



The Pinniped Press

A Newsletter by and for Volunteers of the Noyo Center for Marine Science

Articles in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the Noyo Center for Marine Science.

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Volunteer Opportunities

- The Events Committee is now meeting every second Saturday at 10 am at the Field Station. All are invited to attend to help make plans for and participate in upcoming events. Or just come to find out what is going on.
- March 16th and 17th is Fort Bragg's Whale Festival weekend. We are planning activities to celebrate the gray whale migration happening right off our coast, including Whale Walks, Slack Tide Café popups, special Field Station and Discovery Center exhibits, Science Talks, school tours and much more. We will need extra volunteers to help in all sorts of ways.
- The Beach Survey Program has a few more locations needing a surveyor. If you could take a beach or bluff as the regular surveyor or share surveys with someone else or just be an on-call surveyor, we can use you.
- Do you have fresh story ideas or would like to write for the Pinniped Press? Contact us at editor@noyocenter.org

For more information or to volunteer
contact Wendi Felson at wendi@noyocenter.org

Who to call?

If you find:

A live marine mammal:

The Marine Mammal Center
(415) 289-7325

A dead marine mammal:

Sarah Grimes
Noyo Center Stranding Coordinator
(707) 813-7925

Injured birds:

The Bird Rescue Center
(707) 523-2473

Most other wildlife:

Wild Life Rescue
(707) 526-9453

2023 Volunteer Roundup

Wendi Felson

Over 100 of you volunteered almost 5700 hours of your time, dedication, and thoughtful input towards the success of the Noyo Center for Marine Science. Each year we get closer to making our Ocean Science Center a reality on the Noyo headlands. Volunteers have been busy doing everything this last year from washing dishes at the Slack Tide Café to educating kids and the public at summer camps, the Crow's Nest or the Discovery Center. We clean our beaches and survey marine mammals every two weeks. And, participating and promoting the Noyo Center at everything from Whale Festival walks to Paul Bunyan Day parades. We have volunteers who have been with the Noyo Center since we began working with volunteers nine years ago.

Here are your amazing hours of service for this last year by category:

Administration:	64 hours
Beach Cleanups:	136 hours
Beach Response:	524 hours
Beach Surveys:	1,145 hours
Crow's Nest Docent:	1,268 hours
Discovery Center Docent:	171 hours
Education Programs:	86 hours
Events:	503 hours
Fundraising:	196 hours
Gardening:	25 hours
Graphic Design:	10 hours
Pinniped Press:	323 hours
Red Tide:	66 hours
Science Talks:	43 hours
Slack Tide Café:	941 hours
Specimen Collection/Articulation:	23 hours
Continuing Education:	65 hours
Whale Festival:	105 hours
Total for 2023:	5,694 hours

Total Volunteers: 111

New Volunteers: 34

2022 Total Volunteer hours: 5,609

2023 Years of Service:

Volunteers with over 9 years: Charlene McAllister, David Alden, Peggy Martin.

Volunteers with 8 years: Donna Worster, Wendi Felson, Tony Boyd, Carin Berzolheimer, Mary Ellen Campbell.

Volunteers with 7 years: Sharen Parker.

Volunteers with 6 years: Kianna Zielesch, Mark Swigert.

Volunteers with 5 years: Alix Phillips, Will Roberts, Randi Roberts, Mo Gamma.



Dania Stoneham and Alix Phillips at the Noyo Center summer fundraising concert in Cleone



Donna Worster with a Crow's Nest hat

2023 Volunteer Roundup - continued

A special shoutout to:

- Sara Sundberg for her 640 hours with the Beach Stranding team.
- Donna Worster with the most volunteer hours doing just about everything at 726 hours.
- Alix Phillips for her 312 hours and she is only in Fort Bragg half the year.
- Toni Rizzo for stepping up as Pinniped Press editor.
- Mary Jackson for coordinating and training an excellent Whale Walk team.
- Anna Antonowich for doing her surveys in a kayak on the Noyo River.
- Dania Stoneham for her excellent baking skills at the Slack Tide Café.
- Mary Beth Arago and her team of Michael Arago and Heidi Balderass for 284 hours of beach surveys.
- Carin Berzolheimer for her contributions to the financial success of the Noyo Center no matter where in the world she and Mark are.
- Tony Boyd for helping to keep the Crow's Nest aquarium clean and the critters fed.
- Royce and Mary Meline for allowing the Noyo Center to use their beautiful property to throw a fundraising concert.
- All our volunteers for all you do!



Noyo Center's float in the Paul Bunyan Day parade.



Tidepool aquarium at The Crow's Nest

Beach Survey Program

Wendi Felson

At the Pinniped Press, along with our awesome volunteers, we want to highlight some of the Noyo Center's ongoing programs. Of all the great things the Noyo Center does, my personal favorite is the Beach Survey Program (BSP), and I was lucky enough recently to catch Sarah Grimes, staff member heading up this program, for a short interview. But mostly I'm lucky because I have an amazing stretch of beach near Virgin Creek that I get to survey every two weeks.

"What I love most is that you never know what you will see on the ocean and it's always new and different."

Michelle MacPherson, Blues Beach

The Beach Survey Program is a bimonthly monitoring of beaches and/or bluffs from Westport-Union Landing to Elk/Greenwood. It can include over 45 different locations we regularly survey by our 38 volunteer surveyors. Surveyors follow a set protocol, as this is an effort-based study. For new surveyors, there is an orientation, short training, and beach walk before they begin. When each survey is complete a data sheet is filled out and turned in.

Beach Survey Program – continued

I am entering my third year doing surveys and I survey Caspar Beach. It is wonderful to participate in something that proves together we can make things better. The idea that in the relatively recent past there was little or no bull kelp left along our coast and now I go out and some days get into the hundreds of strands before I stop counting. The effort that Sarah Grimes has made to help me understand the importance of bull kelp to our local marine life really made me think about what I see on my surveys. Also, I use it as a justification to drink more Stellar IPAs!

John Matthews, Caspar Beach

Before there was a BSP, Sarah Grimes would make stops all along the Mendocino coast on her way from one place to another and do a quick check for stranded marine mammals. In 2015 it was Moe Flannery, Ornithology and Mammalogy Collection Manager with the California Academy of Sciences, who suggested to Sarah that a concerted report on deceased marine mammals from this area would be of value. Thus, the idea of the BSP was started. Many meetings, practice beach surveys and data sheet versions later, the first official surveys were started in May 2021.



Data sheet and other materials for surveys

My favorite part of the survey is the 15-minute sit. This past year has been pretty tough, and the shoreline always reminds me that change is inevitable. So, after a while my view expands and I'm so grateful. I see the gulls who wait all year for the creek to open to the sea and they have a bit of time to body surf the little waves. I see the river otters who have returned, and the new caves being carved into the cliff.

Denise Mattos, Pudding Creek beach and bluffs

So, what exactly is being surveyed? The main goal is to look for marine mammals on our beaches. If they are dead, Sarah (707-813-7925) is notified. She works closely with Cal Academy to collect any samples that might aid in determining cause of death, to add to their collection or samples that may become part of the Noyo Center's collection. Noyo Center has now contributed over 250 specimens to the research collection at CAS. Prior to the BSP program there were few animals from Mendocino County in the federal catalog. If the animal is in distress, our surveyors immediately contact the Marine Mammal Center in Sausalito (415-289-SEAL), which will initiate a team to access and if necessary, rescue the animal. When marine mammals seen on or off the beach are healthy, we document the numbers and species and stay out of their way.

I've participated as a BSP volunteer assigned to Navarro Beach since January 2022, along with my two sons (now ages 6 and 9) and my husband. We are so grateful for this opportunity. Serving as a BSP volunteer has given us a chance to form a deeper connection with our local coastline, and it feels good to know that we are contributing data that will ultimately help scientists better understand and support coastal ecosystems.

Noor Dawood, Navarro Beach

We also count bull kelp on beaches, noting numbers, if juveniles, and reproductive spore packets seen as part of monitoring any increase in offshore kelp recovery numbers. We check for any unusual sightings, such as large numbers of invertebrates, river otters, etc. And we pick up trash.

I love returning to the same beach to notice the wildlife and the wild ocean. It's my chance to pause and explore the ecosystem. I also love picking up ocean debris. It's a small thing I can do to keep our beaches tidy, and also foster connections with global efforts to reduce ocean plastics pollution.

Karen Lewis, Albion beach

Beach Survey Program – continued

When asked if Sarah felt like the BSP was fulfilling its goals, she responded enthusiastically that it was “beyond” her expectations. She appreciates that the surveyors are getting to know their survey location and documenting over time any changes, that the experience is meaningful to the surveyors, and that we have very clean beaches.

I think I have been surveying Pudding Creek beach and pocket beaches for over a year. The most obvious benefit to the local ecosystem is the removal of litter as well as speaking with visitors about what we do and what they can watch for. I've found so many people from the Sacramento area and east who are already knowledgeable about kelp and eager to learn more.

Denise Mattos, Pudding Creek beach and bluffs

“But the part I celebrate” Sarah notes, “is we have reached our goal of checking twice monthly for marine mammals along the Mendocino coast. Several times, the survey program has found deceased animals that have become part of scientific research. A surveyor has found one of only three female deceased California Sea Lions (*Zalophus californianus*) reported in our area. On another survey, a California sea lion with osteofluorosis has now become the subject of a recent scientific paper.”

My favorite part about doing surveys is spending time outside close to the ocean—it's invigorating and relaxing at the same time. I survey Hare Creek (Babcock) Beach, which is nice because I can walk there from my house.

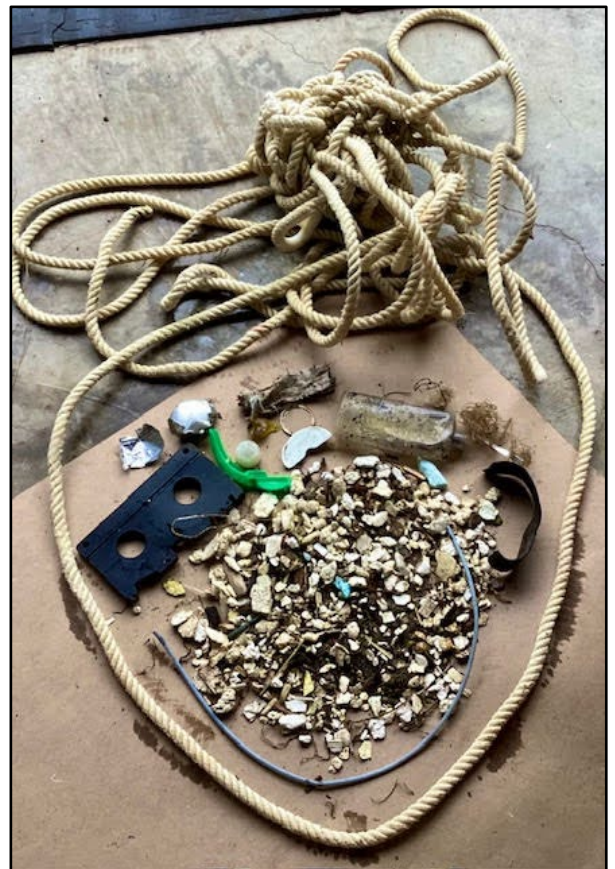
Teresa Skarr, Hare Creek beach

While the BSP has been a great success we could use a few more volunteers to ensure that every beach is always surveyed every two weeks. If you are a surveyor and would like to be on-call to cover for a surveyor who is sick or on vacation, please let me know. Or if you are interested in joining the BSP team, we can use you as we still have a few locations that need a surveyor. Please contact wendi@noyocenter.org

For me, it is important to contribute to the development of a science-based community asset in a remote area with environmental significance (the kelp forest die off and urchin explosion that was occurring when I moved here 7 years back...my first volunteer effort was counting and measuring urchin data on the docks.)

In addition, since I tend to isolate myself in my little hideaway, the involvement in the BSP created a source of community connection and relationship with people who value marine science. Events! Lectures! Parties! Work crews at Carine's!!

Kate Bean, Laguna Point South



Kate Bean's, treasure trove of micro and macro trash

Are Humpback Whales Making a Comeback?

Dobie Dolphin

One of the showoffs of the sea, Humpback whales are often seen leaping out of the water (breaching), slapping the surface of the water with their massive pectoral fins and in general putting on quite a show. Their long pectoral fins average one third of the whale's body length, to more than 15 feet, the longest pectoral fins of any species of cetacean. Humpback tail (fluke) patterns are unique, as distinctive as human fingerprints, which has enabled scientists to identify and monitor individual whales and whale groups since the 1970's. Some humpback tails have a V-notch while others are up to 20 feet straight across. Southern Hemisphere humpbacks have more abundant amounts of white markings than their Northern counterparts.



Photo: Ron LeValley

The humpback migration is one of the longest known for any mammal on the planet, as far as 5,000 miles during each one-way journey. They feed in cold plankton rich waters and move to the tropics to give birth. Their haunting songs last from 10-20 minutes, but can be repeated for hours, with the lowest frequency sounds traveling up to 10,000 miles through the ocean.

Humpbacks feed on krill and small schooling fish, straining huge amounts of water through their baleen plates, fringed overlapping sieves that hang from both sides of their jaw. In order to store enough blubber to sustain them during winter migrations, they eat up to 2,000 pounds of food daily. They can live for 90 years with females giving birth to one calf every 2 to 3 years.

Before the hunting of humpbacks was banned by the International Whaling Commission in 1966, commercial whaling reduced their population by more than 95%. The last whaling station in the U.S. operated out of San Francisco Bay until 1970. When active, the station was manned by a crew of 40 men who boasted they could reduce a humpback whale to oil, poultry meal, and pet food in an hour and a half. The station's boats hauled in an average of 175 finbacks, humpbacks, and sperm whales a year. The commission placed a moratorium on commercial hunting of all whales worldwide in 1986, although a few countries still hunt whales.

Humpback whales are also protected under both the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Today, humpback whales are listed as "least concern" according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species. There are estimated to be about 84,000 mature individuals with numbers increasing.

In 1904, Norwegian explorer Carl Anton Larsen landed in South Georgia, a remote island, roughly 3,000 miles east of the tip of South America. Within 12 years, whalers stationed on the island had slaughtered 24,000 humpbacks. "The whalers absolutely exterminated them," says Jennifer Jackson, a marine ecologist and whale biologist with the British Antarctic Survey.

In 1966, whaling finally ceased on the island and afterward, humpbacks were rarely seen. But starting about a decade ago, humpbacks began to show up again, and their numbers have kept increasing. According to a recent study led by Jackson, the species has recovered to near pre-whaling levels in Cumberland Bay on South Georgia Island.

Most of the humpbacks that feed around South Georgia migrate from the coast of Brazil, where they breed during the winter. Since the first survey in 2002, whale numbers here have ballooned from about 3,400 to 25,000. In contrast, the Oceania population, which moves north along New Caledonia, remains listed as endangered on the IUCN red list and shows no recovery trend.

Are Humpback Whales Making a Comeback? – continued

Along the northern Pacific coast of Colombia, Natalia Botero Acosta, who works for the non-profit Macuáticos Colombia Foundation, has been tracking a group at both ends of their migration. Genetic data show the whales feed almost exclusively on krill along the western coast of the Antarctic peninsula, and photographs of flukes and fins have helped her to identify 850 individuals that come north to breed.

The smallest and most isolated group of humpbacks live in the Arabian Sea. These whales are genetically distinct from other humpbacks, and estimates suggest that they've remained isolated from other populations for over 70,000 years. They don't migrate.

Globally, humpback whales have recovered to about 70 percent of their pre-whaling population size and they have shown remarkable capacity to adapt to change. In the Southern Hemisphere, there are seven distinct populations, all embarking on long migrations in search of food in Antarctic waters. The number of humpbacks migrating along Australia's eastern and western coastlines has been climbing, despite regular lean years, and in March, 2022, the country removed them from its list of threatened species.

"We know that population has reached 40,000 or more," Wally Franklin from the Oceania Project said. "We believe the numbers are now getting close to what we call carrying capacity, when the number of whales born equals the number of whales that die of natural causes each year." Dr Franklin has researched humpback whales for more than 30 years. He said the recovery of the mammal's population is "remarkable."

Closer to home, humpbacks are reappearing in the Salish Sea, the inland sea that encompasses Puget Sound, the San Juan Islands and includes the cities of Seattle and Vancouver BC. The area spans from Olympia, Washington in the south to the Campbell River, British Columbia in the north.

"You never saw them," said Joe Gaydos, science director for the SeaDoc Society, a science and education nonprofit based on Orcas Island. "Now they are showing up in places where they had not been seen since the 1900s." It's a reminder, Gaydos said, of how policies to protect and preserve animals and their habitats can make a difference.

Along with the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act, other environmental laws, including the Clean Water Act, as well as modern sewage treatment have made for cleaner water, and more abundant life in the Salish Sea. "It didn't used to be this way; we did something right," Gaydos said. "It is important to remember and celebrate the victories."

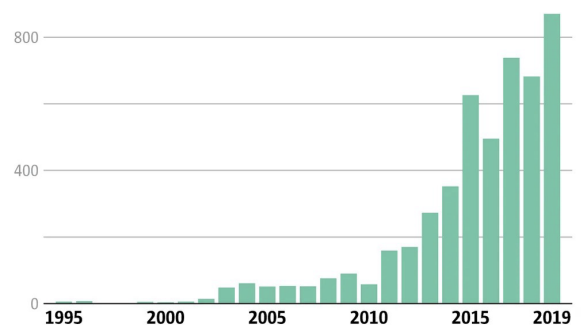
John Calambokidis, a senior research biologist and a founder of the Cascadia Research Collective in Olympia, studied humpbacks for nearly 40 years. With other researchers he assembled a photo catalog of thousands of humpbacks, uniquely identifiable by marks on their flukes. "Seeing just two humpbacks in Puget Sound was noteworthy in the 1980s," Calambokidis said.

Today, the number of humpbacks has grown by an order of magnitude from about 500 on the West Coast to more than 5,000, including about 2,000 in Washington and southern B.C. waters. Not only have humpbacks returned to the Salish Sea but are also feeding on krill and fish offshore of the mouths of the Columbia River and San Francisco Bay.

It is estimated that before commercial whaling began, whales ate an unfathomable 430 million metric tons of krill every year, or twice as much as all the krill in the ocean today. The whales' disappearance should have left a huge krill surplus. Instead, the opposite happened: The krill population collapsed by more than 80 percent because the missing whales no longer returned nutrients to the ocean in the form of iron-rich excrement that acted as manure, stimulating the growth of algae, krill food. Already, humpback whale populations in the northeast Pacific are adapting to life without krill by switching to anchovy.

Humpback whales rebound in the Pacific Northwest

Public sightings of humpback whales in the Salish Sea have increased almost every year since 2011.



*Normalized by date and latitude to remove duplicates

Source: Miller 2020, BCCSN, Orca Network, CRC-logs, Whale Museum

FIONA MARTIN / THE SEATTLE TIMES

Are Humpback Whales Making a Comeback? – continued

Humpbacks Still Face Many Threats

While humpbacks' natural predators include sharks and killer whales, humans remain the primary source of mortality, from entanglement in fishing gear, boat strikes, pollution, and vessel-based harassment from whale-watching vessels or recreational boats. Over time ships have gotten bigger and faster to the point where many captains that hit whales don't even realize it. Most ship strikes go unreported, the whales sinking to the bottom.

Climate change, including warming oceans and melting sea ice affects the number of krill available for the whales. The early larval stages of these small shrimp-like animals live on the underside of sea ice, grazing on algae to fuel their development into ocean-swarming adults. Fluctuations in sea ice cover can change krill stocks. During years with less sea ice, the under-ice nursery shrinks and produces less krill. Even a marginal drop in krill abundance produces ripple effects along the food web.

During marine heat waves, as humpbacks move closer to shore to find food, entanglements and ship strikes increase. On both the East and West Coasts, crab and lobster fishermen are seeing their fishing seasons shrink over concerns that whales are getting entangled in the long ropes attached to their gear, accidents that often end up injuring or killing the animals.

One solution to whale entanglement is on demand fishing, including Pop-up Buoys, Inflatable Lift Bags and Buoyant Spools. On-demand gear development continues to evolve with the help of industry. More about that in a future article.

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California King Tides Project: A Call to Action

Peggy Martin

[The California King Tides Project](#), organized by the California Coastal Commission, asks citizen volunteers to help the state keep track of the changing coastline by taking and uploading photos and video to document the changing tides—particularly during king tides. King tides give us an opportunity to see what average water levels might look like as sea level rises. The photos become valuable information that can be used by researchers and decision makers to help us prepare our communities for the future and provide a record of change for future generations.

The next opportunity to participate in the California King Tide Project is on February 9, 2024. Take your photos as near the time of high tide as you can. High tide at Noyo Harbor in Fort Bragg will be at 9:53 AM. Mendocino Bay at 9:54 AM.

Learn how to upload your photos via a web browser or with a free app [HERE](#).

Join Mendocino Land Trust to take king tide photos as you hike a loop around the Trestle Bridge. For more information go to [King Tides Project in Mendocino County](#).



Photo: [Todd Cravens](#) (Unsplash)

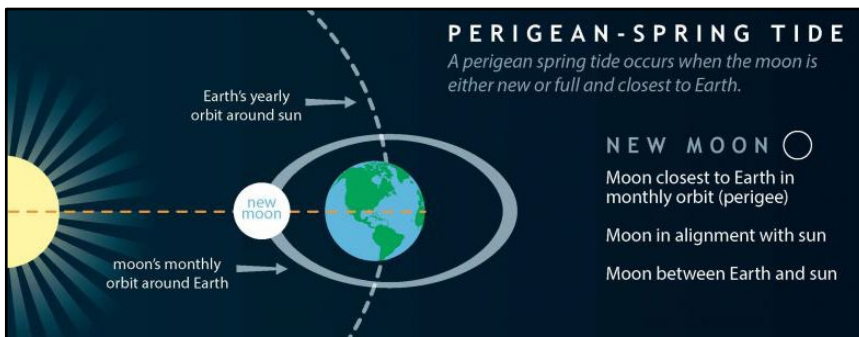
California King Tides Project - continued

So, what are king tides? According to NOAA, “A king tide is a non-scientific term people often use to describe exceptionally high tides.” The term is generally used to describe the most extreme tides of the year. In most coastal areas, high tides occur twice a day, king tides occur only a few times a year.

Being astronomical in nature, king tides are predictable events. Tides are caused by the gravitational forces of the moon and the sun. Due to its proximity to earth, the moon’s gravitational pull is about twice as strong as that of the sun. When the earth, moon, and sun are near alignment, we get a new moon (moon between the sun and the earth) and a full moon (earth between the moon and the sun). This alignment, roughly twice a month, causes an increase in the gravitational pull causing high tides that are called spring tides. Since the earth is closer to one edge of the moon’s elliptical (oval) orbit than the other, when a full moon or new moon occurs near the moon’s closest approach to the earth (its perigee) we get king tides, higher than normal spring tides. This happens about three or four times a year.



King Tide, Fort Bragg, January 21, 2023
Photo: Peggy Martin



Oceanservice.noaa.gov

The King Tides Project was originally formed as a public engagement program in Australia, in 2009, after experiencing its highest seasonal tides in almost 20 years. The California King Tides Project was launched in the winter of 2010/2011 by a partnership of state and federal agencies and non-profit organizations and is now part of a global network of King Tide Initiatives along both coasts of the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and Asia.

Fun Facts:

- Spring tides are **not** named for the season. It is spring in the sense of jump, burst forth, rise. [Website](#)
- King tides bring the most extreme high tides **and** low tides, a time to explore tidepools. [Tidepool etiquette.](#)
- When the full moon or new moon occurs near the moon’s closest approach to earth (its perigee) it is often called a supermoon. [Website](#)
- February 9th’s moon is a supermoon, but we will not see it because it is the new moon, when the side facing the earth is in darkness.
- Discrepancies relating to the definition and frequency of king tides can be seen in the different king tide initiatives. (The King Tide Conundrum)
- You can view an excellent video on king tides [HERE](#)

And, some food for thought from California Coastal Commission: [climate change, sea level rise, and king tides](#). “Snap the Shore, See the Future”

Resources

King Tides: A Cosmic Phenomenon. Sea Grant California. 2023 [Website](#)

Coastal Flooding in California. National Ocean Service. 2015 [Website](#)

About the King Tides Project. California Coastal Commission. [Website](#)

Roman-Rivera MA, Ellis JT. The King Tide Conundrum. Journal of Coastal Research:34. BioOne Digital Library. 2018 [Website](#)

Here Come the Big Waves: King Tides to Hit San Diego Beaches. NBC San Diego .2023 [Website](#)

How and When to Experience King Tides. Flows to Bay. 2021. [Website](#)

F/V Western Flyer

From Poop Deck News; week of January 25, 2024
Donna Worster

In 1940, writer John Steinbeck and biologist Ed Ricketts chartered the fishing vessel *Western Flyer* for a six-week exploration of Mexico's Gulf of California. The boat was used by Steinbeck and Ricketts to “collect and preserve the marine invertebrates of the littoral” (littoral means situated on a shore of the sea or a lake). The idea for this journey was to observe the distribution of invertebrates, to see and to record their kinds and numbers, how they lived together, what they ate and how they reproduced. I was more interested in the boat than the journey, so I started my investigation on the *Western Flyer* and that was



Photo: Western Flyer Foundation

short lived—nothing, until I spoke of my quest to learn more about this great adventure to a couple visiting the Crow’s Nest and learned that the story was the subject of the book by Steinbeck titled *The Sea of Cortez* (1941). Within a couple of days of ordering my copy it arrived in the mail. Kinda dry reading but I forged ahead. The next week, I was given a copy of *The Log from The Sea of Cortez* with the admonition to treat it gently as it is fifty years old. I dropped the newer version and started on the older one, which was easier to read and more interesting.



Photo: Western Flyer Foundation

The book opened with, “About Ed Ricketts, the marine biologist, ecologist and philosopher.” The pages ran from vii to lxvii. I have laughed at the dry wit of Steinbeck’s about the antics of his good friend. It started as an obituary to Ed. Ed had an old car and he “tinkered away at the primer until the ancient rusty motor coughed and broke into a bronchial chatter which indicated that it was running...The sound of his motor and gears blotted out every other sound...The Del Monte Express, the evening train from San Francisco slipped around from behind the warehouse and crashed into the old car.” Here’s another excerpt about Ed. “With any new food or animal, he looked, felt, smelled, and tasted. Once in a tide pool we were discussing the interesting fact that nudibranchs, although beautiful and brightly colored and tasty looking and soft and

unweaponed, are never eaten by other animals which should have found them irresistible. He reached under water and picked up a lovely orange colored nudibranch and put it in his mouth. And instantly he made a horrible face and spat and retched, but he had found out why fishes let these living tidbits completely alone.”

After the adventure, the boat returned to fishing for decades, sank, and was in severe disrepair when marine geologist John Gregg purchased it in 2015. Inspired by childhood memories of the book, Gregg launched the Western Flyer Foundation to restore the iconic boat and continue Steinbeck and Ricketts’s legacy of research and education. Today, after seven years of award-winning labor by the shipwrights and craftspeople in Port Townsend, Washington, the *Flyer* is poised to return to Monterey Bay as a floating classroom and lab equipped with state-of-the-art technology. Once in Monterey, it will embark on its next exciting chapter, taking students and scientists on the water to observe, learn, reflect, and create. Noyo Center is looking forward to having the *Western Flyer* visit our area so that students can visit the ship to learn more about oceanography and marine science.

Watch the story about the history and restoration of the *Western Flyer* that aired on CBS [HERE](#).

Volunteer Highlight: Donna Kimball

Linda Francis

Donna was born and raised in Denair, CA, a small Central Valley town of about 4000, situated 15 miles south of Modesto. Fun fact: The town was named for John Denair, a division superintendent for the Santa Fe railroad and landowner who fought in the battle of Gettysburg and was one of Lincoln's bodyguards.

Donna was the youngest of six kids and grew up in an ag community rich with tree crops and dairy farms. After graduating from college in Modesto, Donna worked for nearly a decade in dental office management in the Turlock/Modesto area. She married, moved to Modesto and had two boys eighteen months apart and began a cherished time in her life as a stay-at-home Mom for 15 years, during which time the family moved back to Denair.

In the early 2000's she reentered the workforce after meeting a florist in Turlock who needed someone to do her books. The job soon expanded to include floral design. Her first marriage having ended, she subsequently met Jim Kimball who owned a building located next to the floral shop where she was working as a designer. While he lived and worked as a commercial and residential real estate broker in the bay area, he was in Turlock several days a week and the relationship blossomed.

In 2007 she began working for an optometric group in Turlock and in 2010 moved to Danville to join Jim, got her real estate license and worked in Jim's brokerage handling property management and coordinating tenant improvements in a large medical office building that Jim co-owned and managed. She and Jim married in 2012.

Donna and Jim traveled up and down the CA coast for weekend get-aways always with an eye toward moving to the coast someday. They heard about MacKerricher State Park, stayed there in their motor home for a long weekend, discovered Fort Bragg, immediately fell in love with the town, and knew they'd found their new home. They made an offer on the second house they looked at, an older property needing work but with good bones with spectacular ocean views. Forty-five days later they moved from the hot Central Valley to Fort Bragg and never looked back.

Meanwhile both of Donna's sons graduated from Cal and live in the Bay Area. Taylor, now 39, works in tech for a Microsoft-owned company called Viva Engage. Ryan is 38 and an architect. While chatting with Ryan one day Donna mentioned that the Noyo Center was currently taking proposals for work on the Ocean Research Center. Ryan's firm, EHDD specializes in this type of work, so they sent a representative to Fort Bragg to discuss the project. EHDD ended up winning the contract. Donna looks forward to seeing Ryan more often as the project moves forward. Donna also has a stepdaughter and two granddaughters who live in Boise.

Donna is a voracious reader, loves to cook and likes getting her hands dirty in the garden. She has finally achieved success at growing tomatoes on the coast!

Donna got involved with the Noyo Center when she stopped by the Slack Tide Café and saw the help wanted sign. She didn't want a job but was happy to come and wash dishes as a volunteer a couple days a week. She loved the atmosphere and doing volunteer work that is hands on/boots on the ground. Since the café closed, she has helped build the Paul Bunyan Day float and is now doing beach surveys at Virgin Creek Beach. She loves the Noyo Center for the great people she's met, the citizen scientist opportunities, and it matches her love of the ocean and all its critters. Donna also loves to dance, so find her rocking out with Jim at one of the many venues in town, or even on the deck of the Field Station.



What Washed In

Nancy Lloyd

Our marine mammal rescue team led by Sarah Grimes reports that the strong king tides and surf washed some dead marine mammals far inland. One dead California sea lion was found a quarter mile from the ocean, all the way up a creek!

Near Manchester State Park, a female striped dolphin was found stranded and apparently dead from *Brucella* bacteria, which can also be transmitted to humans and other mammals, so the team had to be extra careful handling the specimen. Sarah's marine mammal team had to hike about 3 miles with all their gear, through rough weather and up the creek with headlamps, to complete the pathology review of this striped dolphin and carry back the skull and other key bones for California Academy of Science.

In case you missed the December 2023 presentation, here is the video of Sarah Grimes presenting the [Washed Ashore Year-End Review](#)



Ocean Plastic Art

Wendi Felson

Around the world, artists are collecting plastic trash from beaches and creating fantastic art sculptures. Not only are they creating beautiful art, but they are drawing attention to the horrible problem of the danger and ugliness of all the waste in our oceans. Anyone want to start a plastic art project from their beach survey finds? I've been saving interesting pieces from my surveys.



Tess Felix's "Mermaid" will be on display at the Discovery Center beginning in May, alongside a new exhibit on plastics. Felix is a Marin based artist, creating mosaics from plastic debris, a playful response to a serious issue – the perilous state of the ocean and our marine life.

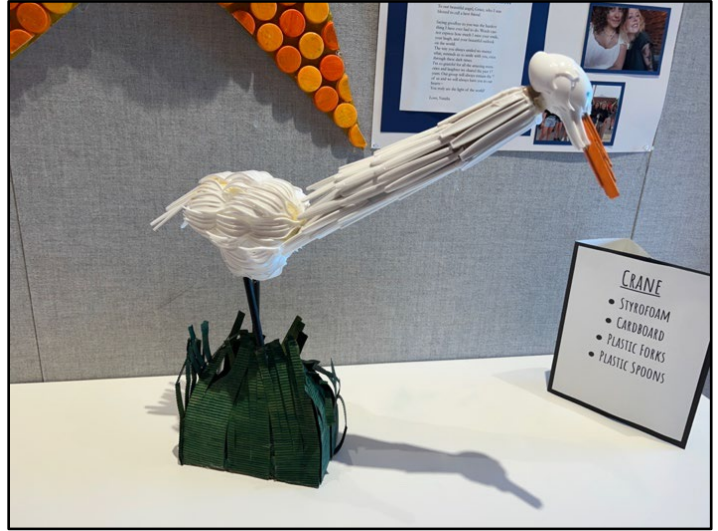


Jones Beach Energy & Nature Center. Photo by Toni Rizzo

Ocean Plastic Art - continued



Jones Beach Energy & Nature Center. Photo by Toni Rizzo



Jones Beach Energy & Nature Center. Photo by Toni Rizzo

Here are a few links to web sites or videos of artists creating art from plastic waste from our oceans. This is just a small taste of the artists and organizations out there:

[Washed Ashore](#)

[Tess Felix](#)

["Skyscraper"](#)

[Plastic Bottle Sculptures](#)

[Transforming Ocean Trash Into Art](#)



"Skyscraper (The Bruges Whale)"
STUDIO KCA, Belgium



Washed Ashore Project

News and Notes

Americorp's North Coast Opportunities for Volunteers 55+

We have been invited to participate in North Coast Opportunities, Inc. RSVP program. The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program is part of Americorp and helps to find placements at select nonprofits. By signing up with NCO, Inc. you may be eligible for additional insurance coverage for your time volunteering with the Noyo Center. For more information or to sign up, contact Wendi Felson at wendi@noyocenter.org or contact NCO directly at: NCO Volunteer Network Mendocino County

413 North State Street
 Ukiah, CA 95482
volnet.ncoinc.org
 707-462-1959



Calendar

- Saturday, February 3, 10 am: New Volunteer Orientation at the Field Station.
- Monday, February 5, 6 pm: Pinniped Press meeting via zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85648325119>
- Friday, February 9, 9 am: Board of Director's meeting, Field Station.
- Saturday, February 10, 10 am: Events Committee, Field Station.
- Tuesday, February 13, 6 pm: Science Talk: Challenge at the Edge: Climate Change, Sea-Level Rise, and California's Coast by Greg Griggs. Register for the talk [HERE](#).
- Wednesday, February 14, 10 am: Docent's meeting at the Field Station.
- Saturday, February 17, 10 am: Beach Survey Program meeting at the Field Station.

The Pinniped Press team: Dobie Dolphin, Wendi Felson, Linda Francis, Peggy Martin, Donna Worster, Nancy Lloyd, and Toni Rizzo, with Trey Petrey.

If you have photo or writing skills or have a particular idea for an article, want to join a great group, or send a letter to the editor, write to Toni at: editor@noyocenter.org



[Wahed Ashore Project](#)