



# The Pinniped Press

A Newsletter by and for Noyo Center for Marine Science Volunteers

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## Volunteer Opportunities

Are you interested in being involved with outreach at upcoming community events such as participating in a parade float in Paul Bunyan Days or a Great Day in Elk? Would you like to distribute informational materials to hotels and other local businesses? We would love to have your help. Contact Wendi Felson for more information @ [wendi@noyocenter.org](mailto:wendi@noyocenter.org)

## Sustainable Seafood: Sorry Charlie, there are no easy answers.

by Teresa Skarr

When I was asked to write this article, I planned to simply reference the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch website and come up with two lists – one for fish to eat and one for fish to avoid. It would take about an hour, I thought. I quickly learned that it was far more complicated than that.

The nuances on the Seafood Watch site can sometimes be frustrating, although in researching this topic I found an [NPR ARTICLE](#) that discusses some of the difficulties one can encounter in the quest to choose good, sustainable seafood. That was my first clue this wouldn't be easy.

Considering all this, I've decided to use a myth vs. facts format to illustrate a few of the most important things I've learned about this issue, and I'll end with some recommendations.

## Sustainable Seafood (continued)

Myth: All farm-raised fish are sustainable.

Facts:

- Some farms are run in a sustainable manner, but many are not.
- Many farms feed large amounts of fish meal made from wild-caught fish to their farmed fish. Some farms consume a higher weight of wild fish than the fish they produce.
- Many farms cause significant pollution that negatively impacts wild fish and other organisms.



Myth: Fish without certification are unsustainable.

Facts:

- There are multiple different certification schemes, at least one of which is run by a grocery corporation.
- Some certification schemes are more rigorous than others.
- It can be very costly to hire the experts needed to establish protocols and produce the documentation required to obtain certification.

Myth: Certain species of fish are always safe to order in terms of sustainability.

Facts:

- There are many different fishing methods.
- Some fishing methods and locations have unacceptably large "by-catch" of endangered fish.
- Some fishing methods endanger wild birds, marine mammals, and other organisms.
- Some fishing vessels engage in forced labor and other human rights abuses.

Myth: Certain species of fish are never safe to order in terms of sustainability.

Facts:

- The sustainability of fisheries is constantly changing, as is the recognition of their sustainability. For example, in February this year, Seafood Watch was updated to include positive recommendations for Vietnamese tiger prawns and California swordfish when caught using buoy gear and harpoons.
- Seafood Watch includes multiple "best choice" options for abalone, even though abalone diving and all wild-caught abalone are banned in California waters. However, there is a sizable industry in farming abalone mostly in pacific rim countries. The largest are in China and Japan, but several are in California.  
<https://americanabalone.com/about-us>
- Although some shark species are endangered, others are considered sustainable.

Recommendations:

- Look up your favorite seafood on Seafood Watch at [seafoodwatch.org](http://seafoodwatch.org) and familiarize yourself with the various recommendations.
- Subscribe to Seafood Watch updates from the Monterey Bay Aquarium at <https://www.seafoodwatch.org/for-businesses/subscribe-recommendation-updates>
- Pick up a pocket seafood guide and carry it with you as a reference when shopping or dining out. You can download **POCKET GUIDES** from Monterey Bay Aquarium, and we also have some with our other literature at the Crow's Nest.
- Ask restaurant waitstaff and fish counter grocery employees about the origins and fishing methods for their fish, based on your pocket seafood guide. Because supply chains can be so complex, they might not have answers. However, your query will register interest in sustainable fisheries, and over time may lead to greater transparency and, ultimately, better sustainability.

## Sustainable Seafood (continued)

- Consider buying directly from local fishers, where you can directly observe their fishing gear and methods and obtain answers to your questions. The Noyo Harbor Fish Market offers an excellent opportunity for this the first Saturday of each month, Noon to 4 pm from June through October, at Grader Park on the corner of Basin and South Harbor Drive. Year-round, Princess Seafood’s market and restaurant in Noyo Harbor are both excellent options to follow this recommendation locally.



Princess Seafood

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Jacewicz, N. March 15, 2017. <https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2017/03/15/520023117/i-want-to-eat-fish-responsibly-but-the-seafood-guides-are-so-confusing>
- <sup>2</sup> <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/insight/feeds-aquaculture>
- <sup>3</sup> <https://www.albertsoncompanies.com/our-impact/products/responsible-seafood/default.aspx>
- <sup>4</sup> By-catch is the unwanted fish and other marine animals caught during commercial fishing for a different target species.
- <sup>5</sup> <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/policy-areas/fisheries/lang--en/index.htm>
- <sup>6</sup> <https://www.sfchronicle.com/local/environment/article/Abalone-diving-is-banned-and-work-goes-on-to-16104928.php>
- <sup>7</sup> <https://oceanoday.noaa.gov/endoceansharks/>
- <sup>8</sup> <https://www.seafoodwatch.org/recommendations/download-consumer-guides>

## The Great Bubble Barrier

by Nancy Lloyd

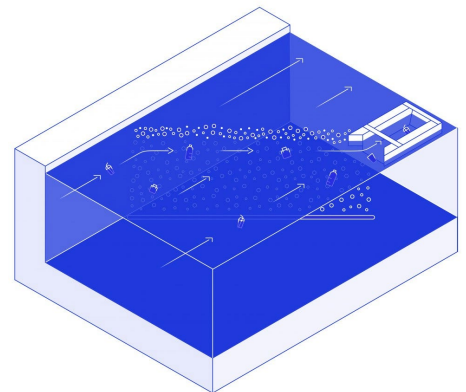
Imagine the impact of three women in Amsterdam, Netherlands, who dreamed of a **clean ocean** and created a solution to filter plastic and other floating trash from their canals before reaching the ocean! Every year, 8 billion kg of plastic end up in our oceans and causes severe damage to marine and human life. A whopping 64% of this plastic is transported via rivers!

Applying technology from the 1940s to solve new challenges, they used a “bubble curtain” to divert plastics away from waterways. Previously, bubble curtains had been used, for example, to block oil spills on the surface of oceans, or to reduce propagation of shock waves from loud underwater noises.

Philip Ehrhorn, of **Great Bubble Barrier**, says, “The Bubble Barrier is, at the end, nothing more than a perforated tube, that’s been placed diagonally at the bottom of a river or canal, and then we pump air through it, and the rising air bubbles will create the bubble barrier...Bubbles steer waste floating on the water, steering into a collection point. Tests in Amsterdam shows the barrier **trapping 86% of rubbish in this canal.**”

Watch the Bloomberg video,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jepCBZAZQ1A>

Anne Marieke Eveleens, co-founder of the Great Bubble Barrier, says: “When **the Great Bubble Barrier** won the Postcode Lottery Green Challenge in 2018, we received much more than just a cash prize. A year of intensive mentorship from Rockstart and participation in the DeepDive weeks have been more impactful than we could have imagined.”  
see video <https://www.greenchallenge.info/about/previous-winners/previous-winners/the-great-bubble-barrier>



## The Great Bubble Barrier (continued)

In the fall of 2019, the first Bubble Barrier was implemented which will remain in place for a long period of time in the capital of the Netherlands: Amsterdam! This Bubble Barrier was installed by The Great Bubble Barrier at one of the outlets from the canals into Amsterdam's waterfront.

The Dutch engineers are using bubbles to prevent river trash from traveling downstream. The curtain of bubbles allows fish to swim through and has no effect on passing boats. The startup behind the idea, The Great Bubble Barrier, piloted its design in an Amsterdam canal in 2018. It was installed as a supplement to dredging, which extracts 42,000 kg (92,594 pounds) of plastic waste in Amsterdam every year. The technology is currently limited to waterways of a certain depth and where there is less ship traffic, but the company is working on scaling up the system.”

From “Points of Progress” in the Christian Science Monitor December, 2022.

Currently, Great Bubble Barrier is working on a permanent installation in the Netherlands. They are ready for implementation in Europe and beyond. The Great Bubble Barrier is ready to help governments and businesses stop plastic pollution in rivers and canals worldwide. Posted on United Nations, Sustainable Development site:

<https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/great-bubble-barrier>

Here is the **Great Bubble Barrier** website:

<https://thegreatbubblebarrier.com/bubble-barrier-katwijk/>

## Moon Rabbit Concert

The first fundraising concert for the Noyo Center’s educational programs was held on a beautiful day in June at a gorgeous location in the redwoods. Here are a few photos.



Moon Rabbit Performs



Mary Meline, volunteer with a friend



Great crowd



Volunteers Misha Morandi and Denise Mattos



Volunteers Dania Stoneham and Alix Phillips



Cynthia Doll and Sheila Semans  
Noyo Center Executive Director

## Volunteer Highlight: Sally Swan

by Linda Francis

Sally was born and raised in Southern California but escaped it's 1970's smog and congestion when she headed to San Luis Obispo to attend college at Cal Poly where she graduated with a degree in Economics. Her longtime dream was to work in San Francisco, so after graduating she headed North and got a job with Pac Bell. She worked for them for 18 years in various management capacities between LA, Sacramento, and San Francisco. Sally got an MBA along the way. Like many jobs it became all consuming. When her younger sister died at 35, she realized it was time to re-prioritize. She left her career and the Bay Area, and moved to Mendocino County for its beautiful forests, majestic ocean, and pace that allows a more balanced life.

She first landed a job as business manager for the Point Arena School district. Then she carried on the same work at Mendocino Unified. This transfer worked great as her office was right across the street from where her daughter was going to school. Her daughter Sophie is now doing wildlife rehabilitation in Morro Bay after graduating from Cal Poly in Animal Science.

When Sally retired from full-time work in 2016, she continued volunteering with the Mendocino Volunteer Fire Department as an EMT and firefighter where she appreciates the members for dedication to the community.

Around this time Sally took the volunteer chaplain training at Mendocino Coast District Hospital and a new passion was born. She loves this work. Most of her prior work had been analytical. Now she gets to use the feeling and spiritual side of her brain as well.

Her Chaplain role offers many hats to wear as it is patient driven. Does someone want to share their joys and concerns? Talk about what gives their life meaning? Pray? A companion to sit with? She became the lead Chaplain so in addition to patient interactions and staff support, she coordinated other volunteers' activities related to spiritual care. The role of coordinator continued until pandemic days when she stepped down and now volunteers weekly. She cares deeply about our hospital and its staff. Sally attended seminary and in 2021 was ordained as interfaith Chaplain and offers interfaith ministries.

Her Noyo Center volunteering is focused on beach survey and stranded animal work with Sarah Grimes. Her survey beach is Big River from the boat ramp out to the West. Having done it for over a year and a half, Sally now sees trends as she walks her route every other week picking up trash and counting marine life, kelp, and people. Sally is impressed with the level of community care for Big River Beach, noting that several dedicated people regularly swim in the river and walk on the beach, and they tend to the beach by picking up trash and protecting wildlife. Inspired by her work with the Noyo Center, Sally is now also in training and volunteering with The Marine Mammal Center.

Sally just enrolled in the Pacific School of Religion, a non-denominational program through the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. It is a multi-year program culminating as a Dr. of Ministry. Her project focuses on bringing nature into a spiritual practice.

And to ensure she doesn't get bored, she also has six chickens, three rescue cats, and three rescue dogs... one of whom has graduated to being a certified therapy dog with plans to join her in providing spiritual and emotional care at the hospital.

Thank you, Sally, for sharing your story and sharing your time as a Noyo Center volunteer!



Sally Swan

## What Washed In

by Nancy Lloyd

Due to recent onshore winds, a larger number of marine bodies and kelp washed ashore in recent weeks. These discoveries spanned nearly our entire geographical range, from a mile up the Big River estuary to Blues Beach near Westport in our northern range. The Noyo Center for Marine Science's marine mammal field work is permitted under NOAA as a designated organization with the California Academy of Sciences. Thanks to Noyo Center's Beach Responders and Beach Survey teams for their watchful eyes and reports. Marine mammal responses this month included: 1 harbor seal, 6 California sea lions (mostly pups and yearlings), 5 elephant seals, and 1 river otter.

River otters are not technically marine mammals since their habitat is mostly upriver in freshwater, but since we do report *live* river otter sightings to the River Otter Ecology Project, we included it. If you want to see some CUTE river otter images, check their website <https://riverotterecology.org/>

Interestingly there was some evidence of shark predation on some the marine mammals found this month.

If you find a dead marine mammal please report it to Noyo Center For Marine Science Stranding Coordinator Sarah Grimes at 707-813-7925. Report Live Marine Mammals in distress to the Marine Mammal Center, (415)-289-SEAL.

Below: Intern Kaedn Strong and Stranding Coordinator Sarah Grimes take samples from sea lions to send to California Academy of Sciences.



River Otter Skull



## Poop Deck News

By Donna Worster

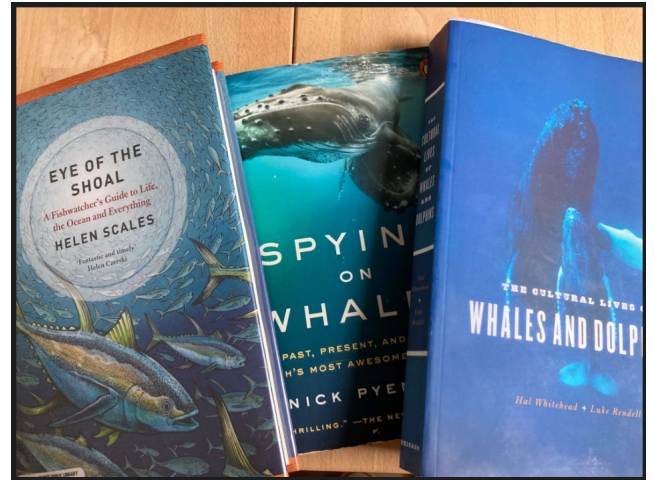
A lot of fascinating individuals find their way into the Crow's Nest, and not too long ago I met a delightful traveler who was especially interested in the history of the Noyo Center and our relationship to the Mendocino Coast. We also talked about some of my favorite books about marine life, and she recently posted this in her personal blog, referencing a look back at our chat and her encounters in California, and going on to tell about a really wonderful whale museum she visited in Denmark. Here is Part I of the blog post – I hope you enjoy it.

### Notes from *The Perch*: Whale Mail from Birgit Nielsen

Three months after Donna's book recommendations, I'm deep into reading about whale and dolphin culture. Still? you might wonder. The books I ordered in CA back in April finally came to me in May. Friends from Oregon brought them and quietly added "marine mammals" to their list of my favorite things to talk about. They are very observant, those two.

While the scientists seem to be divided about the existence of "culture" in non-humans, I feel myself unmoored, jolted out of the myopia of human perception. Self-study, boundless curiosity and philosophizing have led us to accumulate a lot of knowledge. The wheel, coffee, lightbulbs, language, but wait, science in general, art. The list is endless, and yours no doubt different from mine, but to what end, I wonder, if it all comes with greed, destruction, and war.

As I continue to connect the dots in what is so fascinating to me about marine mammals, and why I have followed the story of one whale that washed up on the CA coast more than 13 years ago, I am heartened by the reciprocity. The unexpected feedback, gifts, the things found by the wayside. When, for example, a man calls me – in the middle of his sabbatical – to tell me that a porpoise followed his sailboat for a long time en route to Copenhagen. He recalled my stories about the whale watch encounters in California and paid attention to the porpoise accompanying him as it in turn paid attention to him. Looking at him, staying close. For no apparent reward. He let himself be lost in the unfathomable. The sea he thought he knew as he skimmed the surface. And then he tells me about Soundings by Doreen Cunningham and the gray whale migration, a book he's reading on his journey between Scotland and Denmark.





### **Notes from *The Perch*** (continued)

The book carriers from Oregon wanted to explore Rømø in Denmark. Where we got side-tracked trying to find the whale fence the lady at the tourist info told us about. Whale fence? I was imagining something huge, intricate, interwoven, and artistic on a windswept dune island. “You’ll miss it if you drive too fast,” she added. She had us hooked. Was it small after all?

It was long, low-slung, and from the 18th century, built from the sawn mandible of a bowhead whale and topped by a frequently rebuilt handrail-type board. While the bone has simply turned to stone.

Next door, an old farmhouse-turned-museum houses the skeleton of a sperm whale inside the old barn. A sign of cultural shifts since the generations who had lived and worked in this old building were of a time when whales were seen as resources to be harvested – for their oil, whalebone (baleen) or teeth. And, in some cultures, for their flesh. It wouldn’t have occurred to them that future generations might hang a skeleton of such a wild creature in their barn where they used to keep their livestock and grain, and charge admission to see it.

Re-printed from [Birgit’s blog post](#), July 23, 2023



Sperm Whale Skeleton, Denmark

### **Calendar:**

Saturday, August 5, 10 am: New Volunteer Orientation, Slack Tide Café.

Monday, August 7, 6 pm: Pinniped Press zoom meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85045100225>

Wednesday, August 9, 10 am: Docent’s Meeting at The Crow’s Nest

Sunday, August 20, 4 – 6 pm: All volunteer party, Slack Tide Café. This will be a potluck provided by volunteers with beer and wine that has been donated. We will also have a short meeting and mostly party.

Wednesday, August 23, 6 pm: Science Talk with Alison Cebula, Hiding in Plain Sight: The Western Snowy Plover.

Saturday, August 26: Great Day in Elk parade

Friday, September 1, 9 am: Mussel collection at low tide. Meet at Enchanted trail head, just past Del Mar Montessori school.

Monday, September 4, noon: Paul Bunyan Day parade. Let's have a float this year!

Saturday, September 23, 10 am – noon: California Coastal Cleanup Day, Noyo Harbor beach

### **The Pinniped Press team:**

Sharon Bowers, Dobie Dolphin, Wendi Felson, Linda Francis, Jeff Jacobsen, Nancy Lloyd, Peggy Martin, Toni Rizzo, Jim Rolfe, Teresa Skarr, Donna Worster with Sarah Grimes, and Trey Petrey.

If you have photo or writing skills, have a particular idea for an article, want to join a great group, or send a letter to the editor please write [editor@noyocenter.org](mailto:editor@noyocenter.org)