

**MONTEREY BAY NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Member Announcements
October 2020**

Non-Governmental seats

Business & Tourism

Tom Rowley (alternate)

The two major industries of the Central Coast -- Agriculture and especially Tourism are both struggling to regain economic momentum suffered from the Covid-19 pandemic that has shut down all but essential businesses since mid-March. Many small business Owners are struggling to survive.

Based on new guidelines established by the State, Monterey County was recently moved into the highest restricted Covid-19 classification -- Purple. However, Santa Cruz County qualified for limited economic activities in the Red classification. High Incidences of confirmed cases in Salinas Valley have created a difficult hurdle for meeting the lower Red classification, and hospitality facilities county-wide in Monterey County are now faced with an almost impossible standard to achieve, i.e. Red status which allows "inside dining" to return, but with limited interior seating. The Monterey Peninsula (MP) continues to remain low for both fatalities and active Covid-19 cases. Most major hotels shuttered their respective doors in March, and are still closed or operating at less than full capacity. Public beaches in Monterey, Carmel, and Pacific Grove have been partially opened. And visitors to Fisherman's Wharf in Monterey have been restricted on Holiday weekends by limiting the available parking. Laguna Seca Race Track recently held its first major race since last winter, but without fan participation. Most major community events and planned conferences at the Monterey Conference Center for 2021 remain tenuous at best.

Some golf courses remain open on a limited basis. The City councils of Pacific Grove, Carmel, and Monterey have authorized "outside" dining facilities to open by special permit, and some businesses have also opened with outside sales on a limited basis. The weather has continued to be mild, but the prospects for success of these businesses once the rainy season begins by the end of October is quite speculative. The Annual Whalefest on Fisherman's Wharf in Monterey has been announced for Saturday / Sunday January 30 & 31, 2021.

Lack of new water allocations for housing and for business development remains a fact of life on the Monterey Peninsula (MP). At the expected Thursday September 17th meeting of the California Coastal Commission, Cal-Am Water (CAW) unexpectedly withdrew its appeal for a permit to use a slant-well feed water system at the proposed desalination plant at the former CEMEX sand plant north of Marina. (Refer to the press report listed as the last item on page 7 of the "Sanctuary Office Report" for Aug 5th to Sep 25th, 2020 -- forwarded with the draft Agenda for the October 16th SAC mtg.) The proposed desal plant is one of three components of the MP Water Supply Project (MPWSP) -- the other components are Aquifer Storage & Recovery (ASR) + Groundwater Recycling (GWR aka Pure Water Mtry). The CAW / MP faced a September 30th deadline from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) for starting construction on a water project, OR face possible reductions in future water usage. The impact of a delay in re-submitting the CAW appeal to the CCC is unknown at this time. Under the Cease and Desist Order (CDO) for the SWRCB -- a reduction of allowed water use by 1,000 AFY for the MP could potentially lead to imposition of water rationing on CAW customers. The date of any re-

submission for the permit by CAW to the CCC for the desal slant-well intake system is unknown at this time.

Education

Pamela Neeb Wade (primary)

Current Seat Activities

- Education Primary, Pamela Neeb Wade and Education Alternate, Felicia Van Stolk met to discuss the seat and plan for future meetings

Upcoming Activities

- NOAA Webinars- Giant Sea bass, Kings of the Kelp Forest -October 22nd
- Seymour Marine Science Center- online resources (ongoing)
- Elkhorn Slough Reserve - distance learning (ongoing)
- Monterey Bay Aquarium- Discovery Labs (2020-2021 school year) and self-paced courses (ongoing)

Your Constituent Challenges and Concerns

- The past months have proven to be unprecedented times first with the
- COVID19 pandemic and then the wildfires.
- Public schools Santa Cruz County have announced distance learning will continue due to limited COVID-19 testing and tracing abilities, according to the county Superintendent
- Schools in Monterey County are continuing distance learning. Schools may consider a reopening plan once they are in the Red Tier (as described in the Governor's plan) for two consecutive weeks. <https://www.montereyco.org/resources/alerts/coronavirus/>
- Distance learning presents challenges for students with limited internet access and increases the digital divide
- The recent wildfires have affected environmental education sites and programs throughout Santa Cruz County
- Many programs switched from programing to assist with wildfire relief efforts
- There is opportunity for collaboration among educators to provide increased local learning opportunities in nature to fill a need during the pandemic. This is described in detail in the California Environmental Literacy Initiative.

Related Web Links to Member Report

- CA Department of Education
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/strongertogether.asp>
- California Environmental Literacy Initiative
<https://ca-eli.org/community-organizations/how-california-environmental-education-providers-are-keeping-student-success-at-the-forefront-during-the-pandemic/>
- NOAA Webinars
<https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/education/teachers/webinar-series.html>
- Seymour Marine Discovery Center- Online resources
<https://seymourcenter.ucsc.edu/learn/students-teachers/distance-learning/>
- Elkhorn Slough- Distance learning
<https://www.elkhornslough.org/distance-learning/>
- Monterey Bay Aquarium- online courses
<https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/for-educators/learning-at-home/online-courses?filterBy=>
- Monterey Bay Aquarium- Discovery Labs (spring reservations open December 4)
<https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/for-educators/book-a-field-trip>

Recreational Fishing

Jose Montes (primary)

Current Seat Activities

- Monitoring on-going changes to fishing seasons and regulations.
- Relaying updated changes through various fishing websites and blogs as this is more efficient than trying to enlist subscribers to a newsletter.
- Working with Bird Entanglement working group to prepare future presentation.

Upcoming Activities

- Working with Monterey Bay Veterans Big Fish Derby which had been postponed from May, to try to have one in late fall.

Your Constituent Challenges and Concerns

- Quarantine regulations continue, although fishing doesn't seem as heavily restricted as before. Limited loads on party boats and multiple crew members on private boats with self-social distancing are the norm.

Related Web Links to Member Report

<https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2020/10/08/rule-of-thumb-for-fall-fishing-go-deep-fish-rap/>

Miscellaneous Information

Fishing has been excellent with Rockfish limits the rule for party boats and private boaters. Halibut fishing continues to be excellent around the bay from Monterey to Santa Cruz and up to Davenport. White Sea Bass have been around for about two weeks and continue to be caught by those in the know. Personally saw some being unloaded today (Oct 12) from private skiffs. Bluefin Tuna were spotted along the coast to the south on Oct 9 and on Oct 10 two boats caught tuna south of Monterey in the 70-150 lb range. Weather came up precluding others from making the attempts. Hopefully they'll still be around when the wind/waves settle or ideally move further north toward us.

Governmental Members

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Paul Reilly (primary) and Chelsea Protasio (alternate)

Recreational private boat effort and catch in the Monterey Bay area was steady and focused on California Halibut, rockfishes, Lingcod, and baitfish, although effort decreased during periods of poor air quality due to smoke. Most party/charter boats targeted rockfishes and Lingcod and occasionally California Halibut. Many of the restrictions limiting access to harbors and launching facilities that were in place earlier in the year have been relaxed. Salmon effort and catch were near zero. High shore-fishing effort continued at the Santa Cruz Wharf, Harford Pier, and Monterey Pier 2; catch was primarily Jacksmelt, nearshore rockfishes, surfperches, Pacific Mackerel, and other baitfish with the occasional California Halibut. The Cement Ship Pier in Santa Cruz County was closed for a while.

There have been some trip limit increases provided to the fixed gear commercial fishery to provide fresh fish to local markets; anecdotal information suggests there has been an increase in demand recently. CDFW groundfish staff continued to monitor the groundfish fisheries to ensure harvests stay within applicable limits.

Landings of coastal pelagic species decreased over the past 2 months in the Monterey Bay area with only a few boats landing small loads of squid with an occasional load of anchovy. As of October 9, cumulative statewide landings/season quotas are as follows:

Market Squid: 15,981/118,000 short tons

Northern Anchovy: 4,613/23,573 metric tons.

Pacific Mackerel: 123/6,950 metric tons

Pacific Sardine: 982 metric tons of incidental, live bait, research caught (EFP), and minor directed (<1 mt) fish landed. The 2020/21 fishing year is closed but vessels are allowed to land 20% sardine in their CPS loads, minor directed landings for sardine (<1 mt), or live bait until total landings reach 4,000 mt.