



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary
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44th SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL
May 20, 2015 9:30 am-3:00 pm
Holiday Inn, Rockland MA
MINUTES of MEETING

Present:

Bill Adler	Primary:	Fixed Gear Commercial Fishing
Jennifer Anderson	Federal:	NOAA Fisheries GARFO
Michelle Bachman	Federal:	New England Fisheries Management Council
Priscilla Brooks	Primary:	Conservation
LTCDR Ian Callander	Federal:	First US Coast Guard District
Todd Callaghan	State:	Coastal Zone Management
Tracey Dalton	Primary:	Research
Rich Delaney	Primary:	Education (Chair)
LT Phil Desroches	Federal:	Mass Environmental Police
John Galluzzo	Alternate:	Maritime Heritage
Jonathan Grant	Alternate:	At Large
Christine Guinee	Primary:	Youth (Non-Voting)
Laura Howes	Alternate:	Whale Watching
Martin Klein	Alternate:	Maritime Heritage
Whit Manter	Primary:	At Large
Chris McGuire	Alternate:	Conservation
Kevin Nicolai	Alternate:	Youth (Non-Voting)
Wayne Petersen	Alternate:	Conservation
Michael Pierdinock	Primary:	Recreational Fishing
Kevin Powers	Alternate:	At Large
Charlie Rasak	Primary:	Business Industry

SBNMS Staff:

Craig MacDonald	Elizabeth Stokes
Ben Cowie-Haskell	Nathalie Ward

I. Welcome, Review of Agenda and Approval of 43rd SAC Minutes (R. Delaney)

The Agenda was reviewed and approved. The original Draft 43rd SAC Minutes were revised in *Section IV.ii., "Call to Action" Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Federal Advisory Committee (FAC)*, due to questions regarding the language and legal interpretation in the "Comments" section (pp 4-8). As a result, new language was incorporated in this section.

Comments:

Bill Adler: On page 6, regarding this particular issue. Question to sanctuary Superintendent (quoting from Craig MacDonald's comment on page 6): "There are instances where the Council has said to the sanctuary that they can establish their own regulations to manage fishing...". How

did they do that since the designation document says that how you do that is right. Can you elaborate what you mean by that?

Craig MacDonald: Not entirely sure what the process was. Believe they had a proposal and sent it to the respective councils, asking the council to enact regulations and the council said they would do it on our behalf. But without diving into more details, I believe this should suffice.

Following comments, the Revised 43rd Draft Minutes were approved and accepted.

II. SAC Business

i. Announcing New SAC Members and New Recruitments (R. Delaney):

New Members:

- John Galluzzo from Maritime Heritage Alternate to Primary
- Martin Klein (Maritime Heritage Alternate) - Klein Associates

Former Members whose seats have been renewed for another 3-year term:

- Jonathan Grant - At Large Alternate
- Chris McGuire - Conservation Alternate
- Wayne Petersen - Conservation Alternate

December 31, 2014 Recruitment appointed by Dan Basta on 2 March 2015:

New Member:

- Mason Weinrich, Research Primary, Center for Coastal Studies

June 30, 2015 Recruitment (FRN published May 15th):

Vacant seats:

- Recreational Fishing Alternate
- Mobile Gear Commercial Fishing Alternate

Incumbents whose seats are up for renewal:

- Tim Moll - Business and Industry Primary
- Heather Knowles - Diving Primary
- Chad Smith - Diving Alternate
- Susan Farady - Education Primary
- Rich Delaney - Education Primary
- Bill Adler - Fixed Gear Commercial Fishing Primary
- David Casoni - Fixed Gear Alternate
- Irit Altman - Research Alternate
- Michael Moore - Research Alternate (will not reapply)
- Steve Milliken - Whale Watch Primary
- George Manter (At-Large Primary) (will resign due to relocation)

Since 2010, SAC terms can be up to three consecutive 3-year terms. Please pass on to constituents and interested parties that it is always great to have new blood on the SAC. If you know of anyone who is interested, Nathalie Ward would be happy to meet with him or her individually.

- ii. The next SAC meetings will be held in October 2015, January 2016, and May 2016.
- iii. Programmatic Updates (R. Delaney)

Programmatic Updates are highlights from each sanctuary program of what staff has accomplished during the past fall/winter timeframe. They contain a lot of great and important information. They are also extensive, impressive and describe nicely the scope and breadth of what goes on at the sanctuary. Rich Delaney encouraged SAC to share the programmatic updates with their constituents.

III. Discussion Topics

- i. Council "Round Robin" (R. Delaney)

SAC members introduced themselves and provided brief updates on issues within their respective organizations.

- ii. Dedicated Habitat Research Area (DHRA) Outcome (C. MacDonald)

Craig MacDonald presented graphics of the outcome and decisions made by the NEFMC relative to the DHRA and the Reference Area. There were a lot of moving parts to this process for a very long time. The sanctuary is basically looking at a "status quo" situation from the outcome relative to its interests with the Gulf of Maine Habitat Closure Area overlapping the sanctuary. He also reported about the social media efforts that were initiated during the DHRA public comment period using Facebook and Twitter. In that vein, ONMS is now pushing its sanctuaries to use social media regularly as a public outreach tool, and the DHRA public comment period was the kick-off for launching the sanctuary's social media campaign.

Comments:

Chris McGuire: To clarify, this Council recommendation has yet to be promulgated in regulations and that can take some amount of time. There have been no management or regulatory changes. This has not been voted through as a final action yet and may take many months.

Michelle Bachman added additional explanations regarding the DHRA outcome. *(For more information, please refer to Michelle Bachman's NEFMC report below, paragraph IX. Agency/Governmental Reports, i. New England Fishery Management Council.)*

Additional comments regarding the use of social media:

Rich Delaney: Strategy is to use everything you can to reach the broadest base of people.

Chris McGuire: Suggested following SAC members who have accounts on Twitter.

Michael Pierdinock: It's a great marketing tool to get the word out. Has 5000 followers on his Facebook page for his charter boat business, but tries not to put controversial issues on his account because he would have a full time job responding to tweets, etc. As you throw all of these things out there, as a professional organization and a sanctuary, someone is going to have to respond to them or not respond at all. Craig [sanctuary Superintendent] indicated how this would have helped with the DHRA process. Tweeting and Facebook turn into a popularity contest. If you're making a decision based upon that, concerning the DHRA or any other issues, thinks it's dangerous. We want decisions based on sound science -- a bit confused that you're looking at this

to assess how many people agreed or disagreed. I would be concerned of the use of that in the future concerning a specific topic. You want to get the word out and that's the mechanism to do it. It can be misused but it is good for promotional purposes and to get the word out.

Craig MacDonald: Use it to brand the sanctuary and raise visibility. The DHRA was used as the kickoff topic. Question wasn't so much how well did it work relative to DHRA discussion. This is a larger discussion as we move forward with the requirement to deal with tweets and Facebook weekly. The sanctuary staff needs to deal with new social media for sanctuary outreach. How about using it to brand the sanctuary? Looking for suggestions from SAC.

Priscilla Brooks: This is a great effort obviously and is just scratching the surface. More and more, social media is becoming critical as a way to communicate with the public and to build a constituency. A lot of what SBNMS tries to do is build a constituency for the sanctuary and its resources. To build a following and educate people about a resource that many people don't know is only 30 miles off the coast of Boston is fantastic. That support and that awareness can play in a lot of different arenas, not just in getting people out to enjoy the sanctuary and pass on the word about the sanctuary, but also in supporting good management of the sanctuary and management of its resources. Disagrees with Michael a little bit to the extent that the sanctuary wants to build support for DHRA and had a public that was informed about it and that they were communicating via social media - thinks that's fantastic. If the public wants to chime in on a management process, that's the public's right to do that.

Christine Guinee: A way to build followers is to get a discussion going. Put a post on a topic that has a discussion behind it to get people talking about it - it's a domino effect. Use Twitter to establish yourself. Follow other established accounts that relate to SBNMS or marine issues, then it's retweeted to a larger audience. Facebook definitely is a generation jump. Youth uses Instagram rather than Facebook or Twitter. Snapchat is another social media platform that is used by youth.

Michael Pierdinock: DHRA is a perfect example. We were at odds concerning the science utilized as a basis to select that area. Appreciates the fact that there is a public participation process through the NEFMC basically where the people spoke, they were heard, and they voted against the reference area. If the sanctuary wants to go out and publicize and promote any type of issues that's their right to do so. When that statement is made, I take exception to the fact that what was published concerning the DHRA and the false use of VTRs to select how many boats were in that area. We were adamantly against it from the beginning and NOAA agreed with that. Different groups within NOAA as well as NEFMC and the rest voted against it. That's why I'm concerned about the misuse of it. Getting back to looking at a popularity contest based on Facebook, it's not based on sound science and I'm happy that we do have a process through NEFMC in order to have input and decisions made based on sound science.

Craig MacDonald: Regarding tweets and Facebook, this effort simply announced the public comment period. We did not announce what you should do or say. Anyone who wanted to say anything for or against it, it was entirely up to them. This was in many ways a "PSA". For folks who are interested in the sanctuary, this was to let them know there was a process that NEFMC was running and it's an open comment process. I don't see how anyone can object to that. The quality of science was disputed. The former director of NEFSC disagreed that the science was flawed -- he made that quite clear. The sanctuary program is part of NOAA. We feel that the use of VTR data and the science that was involved in the discussion of the DHRA was valid. We made that clear in several representations to the NEFMC. It came down to a matter of opinion. It had nothing to do with the veracity of the science.

Michael Pierdinock: For the record, I agree to disagree and ultimately the NEFMC voted unanimously against the creation of those reference areas.

Craig MacDonald: It wasn't unanimous. There were 2 votes for it.

Michael Pierdinock: Out of 15 I believe.

Rich Delaney: The DHRA process was a long one. We still have a couple of steps to go before it's final. Hopefully, the decisions were sound and based on good science. The sanctuary will continue to be very interested in those outcomes and the research or however it's configured. It was important that the sanctuary and NEFMC worked together. But for a long time they were in two different orbits. This was a learning process for both entities. While it didn't come out perfectly in anyone's estimation, it still was a good effort to work together as a team within NOAA and with partners around the table. We will continue to pay attention to this -- take the lessons learned and move forward. One of those is how to advertise the sanctuary. That's why the social media discussion is juxtaposed with this.

Priscilla Brooks: Asked sanctuary staff to send tweets and Facebook notices to SAC members so that they can amplify what the sanctuary is doing. Make it easy for SAC.

IV. Status Review of Humpback Whale Listing (A. Rosner, NMSF, and S. Young, Humane Society of Massachusetts)

i. Proposed Revision of the Humpback Whale Listing Under ESA (A. Rosner)

On April 20, NOAA Fisheries proposed to reclassify the humpback whale into 14 distinct population segments under the Endangered Species Act, providing a more tailored conservation approach for U.S. fisheries managers. Protection and restoration efforts over the past 40 years have led to an increase in numbers and growth rates for humpback whales in many areas.

The humpback whale is currently listed as endangered throughout its range. The proposed rule finds that ten of those 14 populations do not warrant ESA listing.

While commercial whaling severely depleted humpback whale numbers, population rebounds in many areas result in today's larger numbers, with steady rates of population growth since the United States first listed the animal as endangered in 1970.

Also under the proposal, two of the other four populations would be listed as endangered and the remaining two would be listed as threatened. If the proposal is finalized, the humpback whale populations that would no longer be listed under the ESA would remain protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

NOAA Fisheries initiated an extensive review of the status of humpback whales in 2010, the results of which support separating the species into distinct population segments. The review also finds that many of the populations are not in danger of extinction (endangered) or likely to become so in the foreseeable future (threatened).

The two populations proposed as threatened – the Central America and the Western North Pacific – at times enter U.S. waters. Two other populations that do not enter U.S. waters – in the Arabian Sea and off Cape Verde Islands/Northwest Africa – would remain listed as endangered.

Public comments will be accepted through July 20, 2015. During this time, NOAA Fisheries welcomes public comments and any new information to ensure that our final determination is based on the best available scientific and commercial information. You may submit comments, information, or data on this document, identified by the code NOAA-NMFS-2015-0035, by any of the following methods:

Electronic Submissions: Submit all electronic comments via the Federal Rulemaking Portal. Go to <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2015-0035>, click the “Comment Now!” icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.

Mail: Submit written comments to Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Public Hearing: June 3, 2015 Plymouth Public Library. 6-8:30PM

ii. Summary of Presentation: Whither Humpback Whales (S. Young)

In April 2015, NMFS proposed to de-list humpback whales globally, define 14 “Distinct Population Segments” (DPS) and re-list two of them (off Cape Verde and in the Arabian Sea) as “endangered” and two of them (off Central America and a large area called Western Pacific) as “threatened;” the other 10 would remain unlisted. Their expert Biological Review Team (BRT), on which NMFS largely relied for recommendations, met in 2010 and 2011 to review literature in a 2011 report by NMFS. They recommended 15 DPS—including two stocks in the Western Pacific though NMFS ultimately designated a single Western Pacific DPS. These 14 DPSs were defined based on presumably discrete breeding stocks as that term is defined in the ESA. The public comment period on the status review closes July 20, 2015.

With regard to humpback whales in the Western North Atlantic, NMFS declared a single DPS in the West Indies and concluded that humpbacks that feed in Gulf of Maine, Eastern Canada, West Greenland and about half of the humpbacks feeding in Iceland breed here. NMFS admits that the remaining humpbacks in Iceland and those in Scandinavia were presumed to breed off Cape Verde and a diffuse/undefined area off western Africa, though sightings are few and genetic studies were said to be minimal.

Questions arise from the status review and its consideration of humpbacks in the North Atlantic. It is clear that Cape Verde is a breeding area and some humpbacks from the Eastern side breed there but not all of them. NMFS estimated approximately 12,000 humpbacks in the West Indies DPS (derived from an estimate 902 from the Gulf of Maine, 2,080 from Eastern Canada, 3,272 from Greenland and *half* of the 11,572 from Iceland). Regional studies called YONAH and MONAH in the Caribbean (MONAH ended in 2005) concluded there were approximately 12,000 humpbacks seasonally present, so these two estimates appear to coincide. A study by Peter Stevick et al. in 2003 forms the basis for most of the conclusions about this breeding stock. Since that time, Stevick et al. has published an analysis that questioned his own earlier conclusion. His 2015 work examined behavioral differences, arrival timing and overlap in sighting histories between humpbacks seen in the Southeastern Caribbean and those seen off the Dominican Republic where most of the YONAH/MONAH studies were focused. The authors now conclude that those in the Southeastern Caribbean are “not a subset of those that winter in the Dominican Republic...” and that “...it is clear that some part of this [southeast Caribbean] breeding area represents a previously un-described and behaviorally distinct population segment within the North Atlantic. Given this, the widely-held idea that there is a single West Indies humpback whale

breeding population is in need of reconsideration.”¹ This information was not included in the status review.

There are also questions about recovery in Western Atlantic humpbacks. A 2013 study modelled the likely pre-whaling population and projected a long-term population of 112,000, concluding that discrepancies in genetics, catch records and the failure of prior population models indicate the need for “continued caution about changing the conservation status of this population.”² The original NMFS recovery plan called for a doubling of the population in 20 years, yielding a growth rate of 3.5% per year necessary before considering a change in listing status but the current NMFS status review documents a growth rate of less than that, at 3.1% per year.

There are management implications to off-listing humpbacks. For those in our area, it means that there would be an increase in the Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level set under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). PBR is the maximum level of “removal” that the population can tolerate without risking decline. The current PBR is 2.6 per year, but if they are no longer ESA-listed, the formula used to calculate PBR would change and result in a PBR that would likely be between 13.4 and 26, depending on the degree of conservatism that NMFS uses in calculating the PBR. Fisheries are required to reduce mortality to be low PBR. Current fishery-related mortality is 7.2 per year, which is above the current PBR but would likely be below and new PBR and thus would no longer be a priority under the MMPA. This, in turn would mean that funding for gear research and for disentanglement response and other scientific studies could be curtailed just as these funds are constrained for other non-listed species such as minke whales. It also means a lower priority is given to considering impacts from offshore energy development, military activities and a reduced ability to argue against whaling for humpbacks in non-US waters. The change in how we list or do not list trans-boundary species may also set a precedent for listing or de-listing other species.

V. Program Updates

i. Maritime Heritage (C. MacDonald)

Matthew Lawrence and Deborah Marx, staff Maritime Heritage Archaeologists, and John Galluzzo have just completed a book on the shipwrecks in the sanctuary. This book has been in the works for almost 2 years and has finally come to fruition. The book should be published and available in June or July.

ii. Facilities (B. Haskell)

Ben Haskell gave an update on facilities and vessels. The severe winter set records and caused damage to the pier and research vessel Auk. The winter was the snowiest on record with 108.6 inches recorded at Logan airport. At the NERACOOS buoy A in the northwest corner of SBNMS, there were 33 foot waves recorded during the late January blizzard. During the same blizzard, high tide in Scituate Harbor reached 14.46 feet; flood stage is 12 feet. A large gangway on the sanctuary's pier broke at the hinge and fell onto the floating dock below. The gangway and floating dock were removed and repaired. Fortunately, there was no damage or flooding to the boathouse

¹ Stevick, Bouveret, Gandilhon, Rinaldi C., Rinaldi, R., Broms, Carlson, Kennedy, Ward and Wenzel 2015. “Humpback whales in the southeast Caribbean are behaviorally distinct from those off the Dominican Republic.” Paper SC/63a/AWMP2 presented to the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission, San Diego, California, USA. May 2015

² Ruegg, Rosenbaum, Anderson, Engel, Rothschild, Baker and Palumbi. 2013. “Long-term population size of the North Atlantic humpback whale within the context of worldwide population structure” *Conserv. Genet.* (2013) 14:103–114.

during these intense winter storms. However, the R/V Auk was at its winter berth in Plymouth when its starboard aft quarter was damaged during the extreme high tide and high waves caused by the January blizzard. The damaged sections of the hull were cut out and replaced. The R/V Auk is now operational and back in Scituate.

Ben gave an update on the planned waterfront improvements to the Scituate campus. The grassy lot that NOAA purchased in 2011 and has been using as a makeshift parking lot will be improved this fall and turned into a real parking lot with space for 15 vehicles. The surface will be crushed stone and a split rail fence will define the border of the lot. The renovation of the boathouse into a fully functioning Marine Operations Center will begin this fall with an Environmental Assessment which will analyze various alternatives for the renovation that accommodate flood plain issues and sea level rise. The actual renovations will begin in FY16 if funding is allocated to the project.

iii. Sanctuary Day (C. MacDonald)

This is an extension of Office of National Marine Sanctuaries' Campaign of Engagement and is a really important event for SBNMS staff. It is a new national campaign to promote awareness of sustainable tourism and recreational opportunities in the sanctuaries. It is being conducted on the weekend of June 27-28 by all of the national marine sanctuaries across the system. The campaign will invite visitors to the sanctuaries to share their experiences through social media. So social media will play a very important role in this sanctuary event. There is potential for participating partners to get into the sanctuary on and off the water. Tourism offices, whale watch companies will be involved, party and charter fishing boat operators will be invited, as well as diving charters, birdwatching clubs, aquariums, museums and nature centers among others. This is an opportunity for everyone who goes out to the sanctuary to make a big splash via social media. There will be a free whale watch cruise out of Plymouth with an e-invite sent to all sanctuary advisory council members. There will a bonus event of the christening of the rehabbed and renamed Boston Harbor Cruises whale watch boat "Sanctuary" on June 26. More information about all of the events that will take place will be posted to the sanctuary website as well.

VI. Youth Seat – How Can the Sanctuary Reach Out to Youth? (C. Guinee and K. Nicolai)

"Youth Involvement in the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary" was aimed at presenting the current level of engagement among young people and the best strategies for getting more young people involved with the SBNMS. After presenting their findings from an informal survey, showing that less than 20% of young people were aware of the SBNMS, and of those about 25% could describe the sanctuary, Christine and Kevin described ways that the Sanctuary could reach out to young people. Some of those methods included reaching out to high school guidance departments and using social media effectively; target and establish the sanctuary in elementary and middle schools; plant the seed early and use social media to get kids more involved. Instagram is the most common followed by twitter. Videos can also be posted on Instagram, as they are very popular.

VII. Working Luncheon – “Ecology of Seafloor Communities at SBNMS: Recent Research and Implications for Conservation” (P. Auster)

A review of multiple studies of seafloor ecology in SBNMS included results of the Seafloor Habitat Recovery Monitoring Program that focused on epifaunal invertebrate communities, patterns of ambush fish predators across the seafloor landscape in relation to bottleneck habitats for Atlantic cod, discoveries of rare invertebrate species, and climate change effects on cusk as a boulder reef associated species. Conservation implications of these results were identified. Problems of

monitoring status and trends of species in non-trawlable habitat and those that are cryptic were also discussed.

VIII. ONMS Campaign of Engagement (C. MacDonald)

i. Update: Letter on "Call for Action" Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) Federal Advisory Committee by Councils Joint Action (C. MacDonald)

Craig MacDonald provided an update on the "Call to Action" MPA letter that SAC members discussed extensively at the last (43rd) SAC meeting in October 2014. Following this discussion, SAC members voted to have the SAC Chair sign the letter on its behalf. At that time, there was some question about where the letter was being sent once all parties signed it. Craig reports that as of December 2014, the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee released a final statement on the "Call to Action". So this letter was met with universal support from 16 major organizations that deal with MPAs within NOAA and DOI. Subsequently, a short statement with a link to the document was posted on the ONMS website. The news release was available on the same day as a constituent newsletter was distributed by ONMS to a list serve highlighting the "Call to Action" and the intent of the groups. The MPA Center sent the letter to the heads of NOAA and DOI, and it was also listed on their websites as an MPA work product for 2014. Flowing from this letter, there are two actions underway by ONMS and the MPA Center. The first is "Get into your Sanctuary Day" which was discussed earlier. This is the first ONMS action to begin implementing the intent of this letter. The MPA Center also has sent a recreational use survey around to all the sanctuary superintendents, which has been completed, as to what other recreational activities take place within the various sanctuaries. The MPA Center is now circulating this survey throughout the DOI parks and refuge systems across the U.S. The feedback from the recreational use surveys will be helpful to identify demographics, uses, and to see how all of this coalesces so that a larger strategy by DOI, ONMS, and the MPA Center can be developed. So this "Call to Action" is getting a tremendous amount of play and the SBNMS SAC was part of a very big process that is well underway.

ii. Update: Subcommittee on Business and Tourism (C. Rasak, C. MacDonald, J. Galluzzo)

Charlie Rasak met with the Ad Committee of the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA). The MIIA Ad Committee has approved the concept and idea of tying in the subcommittee's ad campaign with MIIA's advertising to create awareness and promote the sanctuary. This collaboration will benefit both SBNMS and exhibits goodwill on behalf of MIIA by showcasing SBNMS in its ad campaigns. Subcommittee members are scheduled to meet with the MIIA Board sometime in late fall. In the interim, more ideas and thoughts need to be pulled together to present to the Board at that time.

Craig MacDonald reported that he and John Galluzzo put together a marketing concept on how to proceed to make SBNMS a tourist destination rather than just a "place" to visit. John has contacted the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism in this regard. So the groundwork has been done to prepare for subsequent meetings in June. ONMS has a business advisory council made of top executives from across the country - one of the executives is the Director of Trip Advisor who happens to live locally. She was kind enough to review the sanctuary's marketing concept and said it was fine. She has offered to join Craig MacDonald in meetings with the Mass Office of Travel and Tourism if her schedule permits. These are small steps, but the campaign has lift-off.

John Galluzzo reported that the Subcommittee of Business and Tourism is looking at different events to get the SBNMS name out there. One recent attempt was reaching out to the Plymouth

Country Convention and Visitors Bureau and "Destination Plymouth". These groups recently held a "front line fam" program. A "fam" is a familiarization program. These two groups held a single day event for Plymouth area hospitality industry employees at which community groups were asked to give 5-minute presentations on their work and destinations. Armed with this information, the employees are prepared to educate hotel and restaurant patrons about tourism hotspots and destinations in their area (for example, when visitors come to Plymouth, they should know that SBNMS is the whale watch hotspot in New England or that Myles Standish State Forest offers camping). John tried to get SBNMS on that list, but missed the deadline by one day. But this is the type of event that the subcommittee is trying to tie into.

Maritime Heritage member John Galluzzo reported on his collaboration with SBNMS maritime archaeologists Matthew Lawrence and Deborah Marx on the recently published book by The History Press on Stellwagen Bank Sanctuary shipwrecks. The authors also worked closely with SAC diving member Heather Knowles who provided underwater imagery for many of the shipwrecks. Summary of the book is provided below:

SHIPWRECKS OF STELLWAGEN BANK: DISASTER IN NEW ENGLAND'S NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

Beneath the churning surface of Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary rest the bones of shipwrecks and sailors alike. Massachusetts's ports connected its citizens to the world, and the number of merchant and fishing vessels grew alongside the nation's development. Hundreds of ships sank on the trade routes and fishing grounds between Cape Cod and Cape Ann. Their stories are waiting to be uncovered from the ill-fated steamship *Portland* to collided schooners *Frank A. Palmer* and *Louise B. Cray* and the burned dragger *Joffre*. Join historian John Galluzzo and maritime archaeologists Matthew Lawrence and Deborah Marx as they dive in to investigate the sunken vessels and captivating history of New England's only national marine sanctuary.

The book's forward was written by NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries Maritime Heritage Program Director James Delgado and the book's proceeds go to the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation to support Stellwagen Bank sanctuary's maritime heritage conservation and outreach efforts. For more information, please contact Matthew Lawrence at SBNMS. If you would like to purchase a copy please visit the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation website at: http://store.nmsfocean.org/product_p/stellwagenbook.htm

IX. Agency/Governmental Reports

i. New England Fishery Management Council (M. Bachman)

The Council last met on April 21-23 in Mystic, CT. Major decisions included selecting preferred management alternatives for Amendment 18 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan, and selecting final preferred management alternatives for Omnibus Essential Fish Habitat Amendment 2. The Council also worked on management measures for Framework 9 to the Monkfish plan, and discussed ecosystem based fishery management. The next Council meeting, scheduled for June 16-18 in Newport, RI, will include final action on remaining habitat items and the monkfish framework adjustment, as well as discussion of ongoing herring, scallop, and groundfish actions.

As noted under the 10 a.m. Discussion Topics agenda item, the Council did approve the Stellwagen Dedicated Habitat Research Area as part of the habitat action, with a three year sunset provision but without a reference area closed to recreational fishing. Also in the western Gulf of Maine, the Council plans to maintain the current Western Gulf of Maine Habitat Closure Area, as

well as the Western Gulf of Maine [Groundfish] Closure Area. The groundfish closure will have a modified boundary on its eastern side, but its area of overlap with the Sanctuary, as well as the gear restrictions within the area, will not change. Relative to NE Multispecies Amendment 18, the Council discussed the possibility of inshore and offshore management areas in the Gulf of Maine, but did not identify the designation of inshore vs. offshore management as a preferred approach. Amendment 18 also includes measure related to accumulation limits, a redfish exemption area, and other items. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Amendment 18 will be available soon, and will outline all of the Council's preferred alternatives as well as the impacts of all alternatives. Public hearings on Amendment 18 will be conducted this summer. Current ecosystem-based management activities include development of a control rule to account for the role of Atlantic herring as a forage species.

ii. Coastal Zone Management (T. Callaghan)

Todd Callaghan presented a summary of the 2015 MA Ocean Plan (an update to the 2009 ocean plan), including changes to the North Atlantic right whale, humpback whale, and fin whale protected areas. Each of these areas increased significantly in area due to the inclusion of the most recently available sightings data. He also presented on two new aspects of the 2015 ocean plan, specifically the "Preliminary areas for offshore wind transmission cable corridors" and "Potential sand resources" maps.

iii. GARFO (J. Anderson)

Right Whales in Cape Cod Bay

Over the past two weeks, there have been around 100 right whales sighted in Cape Cod Bay, including several mother-calf pairs. On May 4, we issued a media release to inform boaters of the presence of right whales and remind them of the 10 knot rule and 500 yard approach restriction. We did receive one report of a potential recreational vessel strike which was reported by the vessel owner. OLE is in the process of investigating the incident. We also received a report of a right whale with a fresh strike wound that has damaged or caused swelling across one of the animal's blow holes. It is not clear if this is the same animal from the reported strike, or a separate incident.

Belugas in Narragansett Bay

Last week three beluga sightings were confirmed in Narragansett Bay. Biopsy samples were collected by a team from NOAA Fisheries and Mystic Aquarium's Research and Animal Rescue teams. Robert Michaud, scientific director of the Group for Research and Education on Marine Mammals and coordinator of the Quebec Marine Mammal Emergency Response Network, was able to photo-identify one of the beluga whales as belonging to the threatened St. Lawrence population. This whale was last sighted in 2013. While unconfirmed, it is believed that the others are from the same population. The St. Lawrence belugas have been in a slow population decline for the past decade and were believed to number only around 900 animals in 2012, down from more than 10,000 in the late 1800s. This is the first time a group of three whales has been spotted together in regional waters. The whales are thought to have followed the cold waters of the Labrador Current down along the coast. NOAA Fisheries is continuing to monitor the animals.

Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan Updates

On March 19, we proposed additional changes to the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan based on recommendations made by the Team. The proposed rule included exempting state waters in NH, RI, portions of MA, and around several Maine islands from the minimum trap per trawl requirements to allow single trap/pots. The proposed rule also included additional gear marking for the newly exempted areas, and established two new gear marking areas: Jeffreys

Ledge and Jordan Basin. The comment period closed on April 20th and we are continuing the rulemaking process. Other trap/pot and gear marking requirements implemented by a final rule published in June 2014 will go into effect on June 1.

Right Whale Critical Habitat

On February 20th, NMFS proposed to replace and expand right whale critical habitat in two new areas. These areas include approximately 29,945 nm of marine habitat in the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank region and off the Southeast U.S. coast.

iv. Whale SENSE (A. Rosner)

The program was launched in Alaska in April, with 5 companies participating. Discussions are still taking place in California, but we are planning to launch a pilot program there this summer. In the Atlantic, 6 Whale SENSE participants met with NOAA Fisheries Regional Administrator, John Bullard in April. Discussions included addressing industry concerns and improvements for the Whale SENSE program. Newburyport Whale Watch is joining this year along with an additional south shore company. Atlantic will have 13 companies participating in the program, about 40% of the total industry.

We will be presenting an overview of the program at the National Marine Educators Association Conference in July, and have submitted a poster abstract to the Biennial Conference for the Society for Marine Mammalogy scheduled for December.

X. New Business

John Galluzzo is partnering with Anne-Marie Runfola, SBNMS Volunteer Coordinator, on several outreach programs and events. One of the great things about this collaboration is that it showcases how well a non-profit organization and government agency can work together.

John Galluzzo received a \$20K grant to build surface ocean drifters with Jim Manning at WHOI. Three are ready to be deployed in SBNMS with Plymouth South Middle School students who built two of them and a student from a student from Hull HS who built another one. There are seven more to go out on the water in the summer and fall.

XI. Public Comment

Barry Haas, member of the public: Mr. Haas has more than a fleeting interest in oceans and technology. He is a long-term fisherman, lived on the ocean, and used to be an underwater photographer. This is his first SAC meeting and he looks forward to the opportunity of participating in more in the future. With regard to outreach, he agrees with most of the comments made regarding the use of social media, particularly Michael Pierdinock's comment about being non-confrontational. Recently he attended a social media conference and one of the take-aways was to identify your constituency, select your social media outreach tools very carefully, then maintain them very aggressively, and keep the content fresh. He thinks social media is certainly a good vehicle for spreading the word.

XII. Adjourn: 2:30 pm.