The Marine Mammal Protection Act Turns 20

The Unfulfilled Promise of Innovative Wildlife Legislation

Sea otters in California “are suffering from a reduction in their reproductive rate attributed to high levels of pollution.” Their recovery is being threatened by “small vessel traffic in Monterey Bay.” The small California population is at risk from “deliberate acts of harassment and killing by humans.”

These statements were made not by concerned environmentalists, but by Congress. Although they accurately describe some of the greatest threats confronting sea otters in 1993, they are excerpts from the deliberations on enactment of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) in 1972 and its implementation in 1973.

Twenty years later, these problems remain, and other more serious threats have been identified. Tanker traffic off the coast of California presents a risk of a major oil spill that could decimate the Southern sea otter population. Coastal development, and the pollution that comes with it, threatens to encroach upon and degrade sea otter habitat. Unexplained mortality has been documented in sea otter pups and prime age animals, and otters have been subjected to harassment from jet skis in Monterey Bay.

For sure, important progress has been made over the past 20 years to protect sea otters in California. Incidental take of sea otters in fishing nets has been virtually eliminated. Important scientific information to aid recovery has been gathered. The range of the population has grown, as has population size. A small, but struggling, second population has been established at San Nicolas Island; and a marine sanctuary now exists in Monterey Bay.

Despite these gains, it must be conceded that the promise of the MMPA — to restore marine mammal protection to “optimum sustainable population levels” — has not been fulfilled for Southern sea otters and many other marine mammals. Offsetting MMPA success stories, such as the elimination of sea otter incidental take in fisheries and the dramatic decline of porpoise mortality in tuna purse seine operations, are many new problems. These new problems include the rapid decline of Stellar sea lion populations, the high rate of mortality of the harbor porpoise in New England.
Executive Director's Report

his promises to be a critical year for the otters in the legislative arena. Hearings on both the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) reauthorizations should begin this spring. New congressional representatives, some unfamiliar with our issues, have been elected and will be voting on the issues that are crucial to sea otter recovery.

A lot is happening in our nation’s capitol and the Board voted to send Ellen and me back East for a brief participation in the Washington scene. It was great. We had the opportunity to meet with folks that until this time have just been names on paper or voices on the phone. Everyone had the highest regard for Friends of the Sea Otter and I felt proud to be representing us.

It was both reassuring and exhilarating to realize there are many talented people working to save the environment. Being in Washington allowed us to feel like a part of the larger effort.

People were incredibly generous with their time. Special thanks to Don Baur, our attorney, who met with us, explained some of the intricacies of Washington and set up meetings so that we could talk with the folks most involved with the otters including Michael Bean and Margaret McMillian (EDF), Greg Silber, John Twiss, and Robert Hofman (Marine Mammal Commission), Tim Eichenberg, Debbie Crouse, and Suzanne Ludicello (CMC), Ralph Lopez and Mark Murray Brown (NOAA), Mike Tillman (NMFS), and Dave Herrelson and Jeff Howarth (USFWS).

While we were there, environmental groups began a series of meetings with the fishing industry, including representatives from California, to discuss the MMPA and recommend changes to Congress. There are those who seek to restructure and weaken MMPA protections. FSO has been represented at all the meetings to date. The trip was important. We were shocked to hear from Senator Feinstein’s staff that we were the first constituents to come in who supported the ESA! It was alarming to realize there are forces working to undermine efforts toward conservation. This trip gave us a clearer view of the situation and direction to achieving our goals.

I deeply appreciate the opportunity to have made this trip and thank all of our members and Board of Trustees for making it possible.

— Dina Stansbury
Executive Director

One final thought — we are thrilled to welcome Carol Fulton-Yeates (past Executive Director) and Rachel Saunders (past Scientific Director) back to FSO as members of our Advisory Committee.

President's Message

What is the foremost natural predator of sea otters on the California coast? The answer is most likely the white shark. There is a growing concern worldwide for the well-being of this venerable and often-feared predator. In the California Legislature The White Shark Protection Bill (AB 522) has been introduced by Assemblyman Dan Hauser. This bill would ban most taking of white sharks in California for five years.

Should FSO support AB 522? After careful consideration by our Scientific Policy Committee, the answer is a definite “yes.” Because of their position at the top of the food web, white sharks are an important component of our coastal marine ecosystem. They are easily exploited because their numbers are naturally low and they have a slow rate of growth to reproductive maturity.

Currently there are not immediate threats to California’s white shark population. However, several factors could bring troubles in the near future, i.e., a growing interest in thrill fishing; a growing market for shark teeth and jaws; and increased world demand for fins, skin, and meat.

Sea otters are not a major food item for white sharks. White sharks are known to bite sea otters, and unfortunately most of these encounters are lethal. However, there is no conclusive evidence that white sharks actually eat sea otters. Department of Fish and Game studies indicate that white sharks in California annually bite less than 0.5 percent of the sea otter population. That is, white sharks may be responsible for an average of about seven otter mortalities each year.

Any loss of sea otters is regrettable; however, FSO is pleased to help protect a balanced ecosystem.

— Arthur Haseltine
President, Board of Trustees
MMPA Legislation

Continued from page 1

gillnet fishing, the unexplained mortality of Northern fur seals (especially in the subadult age class), and the continuing decline of the extremely endangered West Indian manatee (due to collisions with motor boats and habitat loss).

Confronted with this record, the question must be asked whether the MMPA has been a success or a failure. The answer is that it has been both. The challenge for those who support the goals of the MMPA during this year when the law must be reauthorized by Congress is to identify the causes for its failure and prescribe the needed remedies.

When Congress passed the MMPA in 1972, it made two major innovations to wildlife law. First, it recognized that the recovery and maintenance of marine mammal populations depends on the overall health and stability of the marine ecosystem. Marine mammals were not to be protected or managed in isolation from the environment they inhabit. Instead, the entire marine ecosystem was to be protected. Second, consistent with marine ecosystem protection, marine mammals were to be recovered to, and maintained at, “optimum sustainable population” levels. These levels were to be defined by the population size needed to promote the welfare of the marine mammals, not to enhance their economic value to humans for purposes of exploitation.

Where the MMPA has failed is in not providing adequate tools to achieve these goals. There is insufficient authority in the law to protect marine mammal habitats and the marine ecosystem, and the target optimum sustainable population levels for most marine mammals are not even known.

Where the MMPA has provided the necessary tools, such as the prohibition on incidental take of marine mammals in fishing operations, gains have been made. Where problems are the result of habitat impacts or threats to the overall health of the marine environment, however, the MMPA has been ineffective. The deficiency of the MMPA in this regard is demonstrated by the crash of the Stellar sea lion population as a result of the over-fishing of its prey species, and the continuing risk of oil spills from tanker traffic close to the sea otter range.

Under the MMPA, no regulatory action has been taken to eliminate these threats. As the MMPA enters into its third decade, it is time to assess how strong a law we want and are willing to support. To bring about the success envisioned in 1972, Congress must support increased research initiatives and enact action-forcing tools that allow measures to be taken to protect marine mammal habitat and the marine ecosystem. Unless this is done, the MMPA will continue to provide a track record of only partial success, and its promise for changing the way we manage the marine environment will remain unfulfilled.

— Don Baur is a partner in the law firm of Perkins Coie in Washington, D.C. He has represented FSO since 1987. Before joining Perkins Coie, Baur was general counsel for the Marine Mammal Commission. He has also served as attorney for the National Parks Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through the Solicitor’s office of the Department of the Interior.
Management of Alaska’s Sea Otters

California sea otter biologists and managers have so far been spared the types of management decisions the Alaska management team is currently facing. The overall population of Alaska sea otters numbers between 100,000 and 150,000 — close to pre-hunting levels. The population is, therefore, not “depleted” under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (Alaska otters have never been listed under the Endangered Species Act). However, there are “subpopulations” of Alaska sea otters that may be either below or above their optimum population levels; these subpopulations may require differing management programs. Issues complicating these management decisions include intense pressure from recreation and commercial fisheries, proposed mariculture ventures, and existing Native Take. All of these need to be factored into sea otter management decisions.

The three main goals of the Alaska management plan are to “maintain the Alaska sea otter population within its optimum sustainable range,” to “maintain healthy habitats for sea otters,” and to “conserve and manage sea otters to ensure that there will be opportunities for a variety of human uses.” Human use includes Alaska Native Take, scientific research and public display, incidental take in commercial fisheries, viewing, photography, and public enjoyment.

The five broad objectives identified as necessary to achieve the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) goals are to:

1. Identify and implement measures necessary to maintain the population of sea otters within its optimum sustainable population range;
2. Monitor size, status, and trends of sea otter populations and collect life history data for use in population models and for establishing removal guidelines;
3. Identify and characterize sea otter habitats, and monitor habitat status and trends;
4. Identify and avoid and/or minimize human threats to sea otters and their habitats, and resolve management conflicts;
5. Establish cooperative programs to further the conservation and management of sea otters in Alaska.

Each of these five objectives are even further subdivided into specific tasks. Implementation of all elements of the management plan would occur over a four-year period following its acceptance.

To create a “management” plan for any species is extremely difficult. For an animal such as the sea otter, which not only occupies a prominent role in the coastal ecosystem but is an intrinsic part of many commercial endeavors, the job of coming up with a balance acceptable to all players is nearly impossible. The Alaska USFWS biologists have researched, identified and presented a variety of management options.

It is now up to reviewers and managers to take their presentation and fashion it into a positive, sustainable model of multi-species and multi-purpose management. If well done, the Alaska management plan will stand as an example of how to resolve many of the other complex resource conflicts facing us today.

— E.F.-D.

Excerpted from “A Management Plan For The Sea Otter (Enhydra lutris kenyoni) In Alaska” (January 15, 1993 draft) with permission from principal author Anthony DeGange.
FSO submitted substantial comments on the Alaska plan to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and made copies of our comments and cover letter available to all parties participating in future management decisions. What appears below is a significant portion of our cover letter to the USFWS.

“We have reviewed the draft management plan for Alaska sea otters. Though FSO deals primarily with Southern sea otter issues, we see that the decisions made now in Alaska will have a great deal of bearing in California when our population of otters fully recovers. What the USFWS does is of critical importance. We list the following as our principal concerns:

“The USFWS Plan must function within the intent of the current Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA).

“There need to be clear definitions of subsistence take, and of depleted or depleting stocks. The USFWS must take the lead in clarifying MMPA language.

“Native Take cannot be construed and used as a potential management tool.

“Enforcement needs to be fully valued and funded; enforcement personnel cannot be allowed to be remiss in their duties.

“Native Take must truly be non-wasteful; the USFWS must account for sea otter end-products and determine how many otters are being shot but not recovered.

“The USFWS must fully ameliorate current and future confusion over the role and impacts of the sea otter.

“Native acceptance of the USFWS plan varies by geographic region and previous experience with self-management. The USFWS needs to adequately prepare for hostile reception, by Natives or non-Natives, of USFWS management and enforcement mandates.

“The Natives are looking to the USFWS for legal guidance. The USFWS must provide this lead through full understanding and enforcement of MMPA and USFWS mandates.

“As part of their education program, the USFWS must convey to Natives and non-Natives alike that all groups are currently supportive of the original intent of Native Take under the MMPA, and will cooperate in working toward common ground regarding general Alaskan zonal management options.

“With progressive management and fully funded enforcement, this management plan will succeed. The USFWS must ensure that five years from now, and fifty years from now, the Alaska management plan is serving as a model of constructive and cooperative resolution of resource conflicts.

“We look forward to a full and honorable implementation of a plan that regards the sea otter as integral to the health and maintenance of a natural and balanced ecosystem.”

— E.F.-D.
Annual Report
1991-1992

Difficult economic times are reflected in last year's financial losses at FSO. While sales at the Otter Center exceeded the budget by $20,000, membership dues and grant money were below budget by $17,000 and $12,000, respectively. Expenses were $2,300 over.

FRIENDS OF THE SEA OTTER
COMPARATIVE STATEMENT
SUPPORT, REVENUE, EXPENSES, AND FUND BALANCES
YEAR ENDED AUGUST 31, 1992

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| **EXPENSES**             |            |                |
| Program Services         | $132,352   | $131,657       |
| Supporting Services      | 79,660     | 64,853         |
| Cost of Sales            | 47,965     | 37,349         |
| Cost of Sales Donated Services | 15,125   |                |
| **Total Expenses**       | $273,102   | $233,839       |
| Excess (deficiency)      | ($25,965)  | 12,261         |

| **OTHER CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES** |            |                |
| Transfers, Net           | $-0-       | $-0-           |
| Fund Balances — Beginning of Year | 135,271  | 121,010        |
| Fund Balances — End of Year  | $109,306  | $135,271       |

FRIENDS OF THE SEA OTTER
COMPARATIVE BALANCE SHEET
YEAR ENDED AUGUST 31, 1992

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<tr>
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<td>Less (Accumulated Depreciation)</td>
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<td>(8,557)</td>
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<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
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<td>$142,389</td>
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| **LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE** |            |      |
| Accounts Payable          | $8,823       | $7,777 |
| Payroll Taxes Payable     | 2,684         | -0-  |
| Sales Tax Payable         | 1,384         | 1,164 |
| Insurance Payable         | 448           | 127  |
| **Total Liabilities**     | $13,359       | $9,118 |

| **FUND BALANCE**          |            |      |
| Unrestricted              | 102,406      | 125,187 |
| Net Equity in Fixed Assets| 6,900        | 8,084 |
| **Total Fund Balance**    | 109,306      | 133,271 |
| **Total Liabilities and Fund Balance** | $122,645  | $142,389 |

(Excerpted from financial audit review by Hanson, Rotter, Green Certified Public Accountants. The complete audit review is available at the FSO office.)

The Otter Raft, Spring/Summer 1993
Following is a new feature of *The Otter Raft* — news in short bites! These will give you quick views and updates on FSO projects and products.

**Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA)**

Fishermen and conservationists met in Seattle in April to negotiate agreements regarding incidental take of marine mammals in commercial fisheries. This was the fourth meeting of industry and environmentalists; during the four-day process, agreement was reached on a number of key issues. Smaller workgroups will continue to meet to deal with details of the consensus document with final presentation of the plan expected to reach Congress by June 1.

A presentation of the incidental take consensus elements, and other elements of the MMPA of concern to FSO will be presented to members in a special edition of *The Otter Raft*; you will be asked to contact your elected representatives to express the collective concerns over this reauthorization. We will give you the necessary analyses and summaries, but it will be up to you, the members, to make the calls and write the letters. We are counting on you to amplify our voice.

**Endangered Species Act (ESA)**

In late March, representatives Tauzin (D-LA) and Fields (R-TX) introduced HR 1490, the "Endangered Species Act Procedural Reform Amendments of 1993." The bill "makes both major substantive and procedural changes to the ESA. The substantive changes would dramatically reduce the protection the Act now affords to species on the brink of extinction. The procedural changes would unnecessarily burden the Act and its implementation" (excerpted from Endangered Species Coalition critique). This bill already has 24 co-sponsors.

Gerry Studds introduced HR 2043 in early May. It proposes increased ESA funding, development of Habitat Conservation Plans, consideration of multiple-species complexes in listing decisions, the timely listing of candidate species and development of recovery plans, and an increased Federal role in protecting species before they get to the point of serious depletion.

As with the MMPA, a strongly reauthorized ESA will need grassroots support from our members. The Studds bill is the best we have going so far, but it too may require further comment and work.

Our ESA analysis and call to action will be presented at the same time as the MMPA analysis mentioned above. Look for your special edition of *The Otter Raft* in late June or July for more information.

**Watsonville Wastewater Treatment Facility**

A series of meetings among the City of Watsonville and personnel from their wastewater treatment facility, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, Center for Marine Conservation (CMC), and Friends of the Sea Otter (FSO) resulted in consensus on a plan of action that will get Watsonville to full secondary water treatment standards by 1998. The plan requires that the Regional Water Board issue a Cease and Desist Order (CDO) to the City of Watsonville; the CDO outlines the reasons for Watsonville's current non-compliance and the steps needed to reach full secondary treatment. Stringent monitoring and reporting standards are required, as are timelines for the acquisition of permits, land, and financing.

FSO and CMC appreciate the progressive and cooperative spirit that the City of Watsonville personnel have brought to these meetings, and look forward to the semi-annual reports of their progress.

**Contingency Plan Requirements for Vessels and Marine Facilities**

The second draft of this contingency plan was released in March by the California State Office of Oil Spill Prevention and Response. The plan still falls far short of what is needed to ensure "best achievable protection" for California's wild and wonderful north and central coasts. FSO provided extensive comments on the gaps in this contingency plan, and will continue to pressure the State to develop truly protective measures against devastating oil spills.

**COAST Volunteers**

The FSO program for training and coordination of oil spill response volunteers has been named COAST (California Ocean Assistance Spill Team). We continue to interview and train volunteers and search for other willing souls. If you want more information on how to become a COAST volunteer, contact Ellen Faurat-Daniels at the FSO office address.

**How to Report Sea Otter Injury or Harassment**

FSO now has report forms for sea otter injury or harassment. This provides every concerned citizen with a concrete, objective way to help response and enforcement personnel get the information they need. If you live along the California coast (or are a frequent visitor) and want to put your eyes and concerns to good use, then contact Ellen Faurat-Daniels at the FSO office address to arrange for training. ☞

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*The Otter Raft, Spring/Summer 1995*
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been conducting research on sea otters in Alaska for about 40 years. Karl Kenyon was one of the first federal biologists to intensively study Alaskan otters. His early work focused on methods of keeping otters alive in captivity and on surveying the Aleutian Islands for otters. Following Kenyon, sea otter research in Alaska was directed by Ancel Johnson and focused on sea otter population and reproductive biology. In 1989, at the time of the Exxon Valdez oil spill, Tony DeGange was the Alaska Sea Otter Project Leader. As can be imagined, the magnitude of this spill and its impacts on otters greatly influenced the research that DeGange was conducting. That effect is still evident today, although otter research not related to oil spills has recently been resumed. Our purpose in this article is to provide a brief summary of the studies we have conducted on the effects of the oil spill on sea otters and a description of two additional sea otter research projects that are underway in Alaska.

Oil Spill Studies

In general, we view the effects of the Exxon Valdez oil spill on sea otters as occurring over two distinct time periods: 1) immediate (occurring during or shortly after the spill), and 2) long-term (resulting from sublethal oiling and continued exposure, either in the environment or through the food chain). Our main objectives in oil spill studies have been directed at describing these effects.

Immediate mortality was readily evidenced by the collection of about 900 sea otter carcasses during the first few months of the spill. It is likely that additional sea otters were oiled and died, but not recovered. It is also likely that a few of the oiled carcasses that were recovered were from animals that had died before the spill.

We took three independent approaches to estimate the total number of sea otter mortalities that resulted from acute exposure to oil. One method estimated the number of unrecovered carcasses based on the probability of carcass recovery. Data from Alaska and California suggest that about 75 percent of sea otter carcasses may not wash ashore.

Another method compared estimates of sea otter abundance before and after the spill. Relative to the number of carcasses retrieved, this comparison suggested that a large number of otters suffered immediate mortality. A third method consisted of a model that estimated hypothetical mortality based on potential exposure of otters to oil and observed mortality rates dependent on degree of oiling. All of the methods independently indicated that actual mortality exceeded carcass recovery. A synthesis of the three estimates of loss suggests that as many as 5,000 sea otters may have died as an immediate result of the Exxon Valdez spill.

Effects of Oil Exposure

Long-term effects on sea otters may result from sublethal initial exposure to oil and continued exposure to residual oil in the environment. These effects may include either reduced reproduction or increased rates of mortality. Preliminary findings of other oil spill studies indicate that levels of hydrocarbons in intertidal and subtidal sediment samples can remain elevated for years. Moreover, invertebrates such as mussels and clams may be contaminated and provide a pathway for continued exposure of otters. Our tasks are to search for possible effects of continued exposure, determine the recovery rate of the affected sea otter population, and suggest strategies for restoration when possible.

The picture of recovery of the Prince William Sound sea otter population from the spill is unclear. There is no compelling evidence that the affected population is recovering. Sea otter densities in some of the most heavily oiled areas remain lower than in unaffected areas. In some places it appears that even two years after the spill, there is a continuing decline in otter abundance. Reproduction, as indicated by proportion of pups in the population, is high throughout the Sound. However, there are indications that mortality may continue to be higher than expected in the oiled areas.

Sea Otter Survey

Our single greatest obstacle to more accurately describing the effects of this spill on sea otters is the lack of a reliable method to estimate their abundance. As you read in The
Otter Raft (S.'92) article by Ron Jameson, estimating sea otter abundance is difficult. This is particularly true in Alaska in areas where shore counts cannot be made. As a result, one study in our project is undertaking the development of a standardized sea otter survey design that will provide added precision and accuracy in our estimates of abundance throughout most of the north Pacific.

Methods used in the past include counts from shore, counts from small and large boats, helicopters and a variety of fixed-winged aircraft, or a combination of more than one method. We have begun to test a small, float-equipped airplane, the Piper PA-18 Super-Cub, from which we can count otters. The method we are testing employs a strip transect design in which otters are counted along a transect line under strict survey conditions. At predetermined intervals along this transect "intensive searches" are made to estimate the proportion of animals that had been missed (e.g., because of diving) during the strip count. Although we are still in the developmental stage, results to date have been encouraging. If we are successful, one of the benefits will be that some of the uncertainties associated with describing the effects of the Exxon Valdez spill on sea otter abundance will be lessened should spills occur in the future.

Another of our studies, although not related to the effects of oil, is designed to help us identify variation among the different sea otter populations or subspecies using molecular genetics techniques. We have collected tissue samples from six locations, including California, Russia and four sites within Alaska, and are comparing these populations based on mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) components.

Our results to date indicate that different mtDNA genotypes (the genetic makeup of an individual as distinguished from its physical appearance) are identifiable in each of the six populations we sampled. This suggests that the exchange of genetic material is restricted at present. Such evidence of divergence is not surprising because each of the samples came from geographically isolated populations.

Although we have begun to resume our non-oil spill related research, we anticipate a long-term effort to monitor the recovery of the sea otter populations affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill. This oil spill, although tragic in many respects, has provided us with the first opportunity to study the immediate and long-term effects of such an event on sea otters. We hope to have the opportunity to keep you informed of our findings.

— James L. Bodkin and Brenda E. Ballachey
Sea Otter Project Leaders, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Alaska Fish & Wildlife Research Center

Saturday, October 23
11 a.m. - 3 p.m.  Sea Otter Center Open House
                  The Barnyard Shopping Center in Carmel
6 - 7 p.m.  Sea Otter Exhibit & ride pool private viewing
            Monterey Bay Aquarium
7 - 9 p.m.  FSO Annual Meeting
            Monterey Bay Aquarium Auditorium

Sunday, October 24
Time TBA  Sea Otter Cruise
          Otter Spotting

Make your hotel reservations early. FSO has arranged for a block of rooms at The Otter Inn, located a few blocks from the Aquarium at 571 Wave Street in Monterey. For reservations call 408/375-2299 — be sure to identify yourself as being with Friends of the Sea Otter.

Special Thanks

A heartfelt thank you to the Homeland Foundation whose ongoing support has made The Otter Raft possible.

Many thanks to Jeanne Irwin who donates her artistic talents. Each year she brings handcrafted otter items for us to sell at the Annual Meeting and has now designed an otter apron to sell in the Center.

A hearty thank you to Anita Lawson, Dug Waggoner, and R.W. Cooke, III for their generous donations of artistic talent.

Thanks to Peter Eberhardt and Lisa Kaye for the donation of tape players for use in the Center.

We appreciate the donation of two handcrafted silver pendants by Lucille Lee Roberts of Pasadena, CA. Both sold quickly at the Center.

A very special thank you to Brian Arthur for his generous donation of porcelain sea otters — a welcome and popular addition to our Center wares.

Thanks to board members Scott Hennessy and Art Haseltine for their help with the Center move.

Many, many thanks to Dan Faurot-Daniels for providing the profusion of beautiful flowers for the Volunteer Holiday Potluck in December.

Thanks to the Carmel Pine Cone for the donation of advertising in their Visitors Review.

We appreciate the generosity of Brinton's in the Carmel Rancho Center for providing keys to the Center volunteers.

Volunteer Notes

The process of moving the Sea Otter Education & Retail Center to its beautiful new location in The Barnyard Shopping Center in Carmel was quite an undertaking. Thanks to the help of our dedicated volunteers, we have settled into our spiffy new digs.

The team of volunteers who helped with painting, packaging, moving and/or display are: Carole Marko, Janice Rayman, June Craft, Alice Williams, Marion Sterling, Joyce Morris, Aldo Scandinaro, Barbara Beyda, Ray and Joyce Denne, Mimi and Frank McKee, Michelle Lander, Joan Peacock, Elly Mark and Ron Charvonia. A very special thank you goes out to all of them. They are the greatest!

The Otter Spotter volunteers got a jump start on the season by helping the Monterey Bay Aquarium celebrate the re-opening of its sea otter exhibit. On April 3, 4, 10 and 11, FSO otter spotters provided spectators on the outside deck of the Aquarium with a telescope-eye-view of otters in the kelp beds, a chance to touch sea otter fur, FSO educational and membership literature, and information on the Aquarium’s current otter rehabilitation efforts.

Additionally, FSO gave a half-hour presentation each day on sea otters in the Aquarium auditorium. Our volunteers enjoyed sunny days with lots of sea otters to view and lots of people to educate. Many special thanks to Bobby Jackson, Dorrie Adamson, Lynda Warner, Montana Easterling, Ken and Barbree Swofford, Kim Beals, Alice Williams, Joann Eastland, and Sheila McMahon for all their help.

The regular otter-spotting season began Saturday, April 17 and takes place from 12-4 p.m. each Saturday, April through November. Come join us at the Monterey Harbor on a Saturday for fresh air and otters, and invite your family, friends, and guests to come along, too!

Friends of the Sea Otter extends a warm welcome to new volunteers: Barbara Beddow, Barbee and Ken Swofford, Joan Peacock, Montana Easterling, Lynda Warner, Joyce and Ray Denne, Frank and Mimi McKee, Ron Charvonia, Janice Rayman, and June Craft.

A general orientation and two training sessions for volunteers were held during February and March. These periodic training sessions help educate new volunteers and update old volunteers on sea otter biology and issues.

The FSO Volunteer Recognition Event was held April 20. This annual event gives FSO an opportunity to formally thank all of the volunteers for their outstanding service. It’s also a great opportunity for volunteers and staff to get together just for fun.
Thank you to all of our supporters.

In particular we wish to acknowledge our new corporate members and our most recent benefactors, life members, and patrons.

Life Members

We deeply appreciate these new life members who chose to join or renew their membership at $200.

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Corporate Members

We are delighted to welcome the following — their contributions of $1,000 or more represent an important source of funding for our programs.

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Patrick L. Stafford
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Benefactors

Please join us in extending a warm welcome to our most recent benefactors who contributed $500 or more.

Brad Harrington
Tiburon, CA
Steve & Mary Lu Luce
Knoxville, TX
Pat Moody
Memphis, TN
Sally T. Selnor
Carmel, CA

Patrons

We extend our gratitude to these new patron members who elected to join or renew their membership with a $100 contribution.

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Memorial Gifts

"... the flow of time, obliterating yet containing all that has gone before — the sea's eternal rhythms, the tides, the beat of the surf, the pressing rivers of currents... the stream of life flowing as inexorably as any ocean current from past to unknown future..."
— Rachel Carson

In memory of...

Jane Ann Blais from Jim and Sue Liskovec
Maxine Burns from Winifred Burns
Edward Gilpin from Lindsay and Andrew Mohn
"Handsome" from Laurie Mass
Emmet Hooper from Dr. Robert T. and Margaret C. Orr
Glen McCroskey from Mona Lange McCroskey
Romi Melchior from Tony Melchior
Ronald Norris Perlman from Frances M. Perlman
Sophia Ott from Laurie Mass
Nancy Eleanor Reed from Jerry and Ann Rogers
Winnifred Snyder from Theresa Bosarge, Shawnee Campos, Judy Kinney, Bruce Murray, Deborah Noll, George Smith, Linda Tame, and Marie Wallace
Patria Taylor from Glenn L. Taylor
Gene Waggoner from Dug and Sonja Waggoner
Helen West from Carol C. Hoyt

FSO received several special gifts

During the past few months, FSO received several donations honoring individuals. Although gifts of this sort were not mentioned in the past, FSO felt that they bear mention in this issue of The Otter Raft.

In honor of Margaret W. Owings’s birthday from June M. Cogswell
In honor of the 50th wedding anniversary of Beverly & Thomas McLaren from Marjorie M. Bolton
In honor of Mr. & Mrs. W. William Baumgardt from Linda & Arthur Tuttle

The Privilege Of Knowing Wallace Stegner

— Margaret W. Owings

A man whose written words reached back into the experiences of childhood and growing maturity, with moments of insight and the skill to sense and retain their meaning...

His dry humor always brought a chuckle. A card came to us from Greenboro, VT, which read: "Pretty soon snow. Pretty soon Stegners come home because our waterline lies right out on the ground and our joints lie right on the surface of our skin. Look for the old couple with canes."

Wallace Stegner died this spring on April 13 at the age of 84. But he has not gone! Far from it, for those of us who knew him as a friend or readers who sensed the depth of human feeling in his 50-year literary career, found an interchange of understanding, looking back or reaching forward — always alive!

Braving a childhood of stark hardship on the windswept plains of Saskatchewan, he stored deep in his brain the sounds, the flickering sights and the evasive smells — the mystic scent of Wolf Willow, which in later years, brought him back to recapture that life with people no longer there.

A Pulitzer-prize winner in 1972, followed by a series of National book nominations and awards, he focused on the upbeat qualities of the pioneers but dealt sadly with the environmental damage they blindly caused. Explorers such as John Wesley Powell held his concentration and a biography of the river man became epic writing. In 1968 we shared a trip down the Colorado with Wally and his wife Mary and once when we pulled our dory over a sandbank, he remarked with a sense of peace, "a river is always passing but always there."

One day in 1981 he arrived home from a trip with the flu and we were poised awaiting for him. We knew that he alone could write "Memo For A Mountain Lion," the theme for a desperate Auction to raise funds to save the cougar. Exhausted and in pain, he said he couldn’t — then, picked up his pen and rolled off lines that were to stir the people of the state

"Once in every corner of the continent, your passing could prickle the stillness and bring every living thing to the alert. But even then, you were more felt than seen. You were an imminence, a presence, a crying in the night..."

Not neglecting our otters, a card reached our box, saying:
"This is to wish you happiness... a nice rocking kelp bed, a rock on your stomach, an abalone on the rock, and a row of admiring spectators on your cliff. And so, with an insouciant wave, a brave smile, and a cheery word... — Wally"
We associate the widening circles from an otter’s dive with the growing accomplishments of our work and the growing needs of our organization. Many of our Life Members continue to make substantial contributions, thus helping the circles to expand.

Following are members who added another circle to the otter’s dive.

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The Otter Raffle, Spring/Summer 1993
The Otter Raft

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