Soundings

AMERICAN CETACEAN SOCIETY
Monterey Bay Chapter

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2014

American Cetacean Society – Monterey Bay Chapter
PO Box H E, Pacific Grove, CA 93950

MONTHLY MEETING AT HOPKINS MARINE STATION,
LECTURE HALL BOAT WORKS BUILDING
(ACROSS FROM THE AMERICAN TIN CANNERY OUTLET STORES)
MEETING IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

MEETING DATE:
Thursday, December 4, 2014
Time: 7:30 PM
PLEASE JOIN US AT 7:00 FOR REFRESHMENTS

Speaker: **Dr. Tierney Thys, National Geographic Explorer**

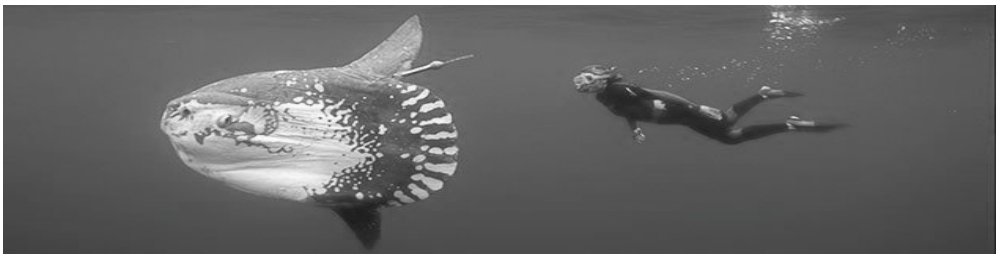
Dr. Tierney Thys has been studying ocean sunfish, *Mola mola*, for 14 years to learn about life in the open ocean. She uses satellite tags and DNA testing to track their movements and feeding patterns to understand how they thrive with their odd shape and diet comprised of mainly jellies.

She told National Geographic her fascination with mola started with a photograph she saw in graduate school. "When it comes to fishes, the mola really pushes the boundary of fish form. It seems a somewhat counterintuitive design for plying the waters of the open seas – a rather goofy design – and yet the more I learn about it, the more respect and admiration I have for it," she explained.

Dr. Thys is a National Geographic Explorer who mentored under the pioneering Sylvia Earle, spent 10 years as director of research for Sea Studios Foundation in Monterey and became a member of the TED Braintrust.

She earned her doctorate from Duke University in 1998 with a dissertation on the mechanics of swimming muscles in fish, then expanded her research and devotion to marine education. While at Sea Studios, she directed research for National Geographic's "Strange Days on Planet Earth."

Please join us for refreshments before the program begins. More information is available on our website, www.acsmb.org, or Dr. Thys' website, www.oceansunfish.org.



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Enjoy the holidays! Then join us for the next ACSMB program at Boat Works Hall on January 29 – the last Thursday of January. We'll have cetacean and ocean related programs on the last Thursdays of the month through October – February 26, March 26 and so on.

CALENDAR

Nov. 13-16: 95th Annual Meeting of the Society of Western Naturalists in Seattle-Tacoma, WA. For more info and registration please go to westsocnat.com

ACS Monterey Bay
Gray Whale Fundraiser

Sunday Jan. 25th from 8:00-10:00 AM

Join local gray whale experts aboard the 100' *Greatland* as we embark into the gray whale migratory corridor during the peak of the gray whale's southbound migration. Monterey Bay is one of the best places along the west coast to observe the annual southbound migration of the Pacific Gray Whale with some trips producing in excess of 50 gray whales just a few miles from the Monterey harbor.

This trip is an annual fundraiser and all proceeds go to support grants for cetacean research. In addition to observing gray whales we may also encounter several different species of dolphins and numerous species of winter birds.

The trip will depart from Princess Whale Watching in Monterey, California. Cost is $40.00 and can be booked online at montereywhalewatching.com or by calling 831-372-2203.

For more information please call Tony Lorenz at 831-901-7259.

Nov. 20: Seymour Center, Santa Cruz
2014 Ken Norris Memorial Lecture. When Ocean Business is "The Family Business"
A discussion with six eminent marine scientist who share a unique perspective on work, family,and the future of our blue planet.

Dec. 17: MBARI Seminar 3:00-4:00pm
Steven and Mary Albert, Filmmakers
The Great Tidepool: The Story of Ed Ricketts' Scientific System

Jan. 24-25, 2015: From 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM, the Monterey Old Fisherman's Wharf Association will hold the 5th annual Whalefest Monterey, at and around Old Fisherman's Wharf. This popular family friendly event is designed to educate and inspire the public about many of the outstanding marine organizations that are involved in the Monterey Bay area and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. More information is available at www.montereywharf.com.

BOOK RECCOMENDATIONS

Deep: Freediving, Renegade Science, And What The Ocean Tells Us About Ourselves, by James Nestor. 2014 HMH Press

The Walking Whales: From Land to Water in Eight Million Years, by J.G.M. "Hans" Thewissen with illustrations by Jaqueline Dillard. 2014 UC Press

Dodging Extinction: Power, Food, Money and the Future of Life on Earth, by Anthony D. Barnosky. 2014 UC Press.

Fishes: A Guide to Their Diversity, by Philip A. Hastings, H.J. Walker Jr., and Grantly R. Galland. 2015 UC Press.

3 Marine Animals Who Are Thrilled About California's Plastic Bag Ban

By Madison Montgomery

Oct. 1, 2014 — While many cities within the United States have taken the initiative to ban the use of plastic bags, the entire state of California has bumped up environmental protection to the next level. Just this week, California Governor Jerry Brown signed the first ever statewide ban on single-use plastic bags that will come into effect starting in July, 2015.

While this ban may seem to be a little inconvenient for grocery stores and business owners who go through hundreds of plastic bags a day, we'll have you know that most Californian business owners are welcoming the ban. Seeing as how plastic bags can cost a single shop millions of dollars a year, perhaps transitioning to paper and cloth bags may not be such a bad idea. To help encourage businesses to transition to greener forms of packaging, California will also provide $2 million in loans to those who

show an intent to switch to greener methods such as the creation of paper or reusable bags.

Governor Brown is proud of the bill's success and stated, "We're the first to ban these bags, and we won't be the last."

Plastic bags are considered to be such a huge problem because of their impact on the environment – specifically the ocean – when not recycled properly. Plastic products in general already make up about 60 to 80 percent of marine pollution, but plastic bags are often targeted by environmental groups because of how frequently they are used and how easy they are to find.

With the help of California's ban, it is estimated that the state could reduce plastic bag pollution by a whopping 13 billion bags! With such a drastic decrease in plastic pollution rates, we can guarantee that plenty of animals (millions of which are killed by plastic products annually) will be happy about to hear about this plan! Here are five marine-dwellers who are super happy about California's decision to say no to single-use plastic bags!

1. Sea Turtles

To a sea turtle who relies on sight above all other senses when finding food, plastic bags can look an awful lot like sea jellies. Every year, hundreds of endangered sea turtles are placed at risk of consuming plastic products. Hopefully, California's ban on plastics will be a victory for sea turtle populations!

2. Albatross

After seeing these images of a deceased albatross full of plastics, it's no wonder California is taking the initiative to ban one of the most used plastic-based items! This happy bird is ready to raise chicks without accidentally feeding them caps, straws, and bags!

3. Sperm Whales

Back in 2013, a sperm whale washed up onto the shores of Spain with over 59 kinds of plastics in its stomach. While the incident occurred in Spain, these whales exist in every ocean and are still considered to be an endangered species. Maybe the ban on plastics will help them safely raise their calves without the lurking fear of consuming the wrong things.

http://www.onegreenplanet.org/news/marine-animals-who-are-thrilled-about-californias-plastic-bag-ban/

Marine Experts Track Sharks, Which in Turn Track Elephant Seals

by Christine Heinrichs

Oct. 22, 2014 — Elephant seals are top predators, but they are also prey for sharks and killer whales.

Occasionally, a wounded seal lands on the beach, or a healed scar gives silent witness to an attack.

This wounded seal rested at Piedras Blancas during the first week of October. Shark researchers have found that sharks have seasonal migrations and spend the time between August or September through March feeding in their favorite places along the California coastline. Those places — Tomales Bay, the Farallon Islands, Año Nuevo — are where they find plenty of marine mammals, like juvenile elephant seals, to eat.

To find out whether sharks are feeding at Piedras Blancas, scientists from Hopkins Marine Station put a buoy offshore at Piedras Blancas in 2013, equipped with underwater receivers to track tagged sharks. Scientists tag sharks with acoustic tags that can be detected if the shark swims within 500 meters of the underwater receiver. Over several months, only two of the tagged sharks swam past, although it was exciting enough to know that Duke, a 17-foot male, was swimming out there.

The Piedras Blancas buoy isn't there anymore but may be replaced in the future. The SharkNet app, available free for iOS systems, lets anyone follow the tagged sharks on their travels.

Researcher Taylor Chapple came to Cambria in August to explain how he tags sharks to Friends of the Elephant Seal docents. Sharks are visual hunters, so he and his team attract them with a wooden dummy shaped like a seal, covered in indoor-outdoor carpet. They add some marine mammal blubber to entice the sharks close enough for the 10 to 20 seconds needed to shoot a digital tag into the dorsal fin. The unique scars on each dorsal fin also identify the sharks as individuals. Chapple has evidence that about 219 adult and sub-adult sharks live along California's Central Coast. He and his team have tagged about 130 of them.

The dummies sure get chewed up.

Keep your eyes out for the tags on the beach. They automatically pop off after a preset period of time and float away. They continue to broadcast a signal so researchers can pick them up, but in a vast ocean, that isn't always possible. They contain far more data than they can upload to satellites, so it's important for the shark research project to retrieve them when possible. Researchers offer a reward of $200 to $500 for turning one in.

A wounded seal heads back into the ocean, where its wounds may heal. (Credit: Christine Heinrichs — Special to The Cambrian).

"We're throwing thousands of dollars over the side every time we tag a shark," Chapple said.

When the juvenile elephant seals return to the beaches for their fall haul-out, sharks follow. In the Farallons and at Año Nuevo, sharks gorge on the juveniles. Juveniles make a bigger meal than the small pups but aren't as fierce and dangerous as adult seals.

"Hunting a pup is a lot of effort for a small benefit," said Chapple, who said the researchers call them "pupsicles."

Sharks attack from below, accelerating to hit their prey with force and disable it with a single bite. They attack from behind. A seal bitten in the tail can turn and fight back.

A serious physical injury can interfere with the shark's ability to hunt.

"Seals are dangerous for sharks," he said. "If a shark loses an eye, it's a serious consequence."

Becoming a docent

Marine experts such as Taylor Chapple partner with Friends of the Elephant Seal docents, another benefit of being a volunteer. Contact FES at 924-1628 or the website at http://www.elephant seal.org.

http://www.sanluisobispo.com/2014/10/22/3309187_elephant-seals-sharks-piedras.html?rh=1

Saving the Survivor: China Scrambles to Keep the Finless Porpoise from Extinction

by Erik Vance

Oct. 22, 2014 — On the morning of July 14, 2002 Qi Qi ate breakfast as he always did. As the world's only captive baiji – or Yangtze river dolphin (*Lipotes vexillifer*) – Qi Qi was something of a celebrity in China and his caretakers kept a close eye on his health. That care may explain why, after being injured by fishermen, he lived an impressive 22 years in the Freshwater Dolphin Research Center in Wuhan, China.

That day he seemed fine and they left him to digest his meal and tended to other duties. Yangtze river dolphins at this point were vanishingly rare and scientists were worried they might be seeing the end of a species. The center's research with Qi Qi was the only glimpse humanity had of this illusive creature. Sadly, the glimpse ended that day.

"When they came back, Qi Qi was lying at the bottom of the tank," says Wang Ding, who heads the center today. "He had died."

There would never be another captive baiji. A few years later, in 2006, Wang and a team of biologists went out onto the Yangtze to count the few remaining animals for a species tally. After six weeks on the water, they didn't find a single one. Dejected, they returned to the shore and announced to the waiting scrum of reporters that the baiji was, for all intents and purposes, extinct.

American researcher Robert Pitman darkly quipped, "It seems the baiji is the only thing that is not made in China anymore."

A little bit of history repeating

The loss of the baiji, predictable as it may have been, was a shock to the world and an embarrassment to China. A charismatic, popular creature had buckled under the wheels of progress, the first cetacean driven to extinction by humans. But what many don't know is that it was not alone in the murky waters of the Yangtze. Another cetacean still survives in China's rivers and scientists are determined to keep it from following the fate of Qi Qi.

The finless porpoise (*Neophocaena phocaenoides asiaorientalis*) has a blunt nose, a little like a beluga whale except smaller. It's not closely related to the baiji, but has managed to survive in the same narrow ecosystem. If the baiji was the lion of the Yangtze,

think of the finless porpoise as the hyena. It's smaller, more versatile in its tastes. Wang says while the baiji spent its days in the middle of the channel, the finless porpoise lives along the edges of the river, skimming fish from the sandbars. And just like the baiji 20 years before, the finless porpoise's numbers are dropping alarmingly. As of 2012 there were about 1,000 left in the river.

The Freshwater Dolphin Research Center is a wonderfully secluded place, surrounded by big leafed trees and verdant lawns. Walking into the main building, the humid air is filled with the sounds of porpoises clicking and whistling away. It's hard not to be dazzled by the elegant creatures in the three adjoining pools. My translator, a seasoned Chinese journalist, looks like a little kid as she makes an immediate beeline for the trainers tossing fish to them as they do simple tricks. While these are not performing animals, the activity and socialization is good for them.

Yu Jiang Hao, a researcher at the center, explains that they are studying the species' behavior and reproductive biology to understand how they can be preserved.

"We're trying to know what kind of environmental factors are influencing their reproduction," he says.

Too many guests at the table

The Yangtze River is filled with all kinds of human-related dangers for porpoises: poachers, boat collisions, stray nets, and pollution from just about every corner of the river. But scientists now think none of these are at the heart of the porpoise's decline. The real killer is starvation.

"They need to transition from milk to food. This is a very important transition period and if food isn't available it's very hard for them to survive," says Hao. "The fish are declining. It's a big problem."

Walking closer to the animals playing with their trainers and zipping around the center pool, he explains that for the first six months of a porpoise's life it stays near its mother, drinking only her milk. After that, it may sample a few fish but only truly weans at around one year. This point--when the animal isn't yet an adept hunter and needs lots of fish--can be lethal for the finless porpoise.

Scientists have found that this is exactly the age when many porpoises die and wash up on shore. Finless porpoises are not picky eaters but the incredible depletion of the river's fish by humans has taxed their ability to find enough food to grow to adulthood.

Freshwater animals like the baiji and finless porpoise have a problem that ocean cetaceans do not. Namely, there's nowhere for them to run. The Yangtze River might seem big, but compared to the ocean it's a raindrop dribbling down a window. Ocean populations can collapse to abysmally low points – where they no longer have a measurable effect on an ecosystem – but they don't usually disappear completely. In fact, there has never been a documented case of a free-swimming ocean fish going extinct.

But for lake and river animals, it's far more dangerous. Freshwater fish like the gravenche, a whitefish endemic to Lake Geneva, and the silver trout of New Hampshire had nowhere to run when human activities close in on their habitat. So, along with a few dozen other freshwater fish during the 20th Century, they went extinct. The Yangtze is filled with similarly troubled animals that are either endangered or possibly already gone. Animals like the Chinese alligator (*Alligator sinensis*), the Yangtze sturgeon (*Acipenser dabryanus*), the Yangtze soft-shell turtle (*Rafetus swinhoei*), and the Chinese paddlefish (*Psephurus gladius*).

So how has the finless porpoise hung on when the baiji couldn't? Well, aside from being smaller and thus less demanding for food, they seem to have adapted better to the rapidly-changing conditions. For example, teams from Wang's lab have found that they now cluster around ports. Using acoustic monitoring equipment, they tracked the movements of the creatures and found they spent a lot of time ducking in and out of bays, dodging boats.

The reason, ironically, is that these are the last places that haven't been overfished, since no respectable fisherman would fish in a port. It's also the last place you'd find stray nets that can kill a porpoise.

Ban fishing on the Yangtze or create protected lakes?

Wang says the lesson from recent research in PLOS ONE and Integrative Zoology is clear: ban fishing on the Yangtze. If the lack of food is killing these animals, fewer fishermen on the water will bring them, and possibly a few other species, back.

"Aquaculture in China produces almost 30 million tons of freshwater product. Commercial fishing in the Yangzi River only produces 100,000 tons," he says. "So economically it's not all that important at all."

Very roughly speaking, that's one ton per person working in the Yangtze fishery. While small compared to the million people displaced by the Three Gorges Dam, it's still a lot of people to put out of

work or relocate. It's not clear the government has any plans to heed this recommendation anytime soon.

So in recent years, China has pursed a different strategy. It's creating aquatic parks out of oxbow lakes – crescent-shaped lakes created when a river channel breaks across one of its wandering turns. Using five of these isolated bodies, they are hoping to create five finless porpoise populations to preserve enough of the species that someday, when conditions are better in the river they can breed a healthy population again.

So far, Wang says, they already have one preserve that's about 13 miles long and a mile wide. They have introduced a few captive animals and retrained them to catch wild fish. Meanwhile, they hope to open a second preserve in the near future.

"We can at least save the seeds of this species," he says. "And hopefully one day the Yangtze will come back as a natural river – as a river with life – and we can reintroduce animals back into the river."

The Chinese public has rallied around the finless porpoise in a similar way as it did with the baiji. But it's hard to convince people to sacrifice economic growth for the sake of a creature few people see in the wild. After the 2006 baiji survey, Pitman told a website called Whale Trackers, "Ten percent of the world's population lives in the Yangtze River Valley right now. They are all experiencing an economic boom and they traded off their dolphin for a little better lifestyle. And I think you'd be hard pressed to convince many people there that that was a bad trade."

That tradeoff continues to this day, the only difference is that scientists have learned from the first time around. And today, they hope the tools they are using will produce a better outcome.

Top Left: Finless porpoises play in tanks at the Freshwater Dolphin Research Center in Wuhan, China. Scientists say that the more we learn about their breeding and behavior, the better we will be able to conserve them before they disappear; Top Right: Trainers at the Freshwater Dolphin Research Center in Wuhan, China, train finless porpoises during feeding time. The animals aren't performers but the training helps them exercise and bond with their human counterparts; Bottom Left: Passengers offload from a ferry on the Yangtze River. Boat traffic is a concern for wild porpoises but the larger threat comes from starvation; Bottom Right: Finless porpoises play in tanks at the Freshwater Dolphin Research Center in Wuhan, China. (Credit: All photos by Dominic Bracco II).

"The next five years is a critical time observing this species. Otherwise if there is no big progress in the next five years, this species will just follow the steps of the baiji," Wang says.

http://news.mongabay.com/2014/1022-sri-vance-finless-porpoise.html#sthash.HAznw7ny.dpbs

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Biggest Walrus Gathering Recorded as Sea Ice Shrinks

More than 35,000 of the marine mammals have congregated in Alaska

by Linda Qiu

Oct. 2, 2014 — Scientists have photographed the largest gathering of Pacific walruses ever recorded, on a beach in northern Alaska, blaming climate change for the estimated 35,000 females and calves huddled beside the Chukchi Sea.

Federal biologists with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) photographed the gathering, known as a haul-out, north of the village of Point Lay over the weekend.

It's hardly the first big walrus gathering to be documented, a fact noted by climate change skeptics. But scientists say the size of the gatherings are growing as climate change melts Arctic sea ice, depriving walruses of their sunning platforms of choice.

"The walruses are hauling out on land in a spectacle that has become all too common in six of the last eight years as a consequence of climate-induced warming," the U.S. Geological Survey wrote on their website Wednesday.

"Summer sea ice is retreating far north of the shallow continental shelf waters of the Chukchi Sea in U.S. and Russian waters, a condition that did not occur a decade ago," the USGS website says. "To keep up with their normal resting periods between feeding bouts to the seafloor, walruses have simply hauled out onto shore."

As the ocean heats up due to global warming, Arctic sea ice has been locked in a downward spiral. Since the late 1970s, the ice has retreated by 12 percent per decade, worsening after 2007, according to NASA.

Walruses were first spotted coming ashore in large numbers in 2007. In 2009, an estimated 3,000 walruses were seen; the number rose to 30,000 in 2011 and went back down to 10,000 in 2013.

Scientists have seen large haul-outs on the Russian side of the Bering Strait for quite some time, says Anthony Fischbach, a wildlife biologist at the USGS in Anchorage. But since the first recordings of walrus gatherings in Alaska in the 1870s, groups of this size weren't observed until 2007, he said.

May 2014 represented the third lowest extent of sea ice during that month in the satellite record, according to the National Snow and Ice Data Center.

"Being in Alaska, climate change is very apparent," said Lori Polasek, a marine biologist at the Alaska SeaLife Center, a research and wildlife rehabilitation facility in Seward. "That's the reason why we have lost summer Arctic ice."

Following Bertha

Walrus gatherings are also a natural occurrence, Polasek said.

Walruses pull their bodies out of the water—or "haul out" – to rest or warm up on ice platforms or land. While it's not unusual for males to gather in large numbers on Alaska's shores, females typically prefer floating ice chunks as places to give birth, leaving calves on the ice when finding food.

Hauling out is partially convenience and partially walrus nature, said Polasek. The stretch of beach near Point Lay is close to Hanna Shoal reef, a prey-rich foraging ground.

The giant marine mammals are gregarious and tactile animals, swimming side by side in the water and sprawling all over each other on shore. And when it's time to haul out, walruses tend to play follow the leader.

"Until one brave soul is willing to haul, they're all looking around and wondering, 'Hey, did Bertha just haul out?' Wherever Bertha or that brave soul picks, within hours, they'll all begin to haul out to [that place]," Polasek said. "They just want to be with other walruses."

Polasek predicts the herd will remain at Point Lay for two to four weeks. They'll return to the waters once winter ice begins to form.

Can Walruses Adapt?

In general, haul-outs can be harmful to walrus populations, she said.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which tracks the status of species worldwide, says there's not enough information about walrus population trends to say whether the species—which has three subspecies, the Atlantic, Pacific, and Laptev walrus—is in decline.

However, "climate change is expected to have negative consequences for Walruses, and particularly severe consequences for the Pacific subspecies," according to the IUCN website.

For one, calves are particularly at risk of disease and from stampedes. Upon a disturbance, whether

that's a polar bear or a boat in the distance, walruses tend to rush to the water.

"The calves get trampled," Polasek said.

In 2009, about a tenth of the walruses that hauled out died. This year, at least 36 walrus carcasses have been spotted, according to NOAA. That track record does not bode well for the species.

"This shift to land of calf loss is large and population recovery is slow. If the ice continues to wane, they'll continue to come on land and you potentially have more stampedes. Then it'll be a pickle where [the population] can't recover," said Polasek.

Pacific walruses looking for places to rest in the absence of sea ice are coming onshore in record numbers on Alaska's northwest coast. Here, over a thousand walruses gather on the northwestern coast of Alaska on September 23, 2014. (Credit: Corey Accardo, NOAA/AP).

Polasek added it's unlikely that the marine mammals can adapt to hauling out in large droves.

Though there may be no way to prevent disturbances like polar bears and other predators, human communities can learn to adapt to the animal's growing presence on land, she said.

"The village of Point Lay… has laid out extremely concerted efforts to protect the herd," Polasek said. "They don't hunt in the herd. They direct vessel traffic away from the herd. They do everything they can to prevent human disturbances."

http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/10/141002-walruses-climate-change-science-global-warming-animals-alaska/

Coastal Wildlife Paradise Declared Biosphere Reserve in Argentina

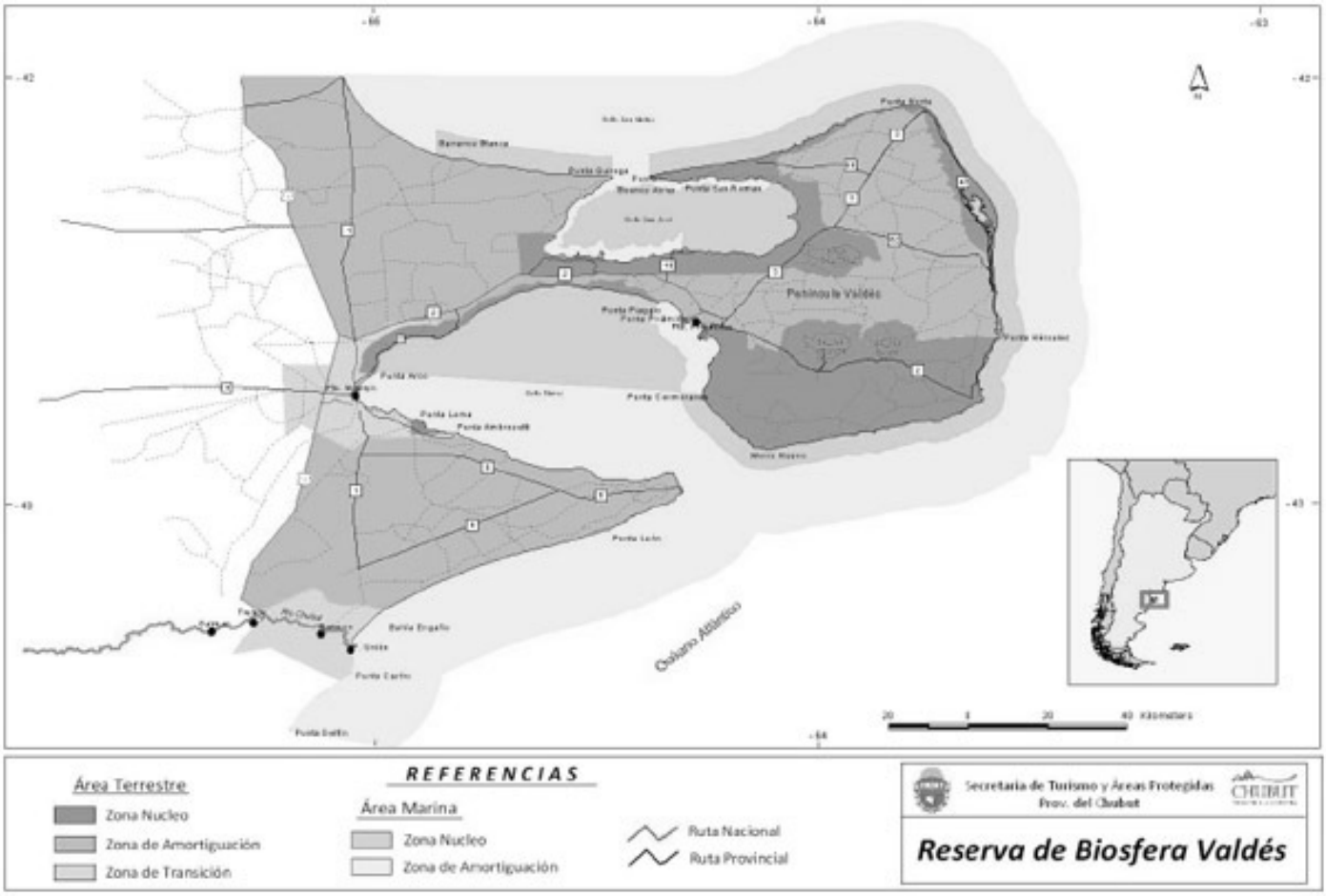
by Jeremy Hance

Jul. 15, 2014 — Conservationists are celebrating the announcement that UNESCO has dubbed Argentina's Península Valdés a biosphere reserve under the Man and Biosphere Program (MBA). A hatchet-shaped peninsula that juts out into the Southern Atlantic Ocean, the world's newest biosphere reserve is home to a hugely diverse collection of both terrestrial and marine wildlife.

"Southern right whales that swim within meters of shore, schools of dusky dolphins, huge colonies of Magellanic penguins, rookeries of South American sea lions that bustle with activity, orcas that beach themselves to capture pups and southern elephant seals that huddle in thousands on lonely sandy beaches," said Senior Conservation, William Conway, with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). "This is the wildlife that makes Península Valdés on the coast of Patagonia so special, one of the world's great natural wonders."

In fact, the peninsula houses the world's largest breeding colony of southern elephant seals (*Mirounga leonina*) in South America and is home to 4,000 southern right whales (*Eubalaena australis*), about one third of the total breeding population. On land, the reserve supports abundant populations of guanacos (*Lama guanicoe*), the rabbit-like Patagonian mara (*Dolichotis patagonum*), and Darwin's rhea (*Rhea pennata*), the latter two of which are listed as Near Threatened.

Its designation as a biosphere reserve means that the Península Valdés reserve becomes a part of a global network to test new sustainable management ideas in order to better harmonize environmental protection with human needs and economies. Moreover, the designation adds Punta Ninfas, just to the south of the peninsula, to the protected area. Home to southern elephant seals, South American sea lions (*Otaria flavescens*), imperial cormorants (*Phalacrocorax atriceps*), and Magellanic penguins (*Spheniscus magellanicus*) – considered Near Threatened – this point is currently imperiled by urbanization and a proliferation of off-road vehicles, according to the WCS.



Top: Map showing the reserve's various zones: core areas, buffer zones, transition areas. (Credit: map courtesy of WCS). Photos, clockwise from Top Left: South American seals (Credit: Reinhard Jahn, Mannheim/Creative Commons 2.0); Magellanic penguin colonies on the Península Valdés; Elephant seals lounging; Southern right whales are abundant off of Península Valdés (Credits: G. Harris/WCS).

says the Península Valdés has "greater concentrations of wildlife than any other area on the entire coast of Patagonia," and that the park's designation as a biosphere reserve "is the culmination of years of hard work by many great partners."

http://news.mongabay.com/2014/0715-hance-peninsula-valdes.html#sthash.o5jjqPNm.dpbs

SIGHTINGS

Sightings are compiled by Monterey Bay Whale Watch. For complete listing and updates see *www.gowhales.com/sighting.htm*

Date	#	Type of Animal(s)
10/31 am	31 2300 75	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins Risso's Dolphins
10/30 pm	33	Humpback Whales
10/30 am	38 1000 400	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins Risso's Dolphins
10/29 pm	19 400 75 4	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins Risso's Dolphins Harbor Porpoise
10/29 am	22 250 10	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins Risso's Dolphins
10/28 pm	24	Humpback Whales
10/28 am	43 400 200 8	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins Risso's Dolphins Dall's Porpoise
10/27 am	22 7	Humpback Whales Risso's Dolphins
10/26 pm	8	Humpback Whales (very active)
10/26 am	13 500 20	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins Risso's Dolphins
10/26 all day	30 1300 150	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins Risso's Dolphins
10/25 pm	27	Humpback Whales
10/25 am	16 30	Humpback Whales Risso's Dolphins
10/24 pm	15	Humpback Whales
10/24 am	18 350 160	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins Risso's Dolphins
10/23 pm	24 20	Humpback Whales Dall's Porpoise
10/23 am	29 500 75	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins Risso's Dolphins
10/22 pm	17	Humpback Whales
10/22 am	20 500 120	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins Risso's Dolphins
10/21 pm	17 150	Humpback Whales Risso's Dolphins
10/21 am	21 40 250	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins Risso's Dolphins
10/20 pm	6 5	Humpback Whales (one breached over 70 times) Risso's Dolphins
10/20 am	38 150 200	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins Risso's Dolphins
10/19 pm	14	Humpback Whales (foggy conditions)
10/19 am	32 200	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins
10/18 pm	30 200 150 5	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins Risso's Dolphins Harbor Porpoise
10/18 am	42 200 300 5	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins Risso's Dolphins Bottlenose Dolphins
10/17 pm	15 6 500	Humpback Whales Killer Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins
10/17 am	30 2	Humpback Whales Killer Whales
10/16 am	35 150	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins
10/15 pm	25 300	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins
10/15 am	26 300	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins
10/14 am	16 200 100	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins Risso's Dolphins
10/13 pm	6	Humpback Whales (active)
10/13 am	18 1000 200 20	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins Risso's Dolphins Harbor Porpoise
10/12 pm	26 500 250	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins Risso's Dolphins
10/12 am	48 450 6	Humpback Whales Risso's Dolphins Bottlenose Dolphins
10/11 pm	20	Humpback Whales
10/11 am	40 100 30	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins Risso's Dolphins

10/10 pm	45	Humpback Whales
10/10 am	29 1 10	Humpback Whales Minke Whale Risso's Dolphins
10/9 pm	2 1	Humpback Whales (active!) Tufted Puffin (rare)
10/9 am	53 60	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins
10/8 pm	52	Humpback Whales
10/8 am	50 4 30	Humpback Whales Killer Whales Risso's Dolphins
10/7 pm	70	Humpback Whales
10/7 am	28 500 30	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins Risso's Dolphins
10/6 pm	28 300 30	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins Risso's Dolphins
10/6 am	47 300	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins
10/5 pm	23 15	Humpback Whales Risso's Dolphins
10/5 am	46	Humpback Whales

10/4 pm	16	Humpback Whales
10/4 am	42	Humpback Whales
10/3 pm	10 300 5	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins Dall's Porpoise
10/3 am	15 1 150 12	Humpback Whales Minke Whale Long-beaked Common Dolphins Harbor Porpoise
10/2 pm	17 30	Humpback Whales Risso's Dolphins
10/2 am	43 30 300	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins Risso's Dolphins
10/1 pm	18 250	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins
10/1 am	27 500 130 5	Humpback Whales Long-beaked Common Dolphins Risso's Dolphins Harbor Porpoise

From top left: Lunge feeding Humpback Whales on Oct. 4; Great Egret on Oct. 17; Transient Killer Whale family group on Oct. 17 (Credits Daniel Bianchetta and Katlyn Taylor).

American Cetacean Society
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