

Research Activity Panel Meeting Summary **Gregor M. Cailliet, MLML, RAP Chair**

FEBRUARY 1999 MEETING

Host: Monterey Bay Aquarium, Ocean View Conference Room

Friday February 12, 1999 9:00am - 12:00pm

Attendance: 17 RAP members and 2 guests (including SAC Chair Steve Webster)

PRESENTATIONS

Institutional Update: Monterey Bay Aquarium (Chris Harrold)

- MBA Mission: inspire conservation of the ocean
- Priorities for MBA: visitors to MBA, living exhibits, regional marine systems, plants and animals in natural habitats, programs for children, learning should be fun, diversity of audience (including learning styles), carry mission beyond the walls, teamwork and entrepreneurial spirit, responsible financial management and self-sufficiency, value quality, and recognize their responsibility to our community.
- MBA is a private, non profit. Budget of 38 million, 420 staff, 875 volunteers, 120,000 specimens and 525 species, annual attendance averages about 1.8 million.
- Conservation annual research has a budget is 1.4 million (4% of total budget).
- Under Conservation Research, the research foci are: tuna research and conservation, sea otter research and conservation, applied marine conservation (public forums, environmental sound business practices, institutional position on environmental issues), regional marine environmental research (Sustainable Seas Expedition, regional marine environmental studies/ecosystem monitoring/environmental health), and applied research (water quality, exotic species and chemistry associated with exhibits and other research projects).

Ecological risks and dredging in Moss Landing Harbor District (Steve Webster)

- There was a workshop on the 23rd January to address issues that have held up dredging in the Moss Landing Harbor District. There will be follow up from this workshop.
- Two papers for Marine Pollution Bulletin are in the works to address-science of the dredging issues, and socio-political aspects of decisions based on the best available science (this is difficult, and the MLHD issue could be a model for other environmental issues).
- Steve Webster is working on clarification of sources of information for sediment transport around the head of the Monterey Canyon.
- A process is continuing to consider an ecological risk assessment for MLHD dredging.
- There will be six months of monthly meetings to develop a risk assessment study.
- Interestingly, SSE dives are proposed for the dredge disposal area and could provide insight into what the dredge areas look like.

RAP and the Underwater Park (Steve Webster)

- Steve Webster gave an update and answered specific questions.
- Communication continues with diver representatives to work on collaborative education projects.
- The diver representative SAC seat is open right now, and applications are being received.
- A kelp harvesting study will soon be published on time series of kelp canopy distribution and abundance in areas where kelp is harvested and where it is not. This study may be continued and expanded in the future.
- There is a potential to work with CIRPAS on future photo surveys from the air.

INFORMATION ITEMS

SAC Summary (Rick Starr)

- Rick attended the February 5th meeting.
- Major issues were: the Sustainable Seas Expeditions, Sea Dragons exercise, kelp/park issue, gravel mining, MBNMS budget, AB1241 implications, modernization of ML Power Plant to make it more efficient, and potential sea otter relocation into MBNMS. See SAC minutes on the MBNMS web site for more details.

MBCORC Update (Andrew DeVogelaere)

- Andrew reviewed agenda topics from the February 10 meeting: membership status updates; upcoming events; MBCORC web site, lists of scientists and information sheet/poster; Sanctuary updates; access of MBCORC member employees to courses at MBCORC teaching institutions; and a presentation on a regional GIS as a unifying project for MBCORC.
- The RAP suggested that it be clear that the unifying project should not be limited to GIS, but to stress efficient sharing of information.

CDFG Nearshore Fish Team meeting on Live (Premium)Fish Fishery (Greg Cailliet)

- The NFT will meet on March 8 and 9. Greg will speak about the RAP role and interest related to the live nearshore fish fishery.
- Greg's talk will address: need to study fishing effort, relevance of life history relative to size limits, coordinate information exchange between CDFG regions, better reproductions and seasonal information, study of live fish sources, movement patterns of fish in the fishery, what is the impacts of the fishery on habitats, how are no take areas being considered in management, and experiments on hook mortality.

DISCUSSION

Input for Annual Research Summary (Andrew De Vogelaere)

- Andrew asked for input to the literature cited section of the 1998 Research Program Annual report.

EPA Representative (Geoff Wheat)

- Geoff will pursue having an EPA representative on the RAP and report back to Greg for more formal channels.

Ecosystem monitoring: needs and potential (Bill Douros)

- The Sanctuary has a mandate to assess change in Sanctuary resources.
- It should build on the existing regional monitoring efforts by other agencies and institutions.
- The components in developing an ecosystem monitoring program include: (1) surveying what are the existing monitoring efforts, a compilation (2) assessing what the MBNMS needs to measure, we cannot monitor everything (3) learning where the gaps are in information (4) an evaluation of effectiveness of existing monitoring projects (5) a designed project to enact the ecosystem effort; this could be a proposal for more funds.
- How do we achieve the above: Develop a supervisory committee to draft and address the above, this will then be brought to the RAP for review. MBNMS is pursuing a postdoc position to provide the personnel to do the work.
- Comments from RAP: make the effort hypothesis driven; see NSF recent review on how to monitor the Antarctic; need to have a postdoc who can communicate and understand the community; there is a need for a good base-map of the MBNMS; the eventual program will be expensive; don't forget about long term historical records, get existing data sets already available.

NSF Proposal for multibeam bathymetry instrumentation for acoustic 3D seafloor mapping (Rikk Kvitek)

- The proposed system will be a nearshore, 0 - 100 m depth range system.

- Rikk is asking for support for the proposal, a RAP letter and individual institution letters

SHORT INFORMATION ITEMS

Verbal items:

Sanctuary Currents program and awards (Andrew De Vogelaere)

- Gary Greene was voted by RAP to receive research award

National Ocean Sciences Bowl (Greg Cailliet)

- RAP members were encouraged to participate

Written items

Comments on the Sanctuaries National Research Plan (A. DeVogelaere)

- Steve Gittings replied to the RAP comments on the National Research Plan. He appreciated the thoughtfulness of the comments and said he would address them in the next draft.

RAP members and their institution (Greg Cailliet)

- Please update the Director and colleagues at your institute about relevant RAP information. This is a key role that RAP members should play to enhance cooperative regional research.

Rockfish forum (Chris Harrold)

- This is a reminder that on March 26 - 28 there will be a forum on rockfish to identify key issues, develop action plans, and share information with the public. The forum will be held at the Naval Postgraduate School and flyers are being circulated.

Future Agenda (Greg Cailliet)

- Don't hesitate to forward agenda topics, speaker suggestions, and written items to G. Cailliet or A. De Vogelaere for future meetings.

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