

**Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine
Sanctuary Advisory Council**

Thursday, November 12, 1998
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Honolulu Interisland Terminal
Room #4, 7th Floor

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

SAC Members Present: Hannah Bernard, Jim Coon, William Friedl, Emily Gardner, Walter Haas, Lou Herman, Greg Kaufman, William Lennan, June Harrigan-Lum, Charles Maxwell, Patty Miller, Paul Nachtigall, Eugene Nitta, Robert Schroeder, Glenn Soma, Mike Stanton, Claud Sutcliffe, Michael Tosatto, Terry White.

SAC Alternates Present: Isabella Abbott, Inoa Aluli, Ron Bass, Kim Beasley, Linda Bruckner, Gary Hoover.

Excused: Herman Chong, Beth Goodwin, Craig MacDonald, Dick Poirier.

Absent: James Housh, Colette Machado.

Others Present:

NOAA: Kellie Araki, Naomi McIntosh, Allen Tom.
EPA: Wendy Wiltse
UH-HIP: Sharon Zeigler
KCDM: Robin Mazor
Public: Scott Hamilton, Jr.

Distributed Materials

- Agenda
- Coral Reef Monitoring Plan
- SAC Charter (signed copy)
- List of possible Education Working Group priorities
- List of possible Research Working Group priorities

Welcoming Remarks

The meeting was called to order by SAC Chairman James Coon. Mr. Coon announced that he would be leaving the meeting at 2:00 p.m. and requested that some changes be made to the agenda. The SAC mission statement discussion would be held at the end of the meeting and the selection of SAC officers would be conducted after lunch. Mr. Coon then called for the approval of the prior meeting's final minutes.

Sanctuary Manager Allen Tom noted the SAC term limits are now staggered to provide greater continuity within the SAC. As a reminder, Mr. Tom stated that the four county representatives, the citizen-at-large, the research seat, and the education seat have limits of three years. All other seats are two years.

Sanctuary Manager Report

Mr. Tom announced the following upcoming sanctuary events: An Evening in the Sanctuary with Dr. Sylvia Earle and Jean Michel Cousteau (part of National Geographic's Sustainable Seas Expedition) on January 31, 1999 and Whale Day at the Mauna Lani resort in Kona on December 30, 1998 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.. SAC participation is encouraged at both of these events. Mr. Tom noted that this Whale Day is the first of its kind for the resort. Mauna Lani has previously held "Turtle Days" on hotel grounds.

Mr. Tom also requested that the next SAC meeting, scheduled for Thursday, January 14, 1999, be postponed until Friday, January 29, 1999. Mr. Tom stated that he would like the meeting to be located at the Maui Sanctuary office and held in conjunction with other Maui activities being conducted at that time. This includes the quarterly National Marine Sanctuary Manager's meeting and Dr. Sylvia Earle's Sustainable Seas Expedition visit. Greg Kaufman made a motion to change the meeting date which was carried unanimously.

Mr. Tom went on to announce that the Sanctuary is in the process of developing a new brochure and is looking for appropriate photographs. Additionally, NOAA will be creating new nautical charts which will include Hawaii's sanctuary boundaries. These will be provided to the SAC when they become available. Mr. Tom also briefly discussed the Coral Reef Monitoring Plan for the National Marine Sanctuary System (distributed).

Bob Schroeder provided a press release to the SAC which announced the first meeting of the Coral Reef Ecosystem Plan Team held by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WESPAC). This meeting was held on September 30 - October 1, 1998 at the WESPAC office in Honolulu. The primary purpose of this meeting was to start the development of a fishery management plan (FMP) for coral reef ecosystems in the US western Pacific region. The next Team meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 24-26, 1999. For more information, contact Mark Mitsuyasu at (808) 522-8220.

A request was made that in the future, SAC members be placed on a list to receive all press releases and copies of documents that go out. Mr. Tom responded that this is possible, though the sanctuary does not currently have a special distribution process to handle this.

The selection of the State Sanctuary co-manager position is currently on hold. Department of Land and Natural Resources chairman Michael Wilson, who is responsible for the hiring process, has asked to open up the position to the public once again due to an unsatisfactory turnout for the job announcement. Mr. Wilson would like to see the position be opened to the entire public rather than be restricted to State of Hawaii employees or Hawaii residents. Emily Gardner stated that anyone wanting information about this position can contact Mr. Wilson or the State of Hawaii employment office.

Mr. Tom announced that an intern will be coming to work with the Sanctuary program for a few weeks in January 1999. Dan Utech, a fellowship intern with NOAA, will be conducting an economic assessment of the whale watching industry in Hawaii. Mr. Tom indicated that the Sanctuary program needs input regarding this subject as well as possible contacts for Mr. Utech to work with. SAC members will be provided more information regarding this at a later date.

Mr. Tom identified the need to fill two seats on the SAC. The Ocean Recreation seat, currently held by James Housh (alternate Ron Bass) and the Fishing seat, held by Herman Chong (alternate Inoa Aluli) will be opened up to the selection process once again due to unforeseen circumstances. Mr. Housh, who now resides in New Mexico, is unable to fulfill his duties in representing his constituency and will have to step down from the SAC. Mr. Chong, has indicated that he is no longer able to attend meetings on a regular basis and would therefore like to be involved with the SAC as an alternate member. Because the Sanctuary is not authorized to automatically switch members with alternates, Mr. Tom stated that these two seat vacancies will be announced to the public immediately. SAC members will received a copy of the application packet to distribute accordingly. Alternates Ron Bass and Inoa Aluli are welcome to apply for their seats. Application deadline is December 31, 1998.

With regard to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs seat on the SAC, Mr. Tom noted that he is still unsure of their desire to participate with the SAC but will send them a letter regarding this issue. In the event that OHA declines to participate, another state agency will be needed to fill this seat. The SAC indicated that the participation of Native Hawaiian cultural groups is important and would like to see that the Sanctuary continues to represent this seat on the SAC. Mr. Tom acknowledged this and state that OHA will be welcome to participate if they show any indication of interest. Mr. Tom was encouraged to contact OHA Chairperson Frenchy DeSoto regarding this issue.

NOTE: In a letter dated December 9, 1998, OHA Trustee Colette Machado indicated that OHA is still interested in participating with the SAC and she will attend the next scheduled SAC meeting.

Additionally, Bill Lennan brought up the point that there is still one open voting seat on the SAC (NMFS has a non-voting status). Wendy Wiltse of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) responded that EPA will take that seat.

SAC Working Group Reports

Research Working Group:

Paul Nachtigall indicated that a list of research priorities was e-mailed to the research working group prior to the meeting. During the feedback process, Dr. Nachtigall was informed about a research workshop conducted on Maui in April 1995. It was recommended that the working group review the findings from that workshop through a document entitled: "Report of the Workshop to Assess Research and Other Needs and Opportunities Related to Humpback Whale Management in the Hawaiian Islands." This report can serve as a starting point and help to further define some of the research options and priorities for the Sanctuary.

Dr. Nachtigall distributed an initial list of research priorities that were discussed within the working group. These topics (not in any order) include:

1. Conduct aerial surveys to determine whether the population of whales visiting the Hawaiian Islands is changing.
2. Examine mark re-capture techniques and expand them statewide.
3. Conduct acoustic surveys to determine baseline sound levels around the various islands and to correlate acoustic and visual surveys.

4. Examine the distribution of whales in relation to the “quality” of the water or other determining factors.
5. Examine vessel impacts across time and determine ways to allow boats and whales to avoid one another.
6. Look at life histories of individual whales, birth rates and rates of growth.
7. Examine water quality in the sanctuary in order to characterize whale habitats.
8. Examine the possibility of acoustically monitoring humpback whales from existing government hydrophone arrays. Tie in a live listening line to the Sanctuary office.
9. Examine the relationship of humpback whales and other species inhabiting the Hawaiian Islands (e.g. fin whales, spinner dolphins, peponocephala, pilot whales, false killer whales).
10. Explore the interaction between Fish Aggregation Devices and cetaceans using a submersible.

Mr. Kaufman questioned the initial approach that the working groups were taking, suggesting that research goals and mission statements need to be formulated prior to the development of research priorities. Furthermore, he stated that the public needs to be notified of working group activities and invited to participate in the prioritization of research projects for the Sanctuary. Mr. Tom responded that this initial discussion among working group members was to allow the group to get focused and organized prior to approaching the public. The public will be involved once the working groups get started and have a better grasp of the existing budget structure.

Education Working Group:

Patty Miller distributed a list of possible education ideas for the Sanctuary which included the following:

1. School materials. Age appropriate kits/traveling boxes to include some or all of the following: sanctuary background information, interdisciplinary activities, games, videos, etc.
2. Research activities for students.
3. Video Conferences/Students Summits. Groups of students can interact with other students and experts, locally or with other sanctuaries.
4. KidScience television series on the Sanctuary for students.
5. Live television broadcast for students from a whale watching boat. (KidScience has the technology to do this).
6. Poster/essay contest for students.
7. Sanctuary slide show, delivered by trained docents in hotels.

8. Professionally produced poster of whales and the sanctuary environment.
9. 15-30 minute video on the Sanctuary to be available for use on airlines, hotels, etc. (A lot of this footage has been shot).
10. Interactive web site for students/general public which follows the research being conducted in the Sanctuary.
11. Sanctuary info/facts placed on Meadow Gold milk cartons, 7-11 cups or McDonalds tray liners, or other sources such as these.
12. Weekly segment in a newspaper during whale season that features sitings, happenings, facts, creative student writings, etc.
13. Traveling exhibits to be anywhere.
14. Lecture series for the public.
15. Sanctuary newsletter.
16. Whale camps for students or families. (Overnight camping experience, includes educational activities and whale watching)
17. Sanctuary mascot and song.
18. Web site for kids to interact with students of other sanctuaries.
19. Educational forum.

As a whole, the SAC responded well to the education topics provided for discussion. Some questions were raised regarding possible duplication of existing education efforts in the community. It was also suggested that the SAC look at the aforementioned research workshop report as it contains a number of education ideas. Additionally, the SAC should consider conducting a workshop for various educators and members of the public to coordinate education ideas and avoid duplication in the field. Ms. Miller suggested that either a statewide workshop could be organized or a series of smaller island workshops could be conducted. Mr. Tom stated that the Sanctuary would provide funds for such a workshop should the SAC decide that this was the most effective option. He also noted that this would be an important effort in developing the Sanctuary's education program as well as establishing partnerships with the community and filling in the gaps for existing educational efforts. Mr. Kaufman once again reiterated the need to first identify the needs and direction of the Sanctuary and determine what can be done to fulfill those needs. Mr. Tom acknowledged this and indicated that goals and mission statements could be formulated through an e-mail discussion within the next few weeks.

Conservation Working Group:

During the educational workshop discussion, Lou Herman noted that the topics of discussion should include conservation issues as well as education issues since the goals are jointly important. Questions were then raised regarding the Sanctuary's primary goals for conservation. It was noted that the conservation vision should focus on the

preservation of the humpback whale through the protection of the aquatic and terrestrial environment. Another individual emphasized that conservation goals should address the threats to the humpback whale (some examples include the Navy's Low Frequency Active sonar program (LFA) and the expansion of Maalaea Harbor on Maui). Other identified concerns include: the possibility of whaling resumption, the environmental impacts of activities occurring outside of Sanctuary boundaries, the SAC's abilities to comment on issues outside of Sanctuary boundaries, and the carrying capacity of whale watch activities.

The SAC concurred that it was important to be as proactive as possible on issues important to the Sanctuary and the humpback whale. This includes maintaining contact with the State's congressional representatives, maintaining contact with researchers, issuing position statements on various issues or recommendations, and reaching out beyond Sanctuary confines to monitor the entire humpback whale habitat. Another suggestion included the possibility of partnering Hawaii Sanctuary activities with the South Pacific humpback whale sanctuary currently being developed in Australia.

On a more general note, the SAC agreed to alter future meeting formats to include island working group reports. County representatives will now be responsible for organizing meetings with their island constituencies every other month to determine community interests and concerns. These representatives will then bring these issues back to the SAC for further discussion. Ms. Miller indicated an interest in attending meetings on each island to help her determine the educational interests for each community. Mr. Coon requested that the SAC members approach their different constituencies before the next SAC meeting in January. The first half of that meeting will then accommodate a discussion of findings and the latter half will be devoted to voting on these issues.

Presentations

Department of Health Water Quality Study (Contact 541-2712):

Wendy Wiltse of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) presented information about the State of Hawaii's Department of Health water quality study. According to Ms. Wiltse, EPA, the Department of Health (DOH) and the Sanctuary worked cooperatively in developing this program. The Sanctuary's primary involvement is through the provision of partial funding.

The study focuses on water quality monitoring, polluted runoff controls, and fishpond restoration. Maximum daily loads for pollutants are determined for State waters. Monitoring is done to assess pollutant sources and control measures are implemented. According to Ms. Wiltse, sediment runoff is Hawaii's most widespread coastal pollution problem.

Current DOH projects include: sediment and nutrient control programs for West and South Maui, development of a sediment control program for South Molokai, and revision and distribution of the "Island Stewardship Guide" for Kauai and the Big Island (This guide was originally developed for Maui but NOAA will provide funds to help revise this book to be geared for all islands.) This guide will also be reprinted for Maui, but without the use of NOAA funds.

The SAC questioned the importance of water quality monitoring with regard to the Sanctuary. In particular, it was noted that the quality of Hawaii waters continue to degrade over the years, yet humpback whale populations continue to increase. The negative impacts of water quality on whale habitats are therefore unclear. Furthermore, because there is no clear definition of what the humpback whale's "environment" consists of, it is

difficult to determine how pollution (terrestrial or otherwise) impacts the species. It was therefore indicated that the DOH water quality study may be only indirectly related to the humpback whale and its habitat and the SAC should evaluate its funding priority. Ms. Wiltse noted that this may be a good issue to review in research workshop.

UH Sea Grant Hawaiian Internship Program (Contact 974-7601):

Sharon Zeigler of University of Hawaii Sea Grant provided a slide show presentation about the UH Hawaiian Internship Program (UH-HIP) to the SAC. According to Ms. Zeigler, UH-HIP is a collaborative effort of the UH Sea Grant, USGS Biological Resources Division, the Hawaii Sanctuary program, the USDA Forest Service Institute of Pacific Island Forestry, the Secretariat for Conservation Biology, the UH-Manoa College of Natural Sciences, the Nature Conservancy, and UH-Hilo Student Services. Through this program interns are partnered with different organizations to gain insight and work experience in natural resources related fields. Ms. Zeigler recognized the Hawaii Sanctuary as one of the founders of the UH-HIP and noted that the Sanctuary program has worked with intern Joylynn Olivera on the historical relationship between Native Hawaiians and the humpback whale.

According to Ms. Zeigler, the benefits of UH-HIP to the Sanctuary program is that it provides an avenue for linking Hawaii's culture with Sanctuary activities, makes the Hawaii Sanctuary the only national marine sanctuary that involves indigenous peoples with its programs, collaborates the effort to increase the numbers of Native Hawaiians involved with natural resource management in the State of Hawaii, and links the Hawaii Sanctuary with other collaborators.

UH-HIP plans to continue this program for at least five more years. Ms. Zeigler indicated that the program is always looking for different internship opportunities with other marine-related industries and asked for input from the SAC. Additionally, she noted that UH-HIP is also looking for different sources of funding to allow non-profit organizations to participate when they cannot afford to pay interns (one suggestion was through the Office of Hawaiian Affairs). Ms. Zeigler went on to state that it is important for the interns to have a good mentor in the field. The program is young, but it has the potential to make a difference.

Kauai Children's Discovery Museum (Contact 823-8222):

Robin Mazor of the Kauai Children's Discovery Museum (KCDM) presented a slide show and brief discussion of the Kauai program and its involvement with the Sanctuary. Ms. Mazor stated that the strategic goals of the KCDM is to:

1. Secure a permanent location by 2002.
2. Provide experiential learning opportunities and educational resources in science, technology, culture, arts and nature.
3. Initiate broad-based partnerships with stakeholders to enhance program development and community support.
4. Secure sufficient and diverse sources of funding for future program development.
5. Partner with Hawaii's visitor industry to become a primary visitor attraction.

6. Become actively involved in the community.
7. Obtain sufficient staff, volunteers, and equipment.

Since 1995, KCDM has had over 100,000 visitations. Over 10,000 of the 50,000 residents on the island of Kauai regularly attend the museum's annual exhibitions. In its partnership with the Hawaii Sanctuary, KCDM has been involved in a number of interactive exhibits including a Marine Life Discovery Day, Coral Reef Family Fun Day, and the Kauai Sanctuary's Dedication Celebration and Family Ocean Fair. In addition, KCDM and the Sanctuary have participated in various school excursions and in the development of educational materials for teachers.

Final Discussion

To wrap up the meeting, Mr. Coon noted that everyone will be sent a copy of the research workshop report discussed earlier. SAC officer elections will be postponed until the next meeting in January once all of the vacant seats are filled. Those interested in serving are encouraged to contact Mr. Tom or Mr. Coon. Mr. Coon also requested that all working groups be up and running by December 15, 1998. Committee chairs should have their group's mission statements ready for presentation by the next meeting in January. Members can submit their ideas for statements to SAC Coordinator Kellie Araki for compilation. The development of a general SAC mission statement will be deferred until the working group statements are in order as this can help formulate where the SAC will go as a whole.

Hannah Bernard provided an update on the findings of the subcommittee assigned to look at options for meeting frequency and locations. The group determined that meetings scheduled every other month was sufficient. The SAC still needs to explore alternative for the funding of meetings. More than likely, commercial airlines will not offer free travel for meetings since the SAC is a government operation. Mr. Tom reiterated that the Sanctuary can accept donations for funding, but cannot solicit donations. The SAC may want to look onto possible venues for soliciting donations on the Sanctuary's behalf. The suggestion that meetings be rotated to other islands has not yet been resolved although videoconferencing was identified as an option. Mr. Coon suggested that the working groups could use this option for their meetings.

A question was raised regarding the issue of placing Mr. Tom on the selection panel for the State's Sanctuary co-manager position (identified at the last SAC meeting). Ms. Bernard stated that as the SAC secretary, she will send out a letter to DLNR Chairman Mike Wilson on the SAC's behalf.

Mr. Kaufman announced that the Pacific Whale Foundation will be conducting a marine science education meeting in Maui on December 5, 1998. The meeting will discuss possible partnerships and programs. For more information, contact the PWF office.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting will be held at the Maui Sanctuary Office on Friday, January 29, 1999 at 10:00 a.m..

