

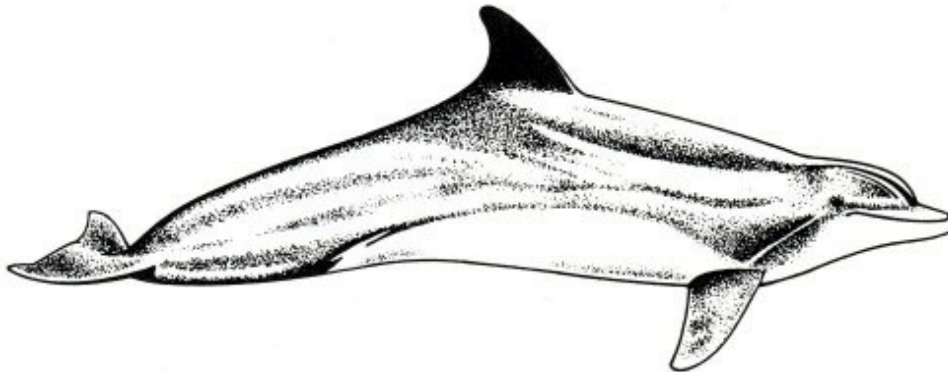
Soundings



American Cetacean Society ~ Monterey Bay Chapter

August 2007

The Newsletter of the Monterey Bay Chapter of ACS
AMERICAN CETACEAN SOCIETY - MONTEREY BAY CHAPTER
Monthly meeting at HOPKINS MARINE STATION, Lecture Hall, Boatworks Building
(Across from the American Tin Cannery Outlet Stores)

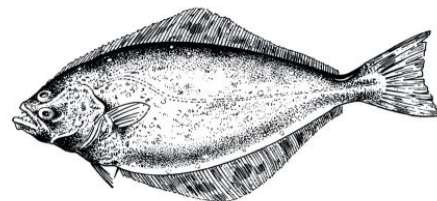


Below is the program information as of press time for the newsletter. Please go to the chapter web site for more about the program: www.starrsites.com/acsmb/

Date: Thursday, August 30th
Time: 7:30 p.m. Please join us at 7 for refreshments
Speaker: California Fish and Game Representative (name soon available)
Title: Specifics on the Marine Life Protection Act

The MLPA has been a bit confusing to many of us. Our speaker will help us understand specific boundaries and what they mean to marine life and to us. We also will understand better how it effects us locally.

Please come for a very timely program.



Two near-shore animals: Bottlenose Dolphin and Halibut.

Drawings by Bob Giuliani, Illustrations of Marine Animals, Dover, 1995

CALENDAR



Whale watch passengers watch fast dolphins go right on by.

Aug. 30, then Sep. 27: The next ACSMB programs.

Soundings Special Issue for Special Event This Month

Aug. 18: ACSMB Benefit Whale Watch. 9 am - 1 pm; board the 70' *Sea Wolf II* at 8:30 at Monterey Bay Whale Watch Center wharf at the end of Monterey's Fisherman's Wharf. Cost \$45, which includes automatic membership to ACS Monterey Bay Chapter. For reservations and information, please contact Tony Lorenz (831) 648-8968 or Jerry Loomis (831) 419-1051.

Please mail checks to ACS Monterey Bay Chapter, PO Box HE, Pacific Grove, CA 93950

Ed. note: The summer whale watch to benefit ACS projects, education and research, is a true Monterey Bay adventure. Looking back over the past 7 years, the

unique sightings and the excitement of open-ocean exploration are quite evident. See this issue for notes about 'our' cetaceans and photos taken from the *Sea Wolf II* with Monterey Bay Whale Watch. Expenses for these long, 4-hour cruises are high. The whale watch companies who donate boat, crew, naturalists, gasoline and expenses deserve our enormous thanks and ongoing support. Before Monterey Bay Whale Watch were our hosts in the past several years, Monterey Whale Watching (then Monterey Sport Fishing) donated our trip. Regardless, time offshore holds adventure and surprises. Below is Alan Baldrige's report for 1999, which gives the flavor of our time on the sea. Don't miss the wonders of our 2007 trip this month !

Aug. 21, 1999: Fifty-two hopeful and excited members and friends departed from Monterey Sport Fishing's dock at 8 a.m. on board the *Magnum Force*, with Captain Leon Oliver....

Cruise highlights included: dense swarms of brown Sea Nettle, *Chrysaora fuscescens*, in the outer harbor and off the south end of Cannery Row; a huge, est. 300 lb., Ocean Sunfish or Mola Mola swimming lazily next to the "Force," possibly being "cleaned" of its parasites by Western Gulls; three formation-swimming Humpbacks 7.5 miles west of Cypress Point, Pebble Beach; two pairs of Blue Whales making feeding dives in 800 feet of water in the Carmel Submarine Canyon. The huge animals appeared to body surf towards the vessel in the big swells of outer Carmel Bay; 5 Dall's Porpoise creating their characteristic "rooster tail" in the same area.

Seabirds were abundant and included: 25 Black-footed Albatross around the boat taking our chum off the fantail; Northern Fulmar; Sooty, Pink-footed and Buller's Shearwaters; Elegant tern; Common Murre; Rhinoceros Auklet; Pigeon Guillemot, and a fly-by hummingbird.

On board naturalists were Esta Lee Albright, Jerry Loomis, Jud Vandevere, and Katherine Whitaker....

Our thanks also to Captain Oliver for putting us in the best viewing positions, to crew "A.J." for chumming, etc., and, finally, to owner Angelo Shake of Monterey Sport Fishing for making this cruise possible. [Other reports of ACSMB whale watches can be found at the chapter web site: www.starrsites.com/acsmc/]

Also, watch our web site for recent issues of *Soundings*. Photographs are especially great in C O L O R !!

Whales and Dolphins Seen on Our Summer Whale Watches

Descriptions below are by Nancy Black of Monterey Bay Whale Watch and feature Monterey Bay observations. See more information, sightings, photos and feature articles at www.gowhales.com. Photos by Esta Lee Albright were taken during whale watch cruises and represent possible viewing in August. Years in which the species were sighted during ACS summer cruises follow each description. Join us, the whales, dolphins, seals, sea lions, many many seabirds, and a sea otter or two ! See page 2 for reservation information.

Risso's Dolphin is a relatively large (13') pelagic dolphin found worldwide in warm temperate and tropical seas.



Tall fins (Risso's) & no fins (Northern Right Whale) Dolphins

In Monterey Bay, these dolphins can be found year-round with school sizes ranging from 10 to over 1000 individuals. Risso's Dolphins are often in the company of Pacific White-Sided Dolphins and Northern Right Whale Dolphins. Risso's Dolphins feed mainly on squid and are frequently encountered in the deeper parts of the Bay. (2006, 2004, 2002)

Like the Pacific White-Sided Dolphin, **Northern Right Whale Dolphins** are endemic to the North Pacific, with an overlapping range. These dolphins are unique, in that they have no dorsal fin or dorsal ridge of any kind. They are generally a pelagic, offshore species; however, due to the nearshore submarine canyon in Monterey Bay, this species is frequently encountered, most often in mixed species groups with other dolphins. (2006, 2004, 2002)

Pacific White-Sided Dolphins, endemic to the North Pacific, are one of the most abundant cetaceans along the central and northern California coastline, often found in herds numbering over several hundred individuals. Monterey Bay, especially the canyon edge which facilitates upwelling and concentrates prey, likely provides an abundant and predictable food source for these dolphins. They feed on small schooling fish and squid. Risso's Dolphins and Northern Right Whale Dolphins, also utilizing this abundant food source, are frequently found in mixed-species herds with Pacific White-Sided Dolphins. Photo-identification of individual White-Sided Dolphins exemplifies the importance of the area for this species. Especially helpful as "herd markers" are anomalously colored or "white" dolphins that are very distinctly marked and easily sighted within a large school of dolphins. Resightings of distinct individuals indicates that particular groups of dolphins frequent the Monterey area at least seasonally and return to the area in subsequent years rather than new groups of animals continually moving through. All behavioral states have been observed for these dolphins in the Bay, including travel, feed, rest, and socialize/play. White-Sided Dolphins are one of the most acrobatic and animated species of dolphin in the world, often engaging in multiple mid-air leaps, flips, and somersaults. These dolphins occur year-round in the Bay. (2006, 2004, 2002, 2001, 2000)



Pacific White-sided Dolphins bowriding

The Dall's Porpoise is endemic to the North Pacific in cool waters and is the most frequently sighted cetacean off central and northern California. Unlike most of the dolphin species, Dall's Porpoise are found in small groups of 3-20 individuals. In Monterey Bay, they are year-round inhabitants that are closely associated with the canyon edges. Along with the dolphin species, they are avid bowriders. (2006, 2004, 2000)

Another year-round resident of Monterey Bay, **Harbor Porpoise** are found in shallow sandy bottom regions of the Monterey Bay shelf. Harbor Porpoise are found in small groups and generally do not approach vessels. (Not reported on ACS summer trips but sighted in July '07)



Common Dolphins Bow-riding

Common Dolphins are found worldwide, generally in warm water areas. These dolphins have become increasingly more abundant in the Bay since the last El Niño or warm water period occurred in 1982-1983. Two different species occur in Monterey Bay: the Short Beaked and Long Beaked Common Dolphin. The Long Beaked is more common and most abundant from late summer through winter. Common Dolphins are found in large, cohesive groups of up to 5,000 or more individuals. (Not reported on ACS trips but sighted in July '07)



Blue Whale's muscular tail stock & flukes

The Blue Whale is the largest animal ever to live on earth, reaching lengths of 80 to 100'. Blues feed only on krill and are found in Monterey Bay from June through October during times of high krill abundance. Like the Humpbacks, Blue Whales often shift to various feeding locations off central California in search of krill concentrations. Blue Whales begin to migrate south during November. It is still a mystery as to where the Blue Whales gather to give birth and mate, but it is suspected this happens in offshore waters south of Mexico. Blue Whales produce very low frequency sounds that are probably used for long-range

communication, with some sounds possibly used to locate dense krill patches. These low moaning sounds can travel over hundreds or thousands of miles across ocean basins. Blue Whales are truly a majestic species, with a tall narrow blow of up to 30'. A bright blue coloration is easily observed before the whales surface. Because of their size, only part of their body is visible at a time and the dorsal fin is usually observed just before their dive. Blue Whales may lunge feed at the surface to engulf surface swarms of krill or they may fluke up and dive to several hundred feet for deep krill concentrations. A single Blue Whale consumes about 4 tons of krill or 40 million individual krill each day. In Monterey Bay, Blue Whales often occur near the edges of the



Blue Whale blowholes (big as manhole covers) on a foggy day

submarine canyon where krill tends to concentrate. The population of Blue Whales off California has been estimated to number about 2,200 individuals from work conducted by Cascadia Research Collective. Blue Whales are endangered with only about 10,000 existing in the world. The population off California appears to be the largest and healthiest population of Blues in the world. Each Blue Whale can be identified by photographing the side of the whale with its dorsal fin in view, as Blue Whales have very distinctive mottling patterns on their grayish blue body. We attempt to photo-identify all Blue Whales sighted on Monterey Bay Whale Watch trips and contribute the photos to Cascadia Research for analysis. (2005, 2002, 2001, 2000)

Killer Whales occur year-round and are occasionally seen (2-5 times per month) in the Monterey Bay area in pods that average 8 to 20 individuals. Two types of Killer Whales normally occur here, the "transients" and "offshores". "Transient" Killer Whales prey on marine mammals, travel long distances, and tend to have pointed dorsal fins with closed saddle patches.



Female & male Killer Whales

Within Monterey Bay, these whales attack Gray Whales, California Sea Lions, Harbor Seals, Elephant Seals, and Dall's Porpoise. "Offshore" Killer Whales are a recently discovered form that tend to travel in large groups of up to 100 individuals, and tend to have more rounded dorsal fins. These whales probably feed on fish and squid. (2004, 2002, 2001, 2000)

Minke Whales are the smallest of the baleen whales at about 30' in length. In the Monterey Bay region, it is possible to see Minke Whales year-round, but they are most frequently sighted during the summer and fall. These whales are usually found nearshore over rocky bottom regions where they prey on juvenile rockfishes. Minke Whales do not have a visible blow and usually exhibit erratic surfacing patterns. However, they are easily sighted by their relatively large dorsal fin and dark body. There appear to be some resident Minke Whales that feed in southern Monterey Bay and along the Big Sur coast. They usually are found as singles. (2000)

Beaked Whales inhabit deep offshore waters, are found in fairly small groups, dive for long periods, and therefore are rarely observed. **Baird's Beaked Whales** are found only in the North Pacific and are the largest of the Beaked Whales. Sightings of these animals usually occur in the fall in Monterey Bay. (2002)

The Humpback Whale is an endangered species, occurring in all the world's oceans. The central California population of Humpback Whales migrates from their winter calving and mating areas off Mexico to their summer and fall feeding areas off coastal California. Humpback Whales occur in Monterey Bay from late April to early December. During this period the whales are here to feed on anchovies, sardines, and krill.

Humpback Whales reach lengths of 50 to 55', are dark in color with distinctive nodules on their rostrum, and have pectoral flippers that are nearly a third of their body length. Current population estimates for Humpback Whales off California



"Friendly" Humpback spyhops near boat 5

conducted by Cascadia Research Collective indicate there are about 800 whales in this population. All whales have been photo-identified by natural markings and coloration on the underside of the tail fluke. From this photo-identification work, the migratory movements, calving intervals, association patterns, and population estimates can be determined for these whales. Humpback Whales are in Monterey Bay to feed and they often shift to various feeding locations depending on prey density. Humpbacks are often observed lunge feeding near the surface or deep diving for prey that is concentrated several hundred



ID photo, Humpback flukes' underside

feet deep. This whale is the most animated of all the baleen whales, and in the Bay they are often seen breaching, spyhopping, pectoral fin slapping, and tail lobbing. In recent years, many different Humpback Whales in this population often approach our boat for "friendly" encounters. When engaging in this "friendly" behavior, a whale will often circle our boat, rub up against it, spyhop within several feet of the boat, roll on its side and extend its pectoral flipper toward the boat, and often tilt its head with an eye open, appearing to look up at the boat and people on board. This phenomenon has been



Mom/calf Humpbacks

increasing each year, probably because this new generation of whales that have never known whaling are becoming curious about boats, and they often stay for several hours investigating our boat. This contact is totally initiated by the whales.

Monterey Bay is one of the best places to observe humpbacks on a day's whale watch because the submarine canyon approaches very close to shore here. The whales are frequently found along the edges of the canyon where prey tends to concentrate. At times, the whales come even closer to shore while feeding on anchovies and can also be found 8-20 miles from shore where concentrations of krill occur in relation to thermal fronts. We attempt to photo-identify all Humpback Whales sighted on Monterey Bay Whale Watch trips and contribute these photos to Cascadia Research. (2006, 2005, 2004, 2001)

Ed.note: also, Sightings records show a **Sperm Whale** seen on the 2001 whale watch. According to the ACS Fact Sheet on Sperm Whales, Sperm Whales are the largest odontocetes, toothed whales. It is best known as the leviathan Moby Dick in Herman Melville's novel. Males migrate to higher latitudes, while females and juveniles stay in more tropical waters. Sperm Whales have been sighted on offshore surveys and a single young whale (probably a wandering male) has been seen several times in and near Monterey Bay.(2001)



The end !

SIGHTINGS

Watch for updates on August and past years' sightings at www.gowhales.com
Compiled by Monterey Bay Whale Watch.

7/18 3 Humpback Whales,
200 Pacific White-sided Dolphins,
1000 Risso's Dolphins, 200
Northern Right Whale Dolphins, 30
Harbor Porpoise

7/17pm 3 Humpback Whales

7/17am 1 Humpback Whale, 100
Pacific White-sided Dolphins, 500
Risso's Dolphins, 120 Northern
Right Whale Dolphins

7/16 2 Humpback Whales

7/15pm 2 Humpback Whales

7/15am 2 Humpback Whales

7/14 5 Humpback Whales

7/13 6 Humpback Whales,
7 Harbor Porpoise

7/12pm 6 Humpback Whales

7/12am 4 Humpback Whales, 2
Long-beaked Common Dolphins,
65 Risso's Dolphins, 11 Dall's
Porpoise, 10 Harbor Porpoise

7/11pm 4 Humpback Whales

7/11am 6 Humpback Whales

7/10pm 5 Humpback Whales, 8
Harbor Porpoise

7/10am 7 Humpback Whales, 50
Pacific White-sided Dolphins, 200
Risso's Dolphins

7/9 9 Humpback Whales

7/8pm 5 Humpback Whales

7/8am 5 Humpback Whales, 120
Risso's Dolphins

7/7pm 13 Humpback Whales

7/7am 3 Humpback Whales

7/6pm 8 Killer Whales (transient
type)

7/6am 10 Humpback Whales,
11 Killer Whales (transient type),
25 Risso's Dolphins, 5 Harbor
Porpoise

7/5pm 1 Humpback Whale, 10
Harbor Porpoise

7/5pm 2 Humpback Whales

7/5am 2 Humpback Whales

7/4am 3 Humpback Whales, 2
Elephant Seals

7/3pm 7 Humpback Whales

7/3am 4 Humpback Whales,
1 Minke Whale, 15 Pacific White-
sided Dolphins, 8 Harbor Porpoise

7/2pm 40 Humpback Whales,
1800 Pacific White-sided Dolphins,
300 Risso's Dolphins, 450
Northern Right Whale Dolphins

7/2am 45 Humpback Whales,
2200 Pacific White-sided Dolphins,
300 Risso's Dolphins, 500
Northern Right Whale Dolphins

7/1pm 3 Humpback Whales

7/1am 8 Humpback Whales,
9 Killer Whales (transient type)

'Oceanic Period' Has Arrived

Sometime in July, the 'Upwelling' Period subsides and warmer, clearer water moves toward the coast from offshore: 'the Oceanic Period.' This usually means less shoreline fog, our 'summertime,' and interesting critters moving in. According to Richard Ternullo, the water temperature at the Monterey Bay buoy (offshore) has been around 63 degrees F. That's warm!

The tuna and albacore fishery is beginning, with the fish already as close as 12 to 20 miles west. Tuna fishermen think nothing of going 40 miles to fish. Some summers it has been a good idea to travel out to the tuna fishing grounds to see birds and whales, so the closer movement of those grounds is encouraging.

Chrysaora (sea nettles) and Aurelia (purple-striped) jellies are abundant. Leatherback turtles may be coming to eat them: 6 or 7 turtles were seen off Pacific Grove recently. Others have been seen by tuna fishermen farther out.

Krill has been reported at Pt. Sur. So far, blue whales have been seen cruising through the area, headed we know not where. Richard reports occasional blue whale sightings as they pass through. He says Tony Lorenz saw six blue whales off Big Sur, heading north. Let's hope they use their very low, long-range communication and invite the blue whales down south to come closer.

American Cetacean Society
Monterey Bay Chapter
www.starrsites.com/acsmc/

P.O. Box H E
Pacific Grove, CA 93950

Aug. 18: Our Summertime
Benefit Watch - See Inside!

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Monterey, CA
Permit No. 338

American Cetacean Society Membership Application Chapter#24

New Membership/Subscription ___ Gift Membership/Subscription ___
Renewal ___

Name _____

Address _____ Email _____

City, State, Zip _____

Membership level _____

Membership levels and Annual dues:
Lifetime \$750 Patron \$500 Contributing \$250
Supporting \$75 Foreign \$45 Family \$45 Active \$35
Student/Teacher/Senior \$25
Subscription only * \$15/11 issues (*not entitled to membership benefits)
Check ___ Mastercard ___ Visa ___ Expiration date _____

Signature _____

Make checks payable to: ACS/Monterey Bay Chapter
Return to: Membership Secretary, ACS Monterey Bay Chapter
P.O. Box H E Pacific Grove, CA 93950

ACSMB

Board Members for 2007

Jerry Loomis, President
email: Loomis@mbay.net

David Zaches, Vice-president
Katy Castagna, Treasurer
Sally Eastham, Membership
Gina Thomas, Secretary
Diane Glim, Publicity
Tony Lorenz, Special Events
Carol Maehr, Conservation
Barbara Oliver, News/Mailin
Bob Mannix, Alan Baldrige,
Programs
Rene Rodriguez, Morgen
Puckett, Education
Randy Puckett, Member at
Large
Evelyn Starr, Webmaster
Esta Lee Albright, Editor
Email: estalee@whalesail.com

Enjoy LOCAL WHALES with companies that have supported ACS Monterey
Bay: MONTEREY WHALE WATCHING 1 800 200 2203
MONTEREY BAY WHALE WATCH 831 375 4658