

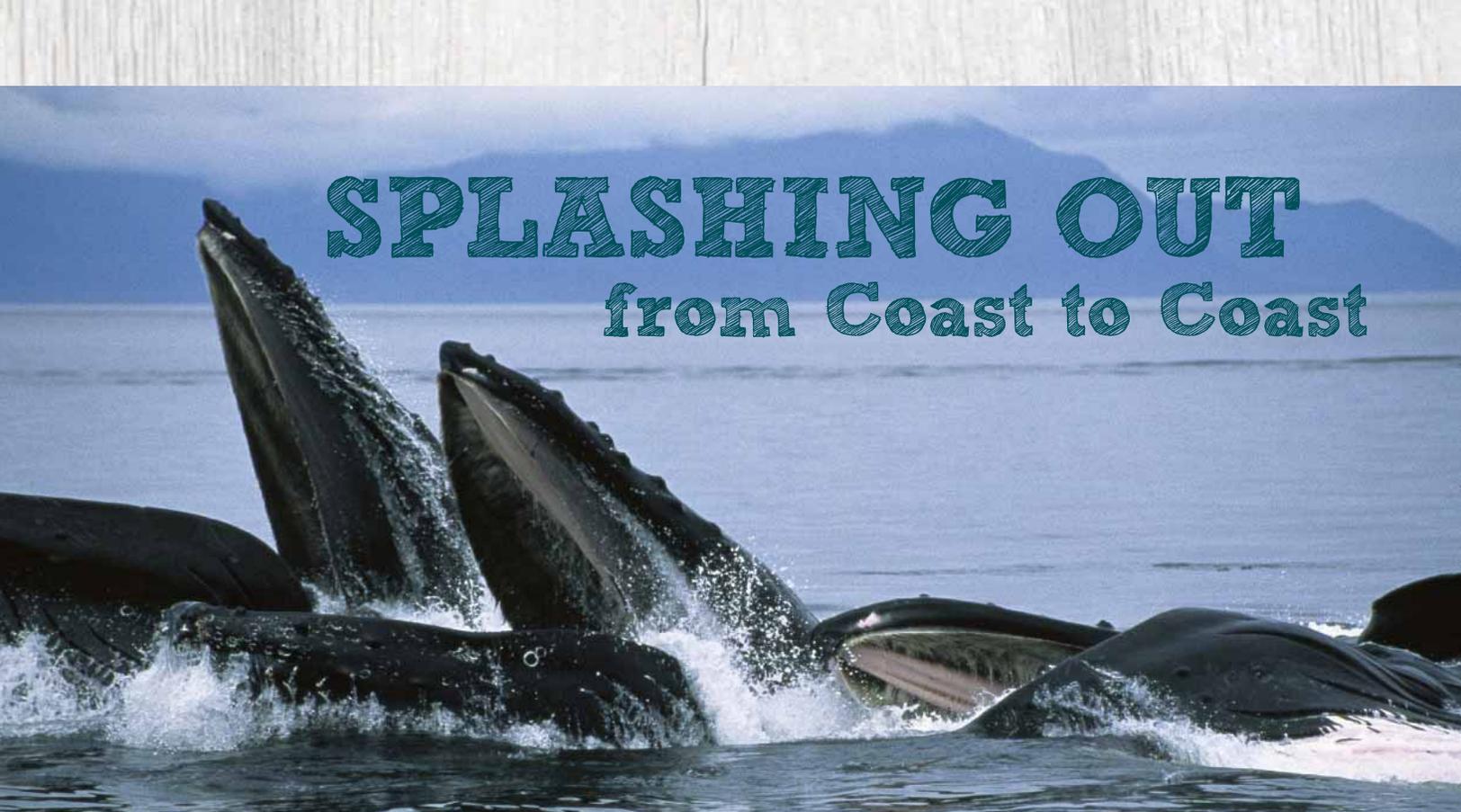


Sanctuary System

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries serves as the trustee for a system of 14 marine protected areas encompassing more than 150,000 square miles of ocean and Great Lakes waters. The system includes 13 national marine sanctuaries and the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. The sanctuary system is managed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) which works cooperatively with the public to protect sanctuaries while maintaining compatible recreational and commercial activities. Sanctuary staff work to enhance public awareness of our nation's marine resources and maritime heritage through scientific research, monitoring, exploration, educational programs, and outreach. For more information, visit <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>.



NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES



SPLASHING OUT

from Coast to Coast

During the summer months in Hawai‘i, humpback whales are nowhere in sight. Instead, they have migrated to Alaska and other summer feeding areas. To continue working with these animals year-round, Ed Lyman, sanctuary marine mammal response manager journeys to Juneau, Alaska, each summer as part of the sanctuary’s partnership with NOAA Fisheries. There, he shares his expertise on humpback whales and addressing issues like entanglement that threaten them.

Entanglement occurs when a whale or marine mammal accidentally gets caught up in manmade nets, ropes, marine debris or other fishing gear. This can cause extensive damage to any sea creature -- and it can result in death if not aided. “Working in Alaska has been a great way for us to maximize our knowledge base and response efforts in addressing the entanglement threat for humpbacks here in the central North Pacific,” said Lyman. Since 2005, Lyman has typically spent three months each summer providing advanced disentanglement training for qualified individuals and “first response” training for

ocean users to ensure an authorized response to large whale disentanglement. Freeing a 45-ton, free-swimming whale wrapped in gear is no easy task and is quite dangerous.

Lyman also assists in entanglement response efforts and has helped free three humpback whales in Alaska over the past couple of years.

“The goal is not to free every whale of the entangling gear, but to gain information in order to reduce entanglement.” With that in mind, Lyman spends a great deal of time working with fishermen, investigating gear removed from whales in Alaska and Hawai‘i,

and gathering other information that might help reduce entanglements for these large animals.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the country, David Mattila heads to New England each summer, where he helps determine the impact of entanglement on whales and works to find solutions that will minimize the negative human influences that may cause harm. As the sanctuary’s science and rescue coordinator in Hawai‘i, Mattila is all too familiar with whale entanglement. “It’s become a very serious issue,” says Mattila. “The estimated actual mortality is greater than what was previously



thought.” In New England’s relatively small population, it was first estimated that two to three whales died from entanglement each year, but recent data indicates that it is closer to 20 to 30 whales that perish every year.

Sometimes fishermen are unaware that a whale has become entangled in their gear. Fishermen must adhere to strict codes and regulations, don’t want to lose their expensive equipment, and certainly don’t want to catch these animals in their gear. Yet entanglements still occur, and they are of great concern to many scientists, managers, and fishermen around the world. “It’s time to address entanglement as a global issue,” states Mattila, “especially since we have the technology, and research and education programs to do something about it. We must all work together to resolve the problem.”

Mattila works collaboratively with the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies in New England, sharing his breadth of knowledge and experience, while implementing structure

and safety protocols. He trains summer interns on the correct procedures and proper use of tools for disentanglements. The interns also get to head out to sea and participate in research, biopsies, and whale watching cruises.

Mattila says many of these interns have become team leaders for SPLASH (Structure of Population, Levels of Abundance and Status of Humpback Whales in the North Pacific) projects in the past, and they continue to grow into research and conservation leaders in countries around the world. SPLASH is an international research project that conducts a large-scale whale population study by bringing together more than 400 researchers across the North Pacific. Participating countries of the SPLASH project include the United States, Japan, Russia, Mexico, Canada, the Philippines, Costa Rica, Panama, Nicaragua and Guatemala.

Both Mattila and Lyman have seen positive results from their summer programs. Lyman views his work as a collaborative effort with

the Alaskan community and points out that there are many similarities between the two regions and their cultures. “Both rely on the community to get things accomplished, and it takes a whole community to do what we are doing,” says Lyman. “Whether Alaska or Hawai’i, the support from the local community has made the difference in helping us save these magnificent animals.” 

***This Page:** (top photo) Marine Mammal Response Manager Ed Lyman demonstrates the techniques used to free large whales of entangling gear. (bottom photo) Fred Sharpe of Alaska Whale Foundation works with Ed Lyman to free a humpback whale entangled in gillnet.*

Charting an International Course



The First International Conference on Marine Mammal Protected Areas (ICMMPA) was held earlier this year at the Grand Wailea Resort on Maui. On March 30, 2009, over 200 MPA (marine protected areas) managers, scientists, and educators representing 40 countries came together to discuss issues related to common species, populations, threats and other matters. This exciting five-day event provided the perfect forum to share information on effective approaches to marine management and conservation, and also helped to establish valuable relationships.

The theme of this year's conference was "Networks: Making Connections." Coming all the way from Scotland was Erich Hoyt, the senior research fellow and critical habitat/MPA program lead with the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society. Hoyt was on the steering committee and was also one of the key speakers at the symposium. "We had someone who lived or at least had worked on every continent, every ocean, so it was truly international," said Hoyt.

The event provided an excellent opportunity for people to form important connections. "Having the MPA designers, the MPA managers as well as the marine mammal scientists and government offices represented worked really well," shared Hoyt. "The size of the conference meant that you could meet up with almost everyone, or at least say hello and exchange business cards and network. But it was more than just making introductions – it was realizing that two people on opposite sides of the world had similar MPA problems or research expertise and then dragging one over to meet the other."

There are over 500 existing or proposed MPAs for marine mammals,

spanning nearly 90 countries around the world. Yet, prior to this conference, there had never been a dedicated venue for sharing and gathering information. In an effort to bridge the gap, the ICMMPA developed an ambitious program with presentations covering specific themes, followed by training sessions on key topics.

Topics included whaling and whale sanctuaries, the role of culture in managing MPAs, and the role of education in the community and on the water. Hawai'i's own Ed Lyman and David Mattila, along with Teri Rowles, conducted an in-depth training workshop on stranding, entanglement and health assessment of whales.

In addition to the presentations and discussions, the group was able to build a stronger network and forge new relationships. "I can say that I am now working closely with at least a dozen new people on projects that directly came out of the recommendations of the conference and the people who attended," added Hoyt. "So, for me, that has made it a very successful conference and I look forward to the next one."

Overall, attendees felt the ICMMPA was a great success. Plans are already underway for the next international gathering, which will be hosted by France. "For me, it was a great experience," Hoyt concluded. "I would like to continue helping to shape future conferences and look forward to new themes that we can work on such as marine mammals and high seas MPAs, marine spatial planning and zoning, and so much more." These newly established connections have the potential to significantly improve the effectiveness of individual MPAs, and everyone is excited about how these alliances may impact the future. 



Support Your Sanctuary

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, a private, non-profit, 501©(3) tax-exempt organization, assists the federally managed Office of National Marine Sanctuaries with education and outreach programs designed to preserve, protect, and promote meaningful opportunities for public interaction with the nation's marine sanctuaries.

Individuals, groups, and corporation can play a key role in ensuring our underwater treasures are still here for future generations to enjoy. Your tax deductible contribution to the foundation is an investment in the future. Care for humpback whales in Hawai'i by supporting the efforts of the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary today!

- Support the sanctuary by making a donation to the Koholā Campaign online at <http://nmsfocean.org/ways-donate>. Call 1-888-55-WHALE, ext. 252, to find out more about the campaign.
- Visit the sanctuary online at <http://hawaiiumpbackwhale.noaa.gov> to find information on other ways you can support the sanctuary (purchase logo wear, a specialty license plate, a reusable shopping bag, or find out how to volunteer your time)
- Become a member of the foundation by visiting <http://nmsfocean.org/become-member>.

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation's tax identification number is 94-3370994 and Combined Federal Campaign number is 10762.

Get Involved in the Ocean Count

The Sanctuary Ocean Count project continues to be the sanctuary's most popular community event. In 2009, volunteers showed up in force on the islands of Hawai'i, Kaua'i and O'ahu, and donated over 11,000 hours of their time observing humpback whales and their behavior from the shoreline. Not even strong winds, and in some cases rain, could stop them.

Don't miss your chance to get involved in the 2010 count. Mark your calendars now for the last Saturday of January, February, and March. Registration will begin in December 2009. Find out more by clicking on the "Get Involved" button on the sanctuary's Web site and help support this project by purchasing a Sanctuary Ocean Count T-shirt from the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation.

Make a Difference

Four-time Grammy winner Daniel Ho is making a difference by supporting ocean education. Daniel composed an original slack key guitar composition named Kai Palaoa, which in Hawaiian literally means "whale sea." This composition is now available on a CD, also titled Kai Palaoa. In addition to music by Daniel Ho, the CD also features the music of some of Hawai'i's finest musicians, who donated their work to raise awareness about the importance of Hawai'i's

ocean resources. These musicians include: The Mākaha Sons, Jack Johnson, Tia Carrere, Kawaikapuokalani Hewett, Kaukahi, George Kahumoku, Jr., Pali, Kawika Kahiapo, Herb Ohta, Jr., and Steve Sano. This enhanced CD also contains a music video of the whale footage that inspired Daniel Ho's original composition.

The project was made possible by support from the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation through the Ernest F. Hollings Ocean Awareness

