

# SAVE THE WHALES

Save The Whales' purpose is to educate children and adults about marine mammals, their environment and their preservation.

## Washington State Orcas Search for Food in California

K and L orca families (pods) called the Southern Resident pods of Washington state, have been observed off California several times since the beginning of the year. Over the past seven winters, these killer whale pods have been seen in California waters near the Farallon Islands close to San Francisco, in Monterey Bay, and L-pod was sighted off Fort Bragg.

These sightings off of California are additional proof that the Southern Resident orcas (killer whales) are roaming far from their summer feeding grounds in the coastal waters of Washington state and British Columbia searching for food.

Ken Balcomb, director of the Center for Whale Research in the San Juan Islands, said, "We are very interested in keeping track of these whales. If the whales' presence is any indication of prey avail-

**"...Chinook salmon are, as expected, increasingly important to these endangered whales, and they may provide their only hope of avoiding extinction."**

Ken Balcomb, Director, Center for Whale Research

ability, coastal California stocks of Chinook salmon are, as expected, increasingly important to these endangered whales, and they may provide their only hope of avoiding extinction."

Balcomb goes on to explain that "Chinook salmon stocks in the Pacific Northwest from the Columbia River to Puget Sound and southern British Columbia are in serious trouble from habitat destruction, over-fishing, and dams."

He states that the Pacific Northwest Chinook stocks cannot in the foreseeable future provide adequate year-round food for the whales or for commercial or sport fisheries. This is the reason the whales have moved to offshore California for the winter months in recent years. If salmon do not provide an adequate food supply, the resident orca populations could begin eating marine mammals. The transient orca population of the San Juan Islands and British Columbia consume marine mammals as their diet.

While California is setting aside marine protected areas for salmon recovery, this year's salmon season has been very poor because of the small numbers of fish.

The Southern Resident killer whales have been listed as an endangered species under the federal Endangered Species Act because of the risk of extinction in their Pacific Northwest home.

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## International Whaling Commission 2007 Meets in Alaska

This year's International Whaling Commission (IWC) met in Anchorage, Alaska at the end of May, the first U.S. meeting in almost 20 years. Pro-whaling countries, Japan, Iceland and Norway, came to the meeting hoping once again to have the 1986 ban on international whaling lifted. However, a resolution was passed by a vote of 37-4-4 reaffirming the importance of the moratorium on whaling and protecting whales.

Significantly, an IWC resolution warned that any weakening of existing restrictions in trade under the Convention on International Trade on Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) could have significant adverse effects on the moratorium and increase threats to whales worldwide. Over the past 10 years, Japan and Norway have submitted 14 separate proposals to CITES to resume trade in whale meat; all of them were rejected.

The IWC resolution to ban any weakening of CITES diminishes the declaration made at last year's IWC meeting in St. Kitts (Caribbean island). At that meeting, Japan and its allies passed a resolution using a simple majority. The resolution claimed that a commercial whaling moratorium was no longer necessary. Japan and its allies did not participate as a coalition at this year's meeting.

Several conservation-minded countries have joined the IWC: Ecuador, Croatia, Slovenia, Guatemala, Cyprus, and Greece. Two long-term members, Peru and Costa Rica, paid their dues from previous meetings so they are now eligible to vote.

The Japan Fisheries Agency's research whaling scheme proposes to kill up to 50 southern ocean humpback whales, a species seriously depleted by commercial whaling and now supporting a major whale-watching industry. Whale-watching trips add almost \$120 million annually to the New Zealand economy and \$28 million annually to the South Pacific islands economy. Australia's whale watching industry is valued at \$260 million a year.

The Japanese whaling delegation believes that the world is biased against whaling. They claim that the IWC has shifted from management of whales to conflicting values because the western developed world is ignorant about current whale stocks.

Japan's so-called "scientific research" has not provided any useful information regarding minke whales in spite of the thousands of minkes

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# CALIFORNIA SEA OTTER

*Enhydra lutra nereis*



*Raft of otters resting and frolicking about in the eel grass beds of Elkhorn Slough, Watsonville, CA by Lee Worthington*

## **Rise and Fall (and Rise Again) Southern Sea Otters (*Enhydra lutris nereis*) Elkhorn Slough, California, 1994-2006**

*By Tom Kieckhefer, M.Sc.*

Researchers with the Pacific Cetacean Groups' (PCG) Sea Otter Ecology Project (SOEP) have been investigating the southern sea otter population trends in Elkhorn Slough since 1994. Every other week, volunteers join PCG researchers in the SOEP research vessel *Kilauea* to document otter distribution, behavior, feeding preferences, and numerous other life history parameters. Elkhorn Slough, a National Estuarine Research Reserve on the coast of Central California, provides habitat for over 80 fishes, 267 birds, 400 invertebrates, and several marine mammal species, including the sea otter.

This long-term project was launched in 1994 by Dr. Daniela Maldini, co-founder of PCG, and a graduate student at Moss Landing Marine Labs at the time. In 1994-1995, Daniela and her collaborators documented a sudden and significant increase in sea otter use of Elkhorn Slough. The sea otter population continued to increase until 2001, when a sudden decline started occurring.

Between 1994 and 2006, researchers documented up to 95 individual otters on a single survey using Elkhorn Slough (over 3% of the entire California population) and discovered a sheltered channel that the otters use as a nursing area, as well as a possible birthing area. From a maximum average number of 52 otters in 1998, otter counts dropped sharply to 27 in 2001, and counts remained low until 2004.

Aerial surveys conducted in spring 2002 and 2003 by the California Department of Fish & Game in Monterey Bay show an increase in otter counts offshore of Moss Landing, which suggest these are some of the animals that moved out of Elkhorn Slough. Over 500 otters were counted in Monterey Bay in the spring of 2003. This has

been the highest number of otters ever counted in this region. It is still unclear whether prey availability in Elkhorn Slough may have decreased due to over-foraging by otters or due to a change in the substrate from mud to bedrock caused by severe erosion. In soft-bottomed habitats, sea otters prefer prey such as clams, innkeeper worms, and other burrowing invertebrates that live in mud.

Some researchers theorize the unusually high numbers of otter mortalities in 2003 may have been related to otters shifting their diet to crab (predominantly Dungeness) in offshore Monterey Bay waters. In addition, high levels of domoic acid (a fatal neurotoxin produced by oceanic diatoms) recorded during this time period may have played a significant role in sea otter mortality in 2003.

In 2004, the average number of sea otters gradually climbed again. While the otters were gone for over three years, there is evidence that the relative abundance of the green crab has been increasing in the slough, and this correlates with the return of sea otters.

In 2005, the average was up 30 otters observed per survey with a sharp increase in 2006 of up to 68 otters per survey where we had several consistently high counts recorded per survey throughout the year (e.g., March 30=94, September 6=84, October 25=88, November 8=95). The increase in 2006 correlated with the high abundance of innkeeper worms floating in Moss Landing Jetty, possibly lodged free from heavy erosion. So far, in 2007, the numbers remain high.

The return of the sea otter suggests a possible cycle in which these otter use this soft-bottom habitat without exhausting prey resources. Within this sea otter microcosm the main raft has shifted down slough along with their pupping area; and after 14 years, the otters continue to find prey in the slough.

PCG is continuing this long-term monitoring program to better understand the critical factors influencing sea otter use of the Elkhorn Slough.

# Bushwhacked - Environment Being Undone

## Supreme Court Regulates Bush Administration

In a 5-4 verdict, the U.S. Supreme Court said that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) not only has the authority, but the responsibility to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from automobiles. The Bush administration and the EPA have said for four years that they could not regulate CO<sub>2</sub> because it is not a "pollutant," but the Supreme Court disagreed. Howard Fox, lead attorney in the suit brought by a coalition of states, municipalities, environmental and public health groups, said, "Today is a great day for the environment. In one of the most important environmental cases of its history, the Supreme Court has reaffirmed what we have been saying all along: The Clean Air Act gives EPA authority to fight global warming. The EPA must act immediately and issue regulations that limit greenhouse gases from motor vehicles that contribute to global warming." The question is whether the EPA will move to regulate CO<sub>2</sub> from motor vehicles?

Head of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, James Connaughton, said the Supreme Court ruling was "somewhat moot," because President Bush is already committed to regulatory changes that would increase auto fuel efficiency and produce renewable fuels to cut carbon dioxide emissions.

## Help Is On The Way

Several court rulings have gone against the Bush administration environmental policies. "They (courts) are finding in case after case that the Bush administration is violating the law," said Trip Van Noppen, vice president of litigation for Earthjustice, a public interest law firm that represents environmental groups suing the government. Among the rulings:

- The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals rejected the administration's 2004 plan for balancing endangered salmon runs against federally-owned hydroelectric dams in the Columbia Basin. The National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries plan was characterized as "slight of hand" by counting dead fish as if they were alive. The court added that the plan ignored an Endangered Species Act provision that requires the agency to consider whether salmon can be expected to thrive, not merely survive, under dam operations.
- In San Francisco, a federal judge threw out new Bush administration rules that gave states a chance to seek logging and other commercial projects in roadless areas of national forests, previously off limits to most development.
- In Seattle, a U.S. judge ruled that the Bush administration illegally suppressed and misrepresented the views of dissenting scientists when it eased logging restrictions designed to protect salmon under the Northwest Forest Plan.
- Additional rulings have struck down mountaintop coal mining in West Virginia, efforts to avoid listing new threatened and endangered species, and EPA emissions standards for brick and ceramic kilns.
- The Bush administration faces administrative, as well as judicial reprimands. Julie MacDonald, deputy assistant Interior Secretary for fish, wildlife and parks, was found to have been leaking information about endangered species decisions to industry groups. The Federal Inspector General believes that she should face punishment.



## FLUKES DOWN

**To Apple** for its iPod design. After 13 months of use, the lithium-ion battery can lose more than half of its functionality. Apple seals the battery inside the iPod. Replacement costs \$65, takes several weeks and, because the new battery comes in a refurbished and wiped-clean iPod, your saved songs are lost.

## FLUKES DOWN - WAY DOWN

**To ExxonMobil** who has managed for 18 years not to pay the punitive damages it owes to victims of the Exxon Valdez oil spill. The company has dragged more than 30,000 people through 13 years of litigation by appealing every guilty verdict rendered since 1994, and 6,000 people have died while awaiting compensation.

## FLUKES DOWN

**To the US Navy** for continuing attempts to purchase land in eastern North Carolina for a landing strip so that pilots based in North Carolina and Virginia can practice aircraft carrier landings. The project has been opposed for years by farmers and local residents. The proposed location is a haven for thousands of ducks, geese and swans that seek shelter in the nearby Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge.

## FLUKES DOWN

**To Texas-based TXU, Inc.**, for planning a \$10 billion investment in eleven new coal-fired power plants over the next several years. Texas Governor Rick Perry has received more than \$324,000 in contributions from coal companies over the past six years. He has fast-tracked the permit process and put a limit on the time frame for public comments on the proposal. If they are built, they will produce a total of 78 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> each year. Texas could easily handle their energy needs by investing in energy efficiency.

## FLUKES UP

**To City of Santa Cruz, California** for offering its citizens communal cars. The cars will be placed around the city and the University of California for use by the hour or day. The program is an attempt to ease traffic and parking congestion and cut down on air pollution at the same time. Seven cars are expected to be available in the fall. This should help to reduce the 20,000 cars entering the campus daily and relieve parking problems. An added advantage is a car without the cost, as gasoline and insurance are included.

## FLUKES UP

**To Massachusetts Farm to School Project**, a three-year program working to eliminate the middleman in food distribution. Farmers bring their produce and dairy products directly to campuses. In three years, the program has grown to about 75 public school districts and 12 colleges where students are receiving more nutritious and tastier food.

## FLUKES UP

**To Eureka, California** and its approximately 750 elementary school students who removed non-native plant species from 7 acres of land near Humboldt Bay. After the cleanup, they positioned themselves on the beach to form an enormous gray whale and the word "Protect."



## Right Whale Killed in Gulf of Maine

A dead North Atlantic right whale was found in the offshore waters of the Gulf of Maine, approximately 75 nautical miles southwest of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia in March 2007. The whale was an adult male and had become greatly entangled in fishing gear in 2002. Ropes were wrapped more than a dozen times around the upper part of his mouth, as well as his body and flippers. This entanglement led to his death, even though he had shed some of the gear based on several sightings.

North Atlantic right whales are the most endangered species of whale with only about 350 remaining. Therefore, the loss of one whale brings the species that much closer to extinction. The Ocean Conservancy is currently suing the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in an effort to bring protection to North Atlantic right whales from entanglement and ship strikes.

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### Proposed Beluga Whale Protection

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has proposed listing beluga whales in Alaska's Cook Inlet as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Cook Inlet is home to hundreds of belugas who have been rapidly vanishing from their habitat in recent years. In past decades, their numbers were as many as 1,300 whales. Today, numbers are less than 300 as pollution to their habitat and sewage dumps destroy their waters.

Additional threats are underwater seismic blasting, spills from petroleum operations, shipping actions, increased development, and global warming. Federal protection under the ESA may provide for research of the remaining population and provide some necessary safeguards for their protection.

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### Washington State Orcas (continued from page 1)

A hopeful sighting of the orcas offshore of California was a new calf born to L pod, given the alphanumeric designation of L-109. If the calf survives a winter, it will be given a name; it is believed that it was born since the first of the year. L-109 could be the calf of one of two females, as it has been seen swimming next to both of them. Family members assist in the care of calves.

If it is the calf of Nugget, it would be her third. If it is the calf of Kasatka (Nugget's oldest child), it would be her first calf and make its odds of survival 50/50. If it is Nugget's third child, its chances of survival are greater. Orca bodies are contaminated with industrial chemicals, particularly Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) which concentrate in fatty tissue and milk. They may have serious effects on the immune system, reproductive system, nervous system and endocrine system. Mothers pass most of these chemicals onto their first and second calves.

The population of orcas in the San Juan Islands has seen deaths and births. Last fall, their numbers were 85 after three adult whales and two calves born in 2006 died; two of them were a mother and baby. The National Marine Fisheries Service has a goal for orca recovery as a stable population of 120.

The orcas of the Pacific Northwest are an irreplaceable community of marine mammals, and their habitat needs to be revitalized if they are to survive.

## Dolphins Face Danger in the Bosphorus

Dolphins are swimming in one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, the Bosphorus Strait, where they stay together in small groups. Their fins may be seen cutting the water's surface from the shores of Istanbul. The strait connects the Black Sea with the Sea of Marmara, which is connected by the Dardanelles to the Aegean Sea and thereby to the Mediterranean Sea. It separates the European and Asian parts of Istanbul.



The marine mammals live in a dangerous world where they have to dodge freighters, oil tankers, passenger and fishing boats that are crossing the congested strait at all times.

Dr. Ayhan Dede of Turkey, and her colleague, Dr. Ayaka Ozturk, a Japanese marine biologist with the Turkish Marine Research Foundation, believe that these dolphins need to be protected. The biologists rent a small touring boat once a week and go out on the Bosphorus to study the environmental impact of a new commuter tunnel being built under the strait.

They collect water samples while keeping watch for their passion, the dolphins. Ozturk said their colleagues call these dolphins, "The street children of the Bosphorus," because they are really neglected and nobody pays attention to them. Dr. Ozturk said that the dolphins are afraid of humans and boats and tend to move in small groups of four or five individuals.

The dolphins use the strait for the same reason as fishermen, it is a natural trap for catching prey fish. On the European side of the Bosphorus fishermen toss their fishing lines into the channel. The scientists believe that the biggest threat to the dolphins is overfishing in the two neighboring seas. Their hope is to determine where and when the dolphins feed and breed. Then, they want to convince the Turkish government to find a way to protect these unique areas.

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### Cal/OSHA Report on Sea World Attack

Our last newsletter headlined the attack at SeaWorld, San Diego, CA of a trainer by a 7,000 pound orca named Kasatka. She dragged her trainer underwater two times during a performance, and he suffered a broken foot and was hospitalized for several days.

The California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) presented an official report on the November 29, 2006 incident. State investigators concluded that Sea World had done a good job of preparing its trainers to work with killer whales, but stated it is only a matter of time *before a whale kills one*. (A trainer was killed by an orca at Sealand of the Pacific in 1991.)

Cal/OSHA's report implied that SeaWorld's orcas have a history of mishaps and misbehavior caused largely by boredom and stress. Their report was retracted after SeaWorld said that it was "flawed" and they claimed it was "highly speculative and not supported by scientific fact." Cal/OSHA then issued SeaWorld a citation alleging "two non-serious violations" or workplace safety standards.

Kasatka resumed performing the day after the attack, but no trainer is allowed to be in the water with her. This was not Kasatka's first act of aggression toward a trainer. Orcas in the wild have no history of attacking humans, but their dismal existence in tanks will undoubtedly lead to more of these incidents.

(\*Editor's Note: SeaWorld is not recognized for factual scientific information re orcas.)

# *In Memoriam*

*Gretchen Wyler*

1932-2007

Gretchen, an advocate for all animals, died of complications from breast cancer on May 27, 2007. She had worked for 40 years to protect animals, and created the Genesis Awards which honors the media and entertainment industry for bringing animal abuse issues to the public. As an actress, she had appeared in Broadway shows, many television series, and numerous films. Save The Whales worked with Gretchen when our office was in Los Angeles, mainly on captive dolphins and porpoises. Her death is a great loss to her family, friends and the animals.

## **Penny Wars High School Fundraiser**

Notre Dame high school in Belmont, CA held a fundraiser called "Penny Wars." Each class tried to fill an empty water jug with pennies, as other classes were putting in bills and different coins. The class with the most pennies (after the bills and other coins were subtracted) won.

An impressive \$1,690.87 was raised and donated to Save The Whales. Theresa Vallez-Kelly, Director of Student Activities, reports that it was a crazy idea, but the students loved it!

Thank you to the young women of Notre Dame High School for their *fun* and *fundraising* idea!

### **Inspirations**

Victor Tucker, age 8, a third grader in Kansas, emailed us a poem he wrote. According to his mother, he likes to read and write stories and poetry. He wants to be a veterinarian.

#### **WHALES**

Whales are chubby.

Whales are fat.

Whales are bigger than a cat.

Whales have two eyes, two ears, and a nose.

Whales have everything but toes.

Whales are big.

Whales are stout.

Whales, they hum, they don't shout.

Whales have a blowhole on top of their head.

Whales don't have to make their bed.

People want to kill the whales.

We have to even save their tails.



## **Arms Family Successful Fundraiser**

The Arms family of Williamsburg, Virginia followed up last year's fundraiser with a significant \$2,400 raised for Save The Whales. Daughters Veronica and Victoria were assisted by their parents, Pamela and Richard, in selling cookie dough at the girls' school. They all worked very hard to achieve this year's successful endeavor.



Thank you to our "East Coast Pals" for the passion and effort your family brings to Save The Whales.

## **Saving Whales for Alison Rodecker**

Saving whales, particularly orcas, and marine life was a passion of Alison Rodecker, daughter of Perth Amboy Superintendent of Schools, John M. Rodecker. Alison, age 23, was a marine science college student and died from a sudden illness in November 2005. Before Alison's death she traveled to Vancouver Island with her father to see orcas up close (as reported in our last newsletter). It was a memorable time for her and her father.

All the Perth Amboy, New Jersey schools took up her cause with programs, poems, songs and fundraisers to "Save the Whales for Alison." The program coincided with Save the Whales' campaign to have schools, ecology clubs and church groups around the earth sing a special "Save the Whales" song on May 17, 2007 in order to bring global awareness to the importance of protecting the oceans and saving whales for future generations. Students and staff throughout the Perth Amboy school district participated, and at Edward J. Patten Elementary School, an impressive 855 persons sang to save the whales.

Ecology Club members at Perth Amboy High School, in conjunction with Perth Amboy Adult School, raised \$1,250 in Alison's memory toward the Alison Rodecker Scholarship Fund. Alison's father and mother, John and Lynn, viewed the programs in their daughter's honor from the audience. Lynn said that the sight of all these children coming out for a cause so important to her daughter brought tears to her eyes.

Perth Amboy students from Dr. Herbert N. Richardson 21st Century School and Edward J. Patten Elementary School collectively raised \$615 to support Save The Whales' educational programs. We wish to thank the Perth Amboy school district for their enthusiasm and support to protect marine life in memory of Alison. Plans are in the works to join classrooms in California and New Jersey through a pen pal program that will focus on marine life and issues affecting the different coasts.

**Save The Whales**  
A 501(c)(3) corporation  
1192 Waring Street  
Seaside, CA 93955

Editors: **Maris Sidenstecker I**  
**Maris Sidenstecker II**

Contributor: **Tom Kieckhefer**

[www.savethewhales.org](http://www.savethewhales.org)

Email: [maris@savethewhales.org](mailto:maris@savethewhales.org)

Phone: 1-831-899-9957 Fax: 1-831-394-5555

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they have slaughtered over the past years, as to whether populations are increasing or decreasing. Other evidence indicates that the population is decreasing.

Japan proposed a resolution that its coastal whaling communities be allowed to engage in commercial whaling, because of its similarity to subsistence hunts by indigenous people in other countries. For the last decade, the UN has repeatedly, and unsuccessfully, requested Japan's government to recognize the rights of Japan's own indigenous people - the Ainu - in the north of Japan. Japan eventually withdrew the proposal.

Alaska's native people achieved consensus approval to allow the killing of 280 bowhead whales over the next five years. Of the total, 260 will be reserved for Alaskans, while 20 will be allocated for Russian whaling populations. The Russian Federation will be allowed to hunt 280 North Pacific gray whales, and the Russian proposal incorporated a request by Washington state's Makah tribe for a hunting quota of five whales every year until 2012. In the past, the IWC had not recognized the Makah as meeting aboriginal criteria. Delegates gave unanimous consent to the five-year proposal by St. Vincent and the Grenadines to kill humpback whales under the aboriginal subsistence whaling quota system.

The IWC's 60th annual meeting will be held in Chile 2008.

### Japan Uses Questionable Tactics to Overcome Public's Faltering Interest in Whale Meat

Jason Kelly is in Japan where he is studying overfishing. He visited Tokyo's Tsukiji fish market, the largest in the world, and was overwhelmed by the amount of fish that were processed in a single day.

When Save The Whales asked for Jason's impressions of the sale of whale meat, he reported that the whale industry is fighting back against the dropping demand for whale meat by running TV programs and publishing books about the plight of fish. He said it would be funny, if it weren't so sad and effective. Shows and books explain that because Japan is not catching enough whales, there are too many and they are eating all the fish. They claim that's why fish stocks are dropping. The fishing industry's solution to overfishing is to blame it on the whales so they can catch more whales!

He said that almost any Japanese person you ask about whales will tell you that *they* are eating all the fish. No one researches beyond the TV program. Anybody who ventures to a bookstore will find on display a book about how the whales are eating all the fish.

Jason aims to counteract this nonsense by eventually introducing his book *No More Fishes in my Dishes* into the Japanese market, accompanied by a strong media blitz. He states that it's easy to refute the fishing/whaling industry because all the data clearly shows human overfishing at work. The fishing/whaling industry does not attend public debates for obvious reasons.

### No More Fishes in my Dishes by Jason Kelly

This colorful picture book explains the problem of overfishing, demonstrates the industry's reluctance to change, shows that change must come from consumers, and teaches people to refrain from eating fish for five days a week. One book character states that for five days a week, say "No fish in my dish." If the world follows that advice: "The fish will have time to have babies and then, slowly the oceans will fill up again." For more information go to [www.nofishinmydish.com](http://www.nofishinmydish.com)

## Gains in Gray Whale Protection

Natural Resources Defense Council reports that 109,000 acres of federal lands in Baja Mexico will be donated for conservation. This is a large step in preserving land around the world's last unspoiled gray whale nursery in San Ignacio Lagoon, Baja Mexico.

This does not mean that the struggle is over. San Ignacio is still vulnerable to oil and gas drilling plans, high-rise hotels and schemes for resort marinas and ocean-bound ships.

Every year, 200 to 300 gray whales congregate in the lagoons to give birth to their young. Mothers and calves remain in the lagoons until the calves have gained enough weight to make the long return journey to Alaska.

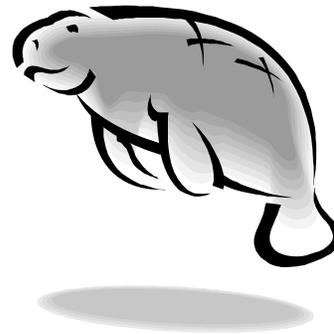
Tourists come to this remote location from all over the world to mingle with the "friendly whales." Some grays, including mothers with calves, will come to the tourist boats and allow themselves to be scratched and rubbed.

Save The Whales also supports The International Community Foundation based in San Diego, who are also working to protect the Baja lagoons by purchasing surrounding lands.

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### Manatee Protection Could be Reduced

Last year was the worst on record for manatee deaths: 417 out of an estimated 2,812 animals died in 2006. Most of these deaths were



caused by boat strikes. Despite this increase in deaths, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is considering *reducing* protection for these gentle creatures. The species would be downlisted from endangered to threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

On June 14, 2007, Florida state wildlife officials approved a long-term plan to protect and monitor manatees in Florida waterways, and spelled out 80 specific goals. The plan was required before the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission could change the manatee status from endangered to threatened.

Some key components of the plan are:

- Within three years statistically sound methods must be used to estimate the population.
- Continue to minimize manatee mortality rates from human-caused threats such as boats.
- Within five years, improve management practices to protect seagrasses and other foods essential to manatees.
- Evaluate the need for future research.

The two major pressures on the manatee population are loss of habitat and boat collisions. The animals are dependent on warm water (above 68°F) to survive over the winter, but development has rendered many of the warm springs inaccessible.

Increased boat traffic is a major problem, as the slow-moving manatees can't always avoid collision with a boat, and they are severely injured or killed by the propellers.

## Student Water Monitoring Program

Save The Whales has completed the after-school water monitoring program in East Salinas, California for disadvantaged elementary and high school students. This school year 9/06-5/07, a total of 45 students participated and made 10-17 visits to their local creeks. East Salinas has one of the highest crime rates in Central California.

Students were taught how to measure the following parameters: air & water temperature, pH, conductivity, dissolved oxygen and transparency of their local creeks. The program was modeled after the adult Snap Shot day program (next column) for adults. Maris Sidenstecker, marine biologist and co-founder of Save The Whales, thought students could benefit from an outdoor in-field program and provide quality data. In addition, students collected water samples for lab analysis of bacteria and nitrates.

They collected trash every time they went to the creek and learned that everything off the streets will end up in storm drains which flows to creeks and the ocean. At the end of the year students stenciled storm drains on their school campus in English and Spanish with the message "No dumping, flows to bay."

We are so impressed with the student enthusiasm and their dedication to protecting their local creeks. The program has been funded for three years through BWET grants from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Save The Whales' members. These programs would not be possible without member support.

To read more about the BWET program, visit [www.savethewhales.org](http://www.savethewhales.org) and click on BWET on left side of the homepage.

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## Whales On Wheels WOW™ Expands

Save The Whales believes education is the key to saving the whales and has educated over 275,000 students through Whales On Wheels WOW™. We devote most of our energy to hands-on school programs because studies prove that this learning technique provides a lasting impression with students.

This school year, WOW™ was able to expand its program selection and outreach range with the addition of another instructor, Tom Kieckhefer, who joined Save The Whales in January 2007. WOW™ now travels to Monterey and Santa Cruz counties in California. WOW™ brings whale bones, dolphin skulls, baleen, visual aides, whale vocalizations, and hands-on activities to the classroom for students to touch, feel and learn from.

Tom, a marine biologist and educator, has added two new programs, one on Sea Otters and the second on Marine Mammal Adaptation and Communication. We are in the process of developing a sea turtle program.

The presentations engage student participation and impart conservation messages. Students and teachers appreciate the presentations as much as Save The Whales' instructors enjoy giving them. Always a highlight with students is explaining the size of the blue whale at 100 feet, the largest animal to ever live on earth. We stretch out a 100-foot rope and have the students walk along it and marvel at the size of a living animal.

Thank you to our members and contributors whose support make this program possible.

## Maris Sidenstecker Wins Educator Award

The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) chose Maris Sidenstecker, co-founder and marine biologist - Save The Whales - as the recipient of this year's Sanctuary Reflections Award in the education category. The annual awards recognize scientists, local



Photo of Maris by  
Caroline Campbell

officials, educators, citizens and conservation groups for their past efforts to preserve the Monterey Bay as a national marine sanctuary and for their continued involvement in the conservation and preservation of the sanctuary.

Maris' award recognizes her work in an East Salinas, California community conducting water monitoring at Natividad Creek with disadvantaged elementary school students, as well as her decade of work with local municipalities in Monterey and Santa Cruz counties on educating the public to prevent storm water pollution.

The award also acknowledged her Whales On Wheels WOW™ program under the auspices of Save The Whales. Maris brings a hands-on mini-museum to the classroom that introduces marine mammals and conservation messages. WOW™ includes bones of baleen whales, clicks of cetaceans, pelts of pinnipeds, skulls of sea mammals, and tales of toothed whales.

The impressive ceremony was held on March 2, 2007 at the Monterey Marriott in Monterey, California.

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## Save The Whales Hosts Snapshot Day!

On Saturday May 5, 2007, beautiful weather prevailed as approximately 155 volunteers monitored 183 sites from Duxbury Point to Morro Bay, California for Snapshot Day. This one-day event utilizes citizen volunteers to collect and analyze water samples from rivers and streams that enter Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. The Sanctuary is a federally protected marine area that extends along the California central coast from Marin County to Cambria in San Luis Obispo County. The Sanctuary supports one of the world's most diverse marine ecosystems and is home to endangered species.

Volunteers are trained prior to the event and put into teams. On the day of the event, volunteers gathered at four centralized hubs strategically placed in each of the four counties bordering the Sanctuary (San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Luis Obispo). Volunteers traveled to their assigned area and monitored water for the following parameters: air and water temperature, pH, transparency, dissolved oxygen, and conductivity. In addition, samples were collected for lab analysis of nutrients and bacteria levels.

Many streams only get monitored once a year on Snapshot Day. The information gathered is used by resource agencies, local governments and community groups.

This year, Save The Whales sponsored the Monterey County volunteer training, lab and report analyses of the water samples. Funding was provided through a BWET grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). This valuable event would not be possible without the many dedicated volunteers who give their time and energy. View data and results of previous Snapshot Day events, at [www.montereybay.noaa.gov/monitoringnetwork/events](http://www.montereybay.noaa.gov/monitoringnetwork/events).

## ***Innovative Ways to Help Our Planet***

Walking School Bus utilizes an adult to lead a group of children to their school *by walking*. Children are picked up along the way and, if possible, an additional adult brings up the rear. Besides cutting down on pollution, there is the added benefit of exercise and weight reduction. See [walkingschoolbus.org](http://walkingschoolbus.org)

### **Pen Pals**

Save The Whales is beginning a pen pals project for young people. We would like to have classroom participation, grade to grade. Contact us if you are a teacher and would like your class to be pen pals with children, not only in the U.S., but in other parts of the world.

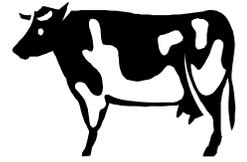


The purpose of the pen pal program is to inspire children to speak to their own age group about what the ocean means to them, as well as to discuss problems of concern about the ocean. This will generate student interest in geography. They might learn that the issues faced on the west coast of the U.S. could be similar to problems in other areas of the world.

If you are interested, email: [maris@savethewhales.org](mailto:maris@savethewhales.org)

## **Possible New Uses for Cow Manure**

Researchers at Michigan State University and the U.S. Department of Agriculture are looking into new uses for cow manure. They state that fiber from processed and sterilized manure could replace sawdust in fiberboard, which is used to make everything from furniture to shelves. They are seeking a solution to the 1.5 to 2 trillion pounds of manure generated every year in the U.S.



Farmers traditionally use manure to fertilize their fields but with the present mega-scale of dairies, there is not enough land use for the end product. This causes farmers to spend more dollars disposing of the manure, such as onsite processing and spreading, and transportation to offsite disposal. Under pressure from the government and public, some large livestock operations are installing expensive manure treatment systems known as anaerobic digesters. The digesters use heat to deodorize and sterilize manure. Captured methane gas is used to produce electricity.

Tests are being performed on the fiberboard made with "digester solids." The manure-based product is made by combining fibers with a chemical resin subjected to heat and pressure. This is the same process used in the wood-based original. The digester solid so far is matching or beating the quality of wood-based products.

The Composite Panel Association questions whether people will want to bring this product into their home.

**Save The Whales**  
**A Nonprofit Organization**  
**1192 Waring Street**  
**Seaside, CA 93955**

