

MARCH 2011

# seawatch

the Ocean Conservation Society newsletter  
[www.oceanconservation.org](http://www.oceanconservation.org)

## One Minute Editorial

### No Choice On Being An Environmentalist

Being an environmentalist is not something one chooses. It is not like deciding a political affiliation or choosing a religion. It is the responsibility shared by all people, to protect the common resources on which we depend for our survival. In this case, the common resource is Earth.

We hear a lot these days about how environmental regulation is an encroachment on the free market, but what good is a free market if we have destroyed our planet's ability to sustain human life?

Spirited political debate on social issues, and the compromises that ought to come with it are the cornerstones of free democracies. But we need to remember (and to let our leaders know) that protecting the environment and building a sustainable future are shared social responsibilities and, as such, are not subject to negotiation.

- Charles Saylan, OCS Executive Director



## The Importance of Marine Mammals in MLPA Monitoring Efforts

Over the last years, OCS has stressed the significance of monitoring cetaceans for any decision-making process regarding MPAs in Santa Monica Bay. Here are a few reasons why: 1) the bay is rich in cetacean species (including threatened & endangered animals), which often use the area as a foraging ground; 2) cetaceans are umbrella species, meaning conservation measures aimed at mitigating threats to such species are expected to result in protection for entire communities of organisms; 3) top predators like bottlenose dolphins are used worldwide as indicators of the status and health of coastal habitats. Long-term research on these animals, present year-round in the bay, allows us to document the history of exposure to ecosystem disturbances and their effects. OCS continues its monitoring efforts, despite the difficulties in finding financial support for research and a seeming lack of interest on the part of local funding agencies. If you would like to help, contact us.

## Save the Date!

### Marine Mammal Conference

**Tampa, Florida, Nov 27- Dec 4, 2011**

If you are interested in marine mammals, don't miss the 19<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of Marine Mammals

For more information check: <http://www.marine-mammalscience.org/>.

### Earth Day

**April 22, 2011**

To participate in local events, check: <http://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2011>.



OCEAN CONSERVATION SOCIETY

## We're on Facebook!

Now, you can join us on Facebook for an ongoing update on news and information related to ocean conservation issues and real-time updates on our marine mammal research. It's easy to sign up, just go to our website at [www.oceanconservation.org](http://www.oceanconservation.org) click on the Facebook logo, then click "like" next to the page title and you're in. Please help us get the word out about ocean conservation by telling your friends where to find us on Facebook. We hope this will become a valuable resource to all interested in preserving the natural beauty and biodiversity of our oceans.



### Gray whales in the bay



Pacific gray whales, known for one of the longest mammalian migrations on Earth, seem to be doing well this year. Hundreds of these leviathans were observed during their south and northbound migrations along the California coastline. The increase in sightings over previous years may be a sign that the population is rebounding. The number of gray whales

### Domoic acid... once again

*A powerful neurotoxin seems a cause of the massive die-off of fish in King Harbor a few weeks ago. Despite the reports indicating that the fish died solely from oxygen deprivation, biologists found that the dead sardines tested positive for domoic acid (DA). This toxin, produced by diatoms of the genus Pseudo-nitzschia, is known to cause amnesic shellfish poisoning, and it has been associated with certain harmful algal blooms. Although the origin of these blooms is still uncertain, it seems human impact may play a significant role. DA has negative effects on marine mammals and humans, causing short-term loss of memory, brain damage and, in some cases, even death.*

along the Pacific coast is estimated to be around 22,000, but in the last two years OCS teams had few sightings of these cetaceans in the Santa Monica Bay. To learn more about the status of the gray whales and the human threats facing them, check: [http://www2.wdcs.org/species/species.php?sp=Eschrichtius\\_robustus](http://www2.wdcs.org/species/species.php?sp=Eschrichtius_robustus).



# OCS Research

Current research continues in the Santa Monica Bay and offshore waters, focused increasingly on collecting more data on skin diseases and physical deformities found on local dolphins. We are working with Okeanis, a sister organization in Northern California, on a comparison of photo-identified individuals to better understand the presence and duration of skin lesions. By studying skin diseases in dolphins, we hope to shed light on the health of the ecosystem as well as the potential impacts on human health. As we learn more, we will keep you updated on the OCS Facebook page.

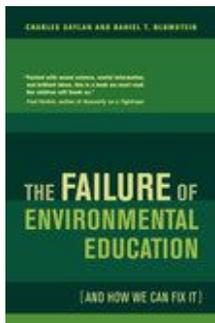
## What about Mozza?

Mozza is one of our most observed dolphins in the bay. She would love to be a part of your family... support OCS by adopting her today.



Check out MOZZA at:  
<http://www.oceanconservation.org/involved/adopt.htm>

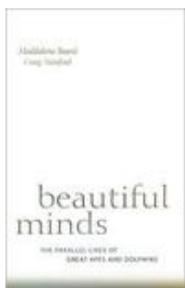
## NEW BOOKS BY OCS STAFF MEMBERS



Charlie Saylan, OCS Executive Director and Dan Blumstein, UCLA Biology Professor, have written a new book for University of California Press to be published in May 2011. Their book is titled "The Failure of Environmental Education (And How We Can Fix It)" and is already receiving great reviews. To learn more, go to:

<http://www.ucpress.edu/book.php?isbn=9780520265394>

*"The hope for the future depends on teaching current and future students the analytical and critical thinking skills for dealing with the most critical problems. My own hope is for this book to be read by everyone, even those outside the field of environmental education. Read this book, read it again, share it widely, and do something - anything - to help our needy and wounded planet."*-Marc Bekoff, author of *The Animal Manifesto: Six Reasons For Expanding Our Compassion Footprint*



"Beautiful Minds; the Parallel Lives of great Apes and Dolphins" co-authored by Maddalena Bearzi, OCS President, and Craig Stanford, Professor at the University of Southern California, is now out in paperback. To learn more, go to: <http://www.amazon.com/Beautiful-Minds-Parallel-Lives-Dolphins/dp/0674027817>

Ocean Conservation Society  
 p.o. box 12860, marina del rey, ca 90295  
 ph. 310.822.5205, [info@oceanconservation.org](mailto:info@oceanconservation.org)  
[www.oceanconservation.org](http://www.oceanconservation.org)

Drawing: M. Demma  
 Logos: J. Bass, J. Arlukiewicz  
 Photos: M. Bearzi  
 Newsletter design: M. Bearzi

### Unsubscribe / Privacy

If you do not wish to receive our e-newsletter in the future, please email [info@oceanconservation.org](mailto:info@oceanconservation.org) with the subject "unsubscribe" and we will remove you from our mailing list. We do not send hard copy mailings or share email addresses with anyone, ever.

