



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary
175 Edward Foster Road
Scituate, Massachusetts 02066
Tel: 781.545.8026 Fax: 781.545.8036

41st SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL
12 March 2014 9:30 am-2:30 pm
The Holiday Inn, Rockland MA
MINUTES of MEETING

Present:

Bill Adler	Primary:	Fixed Gear Commercial Fishing
Irit Altman	Alternate:	Research
Jennifer Anderson	Federal:	National Marine Fisheries Service
Michelle Bachman	Federal:	New England Fisheries Management Council
Priscilla Brooks	Primary:	Conservation
Todd Callaghan	State:	MA Coastal Zone Management
Alyssa Catalano	Alternate:	Education
Tracey Dalton	Primary:	Research
CPT Peter DeCola	Federal:	First US Coast Guard District
Rich Delaney	Primary:	Education (Chair)
Susan Farady	Primary:	Education
Christine Guinee	Primary:	Youth (Non-Voting)
SGT Tony Khabir	Federal:	Mass Environmental Police
Heather Knowles	Primary:	Diving (Vice Chair)
John Galluzzo	Alternate:	Maritime Heritage
Jonathan Grant	Alternate:	At Large
Whit Manter	Primary:	At-Large
Bob McCabe	Alternate:	Marine Transportation
Chris McGuire	Alternate:	Conservation
Michael Moore	Alternate:	Research
Rick Murray	Primary:	Research
Kevin Nicolai	Alternate:	Youth (Non-Voting)
Wayne Petersen	Alternate:	Conservation
Michael Pierdinock	Primary:	Recreational Fishing
Kevin Powers	Alternate:	At Large
Robert Rocha	Alternate:	Education

SBNMS Staff:

Craig MacDonald	Matthew Lawrence	Mike Thompson
Ben Cowie-Haskell	Elizabeth Stokes	Nathalie Ward
Brad Cabe	Alice Stratton	Evelyn Ganson (Volunteer)

Others Present: Mason Weinrich

I. Welcome, Review of Agenda and Approval of 40th SAC Minutes (Rich Delaney)

The Agenda was reviewed and approved. The 40th SAC Minutes were reviewed and accepted (unanimous).

II. Discussion Topics (Rich Delaney)

i. Welcome New SAC Members (Craig MacDonald)

Craig welcomed back former members who have renewed their seats:

Priscilla Brooks, Conservation Primary
Deborah Cramer, At Large Primary
Rich Delaney, Education Primary
Vito Giacalone, Mobile Gear Commercial Fishing Primary
Bob McCabe, Marine Transportation Alternate
Frank Morton, Marine Transportation Primary

Craig welcomed new members:

Alyssa Catalano, Education Alternate
Tracey Dalton, Research Primary
Christine Guinee, Youth Primary
Kevin Nicolai, Youth Alternate
Michael Pierdinock, Recreational Fishing Primary
Kevin Powers, At Large Alternate
Charlie Rasak, Business Industry Alternate

Craig offered special recognition to Mason Weinrich present at the SAC meeting. Mason was a long term past member and contributed enormously to the SAC. After a long absence, Mason is beginning to reengage with the SAC. He is the former Director of the Whale Center of New England and an expert in marine mammal research.

ii. Council “Round Robin”

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

iii. Budget Allocations (Craig MacDonald)

Craig MacDonald provided an overview of the budget allocations for ORF (Operations Funding) and PAC (Planning and Construction) funds. Last fiscal year (FY 13) \$1.7M was allocated for ORF funding and approximately \$1.8M this fiscal year (FY 14). This translates into approximately 5% increase in ORF from last fiscal year. This seems like a step on the road to recovery funding wise. PAC funds received in FY 14 are \$93K. These funds are not sufficient to move forward on renovating the boathouse into a major marine operations center. In anticipation of the renovation, the sanctuary did acquire land adjacent to the boathouse to use as a parking lot. But the main facility needs repairs. There was a water main break along with geothermal problems. Most PAC funds will be used to repair these problems. So the boathouse repair will have to wait another year. But we're quite encouraged that we're moving in the right direction.

The *R/V Auk* has been undergoing major repairs for serious corrosion to the hull. It is hoped to have it in service by the end of March. So far, there are 72 days scheduled at sea this year. In the past, the most boat missions ever scheduled were 83. So this is indicative that funding is better and the sanctuary is doing well partnering with other agencies. Things are looking really good as far as missions are concerned for the *R/V Auk* use this year.

iv. No Discharge Zone in Sanctuary (NDZ) Update (Craig MacDonald)

Craig summarized the document that Alice Stratton and Ben Haskell prepared regarding NDZ in the sanctuary. In response to the motion made at 40th SAC meeting (Nov. 2013), they worked with Todd Callaghan of Mass Coastal Zone Management (CZM) and Ann Rodney of US EPA to help understand the discharge requirements and vessel patterns in the Sanctuary and developed a framework to consider options. They developed 3 options for consideration by the SAC:

- Option 1. No regulatory change.
- Option 2. Prohibit discharges from cruise ships and/or vessels greater than 300 tons.
- Option 3. Prohibit discharges from all vessels.

Discussion/Comments ensued regarding information provided in the document and the 3 options:

Heather Knowles: Should focus be on quality of info or is SAC to arrive at a recommendation? This will be a multi-step process. Don't feel that we have to come to a conclusion today, but need to have a path forward. Open up discussion along the lines.

Craig MacDonald: SAC needs to be comfortable with numbers for making a decision and if not what needs to be done, but may not be able to decide this entirely during this discussion. But feedback would be helpful since there is good representation from various interested groups present.

Michael Pierdinock: Charterboats from Nov 1 to Apr 16, there are hardly any boats out there fishing. Discharge generation per day would be misleading if you took that in to account all year. Smaller boats, numbers seem high. Large head boats, 30 gals per day high end may be appropriate. Questions the numbers; take into consideration that the typical 6-pack boat is not out there every day.

Heather Knowles: Came up at last SAC meeting, 6-pack boat holding capacity will vary significantly. This category needs more granularity to characterize the potential discharge based on size of vessel and what the holding capacity is.

Rick Murray. Some of the numbers may be irrelevant. As a research scientist, having as minimal discharge is ultimate. But wearing his other hat as Scituate selectman, there are about 600-800 moorings in the Scituate Harbor. The seasonality is a huge issue in terms of gallons per day and estimates need to be figured out. Not worth spending a lot of time regulating small boats. Shouldn't spend a lot of time on 5.5 gals versus 3 gals per day. It's not going to matter because there is not any way in off-season to have pumpouts in the harbor and to monitor this. Absolutely agree that we need confidence in numbers or argue on smaller numbers. Waterways Commission in Scituate completely supports the overall idea but impossible to regulate small boats.

Heather Knowles. Same problem in Salem with small boats. No full time pumpout facilities.

Bill Adler: Clean Water Act in document states that it doesn't cover federal waters. Found this strange in paper presented. We're talking waste water. Agree that Option 3 would be very difficult to enforce as stated and don't think we should spend a lot of time putting out to all the "mosquito" fleet to have an enforcement policy on them. Focus should be on the big boats. If they discharge waste water, they're really doing something to the water. Get the big boats under control first, then see where we go.

Todd Callaghan: NDZ does apply to small boats -- enforced by harbor masters. (*Inaudible*).

Craig MacDonald: There is a baseline established by the State of MA. Struggling conceptually that the State is saying it's doable but SAC is saying it's not doable, not enforceable, not a big enough impact. Most boats are coming from Mass ports; is it unreasonable to think that there should be an extension of that prohibition into the sanctuary as well. Boats are actually coming back through State waters to pump-out facilities.

Rick Murray: Seasonality works to our advantage when the pumpout facilities are there. Enforcement is hard. Trying to encourage good behavior. Sensitivity issue and definition of what enforcement actually is. Extend it out through info campaigns, etc. Amount of impact of small boats. Believes very few small boats are causing a problem out there. Going to the cruise ships seems the way to go -- that's where to go. How many big ships are actually pumping out in Boston? How many of the big ships are doing it and where are they discharging.

Jen Anderson: Option 3: It appears that commercial fishing is wrapped into this. Are we going after commercial fishing as well in Option 3? They are fishing during the winter. Indirect effects if vessels cannot get to a pumpout facility. Are they right outside the sanctuary; where are they discharging? What are the other resources in that area that are also being impacted? Need to look at that -- maybe creating a problem somewhere else.

Craig MacDonald: Question as to where commercial fishing vessels are exempt or not exempt from this. Have to check the regulations for a definitive answer.

Michelle Bachman: NEFMC would be concerned about restricting or prohibiting discharge on any kind of fishing vessels especially those that operate in winter and don't have access to pumpout facilities. Pumping outside the sanctuary could be just as bad depending on how waters flow through the sanctuary from where they pumped out. It would be helpful to see comparable data on commercial vessel use by season and discharge rates. It seems cruise vessels are treating their discharge water totally differently before discharging, so may be a totally different impact than waste that is treated to the same extent. MARPOL Annex 4 deals with sewage discharge. The U.S. is a signatory to that. Don't know if cruise ships are from signatory countries. Seems there is a 12-nautical mile no discharge zone that would apply to them that cuts through the sanctuary and don't how this impacts larger foreign vessels.

Chris McGuire: As a former research vessel captain, questions the numbers in the sanctuary report. An EPA publication from 2009 has different numbers for cruise ships in particular than those reported in the report. Important to recognize that wastewater is not a very descriptive term. There is a difference between black water (toilets) and gray water (everything else such as sinks, galley, laundry, etc.). It's important to be very crisp in our language between black water and gray water. In this [EPA] publication, it suggests that for average cruise ships, it's 21K per day for average black water discharge with a range up to 74K per day. Gray water average is 170K average with a high of 249K per day. Impacts for larger vessels are significant. When you're talking about a daily rate, it's important to keep in mind how long that vessels might have been holding, i.e., outgoing vessels probably more likely than vessels inbound, how long in port and how long they've been holding. Volumes that we're discussing for cruise ships are significantly larger than reported in the table. Option 2 focusing on larger vessels greater than 300 gross tons. Assume that most whale watch vessels are under 100 tons because of regulatory desires? Will whale watch vessels be impacted by 300 gross ton rule or not? Commercial fishing vessels would not be. Are they under the 100 ton rule? Transit time is a good metrics as you go. Standard vessel operating procedures discharge everything they have. Transit time is a good metric if discharging as they go, but cruise ships do not operate that way.

Bob McCabe: Typically in port 1 day.

Cpt Pete DeCola: Where do these cases go? Has NOAA General Counsel seen this? Maybe make language crisper and what is in the realm of the policy. Maybe problem is scoped well enough. Voluntary approach

may be more effective. Tough to get legislation passed. You cannot enforce it. It will be voluntary, whether you have regulations or not.

Craig MacDonald: Used Monterey Bay as an example. It has gone through General Counsel since they have a NDZ. So there is a similarity.

Alice Stratton: In terms of daily estimates, tried to adjust for actual transit time through sanctuary. So the numbers reported are adjusted for what was seen in other vessel work. Transiting ones are for about 2 hours so adjusted for that and fishing charter boats also for either 4-6 hours per day depending on full day or half day.

Susan Farady: This has been an issue in the Management Plan for a very long time. There isn't sufficient monitoring of water quality in the sanctuary. Any measure that we do or don't do, we've got to be able to track it. It needs to be documented. If we recommend to do nothing, than we need to be monitoring so we can assess it again. If we decide on one of these options, we need to stay on top of it. Not troubled about enforcement. It's a lot of education and citizens wanting to do the right thing. It's well documented in Management Plan that the working group was very concerned about this issue. More important message is why is it right up to the State border, but when it hits the sanctuary it's like any other body of water. Troubled and concerned about that.

Tracey Dalton: When the States propose a NDZ, they have to show that they have the pumpout facilities and education programs. Are there resources available in the sanctuary to provide/support pumpouts and provide education, or are we relying on the communities and the State to do that?

Craig MacDonald: Essentially the work that CZM has done. Sanctuary would not be underwriting the cost or infrastructure. MA Water Resources Authority has a really substantial, high ranking scientific advisory body that reviews each year the monitoring results. At one point all of MA Bay. Concluded that they really didn't see that there was a problem including in the sanctuary and the sanctuary used to underwrite some of the monitoring but that capability dried up. They are now more concerned with episodic events after big storms for example; output from Boston after the storm was a larger issue (300 million gallons per day) -- much more than any cruise ship discharge. The sanctuary could work with the cruise ship industry to ask them to confirm that you go through a national marine sanctuary. If you don't pump out in Boston, pump out east of the sanctuary and deal with that as a first step. See if there's compliance. See if they'll work with us through education as part of their entertainment. This could tie in to the Business and Tourism Subcommittee discussions. Part of the issue here is, if we are going to be advocating the sanctuary as a best destination for recreation, then the marketing message can be distorted that you can dump once you leave the sanctuary. At the very least, next step is let the sanctuary work with the cruise folks maybe through Mass Port to see if we can get this message out to them and that they would voluntarily comply and see where it would go from there.

Cpt Pete DeCola. Cruise ships are not required to report to the USCG where and when they discharge, but they do keep electronic logs. They'll probably release them if you ask for them. Get a lot more out of voluntary efforts than mandatory regulations.

Priscilla Brooks: Following up on the water quality monitoring. Any discussion with the ship cruise industry should be coupled with a water quality monitoring program year round for the sanctuary. So that we can get some real data on this and see whether it changes in the summer when there is more intense abuse in the sanctuary. Is that in the plan?

Craig MacDonald: It's in the Management Plan as one of the objectives and recommendations is that the sanctuary to have a long term water quality monitoring program. As the sanctuary budget shrank, and as MWRA is of the opinion that the problem was less and less far field, there was a diminishment of capability

to monitor in the sanctuary. Don't see us doing a monitoring program budget-wise in the near term but it's clearly something that the sanctuary should be doing.

Rick Murray: Knowing enough about coastal oceanography, not worried about discharge in the area. It's treated material coming off the cruise ships. So most likely will get biggest bang for the buck with the voluntary and public outreach approach as previously suggested. As a scientist, trying to teach a class out in the sanctuary, echo completely baseline nutrient data across the back area is just deficient. Get a program out there where you go to several different grid points once or every other week for five years would be a very interesting thing and stimulate a lot of research in the area.

Michael Moore: Maybe some modeling might be useful to focus on if there is a problem. USGS ran the models; discharge plume trackings that were put together and are still valid, and proved to be accurate. Would be valuable to put a few rogue cruise ships dumping where you think they are going to dump and see what it does. Modeling can be very helpful. Talk to USGS about their modeling data.

Alice Stratton: In terms of the cruise industry, we have been trying to get with the cruise industry and EPA to get information about what they are actually doing and waste water treatment that they have. This is in the works.

Susan Farady: Seasonal use is a huge issue and suggests that the baseline monitoring modeling will be even more important going forward because the water is getting warmer. Need to take the sanctuary seriously that we're monitoring how it adapts to climate change. This is an important piece of information. Also within the conversations that will go on about DHRA proposal, that it would be helpful for the sanctuary to be able to say that this is something else that they are doing in addition to advocating the kinds of restrictions they are advocating for the DHRA proposal.

Tracey Dalton: Make it a big voluntary campaign and target the cruise ship industry as a first step but also include a huge public outreach as well.

Irit Altman. In terms of monitoring, there may be opportunities now over the course of the summer with the 70-plus days on the *R/V Auk* to collect samples even without funding and bank them. Monitor and research now and analyze later when more resources are available.

Craig MacDonald: Unless it's electronic and goes into a database, the manual aspects of doing the sampling can be very patchy and not indicative across the sanctuary. Staff will go back to the Management Plan and review the content and report back to SAC what the priority actions were within the Water Quality Section. Encourages everyone to go back to the Management Plan and read about it. The idea of modeling and monitoring aspects will be given more thought and what would be the appropriate monitoring scheme, but funding is an issue. Sanctuary staff will begin working with cruise ship industry as far as what is needed for education outreach, as well as with CZM.

Rick Murray: In principle a good idea but archiving nutrient samples is tricky in practice. Better to have a well thought out grid plan over a number of years with frequency sampling. A grid plan would be the way to go. Really need a program.

Susan Farady: Don't let the perfect stand in the way of the good. Think outside the box. Understand there's no funding for research and monitoring, but there are partners here within the SAC body. Encourage what can be done and partner with organizations. Brochures at marinas and charter boat and whale watch companies.

Michael Pierdinock: MWRA had to go through considerable modelling for sewage discharge at Deer Island. Recommend that they be contacted for discharge baseline modeling that they have. They also did a sensitivity analysis.

Heather Knowles summarizes. Don't forget context we're working in -- we have a Management Plan and need to move to a future state where there is no discharge. There is water quality monitoring. Don't forget that context. Points about water quality monitoring are really important; continue to collect data. Sanctuary should go back and look at that --work in partnerships, prioritize. We all support the idea of no discharge. All agree that the most effective approach is a voluntary program that is far reaching and encompasses small and large vessels. There may already be a precedent with State waters. There are regulations in place and pumpout facilities in place but not completely adequate. But there is a structure in place work with that in a voluntary program. Maybe we need the sanctuary to come back with a proposal for how to move along those lines.

III. SAC Updates (Nathalie Ward)

i. February 18th SAC Recruitment

Next recruitment deadline is 31 March. The following seats are being recruited:

- At Large (Primary Member)
- At Large (Alternate Member)
- Conservation (Primary Member)
- Education (Alternate Member)
- Mobile Gear Commercial Fishing (Alternate Member)
- Recreational Fishing (Alternate Member)
- Whale Watch (Alternate Member)

Nathalie asked the SAC to please get out the word. Seats are three-year terms. The following recruitment will be published by FRN on May 15th, with June 30th deadline.

Incumbents whose seats are up for renewal May-June time frame: John Galluzzo (Maritime Heritage Alternate); Jonathan Grant (At Large Alternate), Chris McGuire (Conservation Alternate), Wayne Petersen (Conservation Alternate), Dave Robinson (Maritime Heritage Primary Member).

It is hoped that the incumbents will reapply for their seats.

Executive Committee Terms expire. Elections will be held at the next SAC meeting. Present Executive Committee Members are Rich Delaney, Chair; Heather Knowles, Vice-Chair; and John Williamson, Secretary. All three Executive Committee members are eligible for another term, but may or may not be interested. So other members may apply for consideration if they wish to do so.

SAC members are asked to provide their bios for the website, if they haven't already done so. Visit the revamped SAC website at <http://stellwagen.noaa.gov/management/sac/sachome.html>.

Sanctuary Programmatic Briefings will be provided at the May 29th SAC meeting.

ii. Future SAC Meetings. The 42nd SAC Meeting will be on Thursday, May 29th at NOAA GARFO in Gloucester. Executive Committee elections will be held during the May 29th meeting.

IV. ONMS Campaign of Engagement: Subcommittee: Business and Tourism Outreach and Partnerships Update (John Galluzzo and Craig MacDonald)

Discussion/Comments (Bill Adler, Craig MacDonald, Heather Knowles, John Galluzzo, Michael Moore, Rick Murray, Michael Pierdinock, Wayne Petersen):

Craig MacDonald summarized background on the Business and Tourism Subcommittee established by the SAC. This is a result of one of Dan Basta's (Director, National Marine Sanctuary Program) "Campaign of Engagement" efforts to connect sanctuaries and begin advocating more closely with coastal economies using the assets they have available and working with constituents. Basta's emphasis was primarily in line with a document called "National Travel and Tourism Strategy" generated by the Obama Administration. In this document a tone is set that essentially the U.S. can do more in terms of using its national parks, forest service areas, national marine sanctuaries as assets to attract more national and international tourism. As a result of the Obama Administration's document, ONMS has drafted its own document titled, "ONMS Tourism Strategic Plan" that is presently under review. This document is still unavailable because there is a lot of retooling ongoing to make it more effective. These two documents together lend themselves nicely to the SAC Business and Tourism working group. We need to begin framing what the concept is, then add strategies and tactics as it builds out. People don't know that there is a National Marine Sanctuary called SBNMS in Massachusetts. It's not thought of as a sanctuary. We need an image campaign and coordinate with the various industries to develop themes, and the need to benefit the industries as well.

John Galluzzo: Summarized the first working group meeting. How do we brand/promote the sanctuary as more of a destination? Branding the sanctuary is important. A place that people are thinking about, not just "Stellwagen Bank" but "Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary". The subcommittee is basically starting at ground zero exposure wise, but it has a good chance to shape this from the beginning. What are we promoting, how are we promoting it, and who are we working with to promote it? Identify the industry segments that we want to target, i.e., whale watch companies, charter and recreational fishing boats, diving clubs, marinas, seafood dining, cruise ships, regional tourism councils and chambers of commerce. Work with Mass Audubon to design a travel program for the Sanctuary; prepare a short video that could be provided to interested parties. Build on the service industries that are in place.

There was also the question if this should be a subcommittee or a working group. John Galluzzo and Craig MacDonald explained the difference between a SAC subcommittee versus a SAC working group. A subcommittee basically is a subgroup of the SAC and the working group invites outside sources. At the beginning, the group will work as a subcommittee and can go to a working group if it's needed. It may be we may want to invite folks from tourism councils, etc., at a later time. It's a more complicated process for a working group and requires that members be recruited through a public notification; this could delay the process by several months. Need more members involved. Maybe have SAC members from Diving and Whale Watch who would be willing to serve on the subcommittee.

SAC members presently serving on the Business and Tourism Subcommittee.

John Galluzzo, Chair
Vito Giacalone
Jonathan Grant
Rob Moir
Mike Pierdinock
Charlie Rasak
Chad Smith

Wayne Petersen: Hopes that in the course of developing the agenda, that the subcommittee looks at Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary for marketing ideas and similar crossover. There is a huge industry out on the West Coast.

John Galluzzo: Will look into all the related information from Monterey Bay NMS.

Bill Adler: It's going to be tough because taking people out to the middle of the ocean and saying you're in the sanctuary isn't like taking someone to Plimoth Plantation. It's difficult and tough to get that promotion going, but it can be done. Also, advertising moorings to dive on wrecks. If SBNMS promotes that they have places in their domain for divers, is there any legal liability for the sanctuary if something happens to the divers?

Heather Knowles: Don't think so because divers are going there with charter operators and they are signing waivers that are basically indemnifying all parties. Doubt that it's really an issue, but a good point. Same could apply to party fishing boats. We have two sites where subsea moorings have been implemented to facilitate boat access and safety not having divers drifting around and secure the boat. Don't know if this is something a component of the advertising per se.

Craig MacDonald. The sanctuary cannot advertise or promote. We can work with businesses that use the sanctuary to enable the sanctuary to become identified as a destination. Advertising is done by the State, chambers of commerce, and business. Hundreds of these moorings in Florida Keys NMS and there is no liability.

Michael Pierdinock: Charter and recreational boats attract anglers throughout the nation. They look at the rich history of bottom fishing and the first thing they think of as the first destination is to fish these waters. A lot of people fly in with their families to visit other areas of Massachusetts, such as Boston, Plymouth and Cape Cod. One thing that we always promote is whales, shearwaters, tuna, everything. The whole experience is sold and that works. Implement a program to make it a destination would be helpful. Personally like the idea of trying to pull that in.

Craig MacDonald. Can we proceed as a subcommittee or start with a working group?

Heather Knowles: Consensus is to move forward as a subcommittee.

John Galluzzo will send out an email looking for more SAC primary members/alternates to participate as well as what the next steps will be for the subcommittee. Craig MacDonald added that the subcommittee needs more SAC members' expertise.

Rick Murray: Scituate has an economic development committee organizing itself to bring more tourism to Scituate. It's a citizens committee and they are pretty savvy. Rick will give contact info to John Galluzzo -- tying in "Stellwagen and Scituate."

V. *Charles W. Morgan's 38th Voyage* (Ben Haskell)

Ben Haskell presented on *Charles W. Morgan's* upcoming 38th Voyage and related events that will take place during early Summer 2014. Contact Ben.Haskell@noaa.gov for more information regarding the *Charles W. Morgan's* upcoming events or for a copy of his presentation.

VI. Working Lunch: “How We All Kill Whales” (Dr. Michael Moore, WHOI)

Dr. Moore reviewed commercial whaling methods and the welfare and conservation issues associated therewith. He then contrasted those data with the welfare and conservation concerns of large whale entanglement in commercial fishing gear.

VII. Sister Sanctuary Program and *CARIB Tails* (Nathalie Ward)

Please contact Nathalie.Ward@noaa.gov for a copy of her presentation and for more information regarding the Sister Sanctuary Program and *CARIB Tails*, or at <http://stellwagen.noaa.gov/sister/welcome.html>.

VIII. Agency/Government Reports

i. NEFMC Report (Michelle Bachman)

Michelle Bachman presented the NEFMC report and provided the following summary:

The New England Fishery Management Council representative discussed recent NEFMC decisions on the Omnibus Essential Fish Habitat Amendment. In February 2014, the Council met to review the draft Environmental Impact Statement, select preferred alternatives, and approve the document for submission to NOAA and public hearings/comment. In the western Gulf of Maine region in and around the Sanctuary, the Council identified the following as preferred alternatives: (1) maintain the existing WGOM Habitat Closure and WGOM Closed Area (groundfish closure), (2) designate the Inshore Roller Gear Restricted Area as a habitat protection measure, (3) exempt shrimp trawls from habitat management restrictions west of Jeffreys Ledge, (4) maintain the existing sector and common pool rolling closures, and the existing GOM Cod Spawning Protection (Whaleback) Area, (5) designate the Massachusetts Bay Cod Spawning Protection Area in the late fall/early winter, and (6) designate the Stellwagen DHRA with a 55 nm² reference area and three year sunset provision.

Next steps are for the Council to complete the draft Environmental Impact Statement and submit it to NOAA. Following reviews and revisions, a notice of availability will be published in the Federal Register, and the Council will begin a 45-day comment period and conduct public hearings. The hearings and comment period will likely occur during July and August. The Council will review these comments and select final management alternatives this fall. After the Council makes its final decisions, a final Environmental Impact Statement will be submitted to NOAA and the rulemaking process and associated comment periods will begin. Implementation of any new regulations is expected to occur during summer 2015.

ii. NOAA Fisheries Regional Report (Jen Anderson)

Jen Anderson presented the NOAA NMFS report and provided the following summary:

Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan

NMFS published a proposed rule on July 16, 2013, soliciting public comment on proposed measures to reduce the entanglement risk associated with vertical line. Proposed measures in the Northeast include increasing the number of traps per trawl and seasonal closures. The comment period closed on September 16th. NMFS is currently reviewing the comments and drafting the final rule and final environmental impact statement. NMFS expects to publish the final rule in July 2014.

Sea Turtles

Last year (2013) was the busiest season on record for sea turtle (primarily leatherback) entanglements. There were:

- 48 entanglements in MA.
- Annual average of take between 2002 and 2013 was only 15.
- We have been seeing an increasing trend of takes in the last few years. Some of this may be due to increased awareness and reporting, but we feel that some of it is an actual increase.
- Although these turtles are typically not in the Sanctuary, they often transit either through or immediately adjacent to the Sanctuary.
- The vast majority of these entanglements are in the vertical lines of pot gear fisheries. It is a shared problem between sea turtles (primarily leatherbacks) and large whales.

Mid-Atlantic Bottlenose Dolphin Unusual Mortality Event (UME)

- Geographic area now covers NY through Indian River County, FL (near Vero Beach).
- Total number of stranded dolphins from July 1, 2013, through March 2, 2014, is 1,157.
- A total of 204 dolphins have been tested for morbillivirus from all nine states.
 - 96% (195 of 204) were positive
 - 38 cases currently pending
- Biopsy efforts have been ongoing throughout UME areas. Biopsy samples coupled with genetic samples from stranded cases will be used to look at stocks being affected by die-off.

More information can be found on UME website:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/health/mmume/midatldolphins2013.html>

Assessing the Vulnerability of Fish Stocks in a Changing Climate

Last week, NOAA Fisheries announced completion of the Fish Stock Climate Vulnerability Assessment methodology. This is the first methodology of its kind to rapidly assess of the vulnerability of U.S. marine fish stocks to changing climate and ocean conditions. This methodology will provide fisheries managers and scientists with information about the relative vulnerability of fish species to projected future climate-ocean conditions which will help inform future science needs and management strategies.

NOAA Fisheries recently used this methodology to assess the vulnerability of 79 marine fish stocks of the Northeast marine ecosystem. Results are expected to be available this summer.

Disaster Relief Funds

As part of the Fiscal Year 2014 federal budget, Congress approved \$75 million in fishery disaster relief funds and NOAA Fisheries recently announced that the New England groundfish fishery will receive approximately \$33 million. Commercial and recreational fisheries in New Jersey and New York will receive just over \$3 million for relief efforts to address the impacts following Hurricane/post-tropical cyclone Sandy. NOAA Fisheries will work with the eligible states affected by the disaster to quickly allocate the funding. Over the next several months, details for how the money will be specifically used will be finalized. NOAA Fisheries staff will continue to work with state directors and members of the fishing industry to develop spending plans for these funds.

IX. Constituent Reports

- i. *“The Good, The Bad and The Ugly of Circle Hooks, J Hooks and Treble Hooks”*
(Michael Pierdinock)

Michael Pierdinock, new SAC Recreational Fishing Primary Member and Charter Boat Captain, gave an introduction to, along with the history and facts concerning circle hooks.

- ii. *“Sanctuary Maritime Heritage Outreach Activity Kit”* (John Galluzzo)

John Galluzzo, SAC Maritime Heritage Alternate Member and Director of Education and Camping for the South Shore Natural Science Center (SSNSC), presented on his organization's education and outreach

partnership with the sanctuary. Partially funded through a NOAA Preserve America grant, SBNMS staff members, Anne-Marie Runfola, Deborah Marx and Matthew Lawrence created a maritime heritage activity guide and kit for each of four partner organizations, including SSNSC. The sanctuary team delivers the kits, provides cross-training for the partner organization's staff and volunteers, and helps them run their first event. In return, the partner commits to offering a certain number of events and/or reaching a certain number of people through this program. The goal is to reach many thousands more than the sanctuary could reach on its own, and to create or expand partnerships with groups that complement the sanctuary's mission.

SSNSC ran *A Child's Sanctuary: Exploring the Maritime Heritage of Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary* with SBNMS staff in January 2014. The next day, they introduced the kit to one of their schools, and they have been off and running since, reaching thousands through schools and the center.

X. New Business.

Craig MacDonald recognized CPT Pete DeCola, the USCG Ex-Officio Member, who will be leaving the SAC due to his retirement from the USCG in June of this year. Pete has contributed enormously on many issues since joining the SAC in October 2009. He will be greatly missed. His replacement has not yet been determined.

Rich Delaney reported there are large number of right whales being reported in Cape Cod Bay early this season.

Todd Callaghan: CZM is updating its State Ocean Management Plan, involving mapping of whale and bird species. Data will be up on their website. For more information contact Todd, email: todd.callaghan@state.ma.us.

XI. Public Comment. None.

XII. Adjourn: 2:40 pm.