protect the whales we love. In Agadir, those of us who advocated for the safety and protection of whales spoke in many languages and dialects. Nevertheless, we spoke with one voice, and our message was clear – we will neither accept nor concede to the baseless slaughter of these magnificent animals which, as keystone species in their habitats, serve as bellwethers of ecosystem health, and which so perfectly manifest our values as stewards of the environment.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to work hard on your behalf, on behalf of ACS, and on behalf of the whales you value so much.

***ACS will be working hard to increase its membership in 2011, which will allow us to do more and reach more people. We've had two chapters reactivated in 2010 - San Diego and San Francisco - and we hope to keep growing, increase our footprint, and get this kind of important information out to many more individuals who care. You can help by passing on the membership form on the last page of this newsletter to a friend, giving a membership as a gift, or by directing a friend to our web site to join through PayPal.***



# Conference Countdown

**ACS 12th International Conference  
November 12-14, 2010  
Embassy Suites Hotel - Monterey Bay  
Seaside, California**

**[www.acsonline.org](http://www.acsonline.org)**

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# ACS Conference Is Filling Up!

## Make Your Plans for Monterey

by **Mason Weinrich**

This November, ACS will host its 12th biennial conference, entitled “*Whales 2010: Inspiring a New Decade of Conservation.*” As an ACS member who has been following the news lately, you know the title could not be more appropriate. In the past few months, newspapers have been carrying features daily about the possible overturning of the long-standing commercial moratorium on whaling, the destruction of the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem by the tragic BP oil spill, and now the President’s newly-signed order to unify and progress the management of the marine environment throughout the United States.

We can all read the newspapers, publications, online sources, and gather information. But there is no better opportunity to get the real scoop from the people who are on the ground than at this year’s conference. In what may well be the best speaker line-up ever, we have all of the top people in their field to address today’s current issues.

Interested in some of the most endangered whales and dolphins in the world? We have Dr. Bernd Würsig, Dr. Thomas Jefferson, and Randy Reeves - the world’s authorities - to discuss them. Want to know about the International Whaling Commission controversy, or the federal response to the Gulf spill? We have Monica Medina, the undersecretary of the Department of Commerce and head of the U.S. delegation to the Whaling Commission as our keynote speaker. Interested in the effects of Navy sonar on beaked whales around the world? Dr. Bob Brownell,

leading authority who got his start in San Pedro many years ago with one of ACS’s founders, John Olguin, will address this key topic. Interested in the background behind the academy-award winning documentary “The Cove?” Ric O’Barry will be on hand to discuss both the filming of the movie, their follow-up activities, and the impact that one small team of people has had on a shocking and little-known dolphin slaughter.

Dr. Randy Wells, who has studied bottlenose dolphins off the coast of the Florida for over 40 years, will bring his lifetime of experiences to a featured banquet presentation. Dr. Hal Whitehead will share his experiences of 20+ years at sea with sperm whales, a species with the largest brains on earth and one of the most complex social systems. Other renowned experts will share and celebrate the unique and special nature of the animals we care so much about.

This is an ACS conference designed to send you, as an attendee, home with renewed enthusiasm and vigor. Our final sessions will consider what you, as an ACS member and whale enthusiast, can do to help secure a great future for whales at what is certainly a critical time. Please join us at this special conference. It may only last a few days, but you will remember it for a lifetime. We’ll see you there!

**Link to the registration sight at [www.acsonline.org](http://www.acsonline.org).  
See the full program listed below the event “ticket items.”  
Questions? Contact Kaye Reznick at  
[acsoffice@acsonline.org](mailto:acsoffice@acsonline.org) or call 310-548-6279.**

**Embassy Suites Hotel is offering a special rate of \$169/night to conference attendees. Make your hotel reservations separately by calling 831-393-1115.**

# Book Review by Uko Gorter

## **The Dusky Dolphin: Master Acrobat off Different Shores** Bernd and Melany Würsig, editors

Of the more than 35 different species of dolphins, a half dozen bold-patterned delphinids have, arguably, been grouped within the Genus *Lagenorhynchus*. Dubbed “lags” for short by scientists, these handsome dolphins are found in cold and cold-temperate waters of both the northern and southern hemispheres. Compared to other delphinids like the killer whale and the bottlenose dolphin, this group has received far less attention. Consequently not much was known about their natural history and ecology. Studies of the dusky dolphin, which are widespread in the southern hemisphere, started in 1972 with Bernd and Melany Würsig off the Patagonian shores in Argentina. Since then, they have inspired many (of their) students and colleagues to help continue and expand on their work. Their collective effort has culminated in this impressive monograph, “The Dusky Dolphin: Master Acrobat off Different Shores.”

Bernd and Melany Würsig were also co-authors of the landmark work of “The Hawaiian Spinner Dolphin” (Norris et al. 1994). Not surprisingly, this likely served as a template for their current publication. Very similar in structure and scope, “The Dusky Dolphin” deals with almost every aspect of this dolphin species. However, unlike the “Hawaiian Spinner Dolphin,” this work explores the ecology and natural history of the dusky dolphin in their entire range.

Each chapter is written by different authors, all are experts in their respective field. This has resulted in some inevitable overlap of information. However, it has made their contributions work well as stand-alone articles. Overall, the chapters seem very complimentary and generally have a uniform feel. I especially like the anecdotal-style introductions that set the stage for each topic at hand.

I enjoyed reading April Harlin-Cognato’s historic view on the continuing taxonomic conundrum that is the Genus *Lagenorhynchus*. The three southern lags have been proposed to change their Genus to *Sagmatius*. Although I would doubt if scientist would ever address them as “sags.”

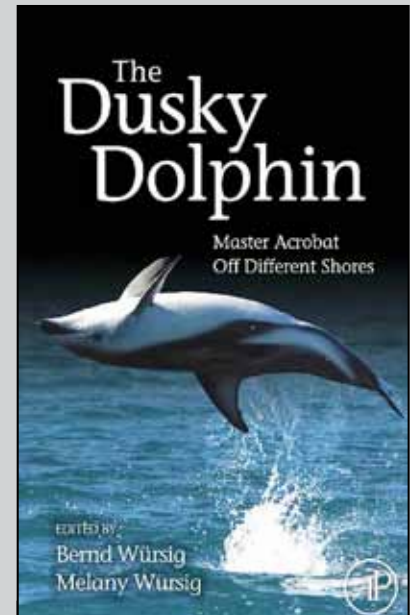
Other highly interesting chapters deal with their trophic role in the foodweb and foraging strategies both at night and during the day. The dusky dolphin acoustic world is expertly covered by Whitlow Au (et al.).

As eco-tourism, and especially dolphin/whale watching and swim-with programs, has expanded rapidly over the last decades, I was fascinated to read the chapter on management perspectives of human interactions. However, the next chapter written by a whale watch and swim-with program operator in Kaikoura (New Zealand) seemed like the odd one out. It read somewhat like an advertisement for his company. Although, I must confess that it made me want to put on my wetsuit right away and dive in.

The chapter on sympatric patterns between dusky and fellow southern hemisphere lags (the Peale’s and hourglass dolphin), as well as their tiny relatives the *Cephalorhynchus* (i.e. Hector’s, Heaviside’s, Commerson’s, and Chilean dolphins) is also noteworthy. The diminutive *Cephalorhynchus* bunch can be found everywhere in the dusky’s range, and it makes sense to explore their roles.

This work is rounded out by a glossary of terms section in the back, while all references are also relegated to the back, as opposed to the end of each chapter.

I can wholeheartedly recommend this comprehensive publication to anyone who is seriously interested in the dusky dolphin, dolphin research, and the immense efforts of Bernd and Melany Würsig and their colleagues. The price of this book is undoubtedly prohibitive for many, and it may be only available in selected university libraries. It is my hope that a less expensive paperback version will be in the works.



### **The Dusky Dolphin: Master Acrobat off Different Shores**

Bernd and Melany Würsig, editors  
Academic Press, September 2009

(copyright 2010)

List price \$89,95

(Barnes & Noble \$71.96)

*Bernd will be a speaker at our  
conference in November.*

# Chapters In Action

## Bernardo Alps, Los Angeles

The ACS/LA “Summertime Blues Whale Watch Adventure” aboard the Condor Express (Santa Barbara) in the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary turned into another unforgettable excursion. We visited the Painted Cave on Santa Cruz Island first and then headed west to an area where the whales had been feeding on abundant krill. We were not disappointed. There were blue whales and humpback whales spread out as far as the eye could see, and they were mostly lunge feeding at the surface. Captain Mat Curto spent most of the day positioning the boat so that we would be in a perfect spot when the whales came up and engulfed huge mouthfuls of water and krill. We topped the day off by watching a 14-foot basking shark also gorging on the tiny crustaceans.

We have an exciting lineup for the ACS/LA speaker series scheduled for this fall. On September 28, Jodi Frediani from the Social Humpback ID Project will present “Swimming with Humpback Whales on the Silver Bank: A Photographic Journey;” followed on October 26 by Graham Slater, Ph. D., from the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of California, Los Angeles, who will discuss “Diet matters: How did cetaceans evolve the greatest size range of all mammals?” and on November 30 Susan Chivers, Ph.D., of the Southwest Fisheries Science Center, NMFS, NOAA, will speak on “Quest for Two Dolphins: Results of the 2009 survey to study common dolphin populations in the California Current.” The lectures are free and open to the public and are held at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium in San Pedro, CA, on the last Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. Before the lecture at 6 p.m., there is a no-host, “meet the speaker” dinner at the Puesta del Sol restaurant, 1622 S. Gaffey Street.

ACS/LA is looking forward to the beginning of the whalewatch naturalist training program at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium. We will meet every Tuesday evening, from the first Tuesday in October to the end of March and prepare for the upcoming gray whale season, when we will go out on local whale watching boats and lecture at local schools. The whalewatch program is free and open to participants of college age and above.

## Wellington Rogers, Orange County

ACS/OC is now accepting enrollments for Certified Whale Naturalist training for the upcoming season. You can get your certification while learning about whales, dolphins, and other marine mammals off our coast. You’ll then be qualified to represent ACS at schools and on whale watch boats. To enroll, please send a \$10 check, made out to ACS/OC to:

Desi Green  
6225 Pacific Pointe Drive  
Huntington Beach, CA 92648

Please include your e-mail address. Desi will send you an e-mail confirming your enrollment and providing the training schedule. All training is from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Costa Mesa Community Center, 1825 Park Ave., Costa Mesa, except the dolphin sighting, which will be at Dog Beach in Huntington Beach between 10 a.m. and noon. The first session is October 21. If you have questions, please e-mail Desi directly at: [Lgreen1128@aol.com](mailto:Lgreen1128@aol.com).



*Alisa Schulman-Janiger captures in this photo what so many hope to see as the gray whale migration begins off the California coast in December. ACS headquarters (right) and the Pt. Fermin Lighthouse are visible on the cliff. Photo © Alisa Schulman-Janiger.*

# Chapters, cont.

## Uko Gorter, Puget Sound

Our chapter is currently taking a much-needed summer break. We will reconvene and start our speaker series meetings on Wednesday, September 15, when Lynne Barre (marine mammal biologist, NOAA Fisheries) and Elizabeth Babcock (NOAA Fisheries' Salmon Recovery Coordinator for the Puget Sound region) will talk about Southern Resident Killer Whales and Salmon Recovery. Stay tuned for other speaker series updates on our website ([www.acspugetsound.org](http://www.acspugetsound.org)).

Other speakers we will hear from this coming fall include Joe Gaydos, marine mammal veterinarian and director of the Sea Doc Society, who will present a talk about killer whale strandings, diseases, and population health.

ACS/PS has awarded a small travel grant of \$400 to Sophie Pierszalowski, an undergraduate student of the University of Washington, who is completing an interesting genetics project using humpback whale sloughed skin samples collected over many years by Mark and Debbie Ferrari (Center for Whale Studies in Hawaii). Sophie has submitted an abstract for a poster presentation at the ACS conference this coming November.

## Diane Glim, Monterey Bay

Huge, dense clouds of krill brought blue and humpback whales to Monterey Bay in July. Sixty humpbacks were recorded in one day – some lunge-feeding at the surface. A friendly humpback visited several whale watching boats for close observation of the excited people on deck. The four whale watching companies serving Fisherman's Wharf in Monterey bumped up whalewatching trips from two to three per day to accommodate the many visitors wishing to view blues and humpbacks. Multiple blue whale sightings in one excursion was common. The abundance of baleen whales congregating near shore made national news.

To protest the possible suspension on the commercial whaling ban and to collect signatures for a petition to President Obama, the Monterey Bay chapter participated in the coastal Whale Rally. Held on May 23 at Window on the Bay Park in Monterey, the rally drew attention to the International Whaling Commission meeting in Morocco.

"John Steinbeck, Ed Ricketts and the Sea of Cortez" was presented to an overflow crowd at the May meeting by Dr. Steven Webster. As one of the founding members of the Monterey Bay Chapter of ACS (in 1980), as well as the Monterey Bay Aquarium (in 1984), Dr. Webster presented a knowledgeable local look at the journey recorded in books with his own



Tony Lorenz, Monterey Bay chapter member, captured this amazing "tandem" lunge feeding choreography in the Monterey Bay area. Photo © Tony Lorenz.

## Chapters, cont.

experiences and photographs. Dr. Webster was honored by the chapter at an annual Barbecue held on July 10 as 'Citizen of the Year' for his work in conservation.

Dr. Brandon Southall, University of California at Santa Cruz, addressed the June 24 meeting with a fascinating talk entitled "Integrating Biological, Bioacoustic and Behavioral Response Studies of Marine Mammals in Southern California."

In August, Chuck Davis, marine photographer and cinematographer, will talk about "Stimulating Marine Conservation through Marine and Underwater Imagery." The talk is timely, as Chuck will also be a presenter at the premier Blue Ocean Film Festival taking place in Monterey August 25-29.

The Monterey Bay chapter supported Executive Director Cheryl McCormick during her 'Dolphin Dash' fundraiser and appreciated her efforts. Our chapter benefits from a Blue Whale Fundraiser on August 28, with Monterey Bay Whale Watching.

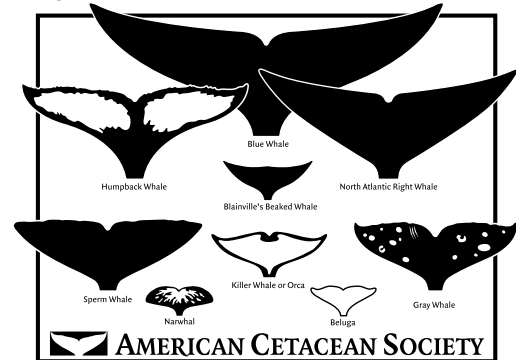
The Monterey Bay Chapter looks forward to hosting the American Cetacean Society International Conference in Monterey November 12-14, 2010. Link from [www.acsonline.org](http://www.acsonline.org) for information and registration. Hope to see you here!



The blue whales have been observable in unusually high numbers this year. Photo © Tony Lorenz.

### New ACS T-Shirt Available!

*Uko Gorter has designed a brand-new shirt for ACS that is not just a fluke. It is many flukes. With the ACS logo on the front "pocket" location, and on the back....*



*Each light blue colored shirt is \$18 + \$2 shipping.*

*Order your shirt in S, M, L, or XL*

*by sending a check to ACS National Office,  
P.O. Box 1391, San Pedro, CA 90733. Call 310-548-6279 if you  
would like to pay by credit card or need assistance.*

## Welcome San Francisco and San Diego!

Two chapters that have long been inactive are up and running again, with the energy and enthusiasm of new leadership and dedicated members.

Beth Cataldo is in the process of activating the San Francisco chapter and sends this information on their first meeting:

### The San Francisco Chapter of ACS is back and better than ever!

Our first meeting is Thursday, September 30th at 6:30 p.m.  
Sharp Park Library in Pacifica.

ACS Executive Director Cheryl McCormick will be speaking about the June meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in Agadir, Morocco. She gives a compelling account of the highlights, lowlights, scandals, triumphs, and setbacks of the meeting.

You won't want to miss it!

**For more information contact Beth Cataldo at (415) 613-5654 or [elizabethcataldo@gmail.com](mailto:elizabethcataldo@gmail.com)**

If you would like to be involved in the San Francisco chapter and possibly be considered for a board position, please contact Beth at the e-mail address above.

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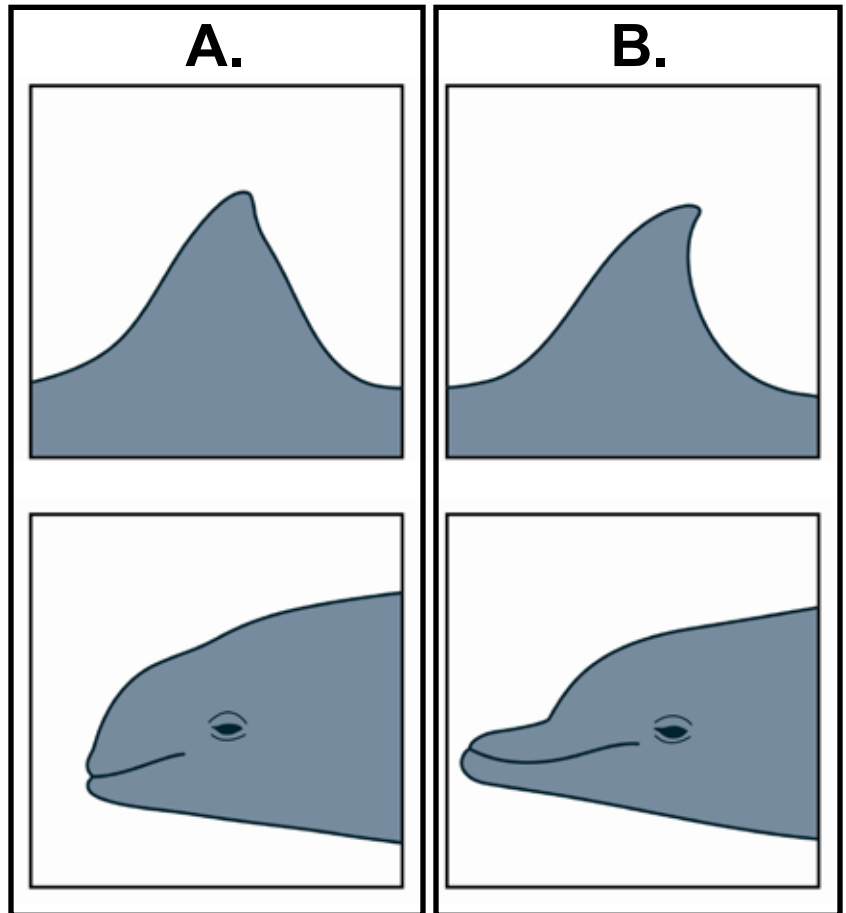
Kim Valentine, who was recently elected as President of the newly reformed San Diego chapter, sends along this message:

"We're baaaaack....The San Diego Chapter is back in business.

On July 27 the executive committee was voted in. Secretary is Ric Matthews. Ric was the first ACS National President and is past president of the San Diego Chapter. Carl Mayhugh is the Treasurer. Lori Mazzuca is the Vice President. We will be meeting on the last Tuesday of every month at Scripps Institution of Oceanography. You can contact me at [valentinek@yahoo.com](mailto:valentinek@yahoo.com) for more information. Come and join us!

# For Kids Who Love Whales, Dolphins, and Porpoises

Which is porpoise?  
 Which is dolphin?  
 A mystery that's quick in solvin' !  
 Check the beak and then, of course, you'll  
 Look for straight or curvy dorsal.  
 Straight in dorsal, beak is lacking?  
 Fin points back, long beak it's packing?  
 One is dolphin.  
 One is porpoise.  
 Ok kids, can you inform us?



*A. Porpoise  
 B. Dolphin  
 \* in U.S. waters*

## On Behalf of Whales, Dolphins, and Porpoises...

### ACS Board of Directors:

- President - Kathy Zagzebski
- Vice President - Mason Weinrich
- Treasurer - Cindy Rustanius
- Secretary - Patty Geary
- Los Angeles Chapter Delegate & Pres., Trips Chair - Bernardo Alps
- Monterey Bay Chapter Delegate & Pres. - Diane Glim
- Orange County Chapter Delegate & Pres. - Wellington Rogers
- Puget Sound Chapter Delegate & Pres.- Uko Gorter
- San Francisco Bay Area Chapter Delegate & Pres. - Beth Cataldo
- San Diego Chapter Delegate & Pres. - Kim Valentine
- Member at Large, Webmaster - Diane Allen
- Member at Large - Barbara Bennett
- Member at Large - Jerry Loomis

Cheryl McCormick, Executive Director  
 Kaye Reznick - Business Manager

**Read more about our chapters and Board members at [www.acsonline.org](http://www.acsonline.org)**

**The American Cetacean Society (ACS) works to protect whales, dolphins, porpoises and their habitats through public education, research grants, and conservation actions.**

**FOR A MEMBERSHIP IN OR DONATION TO THE AMERICAN CETACEAN SOCIETY:**

Go online at [www.acsonline.org](http://www.acsonline.org), or send your check payable to ACS or credit card information with this form to:  
**American Cetacean Society National Office, P.O. Box 1391, San Pedro, CA. 90733-1391**

Name: _____	<u>For Annual Membership - Select Both Chapter &amp; Level:</u>	
Address: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Los Angeles, CA	Active \$35 _____
City: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Monterey Bay, CA	Family \$45 _____
State: _____ zip: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Orange County, CA	Student \$25 _____
Phone: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> San Diego, CA	Teacher \$25 _____
E-mail: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> San Francisco, CA	Senior (62+) \$25 _____
Donation of \$ _____ and/or Membership Dues of \$ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Puget Sound, WA	Supporting \$75 _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> At Large	Foreign \$45 (US\$) _____
Method of Payment: <input type="checkbox"/> Check enclosed, payable to ACS (US dollars only), or		Contributing \$250 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> Mastercard <input type="checkbox"/> American Express <input type="checkbox"/> Discover		Patron \$500 _____
Card # _____ Expiration date: ____/____		Life \$1000 _____

## *A Legacy of Conservation*

The legacy of ACS will be the pivotal role it has played for over 40 years in protecting the world's "ambassadors of the seas." Part of your legacy can be in the support you provide toward this cause. You don't need to be wealthy to make a gift that will have an impact on the future of whales, dolphins, and porpoises and their habitats. A charitable bequest to ACS in your will or living trust will serve as a powerful testimony to your conviction that this work is important to the health and biodiversity of our marine ecosystem.

I hope you'll join me in including ACS in your estate planning. I can't think of a better gift for our children and grandchildren.



**All information about charitable bequests is held in the strictest confidence.**

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send more information about.....

- How IRAs can be used for charitable gifts
- Charitable gift annuities
- Charitable lead and remainder trusts
- Remembering ACS in my will

Please indicate if you have already made bequest arrangements to ACS:

- I have established a charitable bequest to the American Cetacean Society. Please add my (our) name(s) to the Legacy of Conservation Display at ACS Headquarters and in the *Spyhopper* publications.

*The American Cetacean Society welcomes gifts of stocks and securities. To arrange transfers, please contact your personal financial planner.*

**Thank you for supporting ACS and our mission.**

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