

Solar Powered  
Sea Odyssey



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A Fighting Chance  
for Sea Otters

# odyssey NEWS

## Solar Powered Sea Odyssey

BY LAURA BARNES WALKER, EDUCATION COORDINATOR

OSO is a hands-on program and it's important to our staff and board that we run our organization with integrity and put our own lessons into practice. We teach kids to be environmental stewards, so we feel that it is important to be environmental stewards ourselves.

In 2009 O'Neill Sea Odyssey received a grant from the Ludwick Family Foundation of Glendora, California to install solar panels on the OSO classroom at the Santa Cruz Yacht Harbor. Since then OSO has reduced its carbon footprint and saved 28,491 pounds of CO2 from entering the atmosphere.

The ecology curriculum taught during the OSO program highlights the importance of conserving energy in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. When our students are asked to come up with ideas for reducing pollution, they often suggest solar energy as a solution. The OSO instructors tell the students about the solar panels on the roof of the OSO building to show that we are doing our part to reduce our carbon footprint.

OSO was certified as a Green Business by the City of Santa Cruz in 2010, and will be recertified by the city this year. Our recertification process includes an inspection to ensure that we are following guidelines regarding the use of recycled products, energy efficient appliances and non-toxic cleaning products. Even the Team O'Neill Catamaran uses solar and wind power to produce the energy that runs our electronic navigation equipment.

OSO's mission is to provide a hands-on educational experience to encourage the protection and preservation of our living sea and communities. All of us at OSO do our best to run our program in the most environmentally sensitive way possible, so that we can serve as environmental leaders to our students and community. ♦



*Mike "Solar Mike" Aronson, OSO Education Coordinator  
Laura Barnes Walker, and OSO Operations Coordinator Adam Steckley at the last Solar inspection.*

# Thank You

January - March 2013 Contributors

*(Accumulated Giving)*



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## Tip the Ocean and Give Something Back:

Launched September 29th of last year, individuals that go to the Davenport Roadhouse can now add a small tip to their purchase that will go towards benefitting Save Our Shores, O'Neill Sea Odyssey and LivBLUE. These ocean conservation groups focus on three main ideas: keeping our coast clean and healthy,

introducing youth to the ocean as they are the stewards of tomorrow, and raising ocean awareness everywhere. So tip the ocean for all the great memories and adventures that it has given you! It'll thank you one day for it.

Learn more about tipping the ocean at: [www.wallacejnichols.org/245/tip-the-ocean.html](http://www.wallacejnichols.org/245/tip-the-ocean.html) ◆

*("Otters" continued)*

area. Secondly, otter advocates will be able to work on improving conditions in near shore Southern California waters and give population growth a real chance.

Of course these animals don't observe federal boundaries anyway. Several have been spotted off Santa Barbara County and Bernardo Alps, Research Associate with San Pedro's Cabrillo Marine Aquarium, told me he has seen a single otter twice in the Port of Los Angeles in late 2011 and early 2012. Alps also said there was another sighting off San Diego and there are

several otters in Santa Monica Bay and off the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

Their numbers can grow over the next several years, but not without our help.

### On the Net:

Friends of the Sea Otter:  
[www.seaotters.org](http://www.seaotters.org)

The Otter Project  
[www.otterproject.org](http://www.otterproject.org)

*A modified version of this column appeared in the Santa Cruz Sentinel January 19, 2013* ◆

## You Can Make a Lasting Impact

BY JACK, BRIDGET & TIM O'NEILL



Elsewhere in this newsletter, and in every newsletter, is an appeal to you to consider leaving a legacy gift to O'Neill Sea Odyssey. Generous foresight on the part our donors will enable our program to continue into the future.

There are a few ways you can do this. You can name O'Neill Sea Odyssey in your will or estate plan. You can make a gift of stock, real estate or other assets designated to our endowment. Those assets will be put to use for our permanent fund at the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County. You can also earn income with an annuity, with the residual reverting to O'Neill Sea Odyssey.

For more information, you can speak with Dan Haifley at (831) 465-9390 or [dhaifley@oneillseaodyssey.org](mailto:dhaifley@oneillseaodyssey.org). Thank you for your support! ◆

**Terry Medina**, Retired Chief of Police,  
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our future by establishing a permanent endowment fund for OSO which is housed at the Community Foundation for Santa Cruz County.

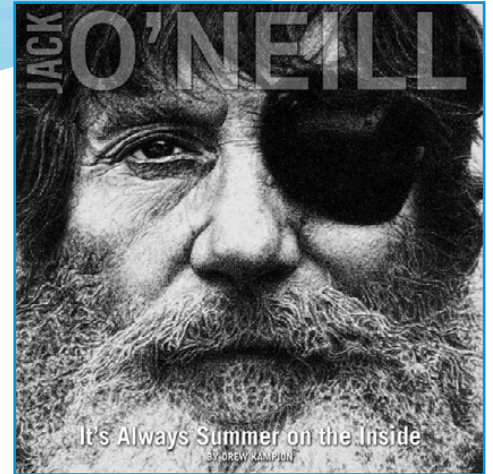
We would like to invite you to help us build a future foundation for our program, for the kids, and for the ocean. You can do this by naming OSO's permanent fund at Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County in your estate plan. There are also many ways to leave a permanent legacy and reap some significant financial benefits before hand, including: a beneficiary designation in your retirement fund or insurance policy, gifts from a will or living trust, an annuity that provides you with lifetime income, gifts of real estate, and charitable trusts.

We would be honored to meet with you to discuss supporting our permanent fund in a way that works best for you. Please contact Dan Haifley at **(831) 465-9390** or at **[dhaifley@oneillseaodyssey.org](mailto:dhaifley@oneillseaodyssey.org)**, or fill out the attached form and mail it to us. Thank you! ♦

## Leave a Legacy for Youth and the Ocean

**Y**ou're part of the reason we're here and you can also be part of the reason we'll be here 100 years from now. Since 1996, O'Neill Sea Odyssey (OSO) has served nearly 75,000 youth with a free, ocean-going science and environment program.

This has been possible in part because you have provided much-needed and deeply appreciated support for OSO's program for area youth. In 2005 OSO's Board of Directors made a commitment to raise funds to ensure



## Autographed Copy of Jack O'Neill: *It's Always Summer on the Inside*

**F**ull of unique, personal stories and photos of the life and times of Jack O'Neill, this beautiful 250 page coffee table book is a rarity, but when coupled with his autograph...wow. With a \$500 donation to the O'Neill Sea Odyssey, you will receive one of these unique books, complete with a letter of authenticity. Originally, this book was sold at retail stores for \$40 and even more than that online. Hurry, because there are just a few remaining! Donate at **[www.oneillseaodyssey.org](http://www.oneillseaodyssey.org)** ♦

## *Ocean Odysseys: Jack O'Neill, Dan Haifley and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary*

**A**n edited oral history of Save Our Shores and O'Neill Sea Odyssey, as told through the eyes of Jack O'Neill, Bridget O'Neill and Dan Haifley has been published in a 156 page paperback by the University of California Santa Cruz. The book retails for \$7.95. Purchase at **[www.oneillseaodyssey.org](http://www.oneillseaodyssey.org)** ♦

### Enrollment Form

- I have named OSO in my estate plan (we will contact you relative to recognition)
- I would like to talk to someone about a gift to OSO in my estate plan
- I wish to learn more about the OSO/Community Foundation's gift annuity program
- I would like the recommended language for including OSO in my estate plan

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send to OSO, 2222 East Cliff Drive, Suite 222; Santa Cruz, CA 95062

# Our Ocean Backyard: Moving South, a Fighting Chance for Sea Otters



BY DAN HAIFLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

After 26 years of a federally-imposed restriction to central coast waters, California's sea otters are now legally allowed to re-occupy part of their historic range from Point Conception in Santa Barbara County south to the Mexican border, giving them a fighting chance to rebuild their population.

Southward migration became legal January 18, 2013 thanks to a string of events set in motion in 2009 when The Otter Project of Monterey and the Environmental Defense Center of Santa Barbara sued the US Fish and Wildlife Service to overturn what was officially called the Southern Sea Otter Translocation Program.



*Photo of sea otter mother and pup taken at Elkhorn Slough by Cindy Tucey.*

Under that plan 140 animals living south of Point Conception were captured by agency employees and carried to San Nicolas Island, an outlier of the California Channel Islands chain. They believed that moving sea otters further offshore would make them less

vulnerable to spills from oil drilling and tanker traffic.

The establishment of a southern outpost was opposed by nearby offshore oil producers, the US Navy which uses the island, and harvesters who compete with the otter for urchins and abalone. In response the fish and wildlife service made the concession of banning them from all other waters south of Point Conception, which became known as the "no otter zone."

But most of the otters abandoned that remote colony and either made the long swim back home, or died trying. That result was foreseen by Dan Miller of Aptos, a retired California Fish and Game biologist and sea otter expert

who sadly passed away in December. He predicted to me that in particular young males would not stay at San Nicolas Island. He was right: of the 140 relocated there, only 11 remained and just a couple dozen are there today.

The story was much different over

three hundred years ago as many as 300,000 sea otters lived in near shore waters off coasts of Japan and Siberia, Alaska and along the western North American coast south to Baja California. In the 1700s they were a prized target of fur hunters and their numbers plummeted.

In the early 1900s their California subspecies, the Southern sea otter, was thought to be extinct until a small group was discovered near Bixby Creek in Big Sur in 1938. Their population grew as they gained influential friends, including the Carmel-based Friends of the Sea Otter, as well as protection under state and federal law.

But their population has recently struggled. A three year average of census counts is used to compensate for the variability that's inevitable when counting mobile animals and by that measure there are now 2,792 of them, mostly in an area that stretches from San Mateo to Santa Barbara counties.

There are many reasons why their population is small and vulnerable. Necropsies on dead otters have revealed diseases from a number of causes, including toxins from inland lakes. Another twenty-two percent of recovered carcasses had signs of fatal shark attacks. Expanding their range is just one more strategy to help get the population to where it could be. Reducing their exposure to natural toxins, predators and pollutants are also necessary to sustain growth in their numbers.

Southern sea otters can have a beneficial effect on kelp forests in southern California if a population takes hold there. They eat sea urchins, thereby limiting the damage they do to kelp mainly by eating away at their connection to the seafloor.

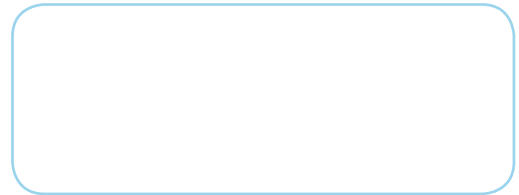
Expanding the allowable range will have two benefits for sea otters. First, they will not be as vulnerable to a catastrophic event such as an oil spill as they would be concentrated in a smaller (*"Otters" continued on inside left page*)



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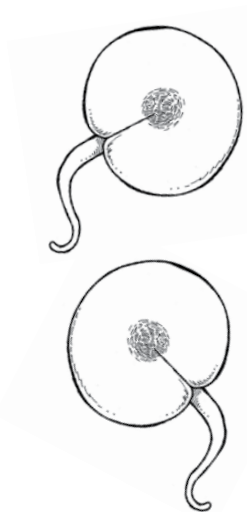


## Noctiluca – Beautiful and Toxic!

BY LAURA BARNES WALKER, OSO EDUCATION COORDINATOR

**A** plankton sample taken during Boulder Creek Elementary School's trip on March 29th was full of Noctiluca Scintillans. Noctiluca are phytoplankton (plant plankton) and are also known as 'sea sparkle' because they are bioluminescent. Although Noctiluca are considered plants, they actually eat other phytoplankton and have no chloroplasts for photosynthesis. This sample was taken near the Santa Cruz

Wharf, and all our plankton samples taken in the last two weeks of March contained significant amounts of Noctiluca. If you go swimming or surfing at night, expect the ocean to glow all around you because of this beautiful bioluminescent dinoflagellate. Although Noctiluca is a naturally occurring species, they are known to emit ammonium during large blooms, which may be toxic to fish. ♦



*Noctiluca Scintillans,  
scientific illustration by  
Chip Street.*



Spring 2013