

# **Marine Animal Oriented Organizations, Cultural Diversity, and Attitudes Toward Marine Wildlife**

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## **MARINE ANIMAL ORIENTED ORGANIZATIONS, CULTURAL DIVERSITY, AND ATTITUDES TOWARD MARINE WILDLIFE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Human interactions with marine animals often have a defining cultural component. In order to clarify how Marine Animal Oriented Organizations (MAOOs), that provide education, recreation, service provision and advocacy services, have positioned themselves vis-à-vis cultural difference, I conducted a series of ten interviews with their staff. For the most part, I found that concern about cultural diversity was not reflected in their own demographic composition and that managers and volunteers were mostly white. Respondents did not have a clear idea about the ethnicity of their public, apart from the mix of public school children. Outreach is mostly directed at this subgroup in the form of programming. MAOO managers identified a number of harmful practices toward marine animals, and most expressed deep concern about some or all of these harmful interactions. Tidepool collecting was the only practice that was linked to ethnicity in some fashion. Instead participants explained most harmful practices as resulting from universals of human experience such as economic desperation, ignorance or neglect. But science-based MAOOs found rising popular concerns for the protection and rescue of animals, such as whales and sea lions, to be problematic. Often rescues go against scientifically defined management practice, yet because political support for animal welfare and animal rights is strong, adherence to such practices can create controversy. And despite their general lack of recognition of culture as a critical component shaping attitudes and practices toward marine animals, MAOO managers linked animal welfare/rights views to urban white or privilege enjoyed by whites.

**Keywords:** Attitudes toward Marine Animals, Cross-Cultural Attitudes, Interviews

**Introduction**

The Southern California coast has undergone a series of changes due to increased density of population, intense fishing activities, and shifts in the recreational uses of this zone. Interestingly some unique responses to marine environmental problems were initiated in Southern California: this is where concern over the plight of whales was first raised (1967), where a yearly International Fish Count (similar to the Christmas Day Bird Count) was begun (1992), and where an aquarium was prevented from catching whales for captivity purposes (1993). Each of these efforts was born out of a Marine Animal Oriented Organization or MAOO (and especially key individuals in them) that was determined and savvy enough to mobilize people and change attitudes.

Los Angeles is an excellent setting in which to understand the role played by these organizations and their efforts to 'make a difference' in the relationship between humans and marine animals. MAOOs in Los Angeles are comparatively numerous and span a wide range of perspectives. They fulfill a variety of immediate roles at different levels, and some of them have been in existence for nearly a century. They include State Beaches, aquaria, Federal and State agencies that promote fishing and conservation, and marine animal rescue organizations, as well as a number of popular fishing and nature recreation venues such as whale watching. These organizations display the wonders of the sea, present issues for popular information and consideration, legitimize scientific discourses, and regulate and penalize marine practices. In short, they all play some role in shaping how humans view and treat marine animals. Typically their message is based on science and is directed toward the general population, in part because the activities of the population at large underlie pervasive marine problems such as ocean pollution and urban runoff.

But in places that are highly urbanized, like Los Angeles, the mitigation of harmful environmental practices is made more complicated by the fact of population diversity. Angelenos span the spectrum--affluent, working class and low-income, people of color and recent immigrants, and both suburban and inner city residents. This complexity is exacerbated by the

fact that people may imbue animals and practices involving animals with great socio-cultural significance. Culture may also directly challenge normative practice in a range of ways: by leading to behavior that resists mainstream rules (such as fishing without a licence by fishers unaccustomed to licencing procedures) or otherwise defies conventional practice (for instance, by calling for an end to keeping whales in captivity). Also, differences in practices and/or attitudes may polarize people or contribute to the subjugation of one group over another. On the one hand, conflicts can arise when such practices run counter to those accepted by MAOOs on the basis of scientific or environmental rationale. On the other hand, the extent to which people support the environment or animal welfare (or rights) has been shown to be in part culturally based and class-linked (Guither, 1998, 64), and thus greater diversity introduces more differentials in the acceptance and support of MAOOs that promote these.

Recent scholarly literature, by scientists, social scientists, and philosophers, has examined the social construction of nature. This effort has helped to identify the human bias in how nature is defined and thus treated. At the same time, it has contributed to an important demystification of science and thus reduced the legitimacy of scientific definitions of nature. As scientific discourse is being deconstructed, and as the animal welfare and rights movements have penetrated academia, a more thorough and philosophical engagement on the part of spokespeople in various scientific communities has begun and has ensued in a highly polemical debate. In *Reinventing Nature? Responses to Postmodern Deconstruction* (Soulé and Lease 1995), renowned conservation biologist and advocate Michael Soulé identified three "myths of postmodernism" that bias new perspectives on nature and animals: "the myth of Western moral inferiority" (by which we undermine our positive attitudes toward nature and idealize those of non-Western peoples, whose culture we continue to see as more pure and reverent), "the myth of Constructionism" (by which we understand nature only as a social construct, and its physical reality as secondary or unknowable), and "the myth of the pristine/profane dichotomy" (by which we despair that nature is irreparably spoiled by humans, especially Westerners) (146-159). Reclaiming the moral high ground, Soulé (1995) eventually posits:

Entire species are being driven to extinction because of superstitious cultural practices in wealthy countries--and the reluctance of activists to meet them head-on for fear of being called racist. Surely we must forthrightly criticize the use of tiger bones in Chinese herbal medicine and the use of rhinoceros horns for dagger handles by Yemeni men. Just as we are obligated to criticize practices that victimize minority populations of *Homo Sapiens* (such as the Ku Klux Klan "culture"), we must also struggle against an anthropocentrism that exterminates less powerful beings. (150-1)

Soulé is disturbed by the reigning cultural relativism that has resulted from postmodern critiques. In the name of disappearing animals, he urges us to take a stance, and likens this stance to one against a racist group. Soulé is putting the rights (to not be killed and to live) of (at least endangered) animals ahead of the rights of some human practices. At the root of this debate is the very real question: if we move the dividing line that has separated humans from nonhumans, where shall we place it? Or in other words, how can we exist without such a dividing line?

This question has real world consequences, including for how humans treat one another. Little so far has been forthcoming in terms of understanding what is at stake for animals, whether a cultural lens introduces more complexity and ultimately less justice, and especially, what to do about it. Relatedly, there has been a lack of research on animal oriented organizations (or AOOs), such as local animal regulation and control bureaus, animal protection organizations that manage problems linked to animal populations, 'animal display institutions' such as zoos and aquaria that affect how people see and think about animals, or animal advocacy groups that conduct outreach campaigns. The most basic questions remain unanswered relative to their numbers, sizes, types, and missions, yet could provide much needed information on these organizations' role in public life, and how they shape our thinking and treatment of animals.

With this analysis, I asked whether and how MAOOs in Southern California acknowledge that culture plays a role in shaping attitudes toward marine animals, that the meaning of marine animal life varies according to factors such as culture, and in turn, that culture may be a contributing element in the organizations' appeal and effectiveness. The study and findings are

based on interviews that I conducted with MAOO managers. I expected that interviewees would comment on cultural diversity in terms especially of race and ethnicity, and on the practices of immigrants for instance, and hoped to hear about philosophical differences tied to class and professional occupation as reflected in various attitudes. I suspected that such issues might be complex and challenging for some MAOO leaders who are not used to dealing with culture and cultural difference. Also I expected that their interpretation would be limited to a conventional interpretation of diversity (e.g. white, black, Latino, Asian, etc.). I was surprised however, to hear them articulate the concept of 'whiteness' as a cultural category linked to economic privilege, 'urbanicity,' animal rights views and ignorance of science. This understanding of culture and its impact on practices and attitudes may form a critical first stage of greater awareness of cultural differentials.

Some people are named in this work, and some of the stories they have recounted may not put them in a pretty light. They were interviewed formally and have been interviewed before, by the local media for instance. None misrepresented the MAOO they were affiliated with. I believe that each of them is deeply committed to the philosophical stances they expressed to me, and that these stances are fundamental if we are to identify problems and create solutions, including solutions that address the strategic positioning that takes place in nature-culture debates. I am also convinced of their earnest efforts to safeguard animals and educate the general public, and hope to portray differences between them as important, and not based on deficient professional or ethical conducts. I am grateful for their candor—this research depended in great part on their cooperation and sincerity—I have done my best to preserve their heartfelt (public) message.

In this report, I first explain how MAOOs were selected as interview candidates. Following this, I present how interviews were prepared. Then I provide a brief profile of each organization and introduce the persons with whom I spoke. Following this, I discuss specific responses and analyze how MAOOs address culture and cultural difference in terms of both outreach efforts and harmful practices. I conclude with an overall appraisal and a discussion of implications for marine wildlife managers and educators.

## **2. Selecting and recruiting the MAOOs to be interviewed**

An inventory and mapping of organizations oriented toward animals in Los Angeles County (Wolch, Lassiter and Top, 1999) informed this work by helping me identify those organizations that deal with marine animals and providing me some basic information on which to base an initial selection of people to interview within each MAOO. Organizations that deal with marine animals tend to be located in close proximity to the coast and concern themselves with marine animals almost exclusively. Of the 453 Animal Oriented Organizations (AOOs) that were recorded, a large majority (274 or 60%) dealt solely with companion animals--a focus that does not really exist for marine animals. In this section I describe the selection process I used to determine which MAOO to interview.

### **Developing an inventory of MAOOs**

The inventory of AOOs was based on listings in telephone directories, other directories such as the Green Pages, web sites, and flyers distributed at various events. Inclusion in the list of MAOOs was premised on three criteria similar to those we had established earlier for the inventory of AOOs: (1) Location in Los Angeles County; (2) Nonprofit (private or public) status; and (3) Focus on marine animals or issues directly relating to them. Of all AOOs, 22 (or about 5%, or 13% of noncompanion animal AOOs) dealt with marine animals (see Appendix A). I visited them, collected relevant documents including newsletters, website information and newspaper articles, and produced an organization profile for each one. On the basis of this profile, MAOOs were categorized according to their primary function, a criterion that had worked well for our general inventory: (1) *Education organizations* that are focused on informing the public about animals, animal status, and care; (2) *Recreation organizations* that rely on animals to provide humans a recreational outlet such as fishing; (3) *Service provision organizations* that serve the general public by rescuing and managing wildlife; and (4) *Advocacy organizations* that lobby for issues relating to marine animals. This taxonomy was most helpful initially to organize information about outreach and highlight substantive differences in this respect.



I examined the range of characteristics and perspectives (public/private, species specificity, scientific/animal welfare and rights) within each category of organization, as well as the length of their commitment to local marine animals, depth and breadth of influence, and the nature of their programs. A number of them, especially 'Education' MAOOs such as aquaria, fulfilled the same function in much the same way in one place as in another. I thus selected those that were the most relevant to our project, in terms of having been active for the longest time for instance. Of the original 22 MAOOs, 10 were selected for interviews (see Table 1). In the end I was satisfied that I had reached a point where no new information was forthcoming and where "no new themes or constructs emerge[d]" (Baxter and Eyles, 1997, 512).

**Table 1. Taxonomy of Selected Marine Animal Oriented Organizations (MAOOs)**

<b>Education</b>	<b>Recreation</b>	<b>Service provision</b>	<b>Advocacy</b>
1. Leo Carillo State Beach	1. National Marine Fisheries Service: the Pacific Recreational Fisheries	1. South Bay Wildlife Rehabilitation Center	1. National Marine Fisheries Service: Marine Mammal Stranding Network
2. Cabrillo Marine Aquarium	2. California Department of Fish & Game: Youth Fishing Project (" <i>Los Tiburones</i> ")	2. Marine Mammal Rescue Center at Fort McArthur	2. The Whale Rescue Team
3. Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History			
4. The American Cetacean Society			

**Education** MAOOs use a wide range of educative strategies: they provide basic information, that is generally based on science, conservation and environmentalism, in exhibits, videos, lectures, books and newsletters, and programs such as tidepool walks. They serve many thousands of people each year, and are on the increase in Los Angeles as well as the U.S., especially as large -- and expensive -- centers of attraction (such as the new Long Beach Aquarium for instance). The education MAOOs that were selected for interviews are: *Leo Carillo State Park*, the *Cabrillo Marine Aquarium*, the *Los Angeles County Natural History Museum* and the *Los Angeles*

*Chapter of the American Cetacean Society.* They offer a wide array of educative perspectives and scales of outreach: for instance, the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium has extensive displays and programming and serves as a meeting site for other MAOOs. In addition they have a protracted history in Los Angeles, whereby they are more likely to have shaped and been shaped by people here. I also selected MAOOs that, because of their location or their work, 'witness' more interactions between humans and marine animals, such as Leo Carillo State Beach. The scientists at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History and the American Cetacean Society, in contrast, contribute a different perspective because their work is 'behind the public scene.'

Some **recreation** organizations such as sport fishermen's clubs actively promote fishing as a sport and raising fry to support the population of 'sport fish.' These recreation MAOOs do little outreach work (especially outside of fishers), and their interests are in great part safeguarded by regulatory agencies such as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDF&G), whose budgets depend on licencing and related revenues. Both agencies operate in part to inform the public about wildlife management policies through programs, such as the *Pacific Recreational Fisheries* (NMFS) or the *Youth Fishing Program* (CDF&G). I focus on both these recreational programs.

**Service provision** MAOOs protect or rescue marine animals. These organizations are often run by a handful of devoted people. We focused on one of these, the *South Bay Wildlife Rehabilitation Center* that takes in a number of sea birds. The *Marine Mammal Care Center at Fort McArthur*, which takes in sea lions and seals, has a more clinical approach and formal organization. These contrasting organizations are the primary rescue centers in the region. A new rescue center for sea birds is scheduled to open in Fall 2000 near the Marine Mammal Care Center. But in the meanwhile animals found in Los Angeles are often transported to San Diego County where some more extensive marine aquatic facilities exist, such as Sea World. The interviews with Directors of the South Bay Wildlife Rehabilitation Center and the Marine Mammal Care Center took place over the telephone (at their request).

**Advocacy organizations** exist to promote a particular view of marine animals and their appropriate use by humans. The National Marine Fisheries Service's *Marine Mammal Stranding Network's* role is advocative in its support of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (1972 and 1994). It was created to monitor marine mammal populations (by putting observers on fishing boats and identifying probable causes of marine mammal deaths), to organize marine mammal rescues, and ultimately to stop all human-caused injuries to marine mammals. The *Whale Rescue Team* is a direct action organization that rescues marine mammals and birds at sea but most of all acts to challenge the Marine Mammal Stranding Network by shaping public opinion about marine animals and even official responses to events such as whale strandings.

Some of the world's leading international MAOOs involved in advocacy, such as The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society and Greenpeace, at one time were highly visible in Los Angeles. But these groups have divested themselves from the area recently. Part of this may be attributed to a sharp decline in membership in environmental organizations across the nation in the mid 1990s, and to a general mainstreaming of environmentalism (and of environmental organizations) since the Clinton Administration. But the decline in members may also have been caused by these organizations' under-appreciation for culture-specific factors in philanthropic behavior for instance<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, while Greenpeace attributes the closure of its LA office to the difficulty in mobilizing people in this city, and while it is true that 'traditional' philanthropy has not fared well in Los Angeles despite some of the highest household incomes in the country (Fears, 1999, B1), some important socio-cultural factors may be at the root of this situation. Indeed, one reason for fewer donations might be that a large share of residents contribute at a grass-roots level by helping family and friends, a situation which "the vast philanthropic sector has not yet made significant efforts to tap into" (Cardenas, 1999, E1). Another reason for a lack of support is that environmental groups have at times displayed insensitivity toward working class people, disenfranchising them from environmental causes. This may have resonated in Los Angeles especially; for instance in 1990, Scott Trimmingham, then President of The Sea Shepherd

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<sup>1</sup> This under-appreciation would include lack of cultural diversity in their boards or staff.

Conservation Society, was quoted in the *Los Angeles Times* as saying (about the plight of commercial fishers who would soon find themselves 'cut out'): "... we are not a job placement agency, and changes to protect our environment may adversely affect some people" (Evans, 1990, B3).

From time to time dramatic but effective media moments are still orchestrated in Los Angeles by Advocacy organizations such as Greenpeace, including the 1997 unfurling of a banner atop the Atlantic Richfield's fifty story downtown building in a campaign against oil exploration in the arctic, and a 1998 protest against a ship bringing newsprint into Long Beach Harbor. I repeatedly tried to interview individuals from Greenpeace and from The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society who were or are currently active in the Los Angeles area, but failed beyond receiving newsletters, newspaper reprints and membership offers. The reason given in both cases was that they were too busy or that I would not be able to quote them. I tracked people who had gone on to work in other environmental organizations, such as Bill Snelling formerly of Greenpeace and now with Green Earth in San Francisco, and he, in part, agreed that organizations such as Greenpeace had dismissed a culturally diverse support base in Los Angeles too easily (personal communication, 1999).

In sum, the organizations whose leaders I interviewed were specifically selected for their contrasting experiences, in order to capture the full range of influences, styles, and emphases that shape attitudes toward marine animals in Los Angeles County. These specialists know each other well, are aware of the roles they each play (especially when they perform similar or complementary functions or in other ways work together), and with whom they disagree. Interviews were conducted and transcribed over a three-month period, then I performed an initial analysis of each discussion separately.

### **3. Planning the interviews**

Interviews have always played an integral part of social research. As a technique, they provide in-depth knowledge from key players, by ensuring a higher response rate than with survey

questionnaires, providing an opportunity to clarify a question or probe for full answers, and by giving the opportunity to observe people in their own setting (Babbie, 1994). Thus I conducted interviews in person whenever possible, but also had to accommodate the participants' time constraints and interviewed some of them on the telephone. In order to achieve good interpretation, I gave careful consideration to questions, to the recruitment strategy and to the selection of candidate MAOOs that could provide us the most informative interviews. A discussion of each of these issues follows in this section.

My questions inquired into the MAOOs' outreach efforts and appreciation for the socio-cultural context of harmful practices and the attitudes that may support them. Interview questions were semi-structured in order to take full advantage of the fact that respondents are then given a better chance to develop their answers, and explain why and how particular decisions were taken for instance. This was especially important because I was looking to clarify how MAOO staff constructed marine related issues, what were their perceptions of public needs and response to them.

All interviewees were asked the same questions, in order to guide us in obtaining a comparative range of answers as the literature on interviews recommends (see for instance May, 1997). However, and as Lofland and Lofland (1995) suggest, topic order was slightly changed depending on the particular MAOO's primary emphasis (and in this way, allowing us to ask the 'easy' questions first). Probing also varied, as did some wording depending on the MAOOs' emphasis on either exhibit or programming. A standardized interview guide was produced, comprising a first contact protocol and statement of introduction, and fourteen open ended questions on four topics. Probes were also prepared to allow for further elaboration on the answers given (for questions and probes see Appendix B).

At the time of the initial telephone call to potential interviewees the objectives of the research were made clear, as was our source of funding. In most cases I had obtained a personal reference from another interviewee and this was mentioned. I assured them that questions could be

answered in half an hour. Also I explained that a report of these interviews would be readily available, and that ultimately the research would be published as part of a doctoral dissertation and a Sea Grant Report that they could later obtain via the Sea Grant website. Much of this introduction was reiterated on the day of the interview. I also gave the person I was about to interview a copy of the research team's most recent Working Paper that describes results of ethnically diverse focus groups on attitudes toward marine animals. Once permission was granted to use a tape recorder, the interview started. None asked for confidentiality, with the exception of one person who reported to have rescued an endangered species of animal without proper authorization. At least half of those who spoke to me have been quoted in newspaper reports on similar topics and all speak routinely about these issues in public. I took brief notes in the event of equipment failure and to mark incomplete answers or statements that I wished amplified.

Before starting the questions I explained what I knew of the MAOOs' functions and activities and asked whether this perspective was correct. This 'warm-up' smoothly led into a first set of questions on the MAOO's demographics. The following topic dealt with the MAOO's outreach efforts toward the public, potential volunteers and members. The next set of questions addressed the kinds of practices that harm marine animals in the region and the last topic dealt with the MAOO's social construction of these harmful practices and attitudes, and whether the interviewee/MAOO ever took a public position on specific cultural practices. The conversation nearly always ran over forty five minutes and usually ended with participants providing supplementary data and pamphlets and introducing us to colleagues for more information, especially in the large MAOOs. The two interviews that were conducted over the telephone proceeded in much the same manner as the face-to-face interviews, but contributed fewer details. Special efforts were made to obtain more written documentation (through newspaper clippings, brochures etc.) about these organizations.

#### **4. Organizational profiles**

The MAOOs' profiles were drafted from interviews and public documents, such as mission statements, annual reports and newsletters. These background profiles include the MAOO's

location and year of origin, affiliations, status as a public or private nonprofit organization, overview of outreach activities, and visitation trends and figures when applicable. In this section I summarize these profiles and describe the tenure and professional background of the person I interviewed. Again, I have organized the organizational profiles according to their primary function.

### **Education MAOOs**

**Leo Carillo State Beach** is located off of the Pacific Coast Highway about 10 minutes northwest of the City of Malibu, straddling Los Angeles and Ventura County. Established in 1953 by the California Department of Recreation and Parks, this State Beach attracts campers and day visitors, as well as people interested in nature walks and naturalist-led visits to the tidepools, to the nature center, and special events such as the Whale Festival. In 1997-98 (the last available count) guided tours attracted about 7,000 visitors, and about 8,000 school children on school field trips. The Park's Head Ranger, John Falk, explained that volunteers had recently been mobilized following a steady increase in tidepool collecting by the general public over the last decade. So far programming has largely been an effort to directly influence this behavior. I interviewed Cara O'Brien, a State Park Interpreter who was recommended by Falk as being most knowledgeable about outreach efforts. O'Brien has worked at Leo Carillo for the last four years. Prior to this she was a diver and taught underwater ecology at the Channel Islands National Park.

**The Cabrillo Marine Aquarium (CMA)** is located on the shore at Cabrillo Beach between Point Fermin and the Port of Los Angeles in San Pedro. A facility of the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks, the Aquarium is sited in a park, near a popular beach and fishing pier. It is also located near an offshore Superfund site where fish have been contaminated by DDT, DDE and PCB. The Aquarium's collection of specimens of local marine plants and animals was opened for public viewing in the 1930s; CMA moved into its current building in 1981. A hands-on approach is encouraged: the tanks can be viewed from all sides, a tidepool has been created in the facility, and labs provide direct supervised access to local marine creatures. A

bulletin board also informs visitors of local news coverage of marine issues. CMA attracts about 450,000 people each year, many of whom are visiting the beach and pier, or attending functions and festivals in the park (such as the Annual Festival of Philippine Arts and Culture), and school children on field trips. I interviewed Director Suzanne Lawrenz-Miller, Ph. D., a marine biologist who has been at CMA for the last 25 years.

**The Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History** first opened the doors of its imposing building in 1913 and is located in Exposition Park in South Central Los Angeles. It has the second largest collection of marine mammal specimens in the world. Despite this collection, the museum's exhibits of marine wildlife are dusty and outdated. All exhibits are slated for refurbishing within the next decade: the Museum is coming out of a period of harsh budgetary constraints that severely impacted exhibit development and outreach. Unlike Leo Carillo and Cabrillo Marine Aquarium, the museum collects an entry fee. I interviewed marine biologist Dr. John Heyning, Deputy Director of Research and Collections and Curator of Mammals. Heyning started as a museum volunteer in the 1970s, and since then, has curated marine exhibits such as the international traveling exhibit *Masters of the Ocean Realm: Whales, Dolphins, and Porpoises*. He has also been a high profile volunteer of the National Marine Mammal Stranding Network (see below) for the last 20 years. Heyning lectures widely in the Los Angeles area, particularly at the American Cetacean Society's monthly meetings (see below) where he teaches whale watching to new docents.

**The Los Angeles Chapter of the American Cetacean Society (LA-ACS)** was the first chapter of this national organization and in 1967, the first organization to sound the alarm about the rapid demise of whales around the world. The Society has remained an all-volunteer education organization, whereby volunteers, who often are scientists such as the Natural History Museum's John Heyning, teach whale watching to about 150 new docents each year. This private organization also sponsors the annual Southern California Gray Whale census at Point Vicente Interpretative Center, another educative MAOO in Rancho Palos Verde, and holds monthly scientific meetings at Cabrillo Marine Aquarium in San Pedro. I interviewed Bernardo Alps,



member of LA - ACS since 1990 and current President. Alps is a newspaper photographer with a passionate interest in science and whales.

### **Recreation MAOOs**

The **Pacific Recreational Fisheries (PRF)** is a program of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Regional Office in Long Beach. This agency is part of National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Department of Commerce. It has assisted fisheries since the 1870s and more recently has managed living marine resources and their habitat in U.S. waters. I interviewed Marty Golden, an oceanographer and the Pacific Recreational Fisheries Coordinator for NMFS. Golden is a spokesman on recreational fishing issues. He develops sport fishing guidelines and informative pamphlets, gives presentations in schools, and participates in local fairs such as fishing shows all over the Pacific U.S.

The California Department of Fish and Game's **Youth Fishing Program (YFP)** (or *Los Tiburones* -- Spanish for 'the sharks') started in the early 1990s at about the same time as other Urban Fishing Programs were being developed across the country. The program is free and involves fifteen youth centers (such as Boys and Girls' Clubs targeting children of middle school age), or about 350 children, in fishing training and competition. Events take place all along the South Coast but mostly in Los Angeles County. I interviewed Paul Gregory, the program's current leader and a marine biologist.

### **Service Provision MAOOs**

The **South Bay Wildlife Rehabilitation Center (SBWR)** started 20 years ago, is located in Rancho Palos Verde and rescues over 1400 wild birds and mammals each year. It is one of a few MAOOs in the region that takes in marine birds (no marine mammals). Volunteers make educational wildlife presentations and reach an estimated 30,000 children and adults each year. No fees are charged but donations make up for rescue expenses. I interviewed Ann Lynch,

founder and Director of the South Bay Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. Lynch is a school teacher with a long experience in rescuing birds.

The **Marine Mammal Care Center (MMCC)** at Fort McArthur is affiliated with the National Marine Mammal Stranding Network (see below) and located near Point Fermin in San Pedro. This center was established in 1987, following a settlement between the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and the textbook publisher Harcourt General. In the early 1980s Harcourt General purchased and then immediately closed Marineland, a marine theme park in Palos Verde that was partly supported by LAUSD as a teaching and field trip facility for children. Harcourt's sudden decision to close the facility angered<sup>2</sup> the community and provoked a lawsuit whereby the company was ordered to partly finance local marine rescue and educational facilities, such as MMCC. MMCC rescues up to 300 marine mammals each year. The outdoor facility is open every day and the public can readily see the animals recuperating in their pens. There is also a classroom, a lab and a gift shop. Once a year the facility celebrates the Day of the Seals, a day of outreach for children. I spoke on the telephone to Director Jackie Ott, who has been at the Center for the last 12 years, is a marine biologist and also has a degree in psychology.

### Advocacy MAOOs<sup>31</sup>

One may not readily think of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) as an advocacy organization, but some programs within this federal agency in fact play such a role. This is the case with the **National Marine Mammal Stranding Network**. This partnership of federal, state and local governments, museums, academic institutions, aquaria, and other non-profit organizations was established by Dr. James Mead of the Smithsonian Institution, when the Marine Mammal Protection Act first passed in 1972. The Act was most recently re-authorized in 1994, and continues to impose a moratorium on the taking and importation of marine mammals.

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<sup>2</sup> The community was particularly angered because Harcourt General was suspected of buying Marineland only to acquire two whales for its theme park in San Diego. Indeed whales could no longer be caught in the wild and one of the two Marineland whales had produced several baby whales. As it turns out, the whales were indeed immediately moved to San Diego, lending credence to the popular suspicions.

NMFS is also required to use the Stranding Network and other sources to collect information on basic health parameters in marine animal populations, record strandings (injured or dead), and dispense scientific information to the general public. NMFS's Regional Coordinator and marine biologist Joe Cordaro has headed the Stranding Network in the region for the last twelve years. He is the only person in California who can issue rescue permits for wild marine mammals (except for sea otters) and authorize their handling.

**The Whale Rescue Team (WRT)** is a private association of about fifty volunteers who patrol the coast, untangle marine animals from gill nets, and call to attention the plight of these animals and the issue of beached whales and dolphins. This organization began its work in 1985 with Peter Wallerstein, a founding member of The Sea Shepherd Society, who left that organization because he felt that donations were used disproportionately for administration costs and because he was frustrated by the lack of local efforts in rescuing marine mammals. As he said: "... here I am, going to the Bering Sea, confronting Japanese drift net boats and it's happening right here in our own backyard!" From his days with The Sea Shepherd Society he has continued to use strategies of civil disobedience and public mobilization through media appeal, and has taken on the role of law enforcement at sea. The WRT ultimately led a successful campaign against the Shedd Aquarium's capturing of whales off of the California Coast in 1993. Today WRT is authorized by the Stranding Network and contracted by the cities of Los Angeles and Santa Monica to rescue marine mammals. Wallerstein is working on a project in Venice Beach to remedy the lack of tank space for recovering animals. I interviewed Wallerstein at his home.

Nearly all MAOOs are located along the coastline or their activities take place on the shore. They have close affiliation with one another, are mostly public or private but have formed some alliances between public and private entities, as exemplified in the Stranding Network. Leaders and experts are white, and all our interviewees were white, and were either scientists, educators or long time marine animal advocates. About half of them were women. With respect to institutional culture, each of these MAOOs has a different style and emphasis, plays a different role or exerts a specific kind of influence, and indeed they expressed a range of viewpoints and

alternative perspectives. I took this to indicate that our selection of MAOOs was successful. Once the main 'camps' were identified, the information (especially on harmful practices) became repetitive and only added details that had to do with highly specific current circumstances.

## **5. Responses and findings**

The interview questions inquired into whether the MAOOs were sensitive to cultural diversity and how they had positioned themselves vis-à-vis culture, especially in terms of shaping attitudes toward marine wildlife. Answers are presented according to the main topics covered in the interviews, namely, Cultural diversity and MAOO demographics; Outreach efforts; Harmful practices and attitudes; and Paying attention to culture. In this section I describe and analyze interview results.

### **5.1 Cultural diversity and MAOO demographics**

My questions began with an inquiry into the MAOO's size, staff, volunteers, members and public. I asked about the ethnic breakdown of the staff and of volunteers and whether a formal survey of the organizations' 'public' and members had recently been conducted. These clear-cut questions were important to enable me to appreciate the breadth and reach of programs and to indicate the extent to which respondents and/or the MAOO itself were aware of trends in visitation, in other words how well they knew their public.

Cultural diversity among public, volunteers, members and staff was not high on the agenda of the **education MAOOs**. In the case of the public, a reason for this lack of concern might be that they simply are confident that they are attracting a diverse population. This is the case of Cabrillo Marine Aquarium, which because of its location on a popular and culturally diverse beach (beginning with mostly African American visitors twenty years ago to a nearly all Hispanic population today), free admission policy, and high attendance by LAUSD schoolchildren, seems to reach all sorts of people. Other MAOOs such as Leo Carillo and the Cetacean Society can also rely on high attendance from children on field trips to 'provide' a substantial number of nonwhite visitors, since over 70% of LAUSD school children are Latino.

However none of these organizations have conducted a visitor survey in the last decade to confirm their casual observations, although Leo Carillo and Cabrillo reported some significant shifts in their demographics. And the records they keep do not include important information on programs or topics: for instance Leo Carillo only counts visitors who go on the Parks' Nature Walks and Tidepool Watches, and in an upcoming poll; Cabrillo will only asks about where visitors come from (to show that the Aquarium draws people from far afield and thus plays a significant economic role locally). Cabrillo and the Museum of Natural History even expressed a reluctance to ask people about their ethnicity as a reason for not including such a question on membership forms or in surveys.

Both staff and volunteers at education MAOOs tended to be white, with more ethnic diversity among interpreters than among marine scientists. Miller of Cabrillo (400 to 500 volunteers) explained that volunteers who came through a summer school program were more ethnically diverse, and the Cetacean Society reported that African American or Latino volunteers had from time to time participated in some of their volunteer programs. However this was either not the case at the present or had been a fairly isolated instance. At Cabrillo the membership organization (Friends of CMA) enjoys a high rate of renewals and has increased from 600 members in 1984 to about 2,000 today. Yet, based on casual conversation, Miller knows that the ethnic composition of CMA members (preponderantly white) had not really changed despite changes in beach visitor demographics. Heyning, from the Museum of Natural History, explained that the museum keeps track of members by zip code (and not ethnicity) and that they tended to come "from everywhere except locally."<sup>3</sup>

Cultural diversity was more of a 'top issue' for both **recreation MAOOs** that I considered. Undoubtedly this is due to the fact that both are mandated to be sensitive to ethnic diversity and hire a diverse staff. Some attention to culture and cultural diversity is evident also because

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<sup>3</sup> The Museum is located in a predominantly poor Latino and African American part of Los Angeles.

cultural trends significant for marine animals are taking place. Marty Golden, who oversees sport fishing in the region, is aware of two demographic shifts: first, that starting this decade there has been a downward trend in the total number of people (about two million) who fish in California, and second, that because fewer fishers are fishing in bigger boats (and these would usually be white and rich fishers) and because more people are fishing on party boats (usually 'minority' people), it seems that an ethnic shift may also be taking place. Gregory, who heads the Youth Fishing Program (that was actually started by a Latino man) has a culturally diverse staff and pool of volunteers. Indeed volunteers are often the children's parents or employees of the Youth Centers where the children come from.

**Service provision MAOOs** tend to have a small staff and to concentrate the volunteers' energies on rescues, not cultural outreach. For instance, the South Bay Wildlife Rehab is a volunteer organization that is run by one person (Ann Lynch) with the support of volunteers. An atmosphere of ongoing daily crisis underscores the financial precariousness of this effort: what is needed most urgently is money. The Marine Mammal Care Center is different because it is intended as a place where education also plays a large role. Still, its commitment to outreach is limited to the 20,000 or so LAUSD children it is mandated to serve, and whoever else happens to come ("tens of thousands, there's no way to tell"). The Care Center has a pool of volunteers that numbers "anywhere between 60 and 1000," whom by Ott's admission come to the Center without any outreach encouragement being necessary. Service provision MAOOs do not make the ethnicity or cultural diversity of their public an issue. For instance Lynch ascribes her public's diversity simply to her facility's location, and instead, is intent on stimulating in all people the sensitivity that "will make them care."

An **advocacy MAOO** such as NMFS's Stranding Network Program in Los Angeles is composed of volunteers who are scientists (from the Natural History Museum for instance) with Cordaro at the helm. The public served by the Program is broad: from beach goers and life guards who find animals and call them to Cordaro's attention, to property owners with a decomposing whale by their beachfront window, to fishers who protest that sea lions are protected. Cordaro was

unaware of ethnic differences but believes that the calls of concern he receives from the public are from "Caucasians and some Hispanic women."

Wallerstein does not know who he and the Whale Rescue Team's fifty or so volunteers reach, because much of their efforts are directed to media debates and newspaper articles. Wallerstein's outreach strategy is indeed focused on the media, but he is also intent on kindling a 'helping impetus' in disadvantaged African American children particularly. He explains how he relates to them despite the fact that he is white, by letting them know that the importance of caring about animals had not been obvious to him as a youngster. "I can see why more whites [become involved in rescuing animals] because I didn't grow up in the pretty neighborhoods. I grew up in an area where it was day to day with life and survival, and getting beat up, dealing with those kinds of socio-economic issues ... for your family too, and the future of that. Not some whale." In fact Wallerstein makes a point of taking these children on his boat to see seals and sea lions 'up close,' including the animals he releases from the stranglehold of gill nets.

MAOOs are for the most part unsure or unaware of the ethnic breakdown of their public or volunteers and members, although several had experienced demographic shifts over the last decade (but only know of this on an anecdotal basis). Casual observation can justifiably satisfy several of these MAOO leaders that their public is indeed diverse especially because of the LAUSD children they serve. But staff and volunteers are mostly white except when mandated otherwise. Some MAOOs (and perhaps 'scientific' MAOOs are more prone to this) expressed being uncomfortable asking their visitors questions about culture and ethnicity, not knowing whether to refer to people as 'Black' or 'African American' for instance, or being confused about people of mixed heritage. This embarrassment is by no means confined to these organizations, but stands in the way of communication--in fact may undermine their good work by not being more inclusive. Other MAOOs consider that they have more urgent priorities (especially rescue organizations that operate on a continuous crisis mode) and that the well-being of animals comes first and foremost. Meanwhile, some MAOOs are beginning to take action in attracting and involving more diverse people. For instance, O'Brien at Leo Carillo was well aware of the

homogenous visitor demographics and its relationship to outreach. She explained how this had shaped her commitment to her job early on, and described what steps she had begun to take toward more effective outreach.

## **5.2 Outreach efforts**

The next topic dealt with the MAOO's outreach efforts. I asked whether particular populations had been targeted for outreach to increase the numbers of visitors, members or volunteers. I invited MAOO leaders to explain how groups had been selected for targeting, and how outreach strategies might vary for different groups, by translating brochures and signage in Spanish for instance. Lastly I inquired into the actual and perceived results of such outreach efforts.

MAOO outreach varies quite a bit, for instance MAOOs now solicit donations or memberships more and thus send newsletters regularly, post a web site, issue news releases or get newspaper ads to announce upcoming events or other programming information. Outreach in the form of programming is the most popular among **education MAOOs**, especially programming for children. Sometimes MAOOs also make a particular effort to counter the lack of staff diversity. According to O'Brien at Leo Carillo, good communication skills are an integral effort of the hiring process because the staff speaks English only. To attract nonwhites O'Brien has obtained funds from the Getty Foundation for an African American intern who speaks Spanish, and she is writing grants that could provide scholarship money for economically disadvantaged children in the future. She had indeed recognized the limitation of being "so park oriented" early on and had decided that she first needed help to identify under-served communities. Now O'Brien is planning a second outreach effort to increase the Park's pool of volunteers, but explained that because of the Beach's isolated location and because volunteers are for the most part older and white, the ability to effectively mentor children coming from radically different environments is still limited.

Staff and volunteers at Cabrillo Marine Aquarium are trained in 'sheltered English,' a mix of informal sign language and simple syntax and words, in order to address people with varying



English language ability. Many interesting tasks that include laboratory research are aimed at attracting and pleasing more volunteers with a wide range of interests. Extensive programming is on-going, and the facility was especially designed to be accessible and make science nonthreatening or less intimidating. Plans are in the works for outreach to be conducted on the nearby beach.

As a whole, the Museum of Natural History is attempting to be more welcoming of minorities and this is evident in the new exhibits and in other efforts, such as the scheduling of a guest lecture in Spanish. This effort stops short however of a deeper involvement with culture. In his exhibit's book for the general public (*Masters of the Ocean Realm*, 1994), Heyning did include a chapter on cultural differences in attitudes towards whaling. But he selected groups of 'coastal people' (as examples of whalers and non-whalers), whose whaling practices are either traditional (Inuits and Tlingits) or known from ancient history (Greeks). He is not critical of commercial whaling for instance. When the exhibit went to Japan, Japanese curators translated it and removed the exhibit's section on whaling, replacing it with a presumably 'milder' version. When asked about his reaction toward this curatorial change, Heyning replied that it was their call: "It's their own thing. It wasn't something I was going to argue about." When asked whether he had taken a public position on the Makahs<sup>4</sup>, he replied: "No ... Even though we try to be educational, I also don't make myself a target." There is little translated signage or materials, and as far as upcoming new exhibits are concerned, cultural expertise will be sought 'in house' by asking staff archeologist and ethnologists.

The American Cetacean Society was specifically formed to be "a medium for the scientists, 'a telephone' between them and the interested layman and laywoman who didn't know much about whales and dolphins but who wanted to learn" (DeBus, 1999). While outreach is of primary concern to the Society (through docent training and whale watching programs), efforts have focused on influencing groups of as many people as possible, and--with the exception of school

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<sup>4</sup> The Makahs, a Native American tribe from upstate Washington, hunted a whale in Spring 1999.

children--not on targeting some groups particularly. Among 150 docents trained by the Cetacean Society, a dozen are nonwhites.

**Recreation MAOOs** varied greatly in their outreach goals and methods according to the leaders' enthusiasm and perception of need. Golden, of the Pacific Recreational Fisheries, reaches anglers by visiting fishing and boating shows, speaking at sport-fishermen's organizations, and distributing literature to tackle shops and fishing boat operations. Some material have been translated but he blamed budget problems and slow bureaucracy for not producing more of them, and explained that outreach was up to each expert at the Fisheries Service according to his or her perception of need. Golden conceded that an advantage of such fragmentation is that each expert has the trust of a particular public, as is the case of him with anglers. And indeed he stated that an information sheet he prepared (on removing fishing hooks and line from snared seabirds) was done so in part to protect fishers from public criticism: "First, seabirds are so commonly affected. And second it's a nuisance to the fishermen. If they don't police themselves, then they're fair game for the animal rights' groups. So it's a matter of being pro-active and anticipating problems. And it's good conservation."

Gregory, of the Youth Fishing Program, stated that its outreach strategy had been target specific. He works with kids from inner-city Youth Centers, kids who are becoming independent but "still can influence their parents to fish." The children are loaned fishing rods and reels (provided by NMFS), get repeated exposure through regular events, and with a ratio of one adult to four kids, receive a lot of individual attention. They learn to identify and measure the fish (an important part of deciding whether to release it), and learn Fish and Game rules. Gregory was aware that his outreach efforts could be more extensive and reach more children, but explained that the staff had enough work as it was, and that other programs also required his attention.

**Service provision MAOOs** have devoted most of their efforts to rescuing animals and defined outreach in terms of fund raising opportunities. For instance, for Lynch, this means speaking to any school group, meeting and picnic that she is invited to. In terms of encouraging caring

attitudes, she focuses on the 'rescue moment' when a person brings her an animal and, according to Lynch, is most responsive to new ways of thinking. She explained: "The rescue experience awakens in people a desire to do more." The Marine Mammal Care Center has no problem attracting a diverse public, since again children from LAUSD visit on field trips. It does not conduct much outreach beyond these school classes, but some classes are bilingual and translated materials are available. Volunteers readily come to the Center without any recruitment efforts being necessary.

**Advocacy MAOOs** differ very much in their outreach efforts. On the one hand Wallerstein of the Whale Rescue Team recruits volunteers and members from the public through bi-monthly training sessions on the beach. He believes that people need an outlet to help and this recognition of the 'helping impetus' is at the core of the organization's outreach efforts. So when people have called him about a sea lion on a beach, WRT quickly dispatches a volunteer with leaflets (including pamphlets in Spanish) to talk to them. The Whale Rescue Team is also confrontational: when seals and sea lions were starving during a recent El Niño season, and Cordaro (of the Stranding Network) imposed a 48 hour waiting period on rescues (because rescue centers were near capacity), the Team posted signs saying that animals might have been saved were it not for the Stranding Network! In contrast, Cordaro does not conduct outreach and produces no publications, except for a signboard placed by the sea lions on the beaches to advise people to stay away from them. He receives many calls of alarm about stranded animals, but feels that the public's sympathies are misguided. He said that the translation of informative pamphlets is not possible because so many languages are spoken in the region.

The MAOOs' outreach strategies had some things in common: a strong focus on children and on programming, and relatedly an emphasis on getting volunteers to perform more tasks. Language obstacles were dealt with by providing some translated material (especially to children), using a greatly simplified form of English, or not doing anything at all. None of the MAOOs targeted any particular group for outreach (except to promote fishing or to protect fishers from criticism), but relied on more ad hoc measures to bridge gaps. Two organizations (the South Bay Wildlife

Rehab and The Whale Rescue Team), are attentive to the moment when people witness an animal in trouble or bring one that they have found, they distribute information about the animal right then, and in the case of WRT (an advocacy MAOO) sometimes has publicly criticized the official non-response toward the crisis or rescue. In a final report of the State Interagency Marine Managed Areas Workgroup (2000), these findings were generally substantiated for particular State agencies and were blamed on a lack of coordination and a lack of distribution of information (13-14) that is worsened by the fact that critical factors, such as “stock assessments and habitat distribution” (17) are not known or made available to managers.

### **5.3 Culturally-related practices and attitudes**

The next set of questions addressed the kinds of human practices that locally harm marine animals, the trends in these interactions, and whether the people I interviewed had eye-witnessed incidents, heard about them through formal channels, or through casual conversations. These questions served to establish a 'list' of harmful activities, highlight their temporal and spatial aspects, and indicate how negative interactions were prioritized by the MAOO. When I asked whether any of these practices could be considered cultural, the answers showed that the word 'cultural' was taken to mean 'traditional,' and in this respect few practices were mentioned (save divers caught for collecting the Protected Garibaldi fish for ritual Polynesian wedding table decoration, and other particular fish being eaten in different cultures). We have organized responses here by type of harmful practice rather than MAOO function.

A practice that MAOOs closest to the shore often discussed was tidepool collecting by people, referred to as 'bucket brigades'. This practice was mentioned by Miller at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium, by Gregory of the California Department of Fish and Game, and by the staff at Leo Carillo State Beach, who all said that it had taken place for a long time, with some periods of increased activity and with few effective deterrents. Miller and O'Brien in particular were well aware of the deleterious effects of tidepool collecting and explained that the tidepools nearby the MAOO had been almost completely depleted over the last decades. Miller had conducted research about this and had concluded that the worst harm was caused by 'lone poachers'. This

was confirmed by conversations with game wardens who told her of individuals caught with large bags of abalone. Gregory of the Youth Fishing Program said that fishers who get mussels for bait get them from the piers' pylons (not tidepools) and are thus not likely culprits. Both Leo Carillo's Head Ranger John Falk and interpreter O'Brien recalled people who collected both mussels for bait and sea stars to show. Concerns over tidepool collecting have resulted in the current focus on programming at Leo Carillo. Only Miller of Cabrillo mentioned that there might be a cultural connection associated with this practice (namely that some tidepool collectors were Vietnamese but that this was incidental), this will be discussed at greater length in the next section.

A second practice that was discussed by interviewees was the killing of sea lions and seals by fishermen. No ethnicity was ascribed to this practice. No counts of dead or injured animals were available, and considerable question remained about whether such killings actually do take place. Gregory explained that, about fifteen years ago, the California Department of Fish and Game had made attempts to deter seals and sea lions away from fishing boats, as they had tried to do with coyotes (for ranchers). These attempts caused much public outrage against Fish and Game, but may simultaneously have encouraged fishermen to deter sea lions by similar and 'more effective' means. A San Pedro fisherman was also caught shooting a sea lion in the harbor four years ago and this event had remained etched in the public's mind, according to several informants.

Gregory of the Youth Fishing Program is also involved in an outreach program directed at fishers in the form of a survey, and explained that it was designed to both assess actual numbers of marine mammal interactions with recreational fishers, and to give fishers 'a chance' to vent their anger about sea lions stealing their fish. As Gregory said he had expected all along, few altercations take place. Heyning and Garrett, both of the Natural History Museum, believe that fishermen are angry at sea lions and that a while back there had been a rash of pelican shootings, but that these were isolated and vengeful incidents and that the shootings had not really increased.

However, Alps (the Cetacean Society), Wallerstein (the Whale Rescue Team), Golden and Cordaro (the National Marine Fisheries), all thought that shootings still occur and perhaps have increased. Since there is little chance anyone would witness such an act, this is based on rumors and assumptions. But Alps has seen the mutilated bodies of dead sea lions on the coast and so has Wallerstein. Wallerstein reported overhearing fishermen discuss this on the marine radio, and thinks they feed seals fish wrapped around an explosive to 'get rid of them'. Golden said that he was aware of this through reading interviews in fishing newsletters, and from calls and letters he receives from party boat captains and fishing associations. Cordaro of the Stranding Network said that the decomposing bodies of sea lions (including those dead of natural causes) are found headless because their heads decompose first, not that fishers necessarily blew them off. Also he explained that shooting at seals and sea lions had been legal until 1994 (when it was banned by the Marine Mammal Protection Act Amendments), and that each year about 60-70 seals and sea lions were indeed found injured or killed by bullets, probably by fishers along the California Coast. In fact, Cordaro suspected that many more were indeed killed or maimed but could not prove this. Rescue agencies and beach maintenance crews throughout California are expected to fill out monthly reports of marine mammal rescues and burials, and return this to him. While this is federally mandated, he knows that noncompliance is common.<sup>5</sup> Both Alps and Wallerstein felt that there were not enough local shelters for injured marine mammals.

Gill netting is forbidden in California State waters (and internationally condemned) but all four interviewees who mentioned it believed that gill nets are still doing harm in the area. Ott said that animals entrapped in gill nets are brought in at the Marine Mammal Care Center. Cordaro knows of this too and Wallerstein contributed that gill nets are used outside of the three-mile State zone, and thus that marine mammals continue to die, only further away from sight. He knows this because he patrols the coast regularly. Heyning thought that the problem had decreased and

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<sup>5</sup> Cordaro said: "90% of the agencies do not report dead animals but just dispose of them" and that he felt powerless in forcing coastal agencies to report the animals. Under the 1994 Amendments of the Marine Mammals Protection Act, NMFS is mandated to cut human-related injuries to marine mammals to zero by 2001. This is not up to Cordaro specifically, but (according to critics) could mean that the fewer the injuries the agency is made aware of, the better.

Gregory said that it had stopped "except in Huntington Flats." Other fishing equipment has caused concerns, especially for sea birds who swallow hooks and get tangled up in fishing lines. This was reported by MAOO officials of all sorts. As mentioned, Golden has issued an information card for fishers on how to remove lines and hooks from sea birds.

For the most part, interviewees expressed alarm and deep concern about harmful practices and listed a range of them, from obtrusive impacts to malicious and lethal activities. These were based mostly on seeing the (sometimes alleged) results of the practices and informal conversations with wardens for instance. However reliable injury data are not systematically recorded and made available, not even for protected species. So managers are left to their own means of assessment: Miller of Cabrillo Aquarium had conducted research on tidepool depletion, O'Brien compared photos and slides of the tidepools at Leo Carillo from ten years ago to today, and Alps has walked below Palos Verde to look for sea lion carcasses on the rocks. These ad hoc means do not give them the confidence to more substantively identify trends, and/or attribute trends to natural or human-caused factors. It is little wonder then that they only anecdotally reported a few 'traditional' cultural activities that harm marine animals and their habitat. And indeed the practices recollected so far do not seem to have a specific 'culture' component to them. However the kind of neglect, harassment, and even cruelty that cause some of the practices that they did discuss, were certainly understood as still pervasive, and in some instances interviewees had taken action, including unauthorized action, to remedy harm.

#### **5.4 Paying attention to culture**

The last topic of my questions dealt with the MAOOs' social construction of harmful practices and attitudes. Here respondents were asked whether they attributed practices and attitudes to culture or to other influences, and on what basis they drew such conclusions. I asked whether they deemed these significant and if they ever solicited help from other organizations, to fashion more culturally sensitive displays for instance. Finally I asked whether they had ever taken a public position on culture-specific practices.

*Traditional 'cultural' practices*

Few MAOO leaders commented about traditional 'cultural' practices, like those engaged in by persons of non-European heritage. Ott and Lynch knew of no harmful practices that had culture at their roots. Most other references had to do with food preparation practices, such as Latinos making fish tacos (Golden). Those that did talk about other issues, were highly specific in terms of culture and species of animals. Gregory, for example, described the use of Garibaldi fish at weddings by Samoans and other Polynesians. Miller, who described some tidepool collectors as Vietnamese, explained that in their country there were no laws curtailing this practice,<sup>6</sup> and that their poaching had a mostly economic basis. O'Brien, in contrast, suggested that one 'could tell' that non-Anglos collected tidepool creatures because Anglos would never eat those particular sorts of animals. Wallerstein conceded that Vietnamese fishermen used gillnets but that white fishermen did so as well. Heyning claimed that gillnetting had been spread worldwide from Western nations through the FAO originally. O'Brien and Miller contended that non-native born people do not always know that a fishing licence is required to fish. When asked, Miller reported that in the aquarium's program on sharks, the detrimental effects of hunting sharks for their fins are mentioned. Gregory knew that people of different cultures eat different parts of a fish, and taught the young people in the Youth Fishing Program how to clean and cut fish properly, especially with respect to avoiding contaminated parts of the fish, or certain fish altogether (such as the white croaker, a fish with a high body burden of pesticides). Cabrillo Marine Aquarium is located in a high toxicity marine area by a fishing pier where mostly Latino fishermen fish. While there is an official bilingual sign on the Pier that indicates that white croakers caught in the area should not be eaten, the Aquarium has so far given little attention to the situation. Miller said that the museum's naturalist who periodically conducts a class on fishing on the Pier explains that some fish caught there should not be consumed, and she and several other staff members recently attended a symposium on communicating fish contamination issues to diverse communities. Alps explained that: "minority groups fish very heavily, and I don't think they have that relationship

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<sup>6</sup> This can not be assumed: many regions have century-old customary or taboo-related methods of controlling the taking of natural resources including tidepool collection.



with ocean life that you would have when you've enjoyed studying it or protecting it ... I mean, it's either a resource and if you can catch it, you'll eat it, or if you don't, then don't bother with it."

These leaders may not pick up on other sorts of cultural practices because they do not identify them as such except when related to some types of food (which they know from eating at 'ethnic' restaurants). In any case, none of the interviewees thought that traditional cultural practices were of much significance and took them to be incidental. Instead, practices and attitudes were ascribed to universals, to 'the way things are.' For instance, O'Brien subsumed harmful interactions as 'things people do to learn':

... I go back to my childhood and I had a sea shell collection. That's how I learned about it. Half of being a kid is when you kill an insect or something, you learn. So for me it's really hard to balance that. They learn by touching and feeling and sometimes hurting. It's the learning process [...] but not even a generation ago, it was fine to pick up these animals, but people simply do not realize that rules have changed since then.

Lynch, of the South Bay Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, interpreted human actions differently. For one thing she sees both the best (rescues) and the worst (mutilations and neglect) of impacts, so she explained that she had given a lot of thought as to why and how some people can be so kind and caring and others so cruel. She ascribes neither types of behavior to culture, but thought that a positive attitude can be nurtured in all people, no matter their cultural, economic or educational background. She believes this on the basis of seeing "people of all kinds" bring her animals. But she also expressed her dislike of fishermen and those who think it best to 'let nature take its course' (as some scientists and wildlife managers do, she implied). Lynch distanced herself from animal rights advocate such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). Interestingly, despite her views about both scientists and animal rights advocates, her work was praised in interviews with people on both sides of the spectrum (for example both Heyning and Wallerstein knew of her and expressed their approval of her work).

Golden was particularly sensitive to the harm caused by fishers to birds. This is to be expected since he represents the interests of recreational fisheries. Thus Golden blamed the actions that harm marine animals on accidents and on irresponsible fishermen, a viewpoint shared by

Cordaro also. They based this on casual observations, such as “people shoot at seals when they’ve had a little too much to drink.” Golden has addressed the morality of human actions through an information leaflet that spells out ‘angler ethics’, with the help of sister agencies such as the California Department of Fish and Game. He described the care he had taken in wording it but was not sure how effective this effort has been. Gregory, of the Youth Fishing Program, is of the same view and supports the teaching of sound wildlife management practice through fishing, in order to shape people’s awareness of the ocean (and support of the agency). Meanwhile Alps felt that harmful practices are not even based on particular attitudes and said: “People are just upset because their fish are being eaten in front of their eyes. It’s really very understandable.”

For Miller the problem is economic desperation: for instance tidepool poachers may well have been Vietnamese but their behavior is the result of the fact that as small time commercial fishers, they had suffered the most from the fisheries depletion in the region at that time, and had had to resort to catching sea urchins to make a living. By being taught notions of wildlife conservation they, and everyone else equally, can learn the appropriate ways of relating to nature that will support wildlife management and the proper use of living ‘resources’ by humans. In this way science is used to normalize cultural differences and all the (troublesome) specificities that they entail: by circumventing culture, science gives you ‘more bang for the buck’. However, as Pulido (2000, 15) writes (on the topic of environmental racism):

It is precisely because few whites are aware of the benefits they receive simply from being white and that their actions, without malicious intent, may undermine the well-being of people of color, that white privilege is so powerful and pervasive. [...] because racism is associated with malicious intent, whites can exonerate themselves of all racist tendencies, all the while ignoring their investment in white privilege. It is this ability to sever intent from outcome that allows whites to acknowledge that racism exists, yet seldom identify themselves as racist.

Harmful practices were generally ascribed to routine things people do, habits that had become harmful mostly because of a changed context: such as radical tidepool depletion, increased population density, and diminished public acceptance for ‘getting rid of’ bothersome animals. This changed context became most clear when these MAOO leaders spoke about the steps to take

in response to stranded or suffering animals. Among interviewees, this discussion even overshadowed concerns about any other harmful practices and was highly polarized.

### *Animal Rights as Anglo Culture*

Most ascriptions of practices and attitudes by respondents generally suggested that actions are based on universals of human experience, such as curiosity, generosity, callousness, irresponsibility, or desperation. But the discussions on the social construction of attitudes also veered to the alleged harm caused by people holding beliefs in animal rights in some form or another. Scientists among MAOO managers especially linked animal rights thinking to a prosperous and city-based Anglo culture<sup>7</sup> (and to a minor extent Hispanic women, for instance mentioned by Cordaro and Wallerstein), and had a lot to say about it. They consistently related this view to ignorance, and again proposed the teaching of science as the remedy. This is how Cordaro of the Stranding Network saw 'the problem':

The problem is the general public, they're not looking at the fact that there are so many animals out there that these shootings are not having any kind of impact on the population as a whole, they're looking at the individual animal. They don't care that this fisherman is losing all his money. They feel 'that's the animal's home, and if he can't live with that he should think of another way of making money.' They're not very sympathetic.

Heyning, a member of the Stranding Network, supported the view of 'Animal Rights people' as thoughtless, and laughed when describing how foolish such people are in the face of nature: "... about 4-5 years ago, we had a stranded humpback whale in Venice, California. And I had people chanting to the dead whale, reading poetry to it, burning incense for its soul. So you run into the whole gamut of humanity."

Several explanations as to why animal rights attitudes are popular here and now, were advanced. Gregory believed that the culprits are "urban centrism" (a term he used in opposition to human-nature relationships in a rural context<sup>8</sup>) and nature shows on television. He felt that such shows

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<sup>7</sup> For a profile of Animal Rights activists see Guither, 1998, 64.

<sup>8</sup> To illustrate this, Gregory described people's reactions to seeing a deer killed by hunters in the back of a

paint an unrealistic view of nature, one that does not promote sound scientific wildlife management, and he went on to explain: "... urbanites may love seals but would be annoyed by them if they fished, just like they are with coyotes. They are ignorant. They watch nature shows on TV that focus on the wonders of the natural world, not on the reality of it." He made light of the animal rights standpoints and 'lack of logic':

A PETA member looks at an animal and they [sic] think: if I were that animal, would I be happy? So when they go to the zoo, they say 'that animal is not happy: it shouldn't be there.' Everything should be natural and free. So they don't want you to have a tank of fish or a dog on a leash, I mean if you live in the country and your dog can run around and kill wildlife, I guess that's OK because it's being a happy dog!

A similar assessment was made by Alps who explained how popular (pro-rescue) perceptions are both 'cultural' and (thus) mistaken:

It is a cultural thing that she [JJ, a stranded whale] was rescued at all, because if she had washed up in any other spot on the Coast she would have just died like whales always do, but she washed up right here where there are so many people ... so all of a sudden, she was rescued. From a biology standpoint, it's neither important nor even right to rescue her, because if she washed out that's probably because of a genetic defect, then she should get out of the gene pool. It was basically just a 'feel good thing' for the humans, it wasn't for the whale. The right thing to do is to let nature take it's course, but people aren't going to accept a thing like that.

Cordaro explained that people's urge to rescue is related to a paradox between high levels of individual well-being and privilege on the one hand, and helplessness on the other hand: "It's just the white people wanting to save every animal that's in jeopardy. That's really an anglo saxon thing ... people are so disgusted with the world around, and they feel helpless to do anything, so they think 'here's a baby animal and I can do something to help that'." According to him, this lack of personal reconciliation prevents people from 'realistic' assessments, both about the fate of

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pick-up truck in Bakersfield vs. Los Angeles.

sick animals and their own relationship to nature, and leads to even greater short-sightedness:

One thing about the rehab, what they don't understand, there is this perception that once the animal is released it will live a long merry life and what they don't realize is that if that animal couldn't survive to begin with, it was due to poor survival skills, and that just some food and a few shots of antibiotic isn't going to make a difference. But it's an 'out of sight, out of mind' type thing: 'we don't care as long as we don't have to look at it.' But they should think. Look if you want to live near the ocean, you have to expect this kind of stuff.

MAOO managers who were scientifically trained were more likely to attribute harmful practices to 'things people do' rather than to consider differentials in the meanings of animals and the practices that involve them. In fact they tended to be more concerned about unscientific practices and attitudes that involved the rescue of marine mammals. They considered them to be biased due to a lack of knowledge of the nonhuman realm and of fundamental natural processes such as evolution, coupled with class and ethnicity-based privilege. They saw this distorted view as extending against fishers, with the public at large being blind to their interests. Some of the respondents explained how this bias for protecting animals 'at all costs' was also based on anthropomorphism, a mistaken understanding of the animal experience based on thinking that no difference ever exists and that all experiences are equal. With almost no exception, they showed more tolerance for people who commit harm to animals through neglect, accidents or other circumstances than to those who rescue them. In short these MAOO managers were frustrated by what they view are critical interferences with the natural world (and with their work).

The level of frustration they feel is easy to understand. On the one hand science has provided reliable explanations of the natural world, and has long been hailed as definitive and bias free. In addition, science (including wildlife management) has been used to negotiate an astounding level of profitability for the benefit and pleasure of humans. But on the other hand, MAOO managers have seen their work directly challenged. For instance, Heyning described how the distribution of power had changed here and now: "[t]he biggest problem with strandings, is that if you get a live stranded animal that quite frankly would be best off euthanized, that option is almost unavailable to you because it would be too hard to explain to the public at that time. They think that through

a miracle you could save that animal." In Heyning's view, people expect that science can resolve all problems, but he does not note that, at the same time, people are having more misgivings about when and how science, such as biotechnology for instance, is used.

Heyning is also frustrated by laws that have resulted from popular misgivings, such as the Marine Mammal Protection Act that protects marine mammals like sea lions without any means of population control, and he exclaimed: "...we're in a country where you can't do anything anyway because they're all protected!" This view was recounted over and over again, with others like Cordaro explaining that he had experienced increased pressure from NMFS to make exceptions and depart from standard wildlife management policy, in order to go along with public demands instead. He recalled a significant instance where his judgement had been overruled, to enable the rescue of a stranded whale that eventually died "anyway" as he put it. After this incident, he substantially curbed his outreach efforts and participation at Whale Fairs for instance, saying "sometimes you just want to have the week-end off to yourself".

Some of the MAOO managers who are science-trained have chosen to work in isolation, such as Ott of the Marine Mammal Care Center, who denied that cultural factors have anything to do with injuries, outreach, or perceptions about animals. She said that animals injured by humans "only represent 10%" of the animals that make it to the Center, and thus that whatever effects humans have is minimal. The Center's main official affiliation is with the Stranding Network. Outreach is focused on teaching biology and non-human ecology to LAUSD children and talking to visitors in front of the recovery pens. Others, such as Gregory, reported feeling that he and others in the agency they represent were unappreciated; "That's another thing that upsets me when I watch a nature show where they'll have a Fish and Game person banding ducks -- they don't mention that they're from Fish and Game, that it's supported by hunters." Meanwhile an organization like the Cetacean Society is circumspect about 'speaking out' about cultural practices and issues statements only after they have been checked and rechecked, so that the organization will provide a uniform and 'rational' response:

One thing about ACS, is it's very very [sic] careful about taking positions, everything is based on science, there's like a whole process to arrive at, like we have a policy book, we can only take a position on something that is in the policy book, it's reviewed by a panel of scientists. Like, we don't have a specific position on the Makahs at the moment although we have one on aboriginal whaling.

Such care with position statements is common and makes sense. However it is also indicative of the fact that the credibility of some MAOOs is on the line when it comes to dealing with issues that may be controversial and culturally sensitive.

One way to defend themselves is for the MAOOs to be pro-active. For example, while Miller said that CMA had not received complaints about keeping animals in captivity or about taking animals from the wild in order to replenish the tanks, the Aquarium's current expansion includes an aquaculture lab. This lab will serve the dual function of replenishing the tanks and of teaching visitors how fragile marine environments and animals are. As Miller put it: "we are aware that we need to play a role of stewardship especially on this issue."

The best example of a conservation organization dealing with culture more directly is Leo Carillo State Beach. There, O'Brien has encountered a number of situations that have tested her interpretative skills. She related how she had dealt with the public when they had seen a seal on the beach, thought that it was suffering, and gotten upset. This got worse when seals and sea lions were actually starving and dying on the beach, due to a recent El Niño season. She explained her conundrum, starting with what she told people: " 'It's El Niño ... Anytime a population reaches its maximum it needs to happen but it's normal, this is OK. It's awful to see, but dead things float off to sea, give them room, enjoy yourself.' But it's hard: who wants to be on a picnic out there and there's this animal over there all emaciated, I can't blame them." There are other moments when she has to act as a mediator between nature and culture:

I was talking to the kids at the Leo Carillo Junior Ranger program ... about death. And kids are trying to work this topic out anyway, so death kept coming up, 'well, my dog was sick and died,' and I was like 'see, it's OK, it's OK, all is well.' People don't want to hear that, but populations get higher, nobody wants to see it, but we see it and it's important. It's just as important to see the ugly side of nature. It can be beautiful if you want to look at it that way.

O'Brien went on to say that she would like to step into more difficult debates, and introduce people to different viewpoints, about whether fishing should continue at the Beach for instance. As an interpreter she was both comfortable and eager to negotiate the treacherous ground of opinion-making, but she did not think that the volunteers would be able or willing to try it, especially with a public unreceptive to rethinking their own fishing practices or unwilling to enter into any debate.

### *The 'unscientific' perspective*

Wallerstein of the Whale Rescue Team clearly introduced his views as unabashedly unscientific and partial. When we asked him if he had had scientific training in marine biology, he replied:

No, no formal education. Passion, some of it is for selfish reasons. Trying to ease some of the restlessness inside my own soul about our planet and all life in general, not just marine ... I happened to be focused in this one area of marine life, but I've also been a vegetarian for 27 years. My respect is across the board, I don't hold marine mammals in any higher reverence than I do my dogs, a salamander, a bird or a tree.

Wallerstein ascribes his beliefs and actions to a personal (and narcissist) examination and moral assessment of the meaning of his life on earth. He has reconciled his own sense of mission with the needs that he feels marine animals have. He does not blame science per se for standing in the way of rescue efforts but believes that the Stranding Network should be in other hands than the NMFS because it is part of the Department of Commerce and is thus motivated by commerce first and foremost. For the professed animal rights activist, nothing but direct-action will correct the problem, and the problem is Joe Cordaro and the agency he represents. He gives several reasons for this: "NMFS does not want to rescue. Cordaro who runs the Marine Mammal Stranding Network was quoted in the newspaper saying: 'there's no good scientific reason to rescue, but if we didn't the public would hang us.' That's the Federal Government's attitude." Wallerstein believes that rescue centers such as the Marine Mammal Care Center are equally guilty and deceitful. He is suspicious of them because they have sometimes handed seals (that had become imprinted to humans during their recovery) over to marine theme parks and zoos:



And even San Pedro [the Marine Mammal Care Center], some centers are so 'in bed' with the Federal Government, and Sea World, it's all one thing, that facilities like San Pedro are a source of pinnipeds for Sea World, for the zoos around this country. And that's unacceptable, to say a little animal who is now too imprinted with human beings, which I don't believe happens, I believe you can break that.

In speaking about officials in NMFS he explains their reticence to act by ascribing to them a cultural identity (rather than a philosophical difference about science or wildlife management), and in doing so perhaps uses 'the race card' himself: "See the big problem is the white [bureaucracy]..., a big part of this ethnic stuff is 'the good old boys,' this is it right here. They are so narrow-minded, so closed-minded, so cold-hearted, and just so concerned with their own jobs and lives that they block everything else out and that they will aggressively fight any possibility for change." Altogether, his anger is based on the belief that government officials have mismanaged the power they were entrusted with: "They could do ... they have the power, they could have done more and they failed, they have failed miserably, not just protecting marine mammals but also the fisheries ..."

In sum, harmful practices affecting marine animals were not generally explained on the basis of culture or ethnicity. Instead, factors underlying these practices were defined as universal human characteristics, including the self interest of bureaucrats. While casual and malicious harm went largely normalized, the discussion about 'well-intended attitudes', such as those of the public, were hotly contested especially by scientists. They saw this popular trend toward the animal rights philosophy as based on class and privilege (and thus whiteness), and as defined by ignorance. Only science could help overcome such a cultural bias. This attitude has made scientifically-oriented organization leaders partly ineffectual in dealing with a public that holds some animal rights-like values. It has also delayed them from conducting the kind of outreach that would attract a more diverse public (beyond LAUSD school children). Worst of all, some have found themselves having to defend a law they do not believe in. Their response (or non-response) has made them an easy target of 'unscientific' views.

## 6. Conclusion

In order to clarify whether and how MAOOs' perceive and respond to cultural factors that shape attitudes and practices toward marine animals, I conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with leaders of education, recreation, service provision and advocacy MAOOs. I selected MAOOs on account of their presence and influence in Los Angeles, and asked them about the ethnic composition of their staff and public, their outreach efforts, the harmful practices they were aware of, and their explanations for these problems. I reached a point in the interviews where the information relevant to our project was reiterated with only minor variation, allowing me to begin to unravel the MAOOs' motivations and outreach perspectives with confidence.

One of the more striking findings from these interviews is that most MAOOs managers seemed unconcerned about the ethnic breakdown of their staff, members, volunteers or public. The most common reason for this was that visitors were in fact ethnically diverse because a large number of them were LAUSD school children. This focus had led to outreach efforts directed almost exclusively at children, who are easy to reach (they are brought in by institutionalized programs and either speak English or are becoming bilingual). No surveys had been conducted to examine the composition of adult attendance and participation. This may be especially unfortunate for non-Anglo populations whose views are ignored or left unaddressed. New immigrants may not have the money or time to seek out information or volunteer, may feel excluded by programming that is so child oriented, and may resign themselves to being a 'lost generation'. The waiting lists for adult schooling (Young, Fitzgerald, and Morgan, 1994) attest to the fact that such resignation is in fact not the course most would chose and hint at an openness to engage in a more active role when, for instance, visiting the beach or aquarium. MAOOs, especially education MAOOs, should be encouraged to take more proactive steps toward knowing their adult visitors.

Trends in the staffing of MAOOs may have actually diminished the likelihood of outreach to non-Anglo populations. For instance MAOOs have become more reliant on volunteers and as a few of the respondents explained, this dependence can be problematic: volunteers require recruitment, training, and retention efforts, and this can be a heavy burden. Also, the expertise of

volunteers varies, they can neither act as 'professional' role models (in the sense of getting kids to think of themselves as future scientists for instance), nor cultural models (the volunteers are most often white), and do not produce community engagement 'magically'. Reliance on volunteers is an economic decision beyond the MAOOs' control, but they must carefully consider the limitations and degree of variability that volunteers bring to their organization, as well as the benefits of these programs.

There was also a certain lack of concern about harmful marine animal practices. There were notable exceptions to this, but mostly I found that the level of concern was insufficient to catalyze the development of a system to estimate the prevalence of such practice--even those involving injuries to rare marine animal species. Several managers did express deep concern and had personally taken some action to more clearly assess the problems. However they seemed at a loss as to what to do about assessing the magnitude of such problems or on how to participate in their remediation.

Attitudes of the public toward marine animals were rarely linked to cultural factors. This could either be because practices rooted in culture-specific worldviews are indeed rare or because attitudes have not been recognized as having anything to do with culture. I suspect that because managers are not so aware of cultural differences, they experience difficulty in recognizing them even when some practices are perpetuated in the face of laws and mainstream social norms. Instead the managers' construction of the causes of harmful practices ranged from universals of the human experience to simple accidents, with one important exception: the well-intended efforts of people trying to rescue or otherwise protect animals. This was an especially contentious point for interview respondents who were trained and employed as scientists, wildlife managers, and naturalists, who thus seem more troubled by people trying to help animals than by people who harm them.

Animal welfare and animal rights views and the increased popularity of these views are problematic for scientists in at least two main ways. First, they stand in opposition to the

scientific perspective which focuses on animals as populations and species (and not individuals). Second, animal rights views are changing their working environment in terms of altered expectations and diminished public appreciation for the role played by marine scientists and managers. In contrast, scientists see the animal rights (and to a lesser extent, the animal welfare) perspective as the result of ignorance about nature and 'sound' wildlife management. They explained this view as based on whiteness, privilege, urban living and the media, and said that such experiences prevented a 'realistic' view of nature and natural processes, and of the roles humans play in them. Nearly all scientific managers reported being increasingly challenged by this perspective, at a variety of levels (from questions to accusations). Some said that this 'socio-cultural' bias was epitomized by the passage of the Marine Mammal Protection Act and its 1994 amendments. They reacted in a number of ways: by retreating from public outreach, focusing more on science, protecting groups caught 'in the middle' (such as commercial and recreational fishers), and in a few instances, being pro-active and addressing public concerns. Education MAOs seemed to handle this challenge most constructively.

I was interested to find that beyond major philosophical disagreements, there were some interesting similarities in how respondents constructed each of the 'camps' on the basis of class, race and ethnicity. Respondents knew that I was interested in race/ethnicity but also thought that (for one reason or another) they did not have much to contribute on this topic. In fact they may have been slightly embarrassed that they had not done surveys, etc. But to some extent, both 'camps' talked of Anglo culture as if they were themselves non-Anglos. In an ironic use of the 'race card', they used the opposite viewpoint as if it were race-based, and as an othering device. I assume that they used this form of race-making because they thought it an effective strategy to express distance, disagreement, and disrespect. To criticize someone's views by characterizing it as an Anglo view, when one is Anglo and in front of an Anglo interviewer seems harmless enough, yet it drives home the point about difference being unbridgeable--because it is likened to a biological characteristic. It intimates that participants feel that the distance is too great, that trust can not be expected, and that a middle ground will not be found.

Nevertheless such an understanding of white culture forms a critical starting point from which to build a greater appreciation for the impact of (other) cultures on practices and attitudes toward marine animals, and may stimulate self-reflection about their own views and practices. This would enable them to play a more active and effective role in the search for solutions to harmful practices, as well as enhance educational efforts. Clearly there is a call for such a role, especially considering that immigrants, for instance, assimilate by adopting many mainstream values, and that they may indeed join in the current popular movement towards animal welfare and animal rights values. The Sea Shepherd Society and Greenpeace, that left Los Angeles in part because they failed to mobilize Angelenos, have since learned to take culture into account elsewhere. Because of cultural expectations, some wildlife managers are already forced to uphold policies that they believe to be unwise, leading to their demoralization and distrust of the public, sometimes leaving them open to further criticism and loss of authority. A project aimed at reaching out to diverse Angelenos and becoming more inclusive of these concerns, far from being threatening, could ultimately help shape new and more environmentally friendly attitudes. As Miller of the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium put it:

I think it's fun to interact with people and with immigrants. Many of them are much closer to nature than the typical Californian, so they really get excited when they see an unusual creature on the beach, and even when we don't understand the language, it's fun. Like a few months ago, there was a really low tide and there were some beautiful moon snails in the intertidal zone, and there was a fisherman and his son, and we couldn't understand each other, but we used sign language and he showed me things and I showed him things. It was great fun to see this together, we were looking at the snails for about half an hour ...

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**Appendix A: Los Angeles County Marine Animal Oriented Organizations (MAOOs)**

American Cetacean Society, Los Angeles Chapter\*

Cabrillo Marine Aquarium\*

California Department of Fish and Game (Youth Fishing Program)\*

California Department of Recreation and Parks(Leo Carillo State Beach)\*

California Turtle and Tortoise Club, Los Angeles

Greater Los Angeles Zoo

Greenpeace

Hook Set Bass Fishing Club

Long Beach Aquarium

Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History\*

Madrona Marsh Preserve

Marine Mammal Care Center, Fort McArthur\*

National Marine Fisheries Service (Pacific Recreational Fisheries\*, National Marine Mammal Stranding Network\*)

Pasadena Casting Club

Point Vicente Interpretative Center

San Fernando Valley Saltwater Fisherman

Save the Whales

The Sea Shepherd Society

South Bay Wildlife Rehabilitation Center\*

UCLA Ocean Discovery Center

Whale Rescue Team\*

Wild Bird Rescue

\* Indicates the MAOOs that were selected to be interviewed.



## **Appendix B. Interview questions**

### **Topic # 1. Demographics of the MAOO**

- 1.1 How many people are on staff? What is their ethnic breakdown?
- 1.2 How many volunteers do you have and what is their ethnicity?
- 1.3 How many people do you reach through your programs and facility? Do you know their ethnic breakdown? Has any of this changed over the last decades? How do you know?
- 1.4 How many members do you have? Do you have an idea of their ethnicity?

### **Topic # 2. Outreach efforts**

- 2.1 What kind of outreach do you do to attract new members? Do you do outreach to specific subpopulations in the community?
- 2.2 If so, how do strategies differ across groups?
- 2.3 Are brochures and signage ever translated? Does anyone on staff speak Spanish or other languages?
- 2.4 When planning for new exhibits, does culture and cultural diversity ever play in the process? When topics of culture come up, how does the staff decide whether or not to make it part of the curricula? Do you ask for help or look at how other organizations have dealt with potentially culturally sensitive issues? Do you plan on doing that in the future? If it is not part of the curricula now, do you plan on making it be next time there is a revision?
- 2.5 Do you know what have been the results of outreach efforts?

### **Topic # 3. Harmful practices**

- 3.1 What instances of harmful human animal interactions do you know of?
- 3.2 Is this from first or second hand experience? Do you have a systematic way of hearing about these harmful practices, or is it through informal conversations?

### **Topic # 4. Paying attention to culture**

- 4.1 How do you determine whether a practice is related to culture?

- 4.2 How do you determine when a culture-related issue has to be addressed? Do you ever mount exhibits specifically related to local culture and attitudes toward marine life?  
Do you ever solicit feedback from visitors, on this or other set of issues?
- 4.3 Do you ever take a public position on other people's cultural practices?