



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
**NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE**  
**Office of National Marine Sanctuaries**  
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**36<sup>th</sup> SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL**  
**7 June 2012 9:30 am – 3:00 pm**  
**NOAA Fisheries NERO**  
**Gloucester MA**  
**MINUTES of MEETING**

**Present:**

Michelle Bachman	Federal:	NE Fisheries Management Council
Priscilla Brooks	Member:	Conservation
David Casoni	Alternate:	Fixed Gear Commercial Fishing
Jamie Courname	Member:	Research
CPT Peter DeCola	Federal:	USCG
Susan Farady	Alternate:	Education
John Galluzzo	Alternate:	Maritime Heritage
Vito Giacalone	Member:	Mobile Gear Commercial Fishing
Jonathan Grant	Alternate:	At Large
Heather Knowles	Member:	Diving (Executive Committee, Acting Chair)
Chris McGuire	Alternate:	Conservation
Maggie Merrill	Alternate:	Business/Industry
Rob Moir	Member:	Conservation
Frank Morton	Member:	Marine Transportation
Rick Murray	Member:	Research
Wayne Petersen	Alternate:	Conservation
Allison Rosner	Federal:	National Marine Fisheries Service
Michael Sosik	Member:	Recreational Fishing
John Williamson	Member:	At Large (Executive Committee, Secretary)
Tim Wilmarth	Federal:	NOAA Law Enforcement

**SBNMS Staff:**

Craig MacDonald	Matthew Lawrence	Dave Wiley
Ben Cowie-Haskell	Elizabeth Stokes	

**I. Welcome, Review of Agenda and Approval of SAC Minutes (Heather Knowles)**

The Agenda was reviewed and approved. The 35<sup>th</sup> SAC Minutes were reviewed and accepted (unanimous). Jen Anderson requested that the Powerpoint presentation on the Draft SERA Proposal that was presented at the 16 February SAC meeting be made available as an attachment to the Minutes. Craig said that the presentation was not attached to the 16 February SAC Minutes but is available for anyone who would like to see it.

## II. SBNMS Business (Craig MacDonald)

Craig discussed the letter that Dan Basta, Director ONMS, sent back to the SAC Chairman in response to the SAC's letter concerning the SERA. Dan's letter is essentially supportive of what the SAC requested, but until there is some stability within the fishing industry in New England, NOAA is reluctant to formally submit the SERA to the NEFMC. Dan Basta thanked the SAC for their interest and encouraged them to continue to be engaged with any discussions involving the SERA proposal. It is up to the SAC to decide if they feel that there should be further redress. A discussion that came up with Dan Basta was that the SAC may want to establish a formal letterhead to move their correspondence forward.

Discussion/Comments:

Priscilla Brooks, Vito Giacalone, Heather Knowles, Craig MacDonald, Chris McGuire, Rob Moir, Rick Murray:

How SAC can transmit communication to NOAA and what is possible? It seems to be a very convoluted process to get a letter to NOAA from the SAC.

Craig MacDonald explained the process of how the SAC letter was submitted to NOAA through the sanctuary superintendent. Viewed from a protocol point of view, it had to be determined who is the appropriate responder since the letter was addressed to Craig MacDonald; it was decided that it should be Dan Basta, ONMS Director. The appearance of the SAC letter from a communications point of view was on plain paper with no cache or letterhead. Dan Basta conveyed to Craig that the SAC may want to have their own letterhead, as other SACs have chosen to have a letterhead unique to their council. Under the SAC charter and handbook there are provisions in which this can be done. This could be an action item that the SAC may want to pursue.

*Further discussion regarding SAC letterhead:*

Agreement amongst members that SAC should have its own letterhead and be provided with some examples from other SACs. Craig will provide examples to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will provide recommendations to the SAC on their selection. Craig noted that it will be important to vote at the next SAC meeting to have it formally adopted as the SAC's letterhead.

Question: Will SAC membership be recognized on letterhead? Will it list all the members and their affiliations? There is some value to this.

There should be two letterheads -- one that lists all the SAC seats represented and another more generic one. For example, a SAC member may not want his/her name on a letter that supports the SERA. Two versions would be better.

Keep template generic -- when a letter is crafted on a specific issue, names can be added of those who support the letter. It would be difficult to maintain a document that is current with SAC membership turnaround; the sensible thing is to see what others SACs have done; SAC needs to have an understanding of current practices within other SACs.

Priscilla Brooks: Wants to be on the record that she continues to be disappointed by NOAA to get the SERA on the NEFMC agenda. It continues to generate a lot of angst amongst stake holders, and continues not to be given its day and there is no light shining on it. As long as this continues, it will continue to be a problem for the sanctuary because it is threatening. Priscilla wants to continue to urge Director Dan Basta to formally release the SERA to the NEFMC so that it can continue to be debated.

Craig MacDonald: Dan Basta doesn't have the authority to communicate directly with NEFMC. It is really NOAA that has to do it.

Priscilla Brooks: Correction – she urges NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco to release the SERA formally to the NEFMC so that it can be debated.

Question: Was anyone higher up the chain cc'd (for example, Dr. Jane Lubchenco amongst others) in the original letter that was sent from the SAC Executive to the Sanctuary Superintendent?

Craig MacDonald: No, it stopped at Dan Basta's level. Since it was written to the Sanctuary Superintendent, it ran into bureaucratic restraints. However, the Assistant Administrator to Jane Lubchenco is aware of it. It may -be that, had other NOAA senior level staff been directly cc'd, it may have been elevated and made a difference.

### **III. SAC Business (Craig MacDonald)**

i. Council "Round Robin" and SAC Challenge 2012. SAC members and alternates introduced themselves and provided updates of their respective organizations and issues, as well as an update on their SBNMS 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary contributions.

Comment: With regard to Vito Giacalone and Michael Sosik's comments about the cod situation, John Williamson recommended that Nathalie Ward schedule someone to present to the SAC on cod stock concerns in order to provide an in-depth understanding of the situation and the cod stock assessment process in the Gulf of Maine.

#### ii. Recruitment: Current/Future (Craig MacDonald)

Craig reported that there is a two-part recruitment process ongoing: Part 1 was just completed for the recruitment of two Research Alternate seats, one At-Large Member seat, and one Youth Member seat. One of the Research Alternates selected is Irit Altman who lives in Portland ME and is associated with Boston University. Ms. Altman has a background in sea plans ecosystems services trade-off modeling, which is emerging as a useful tool for understanding the sanctuary's ecology. Craig is very pleased to have that orientation on the SAC. The other Research Alternate is Dr. Michael Moore, from Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. Dr. Moore is a marine veterinarian who performs all the necropsies of marine mammals in New England and is a well-known national and international figure. Craig is very pleased to bring that perspective and have him on the SAC. The At-Large Member is George Manter who comes out of real estate. George is very interested in sea bird work and has volunteered quite a bit for the sanctuary, and will bring a very useful general perspective to the SAC. The Youth Seat member has been approved, but Nathalie Ward still needs to interview the potential candidate as part of the final selection process. The Youth Seat Member looks like she is a very strong candidate and her name hopefully will be announced after the interview.

Part 2 recruitment is the SAC seats that are up for renewal; members/alternates are all welcome to reapply. The recruitment deadline is 16 July. Nathalie Ward will send out a formal reminder. It is hoped to have this part of the recruitment completed in time for the next SAC meeting. The seats that are up for recruitment are:

Education Member (Billy Spitzer)  
Education Member (Rich Delaney)  
Education Alternate (Susan Farady)

Whale Watch Member (Steve Milliken)  
Fixed Gear Commercial Fishing Member (Bill Adler)  
Fixed Gear Commercial Fishing Alternate (Dave Casoni)  
Business/Industry Member (Tim Moll)  
Business/Industry Alternate (Maggie Merrill)  
Diving Member (Heather Knowles)  
Diving Alternate (Robert Foster)

iii. SAC Summit Webinar - April 2012 (Craig MacDonald). Dan Basta is increasingly trying to do SAC webinars in order to have more frequent communications with the organizations that he works with. The SAC Chairs, Coordinators, and Superintendents from all of the sanctuaries were invited to take part in the webinar. There was an opportunity to ask questions and share information. The main purpose of the webinar was that Dan Basta, Director ONMS, has initiated what he views as a ‘Campaign of engagement’ that he wants to run for the next 3 years. The intent of the Campaign is to reach out to the public in ways that perhaps are not traditional and go beyond the recognized interests that are associated with sanctuaries, and, of importance, to tie in more with businesses and coastal economies and try and build links where there has been acquaintance but not a lot of integrated involvement or projects. The main point was to ask the SAC Chairs for any recommendations in this effort; and the discussion generated a lot of support. All SAC Chairs saw that there was a real value in doing this. For example, SBNMS has a billboard (on Route 93 near Boston) in conjunction with *Yellowbook* and other partners. Craig hopes to see more of that, if the SAC has any ideas on how to achieve this.

iv. SAC Leadership Award Sub-Committee (John Galluzzo)

John Galluzzo reported that the SAC Leadership Award Subcommittee has been revived. He asked sanctuary staff and SAC members to provide the subcommittee with brief applications with the name and background of recipients for the SAC leadership award. So far, one nomination was received. One more SAC member is needed to join the subcommittee to break the tie. It’s not a lot of “heavy work”. Deadline for applications is 30 September. The subcommittee would like to be able to announce a nominee at the next SAC meeting. SAC members are asked to join the subcommittee and to submit names and background of those volunteers.

v. SAC Youth Seat Subcommittee (Rob Moir)

Rob Moir reported that the SAC Youth Seat Subcommittee put out a call for a 14-18 year old youth to apply for a seat on SAC. The one person who responded is stellar in every way, but there is no other information to share about this person at this time. The plan is that the Youth Member will attend the next SAC meeting. There is still an opening for a Youth Alternate seat. If SAC members know anyone, then please get the word out. Rob thanked everyone for their help.

**IV. SAC Elections: Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary (Craig MacDonald)**

The Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary are up for re-election. No new nominations for these positions were submitted either in writing prior to or during the SAC meeting.

The SAC members voted unanimously to re-elect the executive committee incumbents for one more year.

Rich Delaney: Chair  
Heather Knowles: Vice-Chair  
John Williamson: Secretary

Rob Moir: Suggested that the SAC By-Laws be amended to eliminate term limits on executive committee appointments and that an adhoc subcommittee be formed to amend the By-Laws and bring recommendations back to the SAC at the next.

***Motion: Rob Moir moves to set up an adhoc bylaws subcommittee to review bylaws and make recommendations at the next SAC meeting on term limits for the executive committee and members. Jamie Cournane seconds motion for discussion.***

*Brief discussion ensued amongst some SAC members about pros and cons of motion on the table.*

***Motion Vote: Failed.***

**V. Satellite Tagging Caribbean Humpbacks (Craig MacDonald).** Craig provided a presentation and update on the Letter of Intent with Bermuda. A letter of intent signed in June 2011 by NOAA and the Bermuda Department of Environmental Protection started the process to create a sister sanctuary program. The agreement calls for collaborative management efforts, with NOAA and Bermuda intending to work together in the following areas:

- Exchange of whale fluke (tail) photos for Stellwagen Bank/Bermuda humpback whale population studies and related citizen science programs;
- Exchange of technical information, scientific data and practical experiences in managing marine mammal protected areas, including staff exchanges and site visits;
- Development and assessment of methodologies for natural resource protection within marine mammal protected areas; and
- Development, coordination and evaluation of research and monitoring programs, outreach and education programs, and community engagement strategies for management of marine mammal protected areas.

NOAA and the Government of Bermuda will sign a Memorandum of Understanding in September 2012 to develop a sister sanctuary partnership to better protect the endangered North Atlantic humpback whale population. This agreement is a direct consequence of the recent creation of a marine mammal sanctuary throughout the territorial waters of Bermuda. Together, the two marine sanctuaries will collaborate on research, monitoring and outreach programs that could lead to better managing and protecting humpback whales along their migratory route from the Gulf of Maine to the Caribbean Sea.

**VI. Volunteer Update (Craig MacDonald).** Anne-Marie Runfola, Volunteer Coordinator, provided the following Volunteer Program Statistics:

- Currently 60 regular volunteers, plus others who help with occasional events, and other outreach programs.
- Approximately 6,000 hours were given by volunteers since the volunteer program started in earnest last spring; economic value: \$197,808 (that's like four full time volunteer coordinators worth of work!) (Estimate uses MA State rate for unskilled volunteer service @ \$22.46/hr (AARP - source) and an average skilled rate of \$75/hr. Conservative estimate of 1/5th volunteer services at skilled rate.)
- 45,000 people reached directly since spring 2011 through volunteer activities as diverse as marching in a parade to making blubber gloves for a Child's Sanctuary event, to giving a seabird lecture.

## VII. SERA Update (Craig MacDonald)

Craig reported that the SERA Draft Proposal is resident on the SBNMS website. As sanctuary staff members have been attending NEFMC and Habitat Committee Plan Development Team (PDT) meetings, they have been monitoring the progress on establishing EFH designated habitat research areas. Michelle Bachman has kept the SAC informed a number of times on the Council's perspective, their schedule, and what is involved. When questions and concerns arise about data, sanctuary staff takes this seriously. They've been doing a set of analyses in the framework and in the context of the SERA to address some of these concerns. What is presented here is a comparison by the SERA subareas based on VTR data from 1998-2009, which is the period in which we looked at the proposal. In context, 2010 was the first full year of sectors. So data presented is pre-sector. The important thing is that the differences that are being looked is the number VTR trips that are filed by fishermen and then a separate set of data that is filed by observers on fishing trips, and that enables staff to look at a comparison in terms of what the percentage difference is. Craig provides a slide presentation of the data and further explains the data variation across all subareas relative to the construction of the subareas under the SERA Proposal.

Discussion/Comments based on slides presented and other SERA issues ensued:

Jamie Cournane: What do you mean by "difference". What are you measuring here?

Craig MacDonald: We are looking at the percentage of number of trips in each of the subareas and the difference between VTR and observer trips (he explains in detail the differences presented on the slide) -- looking at the differences on a percentage basis. Essentially you have 118,000 VTR trips total and then observer trips you have close to 11,000 (refers to trips within subareas on slides).

Heather Knowles: What does that difference mean?

Craig MacDonald. It indicates the difference could have been 50, 60, 80%, but what we're looking at is less than 1% difference. What it means and our interpretation is that the VTR data at least at the scale of the sanctuary are a valid source of information, as valid as the observer data.

Rick Murray: Understand what is said. Fractional percentages are close but total percentages are completely off by more than an order of magnitude. So the wording in the text -- difference between the VTR data and observer data -- vary and is misleading [refers to variances in percentages on slides] so must be reflective of that. It seems misleading. But the fractions that you are capturing are correct and the wording would need to be more reflective of that.

Craig MacDonald: Is happy to take suggestions on how data is presented. He went over the differences in gear types and percentage basis. There are more trips without observers than with observers that's where the big difference is. Acknowledging that -- there is nothing we can do about that, but when we parse the number of trips into subareas and you look at percentages, there is very little difference. Key is looking at the difference between VTR and observer data for all gear types across all subareas (provides more details from slides).

Vito Giacalone: 118,000 is that all trips in the Gulf of Maine or all trips in the sanctuary?

Craig MacDonald: That is the total number within the SERA over 12 years.

Vito Giacalone: That would mean it's 100% used and we know that's not true.

Craig MacDonald: Referring back to the Proposal, that is the total number of VTR trips within the sanctuary over 12 years.

Michael Sosik: Where do you have recreational?

Craig MacDonald: We don't have that. We are only looking at mobile and fixed because there are not observers on the party and charter boats.

Michael Sosik: But there are VTRs submitted so is that the differential? It is important for us to understand what the whole is that we are measuring from because we're showing comparative percentages so we've got to know what we're comparing it to. And with VTRs, not sure how the observer program data was mined to figure out what portion of the trip was located. But I think everyone knows that a VTR asks for one set of coordinates. If you're fishing in a huge area for a multiday trip, it asks for one coordinate. So fishermen are, like all humans creatures of habit, they are not necessarily spending one portion of a trip in one area. It's totally subjective up to them what number they select. So I've said from the beginning the types of areas that the SERA take in for some fishermen, they're year round areas but they are a smaller subset. For a lot of fishermen it's a seasonal type of species target that goes in those areas. So whether or not areas that they're fishing every single day, very unlikely that they're using coordinates that are going to pinpoint you right inside the SERA areas. So we need to look at other data as well. It looks like Craig used some observer data, I'm just not totally familiar with the types of coordinates that the observers put in. I know they put end of tow information, beginning of tow information. So I think it would be important. What I know of VTRs, it doesn't make sense to have less than a 1 percent. Actually 1 percent when you're comparing it to 7 percent is more substantial than 1 percent of the whole; because if 7 percent of the trips is what we're looking at, it's really 1% is substantial. It's not 1% of 7% it's 1% of the whole. I'm surprised that there's that small of a difference, between the observer because I know the way fishermen declare that one set of coordinates, it's very unlikely that those two datasets should be that well matched because if observers are really taking note of every tow and putting those coordinates down, you're going to end up with more and more trips – having pings inside the SERA area than you would just going by the VTR data.

Craig MacDonald: Addressing Vito Giacalone's comments -- The total number of the 118,000 trips is all the VTRs within the sanctuary over the 12 years (refers to data on slides of total trips within the SERA by subarea and how it was parsed out). The SERA is about 39% of the total sanctuary area when you take into consideration also the part of it that's within the Sliver. Could not give a specific response to Vito's comment, would need Michael Thompson's input as the GIS analyst who helped to input the observer data from the fishermen's logs and into the NMFS system in his previous job. The data that was taken from the fishermen's logs and fishing trip from NMFS were treated as point data and we understand it is not the entire transit. Described how point data were determined using VTR data and observer data between subareas. He indicated several times before when concerns about the VTR data were raised, we looked at the fishery independent standardized survey data done for a year and did the GIS analysis on both fishery independent data and the VTR data for one year. This is in the sanctuary management plan and, looked at spatially, you can see that the areas of highest fishing indicated by VTR and fishery independent data coincided rather well, not precisely but remarkably well. That's what gave us reason to look a little more and compare it with observer data. Will try to get Michael Thompson at the next meeting to have a more specific discussion on this.

Dave Casoni: Obviously with the lobster gear there are no observers, there are no VTR so your statement of all gear across the area, "all" is not inclusive nor is the statement that it is not required for party and charter boats. They're not required for lobster boats – there is a substantial amount that are and you know that and to really observe buoys and high flyers and assume that it's lobster gear and recounted or whatever may be. I don't know how you took it into account.

Craig MacDonald: Two aspects in the fishing independent survey the gear type was associated with the vessel that was deploying or retrieving it, so we knew whether it was lobster or whether it was gill net.

Dave Casoni: I don't know how accurate that is. Somebody watches and says there's a lobster boat and he's hauling gear, it must be lobster gear?

Craig MacDonald: When you see lobster traps coming up instead of a gill net. It's at that level that we're drawing the distinction. And in the case of the VTR, there is an appreciable amount of lobster fishing that is reported by VTR I believe under general permit where boats that can fish for lobster or gillnets are fishing for something else. Do have some data but not all, and we know how much we don't have. We do have some lobster trap fishing captured within the VTR data.

Dave Casoni: And you would have included that under the fixed gear, gillnet there also. But when they were engaged in what we don't know.

Craig MacDonald. Not by this data. The catch also tells us what species are being caught by virtue of what's being reported from that trip. We haven't done that for this level of analysis, we have done though a spatial analysis by gear type and when we've looked at lobster traps and distribution within the sanctuary, for that information that is reported by VTR, we do have that spatial information, and not a lot of that fishing that is reported by VTR occurs within the subarea B North and B South. Would have to review the actual analysis how much occurred over the rest of the sanctuary.

Dave Casoni: What I was trying to drive at was the fact that for years we are trying to get a handle on those who do not have VTR that are not in gillnetting and lobstering to try to find out how many are out there, where they are and what they're doing. We can't get a handle on it. I'm surprised that you can. Or at least a little, that's why I'm saying I'm not sure that fixed gear statistics are in that accurate range.

Craig MacDonald: What makes lobster difficult by context is that they're managed under the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, as well as a small component in multispecies general permit under the Fisheries Service. When we put this proposal together, we knew that there were multiple regulatory parties, fisheries advisory parties that were involved. On some of the fish species, it also involves the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. But what you have here, is every report that was filed by fishing within the sanctuary, in this case within the subset of the ecological research area, we can parse it by somewhere on the order of 23 different gear classifications that NMFS has standardized and we can break this out by any of those and look at it closer. This is a very coarse aggregate overview and what we actually hoped in getting the proposal submitted to the Council, would have been the opportunity to parse it down. We have a framework, this may not be the best; it's our first effort, but let's start having working groups. We're certainly amenable to doing this. We just feel that there's hasn't been the opportunity, given the timing and the way that things have unfolded (refers to more slides to provide more detailed information on the proposal recommendations). Another recommendation was to look at VMS data (describes what VMS data is and explained how the VMS data was analyzed by gear type and percentages and comparing it to VTR data for developing the proposal.

Dave Casoni: Again, there are a substantial amount of fixed gear lobster boats that don't fall into any of these categories. And to say it is not required for charter and party fishing and for lobster vessels, it's not required - none of that is. It may be required for any vessel engaged in other fisheries such as trawling and gillnetting or may have a lobster permit and they're out there and they're dragging or scalloping or whatever and that would show up that they have that because they would have to file what they were doing and what they caught. So a lot of that is put in when they're not engaged in lobstering, and yet the

ones that are not engaged in lobstering that are not required to have observers or any of the monitoring systems are not so noted.

Craig MacDonald: Freely admits that understanding of the spatial distribution of effort by lobster fishing is under represented and imperfect. But does have as indicated on the VTR some of that fixed gear is by vessels that do have VMS and that also do fish for lobster. What has not been done is a finite analysis of what vessels were fishing for what within a general gear category with the VMS data. This was a major task for VMS manager Bill Semrau and his crew. They provided us a 178-page report on how the VMS data was analyzed and put into the appropriate format to conduct a side by side comparison. Just as we have the SERA proposal on the website and it's stamped "Draft". We want to share this information with the SAC and probably should have "Draft" stamped on all of these presentations. None of this is cast in stone in case we were missing something and clarifications and concerns are raised. If this is affecting our analysis, we are happy to re-examine it. This is the first and best attempt to try and address the questions that have been raised relative to the types of data that are being used and the appropriateness of the data to develop a Proposal. Craig sees it as part of dialog that he hopes will continue.

Chris McGuire: This is an interesting thought. It would be more convincing if there were a better temporal overlap between these two datasets that you are looking at. As you suggested earlier, VTR data is pre-sector and you're looking at VMS data that is pre- and post-sector – it would be interesting to compare the data only in the same years of overlap for a methodology perspective to get a better indication. Entirely possible that practices have changed.

Craig MacDonald. Difficulty is we don't have the VMS data prior to 2008. But did look at VTR data in 2010 for first year of sectors and how it compared with previous 12 years. Did not show a large difference in terms of how the subareas were used. Need to request from NMFS VTR data for 2011. As time goes by, each year trying to bring this up so that we start getting temporal overlap as mentioned.

### **Public Comment Period:**

Les Kaufman, Boston University Marine Program: Credibility of the data is a crucial issue and whoever raised it was right about that. What I'm concerned about is that there are three other issues that's put s this in the weeds. Just what is the total impact on fishing of SERA. Was is the equitability of the impact. Is it hitting particular sectors differentially, and then can we look outside the box to solve the problem, so that we have a real partnership with the fishery as well as with everybody else? So the business about the total impact that where the credibility of the data is important but we need acknowledge at the onset that there is a specific problem that particular gear that work on hard bottoms especially are differentially affected and that was really came out in the last analysis for SERA. The total volume, the number of boats involved may be lower or may be particular kinds of boats – small boats. But clearly the fixed gear boats and recreational fishery is the top of the list problem and then there is a problem with some other gear. So the question is what creative approaches could be taken that would flatten the effect of SERA and allow its function to be achieved while clearly acknowledging and minimizing in other ways than just this analysis the impact on the fishery. And then the last thing is that those solutions that we could prioritize the difficulties created by SERA and we could prioritize her efforts to solve those problems. And maybe the critical thing, but this is for another discussion, is how to open the box. What is it that is keeping us from solving these problems? Because I can't speak for the other people here but I never got the impression that it was a philosophical opposition to the idea of better managing the sanctuary and getting the data needed to do that. But by doing it more in partnership then we could also get buy-in to the data for larger issues in the Gulf of Maine in addition to the sanctuary. The real issue here is the sanctuary was put where it was because of the diversity of habitat. There is a concentration of certain unusual habitats in proportion to things like mud. Now that means that no matter what we do within the boundaries of the sanctuary, we will continually have a differential impact because certain fisheries are

concentrated there just as biodiversity is concentrated there. I think we should go for the carotid and that come to things like very small percentage differences in the windows we're looking through to characterize it later.

The question is has there been a step to say these are the problems we have to solve the SERA to go ahead. Here is the most important . . . the next . . . the next. And then go for the worst problem first, the stickiest problem first because we just spent a lot of time. We're responding to legitimate comments from the user community but we're not organizing them in priority and the credibility of the data we're using is a very, very important problem. But no matter how well we solve that problem, we still have this problem of parts of the industry, parts of the user community being differentially impacted no matter what we do. And that seems to me a much bigger obstacle than how many percent difference there is. And this is constructive criticism of whoever addressed the sanctuary with that question. So why don't we say, look the real killer in this whole thing is that it doesn't impact the users equitably. Let's solve that problem and then step down through the problems in the reverse order of their importance.

Craig MacDonald: It's not an easy question to answer at the moment. There is a lot that can be done to parse out the impact and the involvement of the different gear types within this. There is a way to parse out by fishing community, by town in the case of landings that were caught in the ecological area. Everyone knows that on the ecological research area proposal, an economic analysis was done on a broad scale and knows that it is not satisfactory for a lot of the fishing interests because they feel there is an inequity in terms of the impact on different fishing communities. That is something that can't be analyzed by fishing community. A lot of what Les Kaufman said can be addressed. Would really like to see this entered more formally into a fishery management process where these sorts of questions start getting analyzed. Maybe what needs to be done is to get sanctuary staff, Vito Giacalone and fishing folks and talk off the cuff rather than in a strictly formatted formal NOAA discussion. What is it about the analyses that need to be answered and the concerns of social equity? These are the sorts of things that sanctuary staff would be happy to do.

Vito Giacalone: I hope there will be another public comment because one of the things we recognized is that the sanctuary is not going to have the resources to do a full blown economic analysis of the impacts on fishing. It is one of the reasons that fishing impacts and fishing regulations go to the NEFMC and is managed that way because it is complex and you can't do it in a very coarse way that this was done. So I'm not criticizing that process, it's just one tiny little piece that you would look at. We don't want to enter into the business on the fishing stakeholder's side of saying pretty quickly I could show that 60% of witch flounder, for example, that's harvested in the Gulf of Maine happens inside the SERA area, maybe 5% of the time is spent there but it's a seasonal fishery. This is complex and needs to be looked at all the way through and you need to understand what the impacts are to the community not just by percentages, because when you take thousands of trips that are conducted from all communities up and down the coast, it pales -- it looks like 7-8% or when you total them up together it's no big deal, but if it's 50% of one community or 40% of one community, or one gear type or the harvest of one stock. Those are huge impacts that the sanctuary isn't necessarily going to have the resources to do that evaluation. I know that the Fishermen's Wives Association and Massachusetts Fishermens Partnership conducted some surveys that I hope Angela can expand on a little bit in her public comment. But I think that is the kind of more detailed thing and I really like what Les was saying and I think we need to have a plan B on this. If you don't have a Plan B then you're talking about all this time -- why waste this time? If we're going to keep convening the SAC and I know you put alot of time into this, but I know there is a marine protected area federal advisory committee that was convened years ago that came up just on December 11<sup>th</sup> with a letter that basically that this SERA proposal is an MPA. It would fit under those criteria if it were going forward as proposed. Some of the first criteria and recommendations out of that committee is "to enable and promote meaningful continuous engagement of all persons, groups and communities involved in affected by or potentially affected by a MPA in the development and operation of that MPA" -- in the

development first, and then operation. So I can say as a mobile gear stakeholder, prior to the area being released, there was talk about meeting and talking about data. This is the kind of discussion right here. But the area was defined outside a public process. Without knowing specifically the area we're talking about, it's impossible to really weigh in. So we haven't had that opportunity and I'm trying in a constructive way, diplomatic way, how do we bring it back to the table and talk about that? I don't think all the work needs to be redone. I just think we need to get the people involved at ground level in those areas.

Craig MacDonald: What Vito said is very important and it is certainly acknowledged. The way that the SERA proposal developed it was that staff was playing catch-up at the time with the pace that the NEFMC was moving with its discussion of the EFH amendment and staff was afraid that there were going to be decisions made about the Stellwagen area without the sanctuary having an opportunity to really think things through and offer proposals. So the ad hoc subcommittee was formed as a way to give the sanctuary a sounding board and then to try to play catch up to the process. I fully acknowledge that the sanctuary came up with that subarea distribution and did the analysis not in the absence of input but not as part of a public process. But what I thought the SAC was in agreement with was when the SERA proposal was developed, it would be sent to the NEFMC where that public process would begin. The sanctuary wanted it to be incorporated into the analysis of not just the Stellwagen area but the entire Gulf of Maine. The staff needs to restrict itself from doing further economic impact analysis on the SERA until it knows what is going to happen with the other closure areas in the Gulf of Maine. If many of them are going away, then that changes part of the analysis of what the impact is on communities because it creates opportunities outside the sanctuary. I understand the frustration that the SERA Proposal has not been able to be introduced formally into that public process and take advantage of the resources that NEFMC has, and get it in line with all of the other proposals and changes that are going to be considered. If SAC thinks the ecological research area proposal needs to be discussed more publicly, then I would like such a recommendation from the SAC and that may enable us to bring it back to the NEFMC. Right now we have little opportunity to really discuss it because it was prepared to be submitted by NOAA to NEFMC and now it's sitting in stasis. If the SAC wanted that proposal to be brought back in for some large discussion that could perhaps round it out. The sanctuary is open to that. My reservations are that there be any firm conclusions drawn on what the social economic impact is in the absence of the larger analysis of what is going to happen in the landscape in the Gulf of Maine relative to fishery closures. Because that could have a big impact on what the impact of the SERA area would be.

Vito Giacalone: Agree that it would be the right place at the Council because they're going to look at it comprehensively and how it fits in. Plan B I'm talking about is that when they read the objectives of the SERA and you set aside the delineation of the sanctuary itself, there are a lot less impactful ways and much better from a scientific standpoint in getting a 13-year head start. Because if you look at the very core hypothesis of this thing is let's stop fishing and find out what the impacts are as things improve or change – what does that mean? Well we've got a 13-year head start and it's only the lines that are making us ignore that. So if we're going to toss this up to NEFMC and we want them to look at this comprehensively, why wouldn't the SAC consider throwing that out, oh by the way it's our core objective to do this analysis, to do this research and have areas set aside for it. If you've got a better place for it that has these subareas that you've identified in the SERA proposal, why not. I feel like there's room there. Right now you've got one proposal on the table that doesn't fit with the rest of the stuff that is there. I'm sitting on the SAC but I'm just being honest and I've got to go there and say this doesn't fit -- you can't consider it. So I don't know why we haven't thought about getting to that discussion that says, what are we trying to achieve scientifically and is there another option out there that eliminates most of the impacts?

John Williamson: This has been going on for so long that we have had enough turnover here on the SAC that I want to remind people of the reality of the history of this development. We had a Zoning Working

Group that met for over a 5-year period and was attempting to address all of the things that are being addressed right now, and including all of the things that Dr. Kaufman just brought up, in trying to design a research area proposal for the sanctuary, and the zoning working group failed to reach consensus. And that was the reason then that it was turned over to the sanctuary program itself to come up with a proposal that then could be meshed--synced with the habitat plan that's being built at the NEFMC. So just to be fair to Craig and the sanctuary program, this SAC had a Zoning Working Group that met for 5 years and tried to wrestle with these issues and just couldn't do it. So just want to make sure that everybody remembers that. This was not a unilateral action by the sanctuary program.

Jamie Courname: I agree a lot of what Les brought up and I think one of the hard parts here is that, without this clear partnership, it's really hard to get the SERA to move forward in any way. I suspect that a lot of that is due to the perception of a lack of transparency and perhaps groups wanting to be involved that aren't being able to be involved. I think at this point it presents an opportunity of trying to get groups involved. For instance, if it is the fishing community through a series of workshops talking with the sanctuary, I think the sanctuary also needs to be open to adjusting the proposal as it is. If that's not clear going in, then it will just be a listening session and something that perhaps could create a bigger rift. I would suggest that if you do decide to explore partnerships, that it be transparent and that you are very open to what you are willing to do considering the series of perhaps workshops with fishermen or other groups as well. If you decide to that, I would be happy to help work through some of those ideas. I think you need to be very clear going in about what you are willing to do and have it not be something to just listen to people's opinions and then not actually using the information that they're sharing.

Angela Sanfillipo, Massachusetts Fishermen's Partnership. My name is Angela Sanfillipo and I am here this morning as the Secretary to the Director of the Massachusetts Fishermen's Partnership. A year and a half ago, we put together a proposal to do a social economic study of Stellwagen Bank for Gloucester and the South Shore. After a couple of months, we got a yes finally from grant organization working with the University of Rhode Island, we started the project and the project is going and it's amazing what it's revealing and actually I have here with me, Dr. Hiro Ushida from the University of Rhode Island who is doing the study with us. And I would like for him to give some information and at the same time, we just did it on groundfish for dragnets, and gillnetters, longline -- whatever for Gloucester and the Southshore. Our hope is that we're going to keep going and doing lobstering and any other fishery that takes place in Stellwagen that comes into the port of Gloucester. Because we believe our community is very dependent on the sanctuary. So with your permission, I request that Prof. Hiro to give you an update about the study.

Professor Hiro Uchida: My name is Hiro Uchida, I am an Assistant Professor at the University of Rhode Island. I am a Resource Economist and I was approached by Angela with this problem in her mind and she asked me whether some kind of social economic study can be done. Just briefly because I know we're pressed for time. The project has two main components -- one is pretty much what has been discussed here which is the impact on fisheries not only in this case how much production was made in the suggested proposed area that is going to be set aside but also the consequence or the reaction for the fishermen if that was to go forward and what would be the overall impact. So that's one aspect. The other one that we acknowledge is that fishing, the catching and the harvesting the fish, is only one component of the industry when you look at the community as a whole. In other words, there are folks who provide input for those fishermen and obviously there are folks who rely on the land that fish and do their own business. And some portion of that will stay in Gloucester or the Southshore and eventually it might go outside of it. But the point here we are trying to not only look at just how much fish would be landed or not, but also what that ripple effect might be within a wider area of the Gloucester community. And to do so, we have been doing several surveys with much help from Angela and her organization and with the fishermen as well. In terms of the behavioral change and the overall impact on the fishing industry itself, we've been utilizing the VTR data because that's the one that is mostly readily available

with some notable information with the caveat that Vito is not the only one who has been telling me that especially for the trawlers that one point quarterly is just not good enough because then from there whatever direction that they're going they're trawling so that needs to be taken into account. So for the past year or so, we've been trying hard to collect -- some of you might know of this -- the wind plot data that some fishermen do use during their fishing, which tracks the track line of their fishing not so much as just their points. We are constantly struggling to get that data in, but hopefully we'll be able to do it. The grant will be ongoing until next summer, so hopefully by that time we will have some information that would be useful in the discussion here today. I just want to make a point on the record, when we started, when Angela approached me to put the proposal together and eventually do the project together, I mentioned explicitly that whatever the results that I might get may not be the one she wants to hear. In other words, the impact may be much smaller than what you might expect, but keep the science and the research as objective as possible, and to tie credibility to any result that might come out. And she was fully okay with that, so that's where we are and we're still working on trying to get some results out.

Craig MacDonald: Is there some way your study design or the proposal can be shared with the SAC? Can the study be shared?

Professor Hiro: I am sure the grant proposal is a public document I believe. So, yes. I don't think it's on a website, but with a request I can certainly send you the proposal, noting that there are some changes made, so I can perhaps add those notes to it.

Craig MacDonald: This would really help us so that we can understand the framework for the work and we know what the questions are being asked and it can help us put it in to context relative to the work we're doing.

Dave Casoni: Just for the record I agree with Les, I agree with Vito, I agree with Angela, and for the first time in years, I agree with John.

### **VIII. Working Lunch: "Risk of Ship Strike and I-Phone Application" (Dave Wiley)**

Sanctuary Research Coordinator, Dr. Dave Wiley, provided a lunchtime seminar on Whale Alert. Whale Alert integrates GPS, Automatic Identification System (AIS), auto-acoustic-detection, Internet and digital nautical chart technologies to alert mariners to NOAA's right whale conservation measures active in their immediate vicinity and beyond. Whale Alert is disseminated as a free app for iPads and iPhones. With Whale Alert, captains can view their ship's location and all pertinent right whale management information in a single nautical chart display. Information can be updated via AIS or Internet feeds and includes both static (e.g., seasonal speed restrictions, areas to be avoided) and dynamic (e.g., acoustic detection buoys and dynamic management areas) information. Whale Alert has been developed by a collaboration of government agencies, academic institutions, non-profit conservation groups and private sector industries. Whale Alert increases whale protection by reducing the risk of collisions between right whales and ships. It also increases mariner protection by decreasing the risk of mariners being fined for inadvertently violating regulations. While designed for right whales and ships along the U.S. eastern seaboard, extending the Whale Alert app to support the protection of additional species on a world-wide basis is technologically feasible. Partners for Whale Alert include: Center for Coastal and Ocean Mapping, University of New Hampshire; Bioacoustics Research Program, Cornell University, Laboratory of Ornithology; NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Fisheries Science Center; U.S. Coast Guard, First District (DRE); Massachusetts Port Authority; International Fund for Animal Welfare; and EarthNC, Inc.

## **IX. Marine Art Contest (Craig MacDonald).**

The 2012 Marine Art Contest for students in grades K-12 was, once again, an unqualified success. The contest, co-sponsored by the Massachusetts Marine Educators along with the sanctuary, New England Aquarium, Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies, Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society and *Stellwagen Alive!*, attracted 800 entries this year, with the majority coming from Massachusetts, but with entries also arriving from six other states as well as China and Kazakhstan. Anne Smrcina, the sanctuary's Education Coordinator has been serving as the contest director for several years. The contest theme is "Amazing Ocean Creatures of Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary" with an alternative theme this year of "SBNMS -- celebrating 20 years" for the computer graphics division. In addition to computer graphics (all grades), there are divisions for scientific illustration (all grades), high school (9-12), middle school (5-8) and elementary school (K-4). Prizes include cash awards, aquarium passes, and certificates. Every entrant gets a certificate of achievement. The winning artwork becomes part of an annual traveling exhibit sponsored by the sanctuary that has been shown at locations around the state, including the JFK Federal Building in Boston, Cape Cod National Seashore's Eastham visitor center, Salem National Historic Site's visitor center, and NOAA Fisheries NE Regional Office. The 2012 winning art has now started its tour with a first stop at PCCS's laboratory facility in Provincetown. All winning and honorable mention selections are posted on the sanctuary's website (kidscorner in the galleries section). The 2013 contest (same theme as 2012) will be announced later this month, with a deadline of April 25, 2013. For more information about the contest or the traveling art show, contact [Anne.Smrcina@noaa.gov](mailto:Anne.Smrcina@noaa.gov).

**X. Ocean Frontiers Film Presentation.** The New England premiere of the film "Ocean Frontiers", in which Conservation Law Foundation and New England Aquarium were partners with SBNMS, was shown at the New England Aquarium. This was a great event, with standing room only. Moving the shipping lanes was one segment of the project that was showcased, along with three other areas in the U.S. Each segment was characterized by difficult problems, substantively addressed by really meaningful cooperation between multiple parties, with generally the government trying to work with the industry. These were all real success stories. Everyone was very pleased that the movement of the shipping lanes, which Dave Wiley was a big part of, was highlighted and was the spokesman in the film. A DVD of the film can be obtained from SBNMS.

## **XI. Partner and Constituent Reports.**

i. SAC Challenge (Wayne Petersen and Maggie Merrill). Maggie reported on the Technology Discussion and Workshop that was held in Fall River as part of the SAC Challenge events was a success. There were over 75 participants and attendees. She thanked everyone involved for making it happen. Her organization, "Marine and Oceanographic Technology Network" (MOTN), will continue doing business with sanctuary staff and other research organizations that participated in the workshop. Craig MacDonald added that sanctuary staff also wants to continue this type of forum since it ties in to Dan Basta's "Campaign". Also, he looks forward to building a business relationship with this group.

Wayne Petersen provided an update on the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Mass Audubon birders meeting which coincided favorably with the SBNMS 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Dave Wiley and Anne-Marie Runfola of SBNMS participated. Wayne also gave a seabird lecture with Deborah Cramer at the Gloucester Maritime Center. He is trying to get 4 to 5 seabird cruises on the *R/V Auk* in the future.

ii. "Improving the Coast-Wide Management of River Herring" (Jaime Cournane). Jaime Cournane provided the following synopsis of her presentation to the SAC:

Over the past fifty years, commercial fisheries landings of river herring (alewife, *Alosa pseudoharengus*, and blueback herring, *Alosa aestivalis*) in US state waters have substantially declined, and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission recently determined that both species are depleted. Both species are “Species of Concern” and the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is currently investigating whether these species should be listed under the Endangered Species Act. River herring, like Atlantic salmon, are anadromous (born in freshwater and return to sea as adults). They are highly migratory ranging from Nova Scotia to Florida, and they provide an important food source for many important commercial fish, including Atlantic cod, *Gadus morhua*.

Drs. Jamie Cournane and Christopher Glass (UNH) are working together on a multifaceted project to improve the coastwide assessment of river herring through new analyses and working with stakeholders. Knowing that river herring cross multiple jurisdictional boundaries, including international ones, inclusion of Canadian data is paramount to improving fishery management. Drs. Cournane and Glass are also collecting information to report on the best practices for trans-boundary co-management strategies for the river herring fisheries of the United States and Canada, providing important baselines for future efforts should such an approach emerge.

iii. NOAA Fisheries Regional Report & Whale SENSE (Allison Rosner).

Allison Rosner provided the following report for the SAC Minutes:

**Concerns Regarding Increased Commercial Fishing on Stellwagen Bank**

- NMFS and the New England Council have received numerous reports of increased commercial fishing effort, particularly on cod, in the Sanctuary.
- NMFS is investigating the issue further. Currently we are in the process of trying to determine if vessels could be: (1) fishing inshore (e.g., on Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod) but reporting that the catch is from offshore (e.g., Georges Bank cod) or (2) fishing inshore in the GOM but not accurately reporting the area where their catch actually occurred. We also plan to investigate whether larger vessels that traditionally fished offshore have shifted their efforts to inshore waters.
- NMFS will report these findings to the Council’s groundfish Plan Development Team. The Council will determine whether any action should be taken.

**GOM Cod Update**

- The 2011 GOM cod assessment found that the stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring.
- In response to this finding, the Council requested that NMFS take interim action to reduce overfishing on GOM cod.
- As a result, a quota of 6,700 mt was set by NMFS through interim action for 2012. This is within the range recommended by the Council.
- NMFS is continuing to work with the Council and fishing industry to develop a long-term rebuilding program that ends overfishing in 2013.

**Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder Working Group**

- The 2012 Georges Bank yellowtail flounder quota has been reduced by 61 percent.
- NMFS and the Council have formed a joint Working Group to explore measures to help fishermen facing a reduction in quota.
- NOAA is investigating several measures that could help mitigate the impacts of the reduced yellowtail flounder quota, such as allocating an unused portion of the scallop fishery’s Georges Bank yellowtail flounder allocation to groundfish fishing vessels.
- NMFS and the Council are also investigating recommendations for several additional measures that were made as part of a Working Group meeting held on May 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Council will discuss this issue further at its June 19-21, 2012, Council meeting.

- More information on yellowtail flounder is available at <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/hotnews/gbytf/>

### **Atlantic Sturgeon Endangered Species Act Listing**

- On January 31, 2012 NOAA's Fisheries Service a final decision to list five distinct population segments (DPS) of Atlantic sturgeon under the Endangered Species Act. The Chesapeake Bay, New York Bight, Carolina, and South Atlantic populations of Atlantic sturgeon will be listed as endangered, while the Gulf of Maine population will be listed as threatened. It has been illegal to fish for, catch or keep Atlantic sturgeon for more than a decade. NOAA is working with fishery management councils, state agencies, and the fishing industry to find ways to further reduce bycatch of Atlantic sturgeon in federal and state waters without unduly hampering fishing activities. For example, NOAA continues to fund research to test modifications to fishing gear that can reduce bycatch of fish, including Atlantic sturgeon.

### **River Herring Workshops**

- NOAA Fisheries will conduct a series of workshops to gather more information on the status and threats to alewife and blueback herring, collectively known as river herring. NOAA received a petition from the Natural Resources Defense Council in August 2011 to list river herring as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. After reviewing available information, agency scientists and policy managers determined that a full review of the health of these species' populations was warranted.
- The Agency has identified that more information is needed on stock structure, extinction risk, and the potential impact of climate change on these species in order to complete the assessment.
- The workshops, which are open to the public and will also be available through webinar for those who cannot attend in person, are scheduled for the following dates:
  - Stock structure workshop on June 22, 2012 at NOAA Fisheries Northeast Regional Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA (contact Tara Trinko Lake at [tara.trinko@noaa.gov](mailto:tara.trinko@noaa.gov) or 207-866-4238)
  - Extinction risk analysis workshop on July 10, 2012 at the Environmental Protection Agency Offices, 5 Post Office Square, Boston, MA (contact Sarah Laporte at [sarah.laporte@noaa.gov](mailto:sarah.laporte@noaa.gov) or 978-282-8477)
  - Climate change workshop on July 18-19, 2012 at NOAA Fisheries Northeast Regional Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA (contact Diane Borggaard at [diane.borggaard@noaa.gov](mailto:diane.borggaard@noaa.gov) or 978-282-8453)
- Anyone interested in attending the workshops, should contact the workshop leaders listed above as space is limited. More information is available online at [http://www.nero.noaa.gov/prot\\_res/candidatespeciesprogram/RiverHerringSOC.htm](http://www.nero.noaa.gov/prot_res/candidatespeciesprogram/RiverHerringSOC.htm)

### **Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan**

- NMFS conducted a meeting of the ALWTRT Jan. 9-13, 2012 in Providence, RI. NMFS is developing a rule to address the entanglement risk to large whales from vertical lines in commercial fishing gear. The meeting focused on discussion of vertical line risk reduction proposals put forward by stakeholders and members of the TRT. The proposals included many ideas including: increasing trawl lengths, exemptions for state waters, exemptions due to proposed trap reductions, closures, and increased gear marking. The proposals will be analyzed for their conservation benefit and used to shape NMFS' alternatives for the DEIS. The DEIS and proposed rule is expected in Spring 2013 with a final rule publishing in 2014.

### **Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Plan Closure**

- We have completed our annual review of harbor porpoise bycatch rates and compliance levels for the first year following the implementation of the 2010 amendments to the HPTRP. We have determined

that the Year 1 bycatch rate for the Coastal Gulf of Maine Consequence Closure Area has exceeded the target rate. The Year 1 bycatch rate for the Coastal Gulf of Maine Consequence Closure area was so high that the two-year average cannot be reduced below the target bycatch rate for this area, even if no harbor porpoises are observed being caught. As a result last month we announced that the coastal Gulf of Maine (from northern Massachusetts to southern Maine) will be closed to commercial gillnet fisheries each year in October and November, beginning in 2012, to reduce harbor porpoise deaths. This closure will remain in effect annually until bycatch of the Gulf of Maine/Bay of Fundy stock of harbor porpoises is reduced to the Zero Mortality Rate Goal, which for harbor porpoises is fewer than 100 animals or until the Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Team and NOAA Fisheries develop and implement new conservation measures. We plan to reconvene the take reduction team in the late fall, to determine if additional or alternative conservation measures may be needed to reduce harbor porpoise bycatch to acceptable levels under the Marine Mammal Protection Act

### **Whale SENSE**

- Two new companies have joined this season- Sea Salt Charters out of Provincetown, MA and Bar Harbor Whale Watch.
- Nine companies now participate: including companies from Massachusetts, New Jersey Maine, and Virginia.
- Participating companies must create an ocean stewardship project that emphasizes NOAA's Ocean Literacy Principles. This year's projects include- the collection of whale sightings data- particularly in the Mid Atlantic, participation in the SBNMS sea bird survey, recycling programs, and sponsoring internship programs.
- Last year, partnering organization Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society conducted passenger surveys to look at long term benefits of whale watching as well as the efficacy of Whale SENSE on influencing consumer choices. Results have shown that passengers preferred that captains and naturalists receive training, that staying a safe distance from whales was more important than getting close to whales, and that Whale SENSE labeling would influence their future whale watch decisions. Outside promotions of the program need increase to increase program visibility. Publication of results is expected in 2012.

iv. NEFMC Report (Michelle Bachman). Michelle Bachman provided the following report for the SAC Minutes:

Since the last SAC meeting, NEFMC has met once (April 24-26 in Mystic, CT). The Council meets next on June 19-21, in Portland, ME. Major actions discussed at the April meeting, and actions that are ongoing, include the following that may be of interest to SAC members:

Northeast multispecies (groundfish) - NMFS published Framework 47 on May 2. FW 47 included annual catch limits (ACLs) for fishing years 2012-2014. This action also included common pool management measures for fishing year (FY) 2012, modification of the Ruhle trawl definition, and clarification of the regulations for charter/party and recreational groundfish vessels fishing in groundfish closed areas. A Framework 48 will address sector modifications and set acceptable biological catches for 2013-2015 (previously, these alternatives were in two separate management actions).

Habitat - In April, the Council approved deep-sea coral alternatives for analysis in the Omnibus Amendment. Two of the potential coral protection zones are in the Gulf of Maine, although neither overlaps with the Sanctuary. Most are in submarine canyons at the edge of the shelf off Georges Bank and in the Mid-Atlantic Bight. Related to EFH, The PDT has been developing a range of research area proposals for the region, and reviewed them yesterday (6/6/12). The Committee will discuss these proposals and provide feedback tomorrow (6/8/12). Tentatively, the Council is expected to approve a range of area-management alternatives for analysis in the Omnibus EFH Amendment in November of this

year. These alternatives will include revisions to habitat areas, revisions to groundfish closed areas, and research areas.

Monkfish - Amendment 6 (catch shares/adjustment to structure of management plan) will be discussed on June 21. Council will consider removing individual transferable quota provisions from the amendment.

Scallops - Framework 24 is in development. The primary purpose of this action is to identify fishery specifications for 2013 and 2014 fishing years.

Herring - Final approval of Amendment 5 is expected at the June meeting. Proposed measures would establish a catch monitoring program for the herring fishery and address bycatch; other measures may include adjustments to the fishery management program, measures to address carrier vessels and transfers at-sea, trip notification, permitting, and reporting requirements; measures to address interactions with the Atlantic mackerel fishery; the allocation of observer coverage on limited access herring vessels; measures to maximize sampling and address net slippage; measures to address river herring bycatch; and criteria for midwater trawl vessel access to groundfish closed areas.

Small mesh multispecies (silver hake/whiting) - Final approval of Amendment 19 is expected in June.

## **XII. New SAC Issues.**

“Stellwagen Bank Sanctuary Revealed” Gala in Woods Hole on 20-21 July to celebrate the sanctuary’s SBNMS 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. On Friday, 20 July, there will be a discussion forum, entitled “What is a Sanctuary” composed of various users and nonusers of the sanctuary about the past, present, and future of the sanctuary, focusing on what the sanctuary will look like in the future. On Saturday, SBNMS staff will give short talks on sanctuary science and policy at the NOAA Fisheries Science Center; there will be a Marine Art Exhibit at the Fire House; *R/V Auk* Open House; children’s activities; culminating on Saturday evening with a Conservation and Environmental Stewardship Award Ceremony for Graham Nash – founding member of The Hollies and Crosby, Stills, and Nash.

## **XIII. New Business.**

Craig showed a slide of an actual 14 x 48 foot illuminated billboard that will be up for 3 months during the summer. It is located at the split of Highway 3 South to Cape Cod and 93 North into Boston. It will switch sides -- 6 weeks viewing north and 6 weeks viewing south. This is a promotional collaboration with *Yellowbook* and in partnership with Steve Milliken, Dolphin Fleet, the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (NMSF), and Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. The website listed on the billboard refers viewers to [www.yourwales.org](http://www.yourwales.org) which can then be linked to partnership websites. *Yellowbook* will also have a cover photo on their directories in southeast Massachusetts and Boston metro market, and out to the Cape, as well as on their Facebook page and several of their electronic forums. This outreach effort has the potential to reach millions of people and supports Dan Basta’s “Campaign” to raise awareness of sanctuaries. Craig hopes to do more of this work in the future.

**XIV. Public Comment.** No public comment.

**XV. Adjournment.** 2 p.m.