

SUMMER 2011

SANCTUARY WATCH

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America's Great Outdoors: **THE OCEAN**

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RICHARD LOUV

Author of 'Last Child in the Woods'

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*Astonishing Tales from
the Sanctuaries:
Caught in the Eye*



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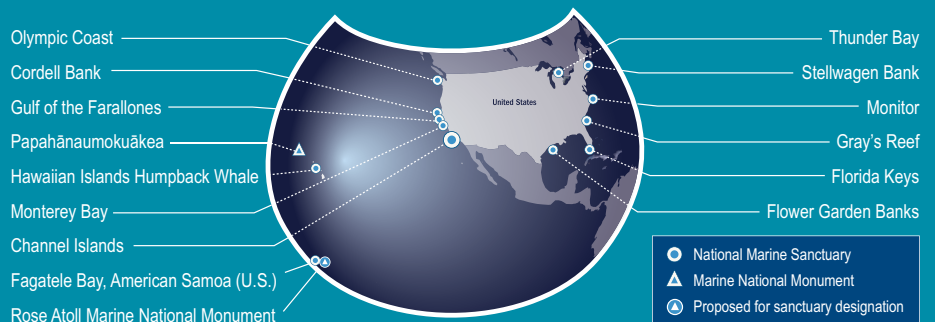


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NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM



Scale varies in this perspective. Adapted from National Geographic Maps.

The ocean has been a part of my life as long as I can remember. Those that know me are aware that I am more myself outdoors than anywhere else, especially when I am near, on or in the ocean. President John F. Kennedy said “We are tied to the ocean. And when we go back to the sea — whether it is to sail or to watch it — we are going back from whence we came.” I think he had it right.

Earlier this year, President Obama launched the America’s Great Outdoors Initiative to foster a 21st-century conservation and recreation ethic. America’s Great Outdoors takes as its premise that lasting conservation solutions should rise from the American people — that the protection of our natural heritage is a non-partisan objective shared by all Americans. We have all inherited an amazing environment to enjoy and hand down to the next generation.

When many Americans think about the outdoors, they think of hiking in the woods or playing ball, but for me, it’s about getting to the ocean. Sitting on a boat in the middle of the ocean, surrounded by water as far as the eye can see — that’s my quintessential “great outdoors” experience. Out there, nothing but a small vessel separates you from the vast, unbroken expanse of wilderness. Below, above, and in every direction on the compass, nature thrives.

In the last *Sanctuary Watch*, we celebrated recreation in the national marine sanctuaries. In this issue, we herald the importance of getting Americans outside and into the water, not just in sanctuaries but all across our nation’s ocean and coasts. We spoke to author Richard Louv, who explained how recent studies have shown that people who spend more time outdoors are happier, healthier, and more productive.

Staying connected to the sea is beneficial to our health, but it’s also vital to our economy. When we spend more time on the ocean, we are more likely to care about it and to take responsibility for its well-being. That leads to cleaner, healthier marine ecosystems that generate billions of dollars in recreation and tourism and support upwards of 50,000 jobs in national marine sanctuary communities alone.

Encouraging people to experience the nation’s special ocean places is a critical part of the stewardship mission of the sanctuaries. The legacy of outdoor areas, an ethic for appreciating nature, and affection for recreational pursuits are American values we should never take for granted.

So, as summer kicks into high gear, take advantage of those opportunities to get outside, head to the shore, dive into the water and enjoy America’s great outdoors.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Basta
 Daniel J. Basta, Director
 Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

NOAA, Partners Launch Voyage to Discovery

NEW WEBSITE HIGHLIGHTS STORIES OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN MARITIME HERITAGE

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, in partnership with Murrain Associates, Inc., and the National Association of Black Scuba Divers (NABS), launched Voyage to Discovery, a new website and education initiative highlighting untold stories of African-Americans and the sea. The website can be accessed at www.voyagetodiscovery.org.

Aimed at everyone from students to adults, the Voyage to Discovery website offers feature stories, interviews and videos about African-American seafaring achievements since the pre-Civil War period. Information about marine careers will also be available.

The website, recognized by President Obama on WhiteHouse.gov during Black History Month, is part of a NOAA initiative to build awareness about the legacy of African-American maritime heritage and engage the public in stewardship of the country's coastal and ocean resources through education, archaeology, science and underwater exploration.

"Our economy and way of life are inextricably linked to the health and productivity of the global ocean," said Daniel J. Basta, director of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. "Through this initiative, African-American youth can learn about their maritime heritage and the educational and career opportunities in the 21st-century global economy."



Crewmembers of the USS *Mason*, the first Navy ship with a predominantly African-American enlisted crew during WWII, stand by their ship at the Boston Navy Yard in 1944.

Photo: U.S. Navy Photo ID: 80-G-218861, National Archives.

Students Selected for 2011 Ocean for Life Field Study

IMMERSIVE PROGRAM GIVES PARTICIPANTS MULTICULTURAL EXPERIENCE

Thirty Western and Greater Middle Eastern students have been selected to participate in the 2011 Ocean for Life program hosted by Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. The two-week immersive field study will be held July 14-26 in Santa Barbara, Calif., and on Santa Cruz Island.

During the field study, students will document their experiences through still photography and video, mentored by staff from the National Geographic Society and graduate students from American University's Center

for Environmental Filmmaking in Washington, D.C.

Ocean for Life, which is funded by diverse non-governmental partners, brings together high school students of diverse backgrounds and cultures to discover marine science, conservation, and how the ocean connects us all. The program provides high-quality, immersive ocean field studies and follow-on education programs designed around three main themes: a sense of place, interconnectedness, and ocean conservation and stewardship.

STUDENTS, TEACHERS EXPLORE NOAA RESEARCH VESSEL

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary hosted more than 150 middle and high school students and teachers from Oahu, Kauai, Molokai, and Maui during a day-long marine education cruise aboard the NOAA ship Oscar Elton Sette.

During the hands-on tour, students rotated through study groups involving plankton, marine mammals, and water quality. A scavenger hunt gave students the chance to explore the ship and learn about living

and working on a research vessel.

"The sanctuary hopes that the experience provided by the education cruise will inspire Hawai'i's students to pursue careers related to marine science and conservation," said Malia Chow, sanctuary superintendent.

Student education cruises have been hosted by the sanctuary in the main Hawaiian Islands aboard NOAA ships since 2005.

FIVE NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY STAFFERS AWARDED BRONZE MEDAL

The U.S. Department of Commerce awarded Bronze Medals to four Office of National Marine Sanctuaries staff members for their superior public service in helping support NOAA's response to the 2009 tsunami in the U.S. territory of American Samoa.



Kevin Grant, Benjamin LaCour, Kelley Sage and Lisa Symons were members of a NOAA team that responded to the devastation in American Samoa, home to Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

William Douros, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries acting deputy director, was also awarded a Bronze Medal for his work with a National Marine Fisheries Service team that developed a regulation prohibiting the harvest of krill on the West Coast.

The Bronze Medal is one of the highest honors that can be granted by the under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere.



AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS:

Last year, President Obama announced the America's Great Outdoors Initiative, laying out a bold vision to reconnect Americans with the natural world and protect our environment for future generations.

"Americans are blessed with a vast and varied natural heritage," he said. "From mountains to deserts and from sea to shining sea, America's great outdoors have shaped

From the placid, sun-kissed waters of the Florida Keys to the rugged, storm-tossed seas off Washington's Olympic Coast, the ocean has nurtured and sustained us for centuries, providing a source of transportation, trade, food and entertainment. The nation's coastal waters were our first highways, its beaches our first playgrounds, and its abundant fisheries our first restaurants.


Generations of Americans, from poets to

tinue to be drawn to the water.

Nearly 160 million people — over half of the U.S. population — now live within coastal communities. More than one-third of the American people participate in some form of ocean activity every year, from swimming to fishing to simply lounging at the water's edge.

They go for fun, fresh air, and a feeling of peace that only the great outdoors can provide. Something about the salt spray and the cool breeze rejuvenates the spirit and nourishes the soul. Coastal tourism invigorates the economy, as well, generating billions of dollars in annual revenue.

The United States is a nation of sweeping plains and towering mountain ranges, of vast deserts and dense forests. But it's also a nation of more than 12,000 miles of coastline and spectacular, thriving ocean treasures like our national marine sanctuaries.

America's great outdoors stretch from sea to shining sea, but the sea is not a boundary. Rather, the ocean is a part of our nation's rich tapestry of wild places. We owe it to ourselves to enjoy it, care for it, and protect it for generations to come. 

"From sea to shining sea, America's great outdoors have shaped the rugged independence and sense of community that define the American spirit."

the rugged independence and sense of community that define the American spirit."

The initiative demonstrates a strong commitment to getting our nation back out and into nature, for the health of our children, our environment and our economy. It's a goal that everyone can support.

But America's great outdoors don't stop at the shoreline. Ever since the birth of our nation, the ocean has been an integral part of the fabric of American life.

presidents, have listened to the whisper of the sea and taken inspiration from it. Ralph Waldo Emerson, Ernest Hemingway, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, President John F. Kennedy — the list of great citizens who cared deeply about the ocean goes on.

Today, many of us shuttle back and forth between our homes and offices in temperature-controlled automobiles, scarcely catching a breath of fresh air. But even as we drift apart from nature in our daily lives, we con-

Ocean

The

By Matt Dozier

“We are tied to the ocean. And when we go back to the sea — whether it is to sail or to watch it — we are going back from whence we came.”

— John F. Kennedy

WHAT MAKES THE OCEAN GREAT?



Jack Curlett
Recreational Fisherman
Key Largo, FL

“The greatest thing about our ocean is the diversity of its inhabitants and their ability to live in such close proximity to one another in their shared environment. Each and every time I either put on a scuba tank and go under the water’s surface or sit in a boat and cast a line into the water it is a true mystery.”



Ashely Pereda
5th-Grade Student
Ventura, CA

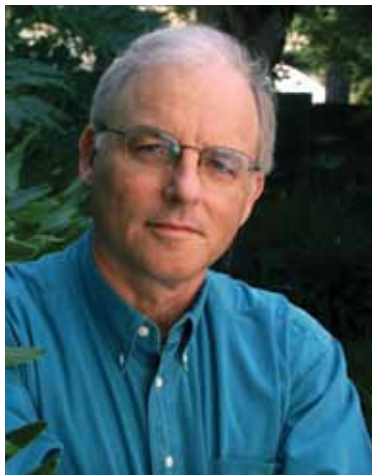
“To me, the ocean is one of the most important places in the world. It is important because the ocean gives us many things like fish and shrimp. The ocean to me is a home to not just animals, but seaweed that makes the oxygen we breathe. Plus the ocean is a fun place to be at, it has nice beaches for me to run on and waves to jump over on sunny days.”



Capt. Jim Coon
Whale Watch Tour Operator
Maui, HI

“The vastness of the ocean and its constantly changing moods create a stimulating environment that, even after a lifetime working on it, continues to thrill me. The variety of ocean life that surrounds us from the very smallest invertebrate to the magnificent humpback whale reinforces my passion to educate, share and protect these amazing — but fragile — resources.”

Photo: Lars Fackler



RICHARD LOUV

Author, *The Nature Principle* and *Last Child in the Woods*

Sanctuary Voices is a guest column featuring views and opinions from the national marine sanctuary community.

In this issue, we talked to author Richard Louv about the ocean, our connection to nature, and the future of conservation. For the full Q&A, visit sanctuaries.noaa.gov.

In your new book, *The Nature Principle*, you talk about some of your experiences on the water. What part of your

time on the ocean impacted you the most?

I've spent more time on freshwater than saltwater, but in recent years two friends have taken me, and sometimes my sons, out on the Pacific to fish, or to take photographs, or just to experience the ocean. There have been many moments: gliding over sunken galaxies of bioluminescence; following dolphins to the Coronado Islands; watching for breaching whales and sharks, and seeing them; racing home as a powerful storm came in from the west. Perhaps the most moving moment was encountering a great ocean sunfish, a mola mola, basking in the sun.

You have spent time with Robert F. Kennedy Jr., whom you quote in *Last Child in the Woods* as saying, "Our children ought to be out there on the water. This is what connects us ..." Can you expand on that idea?

Part of the connection is simply the water, which is not only mysterious at its source, but in its constitution. In *On Water*, Thomas Farber writes: "The water in our blood will be cloud one day, was glacier eons ago," and will be ice again, and will lose nothing in its translation. When we look into water, we're reminded of our own depths and possibilities, and of humility.

Why do you think people feel such a deep connection to the ocean?

Oceans are water writ large. They remind us not only who we are, but what we aren't — and what we can't control. Why this is true is still a mystery. E.O. Wilson introduced the biophilia hypothesis, which holds that humans are genetically wired to have an affiliation to nature; that affiliation would, of course, extend to oceans.

Nature always moves on, and life usually finds a way. We can harm the oceans, or the part of us that is drawn to nature, but we can't control the oceans.

With children spending more time indoors and less time exploring the natural world, what are the dangers of letting that bond with nature disappear?

First, there's the impact on children now; then there's the impact on the long-term human relationship with the natural world. Recent

research suggests that children who experience nature play tend to be healthier, psychologically and physically, than peers who grow up mainly indoors. Many of us believe that spending time outdoors is vital for people of all ages who hope to live a balanced life and to feel fully alive.

As for our long-term relationship with nature, several studies have found that people who identify themselves as conservationists or environmentalists almost always have had transcendent experiences in nature when they were children. What happens if those experiences shrink to the point where they're no longer considered normal? We'll

Oceans are water writ large. They remind us not only who we are, but what we aren't — and what we can't control.

always have environmentalists, of course, but unless we connect future generations to nature, environmentalists will carry nature in their briefcases, not in their hearts. And that's a very different and unsustainable relationship.

You speak often about "Nature's Therapy." What do you mean by this — what is nature's role in our health and well-being?

Time spent in the natural world can help build our physical and emotional fitness. We know nature-based therapy has had success healing patients who had not responded to treatment. Studies show exposure to natural environments enhances the ability to cope with and recover from stress, illness, and injury.

There now are established methods of nature-based therapy (including ecopsychology, wilderness, horticultural, and animal-assisted therapy) that have success healing patients. I believe these approaches will grow in popularity in coming years, including among the traditional health professions. This is already happening.

To health and well-being, I'd add intelligence and creativity. New research suggests that exposure to the living world can enhance intelligence for some people. A more natural environment seems to stimulate our ability to pay attention, think clearly, and be more creative. One reason may be that, when truly present in nature, we use all our senses at the same time, which is the optimum state of learning.

What role can environmental conservation — and special places like national marine sanctuaries — play in reconnecting our society to the great outdoors?

Some recent science has shown that, in urban neighborhoods, the greater the biodiversity, the greater the psychological health of people, and the better they treat each other. Children who spend more time in nature and with non-human animals seem to develop a keener sense of empathy.

As a species, we generally do better when we're in kinship with species besides our own. If this is true in the neighborhoods in which we live, learn and play, then it may well be true in much larger environments, such as the ocean. We need to know that we share this world with countless neighbors, and the more diverse they are, biologically, the healthier that world is.

As national marine sanctuaries return some of the biodiversity that we have destroyed or lost, we'll feel the benefits — intellectually at first, personally later. We do need more direct experience in nature, but in some instances, if we're going to have a relationship with nature in the future, we need to step back and give other species some space and time. Building long-term kinship takes time and patience.

How do we penetrate all the noise in today's world to deliver this critical message of the importance of nature to human existence and survival?

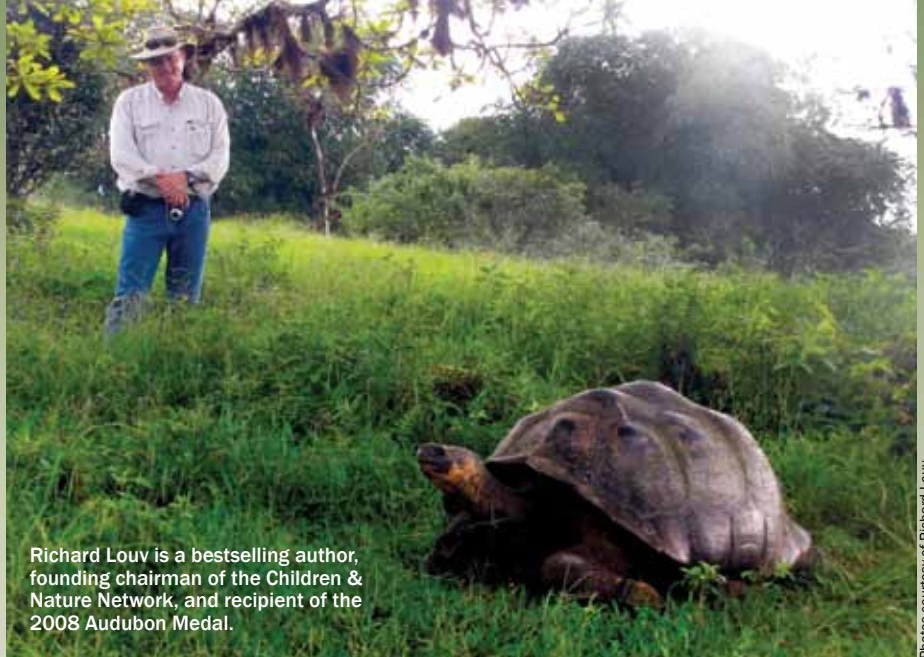
This is too simplistic, I know, but spending more time in nature does help us listen; it opens our senses, and builds our sense of humility. I believe that people are starved for authenticity, and nature gives us that. Technology is here to stay, and will grow, and brings many gifts; but we also need an antidote to the downside of technology. In short, the more high-tech our lives become, the more nature we need.

You have posed the question, "Where will the future stewards of the Earth come from?" How would you answer that?

We can now see the emergence of what I call a "new nature movement," which encompasses but goes beyond traditional definitions of environmentalism and sustainability. I realize that deserves more explanation, but stimulating a new nature movement is part of the reason I wrote *The Nature Principle*.

For decades, our culture has struggled with two addictions: to oil and to despair. But what if our lives were as immersed in nature as they are in electronics today? What if we not only saved energy, but created human energy — as new homes, cities, schools, and workplaces emerge that maximize the benefits of the natural world to health, intelligence and creativity? What if we not only conserved nature, but created it where we live, work, learn and play?

Answering these questions, and then acting, will be the goal of a new nature movement.

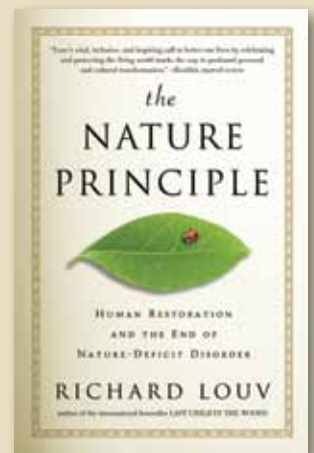


Richard Louv is a bestselling author, founding chairman of the Children & Nature Network, and recipient of the 2008 Audubon Medal.

Photos courtesy of Richard Louv

Excerpt from *The Nature Principle*

"...my son and I saw an ominous-looking dorsal fin cutting the waves, moving toward us. The fin dipped loosely now and then, like a sleepy eyelid, and then we saw what appeared to be an eye — a flattened orb, a great blue pupil beneath a reflective skein of saltwater. The eye looked at us as if its owner were curious.



"Karma fish," said Louie. He was smiling broadly.

We had encountered one of the strangest fish in the sea, an ocean sunfish, or *Mola mola*. This sunfish appeared to weigh a few hundred pounds. It circled the boat, almost touching the hull, pausing now and then. "Good luck to see one. Bad luck to hurt them," said Louie...

...Since then, the *Mola mola* often comes to mind. That slow, unafraid creature somehow offered a reminder that life's tide can be slowed, and that I must take more time to recognize the miraculous."

For more, visit www.natureprinciple.org

COAST TO COAST: AMERICA'S

TOP 8

OCEAN ACTIVITIES

(Number of annual participants)

 **1. VISITING BEACHES**
77.8 Million

 **2. SWIMMING**
60.3 Million

 **3. VIEWING & PHOTOGRAPHING SCENERY**
29.9 Million

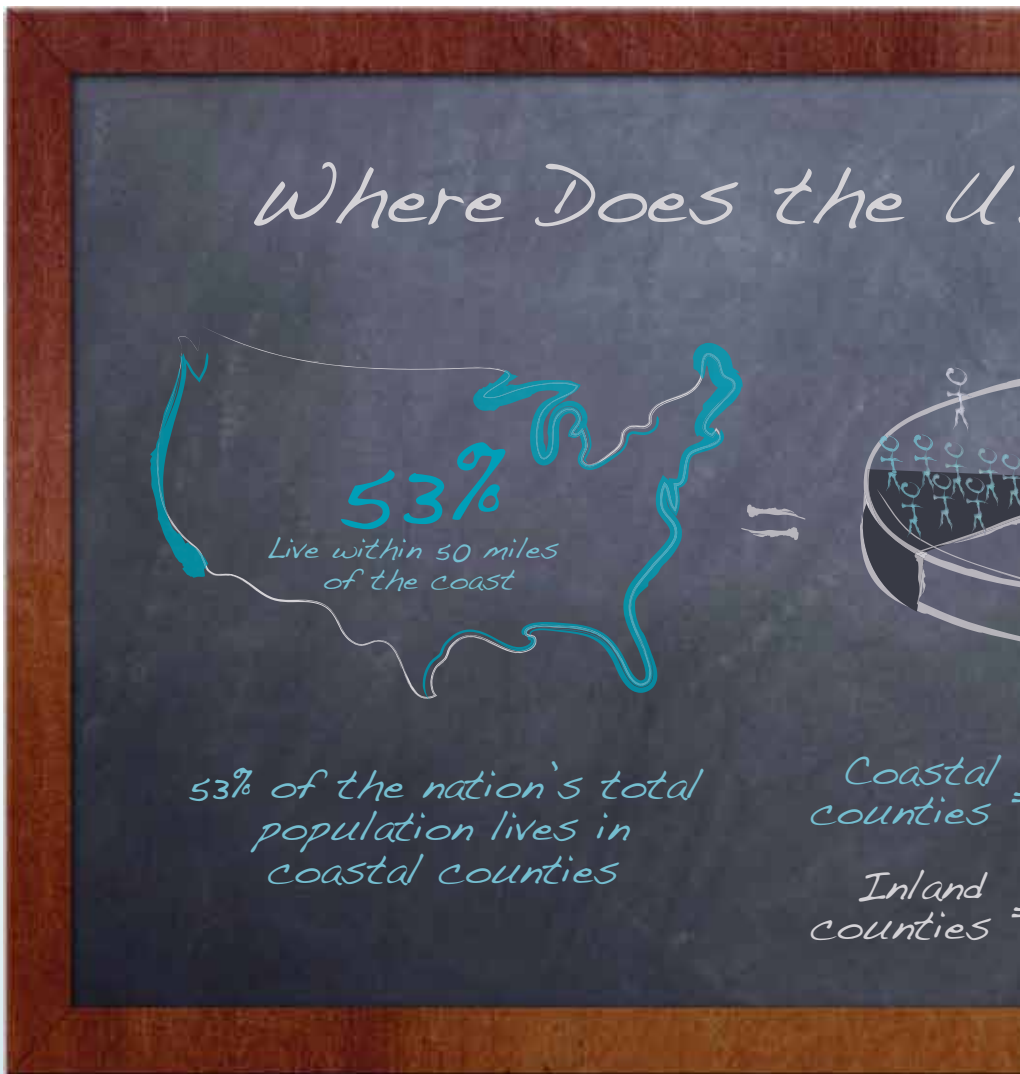
 **4. FISHING**
24.1 Million

 **5. BIRD WATCHING**
21.8 Million

 **6. MOTORBOATING**
17.4 Million

 **7. OTHER WILDLIFE WATCHING**
17.3 Million

 **8. SNORKELING**
12.6 Million



14 DAYS



Time the Average Beachgoer Spends at the Shore Per Year

33,000 JOBS

Supported by ocean recreation and tourism in the Florida Keys

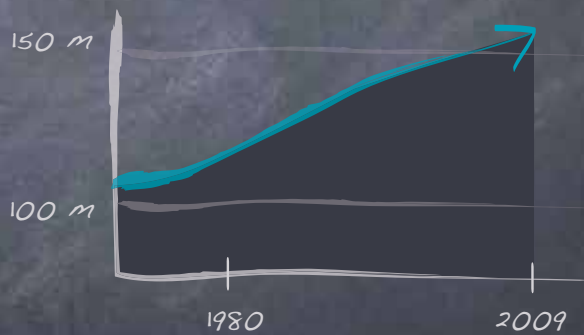
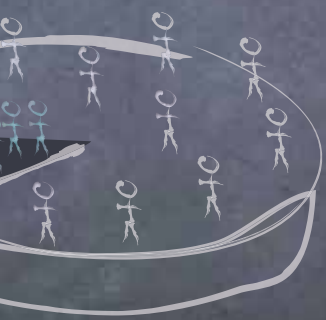


1 in 3

Americans participate in some form of ocean recreation

OCEAN CONNECTION

U.S. Population Live?



12% of U.S. land area

88% of U.S. land area

39 million - Increase in U.S. coastal population from 1980 to 2009

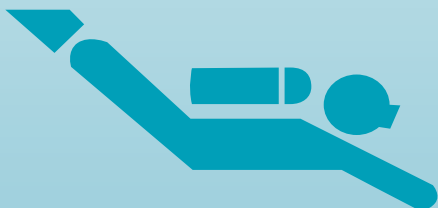


Annual revenue generated by ocean recreation, tourism and commercial fishing across the National Marine Sanctuary System

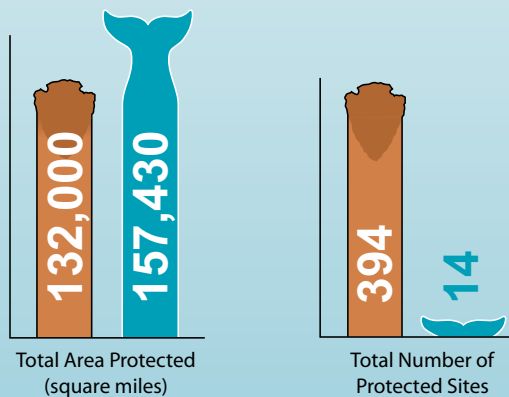
\$4,000,000,000

2,500+

SCUBA DIVERS visit **Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary** every year



PROTECTING THE GREAT OUTDOORS



National Park System
 National Marine Sanctuary System

Connecting Children to the Outdoors

Ocean Education Programs Rekindle Our Bond with Nature

By Michiko Martin and Seaberry Nachbar

The gust of wind carried the grand arch of balloons away from the confines of the city garbage bin. The students of Pacific Grove Middle School in Pacific Grove, Calif., did not delight in their flight. Not cheers, but gasps, escaped from the children's mouths as they watched the balloons drift away beyond their reach.

Across the National Marine Sanctuary System, diverse educational programs provide children with hand-on learning opportunities in the great outdoors. These experiences foster a connection to the natural world, improved physical and mental health, and a sense of responsibility for the environment.



The reason for their concern, explained middle school student Marissa Martinez, is that the balloons would float offshore into the nearby Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, where animals would mistake them for food and eat them.

The students learned about the problem after their teacher, Kelly Terry, nominated the school to the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries' Ocean Guardian Schools Program. "I had a sense that since we can see the ocean from our school, we should definitely be ocean guardians," Terry said. Today, as part of their Ocean Guardian School commitment to protect the ocean, the students take a pledge to help reduce marine debris.

"Even if a balloon released into the ocean doesn't harm an animal," said student Lexi Rohrer, "it could end up in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch."

Armed with the knowledge of how runaway balloons can harm ocean wildlife, these young ocean guardians decided to take action. They organized a letter-writing campaign and collected signatures for a petition, urging both their school and the Pacific Grove City Council to ban latex balloons at outdoor activities.

"Our school is an Ocean Guardians school, and we are trying to keep our area free of litter," wrote student Luke Hiserman, author of the petition. "We would like to propose that it be illegal to have balloons in Pacific Grove at public events because we are so close to the ocean."

The city council agreed and has since banned all balloons at outdoor events. In addition, the school has prohibited large balloon bouquets on campus.

Fighting "Nature-Deficit Disorder"

The students of Pacific Grove Middle School stand in proud defiance of the widening gulf between people and nature. Author Richard Louv addressed that gulf in his bestselling book *Last Child in the Woods*, which sparked a national debate that led to a growing movement to reconnect children with nature.

Coining the term "Nature-Deficit Disorder," Louv described the growing divide between children and their environment and the significant negative consequences of this gap: "An increasing pace in the last three decades, approximately, of a rapid disengagement between



children and direct experiences in nature ... This has profound implications, not only for the health of future generations but for the health of the Earth itself.”

The outdoors have increasingly lost their relevance in the lives of our children, who now spend only half as much time outside as their parents did, but who spend an average of seven hours a day using electronic devices. In his remarks at the April 2010 White House Conference that launched the America’s Great Outdoors Initiative, President Obama cautioned that “[w]e are losing our connection to the parks, wild places, and open spaces we grew up with and cherish.”

People who are disconnected from nature are less likely to be committed to — and involved in — stewardship of the environment. Environmental psychologist Louise Chawla believes that early nature experiences are essential to produce tomorrow’s leaders of change; for most environmentalists, it was a deep connection to nature formed early in life that inspired their later work.

Nature’s Medicine

Reconnecting our children to nature is vitally important to developing tomorrow’s leaders and stewards. But the health of the environment may not be the only thing at stake. A growing body of research suggests that the great outdoors positively impact our own health and well-being, as well.

Nature can help protect children against stress and adversity, according to a 2003 study by Cornell University environmental psychologists Nancy Wells and Gary Evans. “Our study finds that life’s stressful events appear not to cause as much psychological distress in children who live in high-nature conditions compared with children who live in low-nature conditions,” said Wells.

In 2000, Wells conducted another study that found that being close to nature also helps boost a child’s attention span. Previous studies have similarly found that time spent in the great outdoors is linked to better psychological well-being, improved mental function, fewer illnesses and speedier recovery. Louv supports those ideas in his books, explaining that by tapping into the restorative powers of nature we can boost mental sharpness and creativity; promote health and wellness; build better and more sustainable businesses, communities, and economies; and ultimately strengthen human bonds.

Innovative Sanctuary Programs

Encouraging children to experience nature and fostering a sense of responsibility for our environment is at the core of educational programming in the national marine sanctuaries. Sanctuaries enable people of all ages to experience the wonder and beauty of the natural world firsthand, and help instill a deep appreciation for the people, stories and traditions of these special places.

As the efforts like the NOAA Ocean Guardian Schools Program prove, children who feel personally connected to their environment become passionate stewards of the great outdoors. Their hands-on experiences with a world beyond computers, cell phones and game consoles motivates the students to care and protect — whether through recycling, discouraging single-use plastic shopping bags, or speaking up in the fight to keep trash out of the ocean we all share.

Prominent environmental activist Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. summed it up well in Louv’s book, *Last Child in the Woods*: “Our children ought to be out there on the water. This is what connects us, this is what connects humanity, this is what we have in common. It’s not the Internet, it’s the oceans.” 🐟

Channel Islands Naturalist Corps volunteer Sally Eagle interacts with a child on a whale watch cruise in Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. Volunteer programs like this one work to make visitors' experiences fun, informative and memorable.

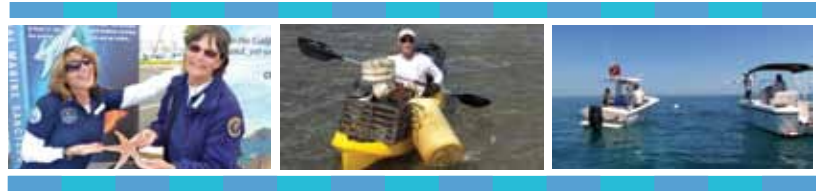
Photo courtesy of Bob Perry, Condor Express



Reaching Out, ON THE Water

Volunteers Help Visitors Appreciate the Great Outdoors

— *By Tracy Hajduk*



Catherine French stood on deck and watched as the students piled aboard, still smiling and laughing after hours of trekking around the trails and tidepools of Santa Cruz Island.

Their day of exploration in California's Channel Islands National Park was at an end, but ahead lay an hour-long boat ride back to port through the neighboring Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. This was French's chance to share the mystery and excitement of the natural wonders found beneath the waves of the sanctuary with a captive audience.

And this is where she met her match.

It started with a question. As the boat paused to watch some humpback whales feeding near the surface, a fourth-grade boy wanted to know what the whales were eating. French, an 11-year veteran of the Channel Islands Naturalist Corps with years of experience talking to visitors about the islands and the surrounding waters, replied with enthusiasm.

His hand shot up with another question. Then another. And another. Each answer sparked a new inquiry. "How long can humpbacks hold their breath?" "What's the difference between seals and sea lions?" "Why are those birds diving in the water?" "How can I do this as a job?"

French spent the rest of the trip home breathlessly trying to keep pace with the boy's rapid-fire curiosity. As the boat pulled up to the dock, she beamed when he said,

"I thought when I grew up I would just get a job like my brother, and that would be it. Now I know what I am going to do — I am going to go to college and study marine science. And then I am going to come out here and teach people about the oceans and the animals. I am so excited!"

Connecting People with Nature

Every day, smart, passionate volunteers like French reach out to visitors across the National Marine Sanctuary System in an effort to make their trips to the sanctuaries educational, enjoyable and safe.

"Just a little bit of outreach can create a lot of enthusiasm," explained French, who said she gets an "amazing" number of questions from people of all ages.

Through programs like the Channel Islands Naturalist Corps, these trained volunteers connect with people of all ages in the great outdoors. They encourage curiosity, provide information about sanctuary resources, and promote responsible use of the ocean.

Park ranger David Begun, who coordinates the Naturalist Corps in partnership with Shauna Bingham of the Channel Islands sanctuary, emphasized the importance of volunteers in helping visitors get the most out of their time in the great outdoors.

Knowledgeable volunteer naturalists, Begun said, can help members of the public gain a deeper appreciation for places like the Channel Islands, an understanding of

the need to protect those treasured places, and a desire to come back again. Some people, like the inquisitive boy who bombarded French with questions, even come away with the urge to pursue a career on the water.

Promoting Education and Stewardship

In Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, volunteers with the Team OCEAN program have become an essential part of the sanctuary's public outreach efforts. Todd Hitchins, coordinator of the program, said Team OCEAN members in boats and kayaks station themselves at popular spots for boating, fishing, snorkeling and diving, providing them with plenty of opportunities to interact with sanctuary visitors.

Hitchins said volunteers on the water can educate visitors about the local coral reef ecosystem and help them better appreciate the sanctuary without accidentally causing harm to its habitats.

"When I go to a place, I want to learn about it," Hitchins said. "Team OCEAN volunteers let visitors know they are in a sanctuary and share information about the reef, and people really appreciate that."

America's great outdoors are there for all to enjoy, and the Channel Islands Naturalist Corps, Team OCEAN and other volunteer programs work tirelessly to make every visitor's experience fun, memorable and educational. 🌊



STACI KAYE-CARR | Volunteer, Channel Islands Naturalist Corps

Superstar Naturalist Passes 3,000 Hours of Volunteer Outreach

Staci Kaye-Carr adjusted a few last wires and cables before checking in with her co-hosts. “You guys all set down there?”

“Down there” was 35 feet underwater, in the middle of a towering kelp forest off Anacapa Island.

“Good to go!” came the reply from the divers, ready to beam their voices and video from beneath the surface of Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary to Staci’s group of visitors on the island and a classroom of students 60 miles away on the California mainland. They waited for her signal.

Moments later, the cameras rolled and Staci launched into the broadcast, sparkling with enthusiasm as she and the dive team led the audience on an immersive, interactive tour of the watery world.

The show, part of a Channel Islands National Park program called “Channel Islands Live,” lasted about 20 minutes. As a volunteer naturalist for the Channel Islands Naturalist Corps, Staci contributes more than 500 hours of her time to programs like this one *every year*.

Think about it. That’s more than 60 eight-hour workdays, or as much as a full-time employee works over three months!

Since she joined the Naturalist Corps in 2004, this “all-star of the sea” has donated a staggering 3,100 hours to education and conservation efforts in the sanctuary and adjacent Channel Islands National Park. She received the sanctuary’s “Volunteer of the Year” award in 2010 in recognition of her tireless contributions.

“At sea or on land, I never get tired of sharing with the public,” she said. “It’s so rewarding to spend time outdoors and give back to the community.”

Staci said she could hardly contain herself when she first donned the signature navy colors of the Naturalist Corps seven years ago.

“That was a great day for me,” she said. “I was so over the moon. Getting my blue uniform was as exciting as getting my wedding dress!”

Her enthusiasm seems to jump like electric current into anyone she touches, whether she’s hosting “live dive” broadcasts, performing puppet shows, leading nature hikes or just chatting to people during her daily walks on the beach.

But Staci, like the other naturalists, brings more than just passion to her interactions with Channel Islands visitors. She knows the islands and the surrounding waters as well as almost anyone, having logged more than 1,000 dives in the sanctuary since she got her scuba certification in 1987.

On whale watch cruises and other outreach opportunities on the water, she works to enhance visitors’ experiences by sharing her knowledge and helping them gain an appreciation for the hidden world below the waves.

“We want to make people’s trip out to the sanctuary more meaningful,” she said.

Even with thousands of hours of service under her belt, Staci shows no signs of slowing down, and her dedication continues to inspire new volunteers year after year.

“It has been an amazing journey,” she said, “and it’s really just starting.”



Photo: Staci Kaye-Carr

Staci poses with her hand-sewn blue whale puppet, part of the Channel Islands puppet show that she performs for visitors of all ages.

Years since Staci joined the Channel Islands Naturalist Corps	7
Number of hours she volunteered in 2010	610
Total hours she has volunteered since 2004	3,100
Volunteer hours contributed by the entire Naturalist Corps in FY 2010	23,878
Visitors reached by Channel Islands sanctuary volunteers in FY 2010	420,000

Astonishing Tales

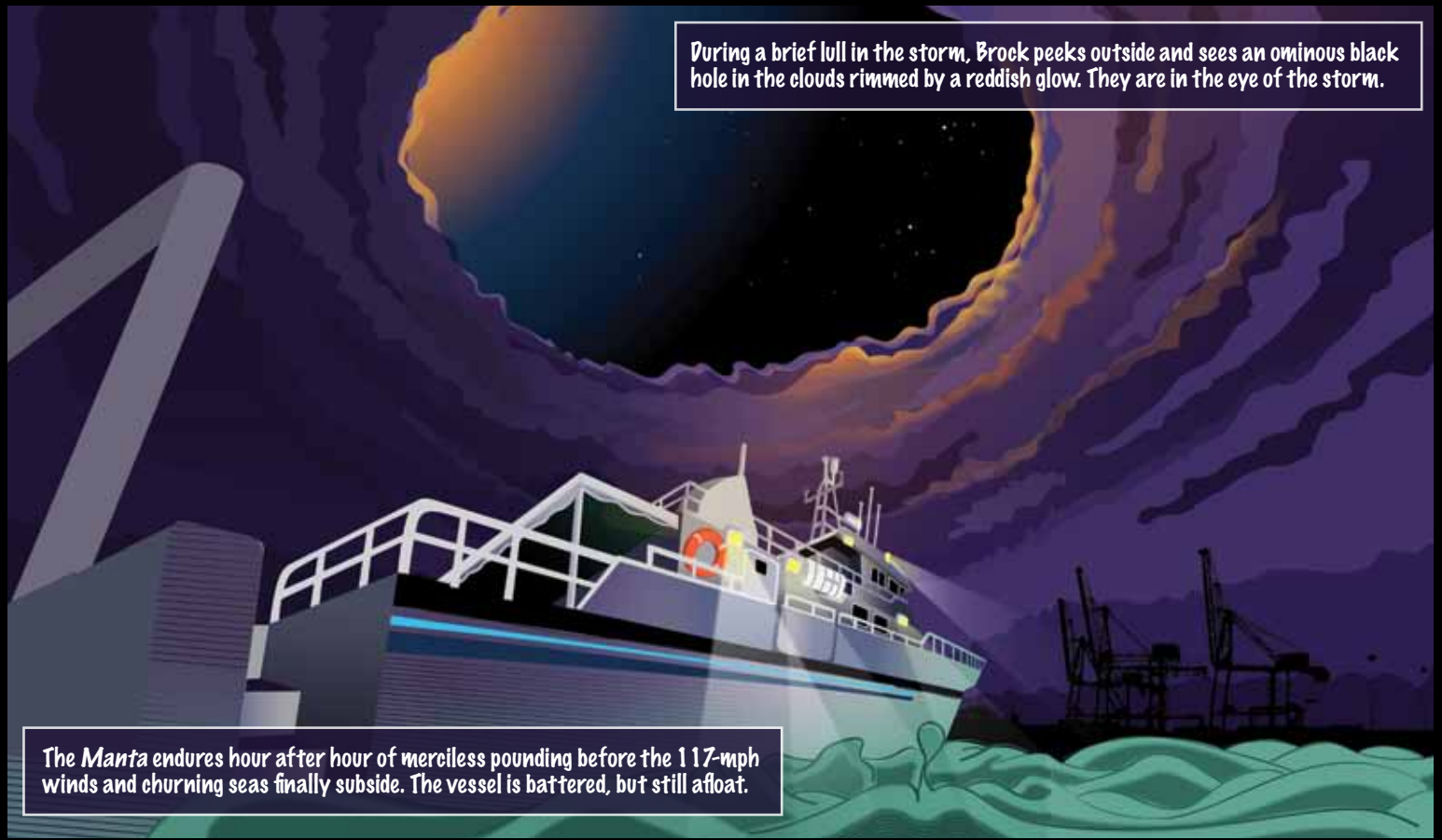
from the NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES:

Caught in the Eye of the Storm

Friday, Sept. 12, 2008 — Hurricane Ike surges toward the coast of Texas. Directly in its path is Galveston Bay, where Captain Chuck Curry and Mate Deb Brock are preparing to ride out the storm aboard the sanctuary research vessel *Manta*. Staying behind is risky, but they know it's the ship's only chance at survival.



Night falls. The wind howls. Rain falls sideways in dense sheets. Huge waves toss the 83-foot *Manta* around like a toy sailboat.



During a brief lull in the storm, Brock peeks outside and sees an ominous black hole in the clouds rimmed by a reddish glow. They are in the eye of the storm.

The *Manta* endures hour after hour of merciless pounding before the 117-mph winds and churning seas finally subside. The vessel is battered, but still afloat.



After assessing the damage to the *Manta*, Brock and Curry volunteer the ship to help with recovery efforts on Galveston Island. Over the next several weeks, they provide showers, food and a resting place for hundreds of people. Slowly but surely, Galveston starts to rebuild. And thanks to the heroic efforts of its brave crew, the *Manta* lives on to support the national marine sanctuaries another day.



Photos: Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (top), iStock ©Daniel Cota (bottom)

SANCTUARY SNAPSHOT Just like trees on land, kelp can grow in dense underwater forests that provide shelter for wildlife, give us oxygen to breathe, and embody the mystery and wonder of the great outdoors. National marine sanctuaries work with diverse partners to encourage Americans to enjoy and care for our nation's wild places, both on land and in the sea.