



Heal the Bay

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# currents



## Coastal Cleanup Day

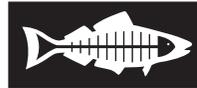
Sacking One-use Plastic Bags

Bob Hertz: Our Super-volunteer

The Beach Report Card Goes Mobile

# currents

current(s) adj or n 1: belonging to the present time 2: a movement of water in a certain direction 3: the prevailing public opinion or belief 4: the newsletter of Heal the Bay



Heal the Bay.

Heal the Bay is a nonprofit environmental organization dedicated to making Southern California coastal waters and watersheds, including Santa Monica Bay, safe, healthy and clean. We use research, education, community action and advocacy to pursue our mission.

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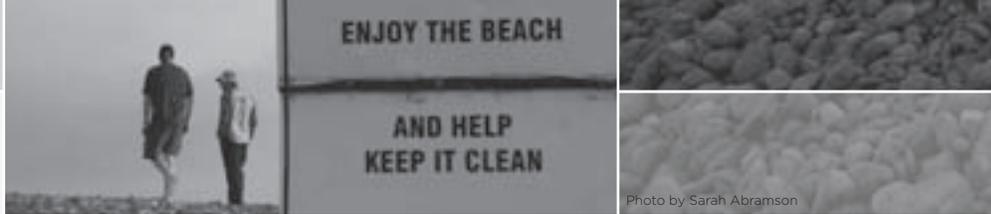


Photo by Sarah Abramson

# Border Blues

Mark Gold gains some perspective after a shocking visit to the Tijuana River watershed

**150** miles. That's the distance between the Santa Monica Bay and the majestic Guadalupe Dunes to the north and the stark Salton Sea to the east. And just 150 miles south of Santa Monica is where the sewage meets the sea in Imperial Beach, one of the most polluted shorelines along California's coast.

Imperial Beach is polluted year after year due to a 1,700-square-mile watershed that drains runoff from the bustling Mexican border cities of Tecate and Tijuana and numerous American horse ranches and farms into the Tijuana River Estuary. This incredibly productive estuary and coastal salt marsh drains directly to the shore just south of Imperial Beach.

Heal the Bay's science and policy staff recently took an eye-opening tour of the watershed, accompanied by Stanford professor Alexandra Boehm, Ben McCue of the environmental group WildCoast, and Oscar Romo from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

After crossing the border, we visited Goat Canyon and saw a densely populated community of nearly 75,000 people with negligible sewage infrastructure and woefully inadequate flood control. We saw polluted runoff mixed with sewage flowing in the dirt streets. The canyon drains directly into the enormous sedimentation basins designed to capture sediment from the 50-year storm. These basins were overtopped during our record rain year in 2005, resulting in large sediment-laden flows that smothered part of the Tijuana River Estuary.

Sewage treatment problems in the Tijuana area resemble those in Santa Monica Bay about 50 years ago. About 25 million gallons per day is given primary treatment

(screening and settling) at the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (IWTP) in the United States. The effluent is discharged three miles offshore through the South Bay Ocean Outfall. The discharge fails to meet the full secondary treatment (biological) requirements of the Clean Water Act. Until the IWTP and outfall were built in 1999, massive volumes of raw sewage were routinely discharged directly into the Tijuana River. This foul mixture flowed to Imperial Beach, posing an enormous health hazard to swimmers and surfers alike.

Another 30 million gallons per day of Tijuana sewage is treated a few miles south of Tijuana at the San Antonio Plant, just north of Punta Bandera. This plant treats about half of the sewage to a secondary treatment level equivalent to advanced primary in the United States. The rest is given primary treatment.

However, that's not even the beginning of the shocking news. The wastewater is discharged into a gully that flows directly to the beach!

The overwhelming stench of the sewage on the beach nearly bowled over our group. But the aromas paled in comparison to the sight of an enormous near-shore sewage slick that attracted thousands of feeding seabirds and a pod of bottlenose dolphin. The organic material from the sewage was clearly serving as fish food, which in turn fed the pelicans, cormorants, terns and dolphins.

This all occurred on a beach directly adjacent to Donald Trump's luxury coastal development now under construction. No one should swim within five miles of that discharge, let alone live right on top of that polluted beach!

We wouldn't have learned about these conditions without the generous donation of time and knowledge from Oscar and Ben. The experience made me realize that 150 short miles away are beach cities with problems long since solved by the city of Los Angeles, the L.A. County Sanitation Districts, Heal the Bay, the EPA, the state and others. We may still have enormous urban runoff problems, but the days of raw or poorly treated sewage discharged to our beaches on a daily basis are long gone.

There has been outrage over the beach water quality problems in Imperial Beach and Tijuana for over 15 years. Despite the efforts of the Mexican government, California state officials, three U.S. presidential administrations, the cities of San Diego and Imperial Beach, Surfrider Foundation, San Diego Coastkeeper and WildCoast, the ocean there still poses an unacceptable public health risk to residents, swimmers and surfers.

The enormous sewer infrastructure and treatment problems will take years to solve, given the governmental complexities and booming population growth of the north Baja Coast, especially Tijuana (300,000 to over 2 million in 35 years). However, the status quo is simply unacceptable to the millions impacted by these problems — as it once was for those hurt by pollution in Santa Monica Bay so many years ago.

Mark Gold  
President,  
Heal the Bay



# Beach Bulletin

By Polly Barrowman

## Beach Report Card Puts Pressure on Long Beach

The City of Long Beach has been under a great deal of pressure about its poor water quality following the May release of Heal the Bay's annual Beach Report Card. Media scrutiny and public outcry led Long Beach Mayor Bob Foster and the City Council to issue a release alerting the public that the city has launched a significant water quality study.

The \$250,000 study, now in its initial phases, will incorporate input from experts about identifying the sources of poor water quality, especially between 1st Street and the Belmont Pier. Heal the Bay has been actively involved in these issues and will continue to post updates as they are received.

## Beach Bacteria Violations Posted Online

Bacteria Total Maximum Daily Loads, known as TMDLs, are federal limits that require beach waters to be free from unhealthy levels of fecal bacteria. These restrictions apply to all Santa Monica Bay beaches — from Palos Verdes to the Ventura County line — during “dry weather,” defined

to be between April and October, when tens of millions of residents and visitors use the beach. Regulations now mean that cities and other dischargers are now subject to fines up to \$10,000 per day per TMDL violation.

TMDL violations are now updated weekly on Heal the Bay's Beach Report Card ([www.healthebay.org/brc](http://www.healthebay.org/brc)) to enable easy identification of beaches that are not in compliance with bacteria limits. One beach standing out from the rest, with an appallingly high number of violations, is Santa Monica Municipal Pier. Heal the Bay has urged city officials to take appropriate actions to ensure that beaches near the pier are safe for recreational use. Santa Monica City Council recently approved a Measure V implementation strategy that could allocate over \$5,000,000 to rehabilitate decaying storm drains and diversion structures between the Pico-Kenter storm drain and the Santa Monica Municipal Pier. These projects are scheduled to be completed in 2008.

## Mother's Beach Cleans Up

Marina del Rey's Marina Beach, more commonly known as Mother's Beach, sits in the Bay next to the largest man-made marina in the world. Calm

protected waters make this beach a popular location for families with small children.

However, the tranquility of Mother's Beach is caused by poor water circulation, which is also responsible for slow dispersion of pollutants. Fortunately, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board recently voted to incorporate bacteria pollution limits for Mothers' Beach and Back Basins into the Los Angeles County Municipal Storm Water Discharge Permit, meaning that there must be zero exceedances in the water quality standards for bacteria during dry weather. Heal the Bay testified in strong support to include these bacteria limits.

We commend the county for taking recent action in the Mothers' Beach area that has seemingly led to some improvements in beach water quality over the last few months. These projects included a water circulation pump and two dry weather runoff diversions. This summer has been cleaner for Mother's Beach than in past years. Despite this progress though, the beach isn't always in compliance with the Marina del Rey bacteria Total Maximum Daily Load especially near the playground.

Photo by Meredith McCarthy



Photo by Kristen James

# Bagging the Bag

By Matthew King

**P**lease help Heal the Bay persuade the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to take immediate action on its staff's recommendation to ban unsightly and harmful plastic grocery carryout bags.

More than 6 billion plastic bags are used countywide each year. Designed for single-use, they foul our public spaces and put added pressure on scarce landfill. Less than 5% of plastic bags consumed in the state are recycled. Instead, they become part of the plastic-dominated litter stream, where they degrade already weakened watersheds and threaten marine life.

Unfortunately, the board decided at press time to indefinitely postpone consideration of a staff report that makes strong policy recommendations to significantly reduce or eliminate plastic-bag litter throughout the county. We need concerned citizens to sign our petition urging the

supervisors to show their commitment to the environment by scheduling the issue for prompt public discussion.

The county pulled consideration of the proposals from public meeting agendas, saying it needed to receive more input from stakeholder groups. However, a wide variety of interested parties, including plastics and grocery associations, participated in the drafting of the staff report. Months of considerable research, analysis and stakeholder input led to clear-headed proposals to either implement an outright ban or a phased ban if recycling proves unsuccessful.

Additional study will only impede much-needed action. Now is the time for the public's voice to be heard. Heal the Bay and 25 other concerned groups, representing hundreds of thousands of members, have sent a letter to the board supporting a bag ban and requesting that residents be given an opportunity

to comment publicly without delay. Please let your elected officials know the importance of this issue. Visit our web site to sign our petition on this matter.

The supervisors can demonstrate their commitment to the environment by joining other progressive municipalities and nations in banning the bag. Officials in San Francisco, Oakland and Paris recently adopted comprehensive bans. South Africa, Ireland and Bangladesh are among the nations that have agreed to eliminate or heavily tax plastic shopping bags. Let's add Los Angeles County to the list.

Please further educate yourself and about the environmental harm caused by the proliferation of single-use plastic bags and the steps you can take in your daily life to reduce their use. Keep checking [www.healthebay.org](http://www.healthebay.org) for regular updates, action alerts and public meeting schedules. You can also get information on practical alternatives to plastic bags.



Photo by Yuji Tone



Photo by Carla Finerman

# 40 Tons of Debris Goes to the Landfill Instead of the Bay

## 11,000 Volunteers Band Together for Coastal Cleanup Day

By Jessica Belsky

**H**eal the Bay staffers cheered this Sept. 15, after crunching the numbers and realizing that we'd cleaned up nearly 10,000 more pounds of trash this year during Coastal Cleanup Day than during last year's effort. This extraordinary achievement was made possible by 11,000 volunteers, students and organizations throughout Los Angeles County who were willing to lend their hands...and get them a little dirty in the process.

Ten buses of elementary school students officially kicked off the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual California Coastal Cleanup Day with us on Friday, Sept. 14, at the Santa Monica Pier by participating in our third annual Coastal Cleanup Education Day.

All buses came from schools that support students in underserved communities (Title 1 schools) for a day of relays, games and learning about pollution prevention on the

beach. Heal the Bay strives, through this day of education, to instill students with a sense of awe, respect and responsibility about our coastal environment.

Kids got to dig and sift and run through the sand, tour the aquarium and even spearhead their own beach



Photo by Yuji Tone



Photo by Jessica Belsky



Photo by Natalie Burdick



Photo by Jessica Belsky



Photo by Jessica Belsky

**From left: kids and adults pitch in to clean up inland sites like the Sepulveda Basin at Balboa; in Santa Monica, young volunteers keep track of what they pick up; students celebrate Coastal Cleanup Education Day at the Santa Monica Pier; volunteers remove trash from Compton Creek.**

cleanup. The crowning achievement of which was filling a 6-foot tall Plexiglass tube full of cigarette butts (the tube was appropriately named the Butt-O-Meter and is now on display at Heal the Bay headquarters).

The following Saturday marked Heal the Bay's 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary of coordinating Coastal Cleanup Day in Los Angeles County. We mobilized coastal and inland sites, from Malibu to Echo Park to Long Beach, and even held specific cleanup locations for divers and kayakers. CCD isn't just one day to clean our beaches and inland waterways, it's primarily a day to educate Angelenos and beyond about the impacts of marine debris. Volunteers learned about simple changes that they can make in their everyday lives that can have a huge impact in their immediate and coastal environment.

In only three hours, volunteers picked up 83,434 pounds of trash, including 5,512 pounds of recyclables. Among the debris were cigarette butts, plastic and Styrofoam pieces and also some more unusual items: a bridal gown found submerged by the Santa Monica Pier, an expired passport in the sand

at Hermosa Beach, a bottle full of dead beetles and more than 2,000 used or partially filled spray paint cans in a Wilmington park and 60 golf balls in Elysian Park.

California Coastal Cleanup Day is part of International Coastal Cleanup Day, known affectionately as the "largest volunteer day on the planet." Every state and nearly 70 countries partake in the cleanup worldwide. California's involvement in the event accounts for one-seventh of the entire world's participation!

## DID YOU CATCH COASTAL CLEANUP DAY ON TV?

**Thanks to Don Corsini and Stephanie Rodriguez, director of public affairs for KCAL9/KCBS2 and Heal the Bay board member, "Heal the Bay" aired last month on both stations.**

**It starred none other than our board and staff members: Don Corsini, actress Amy Smart; president Mark Gold; and staff scientist Sarah Abramson. This television special is geared towards students, educating them about the watershed environment, urban runoff, sewage pollution, household hazardous waste, and how they can make a difference in their communities. Check out the link on our web site.**

# Nurdles and Turtles

State lawmakers act to save marine life and curb deadly plastic marine debris

By Kirsten James



All photos by Algalita Marine Research Foundation

The word *nurdles* probably isn't part of your everyday vocabulary, but these plastic, BB-sized killers have been ravaging marine life on California seashores for decades. Heal the Bay's science and policy staff members have been working hard for years to rid plastic from marine ecosystems and now their diligence is paying off with important legislative wins.

Governor Schwarzenegger recently signed into law AB 258, a marine protection bill that requires

*Protection Initiative*, a flotilla of marine debris legislation that Heal the Bay and Environment California helped draft and are now pushing to enact statewide.

### So what exactly is marine debris?

It's largely manmade trash and materials that litter our sea and beaches, the majority of which is comprised of plastic materials. An estimated 60–80% of all marine debris, and 90% of floating debris, is plastic — a disturbing byproduct of our single-use consumer culture. Despite enhanced recycling programs, marine litter is increasing dramatically worldwide.

And nurdles account for much of this alarming growth. Approximately 60 billion pounds of nurdles are manufactured annually in the United States alone, where they are routinely discharged to waterways during the transport, packaging, and processing of plastics.

The tiny pellets migrate through storm drain

systems to beaches and coastal waterways. Due to their small size, nurdles escape most trash capture devices. Nearly 100 million individual pellets littered Orange County beaches, according to a recent month-long study conducted by the Southern California Coastal Waters Research Project. These nurdles comprised over 98% of the total debris collected in the study.

And the nurdle invasion isn't just a problem in California. Studies have shown an international proliferation of these pellets in the marine environment, including remote areas throughout the South Pacific and in Hawaii.

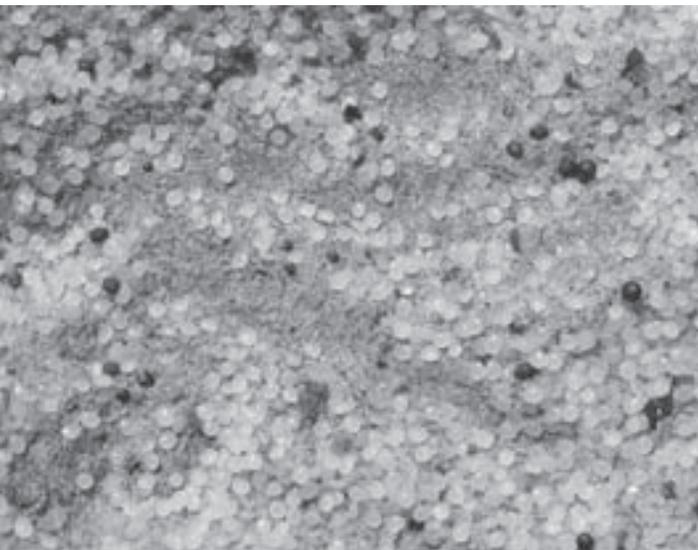
Put simply, nurdles kill marine life.

Approximately 44% of seabird species worldwide have ingested plastic debris, and many of these species have ingested preproduction plastics. Nurdles pose the greatest threat to plankton-feeding seabirds, such as shearwaters, petrels, phalaropes, and auklets, which easily mistake these plastic pellets for natural food. Sea turtles, fish, and invertebrate species including lobster, have also been documented to ingest nurdles.

Ingestion can cause intestinal blockage, decreased stomach storage volume, and reduced feeding efficiency. Ultimately, these animals are unable to accumulate the energy reserves necessary for migration, reproduction and survival.

Nurdle consumption can also increase an animal's exposure to chemicals. Plastic debris, and in particular nurdles, can act as a transport mechanism for toxic substances in the marine environment. Nurdles have been documented to absorb chemicals from ambient seawater.

A recent study found concentrations of PCBs and DDE on nurdles collected along Japanese coasts of up to 1 million times higher than the levels



manufacturers to prevent nurdles, the pellets used in the pre-production of all plastics, from spilling into storm drains and waterways. The measure, authored by Assemblymember Paul Krerkorian (D-Burbank), marks a key win in the fight against marine debris.

This bill's passage provides momentum for *The Pacific*

detected in surrounding seawater. There is concern that nurdles could be a route for these chemicals into the food chain, as the toxins may partly disassociate from nurdles and other plastic particles in the digestive tract and be taken up by the marine life that ingested them.

AB 258 also affirms the work of the Ocean Protection Council, which sets the state's official ocean policy. The panel, whose members include Lt. Gov. John Garamendi and Secretaries Mike Chrisman and Linda Adams, unanimously adopted a Resolution on Marine Debris earlier this year. The resolution specifically recognizes that nurdles are a significant source of beach pollution and calls for the

reduction of nurdles in the marine environment.

This new law promotes zero discharge of preproduction plastics from plastic industry facilities. It will require the State Water Resources Control Board and the nine regional water quality control boards to implement a program to control discharges of preproduction plastic from point and nonpoint sources.

The required best management practices will include containment systems on all on-site storm drains that are down-gradient of handling areas and vacuum systems for quick cleanup of plastic pellets. To track the success of this program, the state board and regional boards would require the



**Marine animals often mistake nurdles, tiny preproduction plastic pellets, for food.**

dischargers to implement a monitoring and reporting program.

The fate of subsequent *Pacific Protection Initiative* bills addressing lost and abandoned fishing gear, toxics in plastic and sustainable packaging will be decided next year. (For more information on these measures, visit [www.healthebay.org/PPI](http://www.healthebay.org/PPI).)

# Welcome Aboard



Congratulations to **Matthew King**, Heal the Bay's new Director of Communications. Matthew grew up on the beaches of Santa Monica, where

his father served as an L.A. County lifeguard for more than 30 years. Those early years by his dad's side taught him the importance of coastal stewardship and giving something back to the ocean, which provides so much pleasure to millions of Southland residents. Matthew joins Heal the Bay from The Hollywood Reporter, where he served as an executive editor and VP for more than a decade. He graduated from UC Berkeley with an English degree and later earned his master's degree in journalism from USC. He says there are obvious overlaps between the worlds of publishing and

nonprofit environmental work — a sense of mission, communicating effectively and developing new audiences. An avid surfer, you might see Matthew out in the lineup at El Porto, or sneaking away to Rincon when he can.



**Jessica Belsky** grew up in and around the ocean in Daytona Beach, FL. After earning her bachelors degree in English from

the University of Miami, her life-long interest in ocean conservation led her to Los Angeles where she became a volunteer for Heal the Bay's Speaker's Bureau program. She completed an internship in the Communications Department and now joins the team as the Communications Manager. Jessica

is very excited to be a part the many achievements and programs of Heal the Bay and still enjoys volunteering in her spare time.



**John Seiber** has joined the staff of Heal the Bay as Director of Development. John brings 12 years of fund-raising

experience in areas such as direct marketing, major donor cultivation, foundation/corporate grants, and budgeting. He has worked for well known non-profits including AIDS Project Los Angeles, Save the Children and Caring for Babies with AIDS. His professional experience also includes the County of Los Angeles where he managed non-profit contract compliance.



# Shelter From th

## Heal the Bay works to create Marine Protected Area in Santa Monica Bay

By Sarah Abramson



All photos by Nick Fash

**S**outhern California's marine ecosystems are incredibly stressed, given the multiple threats of polluted runoff, habitat destruction and overfishing. Kelp beds throughout the Santa Monica Bay have declined substantially since the early 1900s. Several fish stocks have crashed statewide, causing many fisheries to be closed or severely limited.

Fortunately, state officials are increasingly establishing safe havens called Marine Protected Areas, where marine life can find refuge from man. Local officials are now working to create MPAs in the Santa Monica Bay, following on the heels of successful programs on the central coast of California.

California is currently establishing a network of MPAs along the coast

as required by the Marine Life Protection Act. There are several types of MPAs including Marine Parks, Marine Conservation Areas and Marine Reserves. State Marine Parks prohibit commercial fishing, but allow recreational fishing. State Marine Conservation Areas allow limited

commercial and recreational fishing, while Marine Reserves completely prohibit the harvest of marine life and alteration of marine habitats.

As a valuable tool for both ecosystem protection and fisheries management, MPAs are designed to replenish depleted populations. These havens have been scientifically proven to protect and enhance degraded ecosystems, including kelp forests and fish communities and have shown to be effective in the Florida Keys, New Zealand, and other areas of the world. Historic approaches to fisheries management have not adequately protected California's fish stocks, as reflected

by the decimated populations of rockfish, abalone, and other species.

Contrary to traditional management strategies, which only control certain activities or protect marine life on a single-species basis, MPAs take a more ecosystem-based approach by protecting marine habitats and the marine life that live within those habitats.

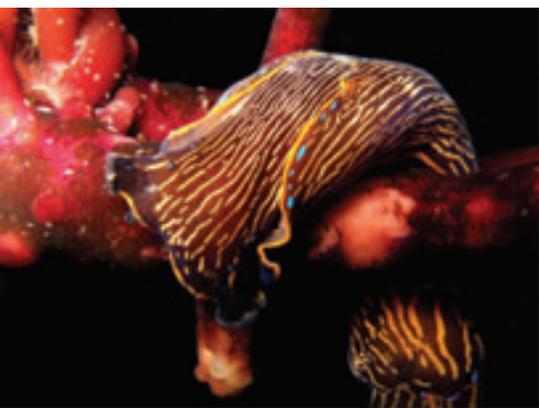
By prohibiting or restricting fishing in certain areas of the sea, localized marine creatures within each zone are given refuge. (The majority of fishing throughout the state occurs in Southern California; together, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego Counties account for over half the recreational fishing activity in California.)

As a result, marine life living within MPAs, and specifically marine reserves, is often more diverse, abundant, and larger in size. Populations may





# e Storm



also seed neighboring waters where harvest is allowed. Additionally, larger animals, such as marine mammals and sharks, can benefit through increased availability of food.

The Marine Life Protection Act Initiative engages scientists, resource managers, experts, stakeholders and members of the public to inform the establishment of MPAs. But the process has faced many obstacles in the past six years. The measure has been stalled, restarted, and had its funding gutted and then renewed. The state is now taking a regional approach to implement MPAs along the coast. The process began in the central coast (Pigeon Point in San Mateo County to Point Conception in Santa Barbara County), which resulted in the establishment of 29 MPAs, covering 18% of the coast in this region earlier this year. It has now moved to the north central Coast (Alder Creek

in Mendocino County to Pigeon Point in San Mateo County), and will then move to the north coast, San Francisco Bay, and south coast. While the order in which each region will be addressed is uncertain, it appears the process will move south in the next few years.

Heal the Bay is coordinating efforts with like-minded environmental organizations to lay the groundwork for the eventual placement of MPAs in the Santa Monica Bay. The Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission recently established a Marine Protected Areas Technical Advisory Committee, comprising members of the academic and agency communities to compile existing information about local marine resources.

The Ocean Protection Council funded the group to conduct a gap analysis to identify research needs in the Santa Monica Bay. They will also identify research projects to help inform the MLPA process in Southern California.

### **So why does Santa Monica Bay need its own MPA?**

With over 50 million visitors each year, the bay is a valuable asset



to California's economy. These visitors, both locals and tourists, enjoy swimming, kayaking, scuba diving, and many other activities. However, the dolphins, whales, kelp forests and diverse coastal resources that also draw visitors to the Santa Monica Bay face a multitude of stresses.

Establishing MPAs within the Santa Monica Bay and throughout Southern California will help protect these resources, benefitting the ecosystem, coastal enthusiasts and regional fisheries. To learn more about MPAs, the MLPA process and how to get involved, visit our website ([www.healthebay.org](http://www.healthebay.org)), where you can read about Heal the Bay's related advocacy efforts and check on the state's MPA implementation efforts.

# Kids Say *Tanks* for Enhanced Field

By Randi Parent

**F**ourth graders coming to the Santa Monica Pier Aquarium for field trips this year are getting web-savvy.

No, not the Internet. Instead, students are building food webs as part of Heal the Bay's commitment to fun, interactive and age-specific education.

Youngsters use blocks to create a multi-leveled pyramid that represents a simple food chain in the ocean. The base of the pyramid is sunlight, captured through photosynthesis to nourish

seaweed and algae, which in turn feed the fish that are herbivores. They are eaten by bigger fish, eaten by still larger fish, and on to the largest fish and marine mammals.

When the food web is complete, students brainstorm about what factors introduced by humans could weaken the pyramid. For example, plastic debris coursing through the storm drain system will

of how the actions of humans can have a dramatic effect on the environment.

This hands-on demonstration exemplifies the modified curriculum work being done by the Santa Monica



Pier Aquarium education staff to meet the California science standards for K-5 students. Accompanying pre- and post-field trip materials are being designed for each grade specific program as well.



Heal the Bay's Santa Monica Pier Aquarium educates about 20,000 students each school year.

eventually reach the sea, where it can kill birds, fish and marine mammals. Oil from leaky cars enters the ocean via the storm drain, where it degrades seabirds' feathers and is ingested as the birds clean themselves. The oil also kills plankton by blocking out sunlight in the water and disrupting photosynthesis. As the list of human impacts grows, pyramid blocks are removed until the structure collapses, providing a graphic example

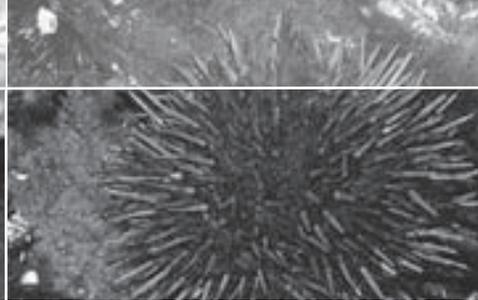
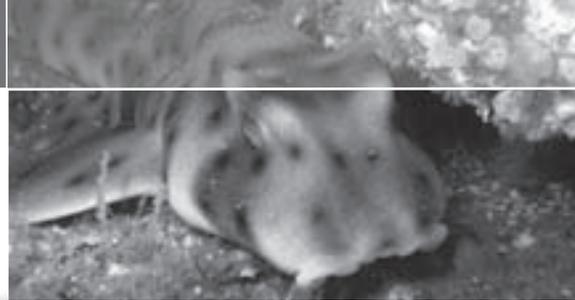
The goal is to offer field trip education programs that meet the needs of the schools and their teachers, while keeping students alert and engaged. Our objective is to create lifelong learners about the marine ecosystem, who will return to the aquarium frequently. A \$150,000 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services has funded the new curriculum development. The grant will be used over two years to supplement, enhance and enrich the field trip education programs.



INSTITUTE of  
Museum and Library  
SERVICES

In July 2006 the aquarium received the prestigious Museums for America Grant, awarded by the Institute of Museum

# Trips



and Library Services, which is an independent federal agency that grows and sustains a “Nation of Learners.” For more information about the Institute of Museum and Library Services please visit <http://www.imls.gov/index.shtm>.

These resources have allowed the education staff to research, design and expand elementary curriculum, including upgrading, implementing and evaluating grade specific education programs.

For pre-K and kindergarten classes, students use their senses to discover the animals of the ocean — those in the aquarium and those they encounter along the shore during the beach exploration portion of the program. Through exploration of artifacts and live animals, first graders journey through the four main habitats of the Santa Monica Bay, learning what impacts humans have on these fragile ecosystems.

Second graders visiting the aquarium learn about life cycles of ocean animals, and third-grade students will discover how these animals adapt to survive in their own unique environment. And finally, fifth-grade students study the water cycle and pollution.

All elementary school programs include a beach component and time to explore

the aquarium touch tank exhibits.

The IMLS funding ensures the fulfillment of aquarium education program goals — to provide high quality, interactive marine science and environmental education programs to students throughout Los Angeles County and neighboring regions.

Grade-specific programs also guarantee that a student returning year after year for field trips at the aquarium will never get the same program twice. The curriculum builds upon the foundation of knowledge gained each year, increasing the students’

knowledge of ocean life and the myriad ways humans are tied to it.

The aquarium education topics are also aligned with the state’s Education and the Environment Initiative (EEI), and the National Science Education Standards’ Ocean Literacy Principles. The EEI is the landmark environmental education law co-authored by Heal the Bay and former California Assemblymember Fran Pavley. Heal the Bay continues to work on implementation of the curriculum statewide.

## The Perfect Gift: Aquadoption!

By Randi Parent

**Stewardship of the marine environment is one of the most important gifts anyone can receive. And with the season of giving fast approaching, what better way to show commitment to the ocean and its inhabitants than to participate in the Aquadoption program at the Santa Monica Pier Aquarium.**

**Launched two years ago, the program lets recipients get involved in the care and feeding of an animal at the aquarium. Eight different species on display are available for adoption, ranging in price from \$25 for an ochre sea star to \$750 to adopt an octopus. Each adoption is good for a year, and includes two free family passes to the aquarium, an Aquadoption certificate, a photo and fact sheet about the adopted animal, and literature about Heal the Bay.**

**Giving the unique gift of an animal adoption demonstrates dedication to Heal the Bay’s mission of making Southern California coastal waters and watersheds, including the Santa Monica Bay, safe, healthy and clean. And the person receiving the gift gets a hands-on introduction to the Santa Monica Pier Aquarium and the creatures of the Santa Monica Bay.**

Adoptions can be arranged by printing an order form from our website at [www.healthebay.org/smpa](http://www.healthebay.org/smpa), by calling the Aquarium at 310-393-6149, or by speaking to a staff member while visiting the Aquarium. So come on down and pick out an animal — or several — to support for the year.

Animal	Sponsorship Level
Ochre Sea Star	\$25
Purple Sea Urchin	\$25
Sand Dollar	\$25
California Sea Hare	\$25
California Spiny Lobster	\$100
Garibaldi	\$250
Horn Shark	\$500
Two-Spot Octopus	\$750

# Happening Causes

By Natalie Burdick

Heal the Bay would like to thank all of our Third Party sponsors this year, whose fundraising efforts raised tens of thousands in benefit proceeds!

This year's benefits included a wide range of events, ranging from concerts including the perennial KROQ Weenie Roast, Bad Religion at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium and the Santa Monica Pier's Twilight Dance Series, to invitation-only galas like Helio's Ocean Launch, the White Party and the Malibu Swimsuit Calendar Fashion Show, as well as the Santa Monica Classic 5K/10K

run and the Malibu Surfing Association's 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Classic Invitational. In October, there was even a 'Wicked' Day for Heal the Bay, our first-ever, benefit theater performance.

These Third Party events helped raise money and awareness for Heal the Bay, while offering participants a variety of wonderful ways to show their support of what we do! Contact the Development Department at 310.451.1500, ext. 159 if you, or someone you know, would like to learn more about our program.



## Helio Launches Ocean

To launch Helio's Ocean, long-time Heal the Bay supporter and board



Amy Smart and Emmy Rossum.

member Amy Smart co-hosted an exclusive summer party at the Sunset Tower Hotel to benefit Heal the Bay's Coastal Clean-up Day. Celebrity guests included Paris Hilton, Emmy Rossum, Erika Christensen, Elisabeth Rohm, Brooke Mueller, Freddie Rodriguez and Rumer Willis.

"I think this event is a great way for people to learn about how important it is that everything we do on earth is going to end up going in the ocean," Paris Hilton explained.



Photos by Amanda Clarke

## PartywithaCause.com's White Party

Held at the trendy W Hotel's 'Backyard,' this year's highly successful White Party drew a number of Hollywood's young tastemakers from actors and models, to publicists and agents. Over 300 guests enjoyed the beautiful setting, live DJs and complimentary cocktails and appetizers from event sponsors Heineken, Krol Vodka, Tequila 33, Red Bull, H20m Water and Tengu Westwood. VIP extras included exclusive early access, personal cabanas and White Party gift bags.



The second annual benefit raised nearly \$20,000, doubling last year's contribution.

## Twilight Dance Series

For the second year, Bike Attack ([www.bikeattack.com](http://www.bikeattack.com)) and the Santa Monica Daily Press ([www.smdp.com](http://www.smdp.com)) joined forces again to support Heal the Bay at this year's 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Twilight Dance Series at the Santa Monica Pier.

Concert goers could contribute to Heal the Bay by purchasing tickets to enter the weekly, Thursday night drawing for a Manhattan Beach Cruiser bicycle, valued at \$300.

Heal the Bay staff and volunteers staffed the summer-long series to raise awareness and answer the public's questions about our latest programs and policies.



## The Cause of the Black Pearl

Keeping community and environment top of mind, Abode Restaurant & Lounge has created a unique charitable offer for the guests of their Santa Monica restaurant: a \$300 "Heal the Bay Black Pearl Martini" garnished with a genuine 12mm AAA quality Tahitian Black Pearl, with all proceeds benefiting Heal the Bay.

This summer, a Santa Monica native and avid supporter of Heal the Bay, Joanne Duffney, became the first diner to support Heal the Bay through her purchase of this amazing aperitif.

To read more about Abode Restaurant & Lounge and Joanne's experience, visit [www.healthebay.org/supportus](http://www.healthebay.org/supportus)

# Dive Log

## Senior Aquarist José Bacallao chills out with the Sand Rose Anemone

**O**n a warm and sunny August day, I found myself suiting up with my colleague Brianne Emhiser to dive in search of a beautiful group of anemones in Monterey Bay.

As part of our effort to populate the new Rocky Reef Habitat exhibit at our Santa Monica Pier Aquarium, we were looking to collect the species *Urticina columbiana*, the sand rose anemone, and *Urticina piscivora*, the fish eating anemone.

These two species occur commonly in the much warmer Santa Monica Bay, but an intended professional visit to the Monterey Bay Aquarium made diving there a unique and exciting opportunity. Not only is the Monterey Bay beautiful and distinctive, but these anemones are plentiful and can be found in fairly shallow water.

We checked weather and ocean conditions; everything seemed perfect. The sun was warm, no clouds for miles, the sea was calm and flat and the surface temperature in Monterey was surprisingly mild for the Central Coast at a pleasant 59° F. We were greeted by frolicking sea lions and sea otters on our swim out through the waves.

The safety dive float was anchored, collection gear was distributed and a final check of the SCUBA equipment was made before our descent into...please pause for bubbles and equalization...bone-chilling 48°F water! Ouch!

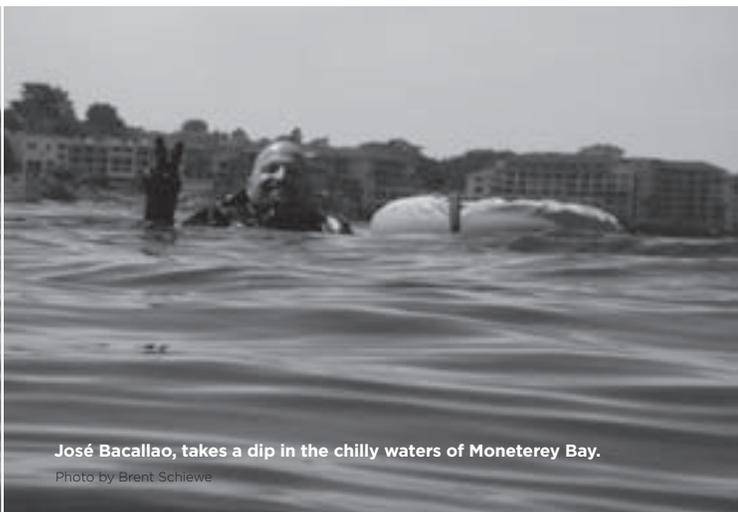


Needless to say, the cold waters of Monterey Bay took a toll on the dive team. Thirty-two minutes later we were back at the surface, swimming to shore with collection bags in tow and in dire need of a warm towel and beverage. Albeit a short dive, it was rather successful. We were able to collect four sand rose anemones.

The sand rose anemone can reach a diameter of 14 inches. It has large tentacles and its reddish outer column is covered with tiny tubercles. These tubercles will attach sand, pebbles and shell fragments to the column in an attempt to hide and protect the anemone.

With its large and long tentacles the sand rose anemone can capture small prey like fish and crustaceans. These tentacles are covered with little stinging structures called nematocysts, the same structures found on sea jellies that enable them to produce a sting. The nematocysts release a toxic harpoon like structure, stinging and paralyzing the unsuspecting prey. This species is commonly found from British Columbia south to Baja California. It will feed on various small fish and invertebrates and it is predated on by large sea stars.

The four sand rose anemones are currently exhibited in the Santa Monica Pier Aquarium's Rocky Reef Habitat exhibit. The aquarium dive staff is currently planning a dive trip to Catalina Island to collect the fish-eating anemones and they too will be on display at the Santa Monica Pier Aquarium.



José Bacallao, takes a dip in the chilly waters of Monterey Bay.

Photo by Brent Schiewe

# Local Hero

The late Bob Hertz, Heal the Bay's super-volunteer, knew the secret for finding profound peace

Whatever success Heal the Bay has achieved over the years can be linked to the hard work of our incredible volunteers. The Speakers Bureau program alone has educated nearly 300,000 people over the last 15 years. Perhaps the most prolific speaker, and definitely the most innovative, was Dr. Bob Hertz, a longtime Heal the Bay supporter who lost his courageous fight against lung cancer in late October. The Malibu resident charmed and informed thousands of people, predominantly students, about water quality and coastal resource issues in Santa Monica Bay. In addition, Bob mentored dozens of speakers who have taught thousands more about environmental stewardship. A retired dentist, Bob could always be counted on for his amusing props, especially the mini toilet, sewer and storm drain models. His humility and wonderful sense of humor made him one of Heal the Bay's most valuable volunteers. In recognition of this outstanding service, Bob has been named the winner of the Jean Howell Award, the highest honor that Heal the Bay can bestow to its volunteers. Even while fighting the ravages of disease, Bob took the time in his final days to give back to our community, sharing his memories and perspective with Currents staff. We are honored to present his lasting testament to the importance of coastal stewardship.



spotlight

## **How did your association with Heal the Bay begin?**

I read about the good work Heal the Bay was doing. Having been fortunate enough to own a weekend home on Carbon Beach in Malibu since 1975, and having done my own beach clean-up efforts, I wanted to work in a larger way to protect the Santa Monica Bay for my children, grandchildren and others. I contacted Heal the Bay and offered to volunteer, they were happy to have me, and our long, wonderful relationship began.

## **You could obviously choose a number of worthy causes, so why Heal the Bay?**

I have volunteered for several other environmental, cultural and educational organizations throughout my life, and especially during my retirement years. But Heal the Bay has been my longest affiliation and the one where I have been most able to impact children and others with regard to the importance of protecting our environment, our oceans and our other natural resources.

## **What is unique about Heal the Bay? What makes it effective?**

Heal the Bay works with the community in so many important ways, providing a full spectrum of activities to fulfill its mission. Whether it is high-minded work on legislation or the down-and-dirty work of putting our hands into the sand to pick up cigarette butts, Heal the Bay performs a great service to the citizens of Southern California. It's staff and volunteers that make it run smoothly and effectively, and it's like a big family of environmentally enlightened people.

## **What does the ocean mean to you personally? To your soul?**

It is the only place I know where I can look at infinity. The peace that the ocean brings when

walking on the beach, bodysurfing, listening to the crashing of the waves, or watching dolphins play in the water, is a profound peace. I am extremely grateful to have been able to live by the ocean.

## **Did you grow up around the water? Have you always felt a sense of connection?**

I was raised in New Jersey, far from the ocean, and saw the ocean only rarely. When I moved to Southern California at the age of 15, I was immediately attracted to the ocean, specifically the Santa Monica Bay. I have always felt a sense of connection and responsibility to the ocean. My children and grandchildren feel the same way, which gives me hope for the future.

## **How have you seen the organization change over the past decade or so?**

Heal the Bay has grown incredibly in terms of its influence and its positive effect on the public mindset about the importance of protecting our Bay. One can hardly think about the Santa Monica Bay without thinking of Heal the Bay and its positive impact on our local waters. I hope that eventually the Bay will be healed, but until then Heal the Bay is its best hope for the future.

## **Do you feel like we are moving in a positive direction as a society about stewardship of our oceans and watersheds?**

Because of organizations like Heal the Bay, I feel that we are [making progress.] Yet there are still far too many people who do not appreciate how fragile our ecosystem is and how careful we must be to preserve our oceans and other natural resources for future generations.

## **What do you make of the media's sudden interest in all things "green"?**

I think green phenomenon is finally starting to become mainstream. With Al Gore winning the Nobel Peace Prize, more people choosing hybrid cars, and better public and private efforts to reduce, reuse and recycle, I hope the green movement is here to stay. I am especially proud of my architect son David, and his Santa Monica-based Studio of Environmental Architecture, for being a leader in the green building field. And my attorney/mediator son Brad leads nature hikes in the Santa Monica Mountains and educates young people about the importance of preserving our natural resources. So I hope more and more people will incorporate green living into their lives.

## **You've obviously given a lot to this organization, but what has the relationship given back to you?**

Just knowing that I have been able to make a positive difference in people's lives gives me tremendous satisfaction. The stacks of thank you letters and drawings I have received from students to whom I have spoken are all the thanks I need. One of my favorite letters said, "When I heard we were having a guest speaker, I was glad because it meant I would get out of class. But once I actually heard you, I learned a lot and will now take better care of my neighborhood and the beach."

## **What would you say to people who are living busy lives and truly find it hard to find the extra time to devote to volunteerism?**

We all have the same amount of time, so saying there is no time to volunteer is no excuse. And research shows that people who help others through volunteer work are actually happier and more fulfilled because of it. So I strongly urge people to make it a priority to give back to a society and world that has given us so much.



# Avant-Garde Report Card

## Statewide Beach Grades Go Mobile

By Jessica Belsky

**H**eal the Bay, in an effort to make water quality information easily accessible from any location at anytime, has launched a new service that offers Beach Report Card grades via text messaging.

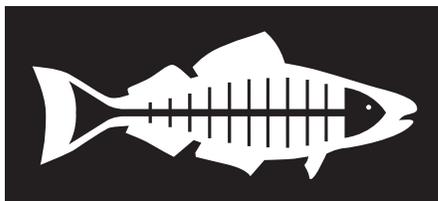
The Beach Report Card program, now in its 17<sup>th</sup> successful year, publishes weekly water quality grades for California beaches, and is the state's only comprehensive analysis of coastline water quality.

If you're hitting the beach, you can now get instant water quality grade information for any of the over 400

monitored California beaches on your cell phone or other mobile device.

Users simply visit our Beach Report Card website ([www.healthebay.org/brc](http://www.healthebay.org/brc)).

### BEACH REPORT CARD



[org/brc](http://www.healthebay.org/brc)) to find the keyword name assigned to their beach. They can then send a text message with the beach's name to the number 23907. The

current grade for that beach will be text messaged back instantly.

"Everyone has the right to know the water quality at their favorite beach," said Karin Hall, executive director of Heal the Bay. "Through text messaging, beachgoers now can have that information at their fingertips no matter where they are."

Heal the Bay partnered with GoLive! Mobile, a Los Angeles-based firm that provided the technology for the project. Look for additional mobile initiatives throughout the year, such as possible SMS action alerts for our volunteer network.

# Making the Grade

By Matthew King

**M**arking significant improvement, overall water quality at California beaches this summer was excellent as reported in our annual End of Summer Beach Report Card. Some 92% of the 494 beaches monitored statewide received A or B grades from Memorial Day to Labor Day. These good grades represent a nearly 10% rise from last year.

California's record low rainfall this year, which limited polluted urban runoff in storm drain systems, played a major role in better water quality. Enhanced infrastructure at several sites also led to rising grades. There were only 38 locations in the state that received fair-to-poor water quality grades.

"The combination of record drought and completed Clean Beach Initiative projects led to the cleanest summer water quality in years," said Mark Gold, president of Heal the Bay.

"With more beach cleanup projects on the horizon, the prospects for this positive summer becoming a trend are great."

The completion of numerous dry weather runoff diversions, treatment plants and source abatement efforts has led to improved water quality at numerous California beaches, according to Gold.

Los Angeles County once again has the worst ocean quality grades in the state, with 17% of its beaches earning F's during the summer. On a positive note, Santa Monica Bay monitoring locations received high marks this summer. Bay beaches received 93% A's and B's, actually surpassing the statewide average. Only four of the 67 Santa Monica Bay beaches earned poor marks this summer, compared to 16 last year.

For a complete breakdown on all the grades, by beach and by county, go to [www.healthebay.org/brc/summer](http://www.healthebay.org/brc/summer)

# Thank You

The following list represents gifts from June 1, 2007 through August 31, 2007.

*\*In-kind donation*

## \$25,000+

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Joan & Randall Zister

## Aquadoption

## In Honor Of

## In Memory Of

Aquadoptions at Heal the Bay's Santa Monica Pier Aquarium are a great way to express a special connection with the marine life of Santa Monica Bay. Aquadoptions have been acquired for the following:

Wendy Maron  
Helen Lickhalter  
Lisa Jenkins

Luco & Marco Fele  
Pam Putch

A wonderful way to commemorate a special occasion, milestone or birthday for friends or family is to make a donation to Heal the Bay in their honor. The following people have been honored recently:

Adi Liberman  
Ann Rosenblatt  
Art Levitt III  
Barbara Leigh  
Briggs Akin  
Cassidy & Matt Coelho and Unyi  
Chris Robb & Erin Sheehy  
Chris Weitz  
Claire Mutchnik  
David Calloway  
Debbie & Mark Attanasio  
Ellen Kircher

Erin & Chris Robb  
Fiscus / Maness wedding  
Gil Segel  
Jacob Hauser  
Jake & Orion  
Jason Schwawrtz & Jessica Leiman  
Jesse Ehrman  
Jim Hake  
Joe Ellison  
Julia & Brad Hall  
Larry & Ruth Rosen  
Lucy Davis

Maia Leventhal  
Mark & Debbie Attanasio  
Mary Ann Rosenfeld & Shelly Kadish  
Primary cast & crew members of  
"The Mummy: Curse Of The Dragon"  
Regina Ferguson  
Robert Levy  
Sammy  
Sandy & Ken Kurtz & Esther Kam  
Sara & Ned Schuft  
Trey Mahan  
Zach & Mina Chessler

Donations have been made to Heal the Bay in memory of the following people who have recently passed away. We at Heal the Bay extend our sympathies to the family and friends of:

Bill Parker Sr.  
Clint Wendell  
Earl Carter  
Faye Grossinger  
George Clifford Evans

Gerry White  
Jan Nathan  
Linny Dwyer  
Ryna Farberow

# We're Listening ...

Heal the Bay wants to hear from you. Please let us know what type of information or features you'd like to see in our regular communications. Have an idea for a story? Want to point out how we could be doing a better job? Care to share an

amusing anecdote or a terrific source? Give the Communications Department a call at 1-310-451-1500, or you can e-mail your thoughts by visiting us online at [www.healthebay.org/contactus](http://www.healthebay.org/contactus)

# Heal the Bay's End of Year Sale

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Visit us today at [healthebay.org/shop!](http://healthebay.org/shop!)



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