



## The Pinniped Press

### A Newsletter by and for Volunteers of the Noyo Center for Marine Science

Articles in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the Noyo Center for Marine Science.

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#### Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers with all levels of experience are needed for planning, promoting and participating in events. The Noyo Center is busier than ever with the [North Coast KelpFest!](#) in May and June, a concert in June, a couple of parade floats in the summer, and fall fundraiser. For more information about any of the above volunteering openings, please contact: [wendi@noyocenter.org](mailto:wendi@noyocenter.org) or come to the All Volunteer meeting on Sunday, April 7<sup>th</sup> at 10 am at the Field Station.

#### Harbor Seal Pupping Season and Predation

Wendi Felson

It will soon be Harbor Seal, *Phoca vitulina*, pupping season which usually peaks at around April 15<sup>th</sup>. Locally, MacKerricher State Park has a protected cove where the moms have their pups. It is a unique spot to safely observe the moms and pups interacting. And if you are lucky, you may see one being born. This area is protected by rock outcroppings from sharks and other ocean predators.

The park places a rope along the beach in this area to keep humans away from the seals, so they don't become unduly stressed. Seals are wary of humans on land and will, if disturbed too much, abandon the haul out and even their own pups. If a seal looks disturbed you are too close, back away from area.



Photo: Charles J. Sharp, Wikimedia Commons



## Harbor Seal Pupping Season and Predation - continued

Harbor seal pups weigh about 20 to 24 pounds and can swim at birth. At about 6 to 8 weeks, the pups are weaned from their mother's milk. Females will occasionally leave their pup on land while they feed in the ocean. The pups may look abandoned, but it is critical to leave them alone. They don't need to be put back in the water, covered with a blanket or any other type of "help." As with any marine mammal, if it is sick or injured call the Marine Mammal Center at: 415-289-SEAL. If the animal is dead, call Sarah Grimes at: 707-813-7925.



Photo: MacKerricher State Park

Harbor seals eat sole, flounder, sculpin, hake, cod, herring, octopus, and squid. They spend half their time in the water and half on land. They are able to dive up to 1,500 feet and can stay under for about 40 minutes. However, their average dive is about 3 to 7 minutes. Harbor seal females live about 30 to 35 years while the males average 20 to 25 years. Females' gestation period is about 9 months. In general, both courtship and mating occur underwater. If a pup is disturbed there is a chance the mother may abandon her pup, so always remember to stay at least 150 feet from any marine mammal you find on the beach.

In the last few years, harbor seal pups have occasionally been found dead with their heads missing. Since 2016, Sarah Grimes, the Noyo Center's Stranding Coordinator, has been investigating the possible cause of the death of the carcasses that were being found on the ice plants, away from the beach.

*"It was so gruesome," said Grimes. "I was like marine mammal CSI, seeing all the dead pups with their heads torn off, and I'm like, 'What the heck did that?'"*



A coyote scavenging a seal carcass at Point Reyes National Seashore.

Photo: A. Kopshever, National Park Service

Meanwhile, Frank Garrity, a doctoral student at the University of California, Santa Cruz, was studying beach dwelling coyotes and what they eat. He was placing motion-sensitive cameras at locations to study what coyotes were scavenging and eating. His cameras caught coyotes attacking harbor seal pups. One of the locations Garrity set up his cameras was at the MacKerricher harbor seal haul out. As Sarah suspected, a coyote was caught on camera pulling a harbor seal pup into the ice plants.

There is much more to learn from this fascinating study of these two native California species.

In fact, the study's initial findings hit numerous news outlets and brought national attention to Sarah Grimes and the Noyo Center. The cameras will be back this year as the study continues. Read the full report [HERE](#).

Note: The next Beach Survey Program meeting will be a group walk to the harbor seal haul out at MacKerricher State Park. We will meet Saturday April 13<sup>th</sup> at 10 am at the parking lot on the north end of Ward Avenue.

### References

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harbor\\_seal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harbor_seal)

<https://www.marinemammalcenter.org/animal-care/learn-about-marine-mammals/pinnipeds/pacific-harbor-seal>

<https://noyocenter.org/marine-wildlife-blog/pacific-harbor-seals>

[https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=436](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=436)



## Can We Restore Bull Kelp?

Jim Rolfe

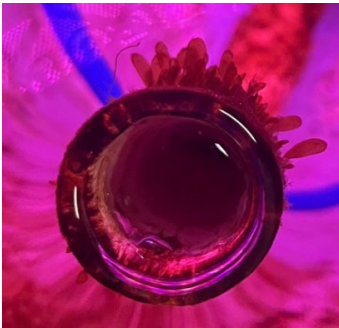
In the November 2023 newsletter article “Kelp Restoration,” I reported that the primary goal of any restoration program was the preservation of the existing subtidal zones, to allow a natural recovery of the native bull kelp spore bank. That aspirational goal may not be possible given the ecosystem’s subjugation to on-going climate change. In spite of that, and because of a \$4.9 million grant from the 2021 Infrastructure Act, the Greater Farallones Association (GFA) and Bodega Marine Lab (BML), are currently growing kelp spores in hopes of halting the demise of Bull kelp along the Mendocino/Sonoma coast.



### **Kelp spore under a microscope (photo Rachael Karm S.S.U.)**

Bull kelp sporophyte “seeds” are the size of a pin head but once attached to a suitable foothold, will grow to a size able to be “seeded” in a wild or cultivated method. Larval spore material is gathered in summer from 50 to 60 wild adult kelps in order to maintain genetic diversity. The male and female spores grow into gametophytes during the winter months, while fertilized females produce an asexual sporophyte that begins its adult growth cycle during the extended sunlight of spring and summer.

The first step in “growing” kelp is to gather the spores manually by harvesting healthy sorus tissue (gamete-producing tissue in certain algae) from the fertilized cells (called the sporangia) of kelp blades. Noyo Center plans to start a spore bank this year along with other related research projects under development at the Marine Field Station in Noyo Harbor. Once isolated, the viable spores will attach to a suitable foothold. In the recirculating culture system used at BML, a very fine (1mm) twine is wrapped around a length of PVC pipe and placed in an ocean water “nursery” tank, which continuously circulates the natural seawater. The tank is temperature and nutrient controlled and works best with indoor lighting for the seasonal variations the spores need for photosynthesis. In 3 to 4 months, they will mature to a size suitable for “seeding” in offshore planted areas, or aquaculture settings.



### **PVC pipe under grow lights, at the BML (photo: Rachael Karm SSU)**

Materials and methods for the process of artificially growing kelp spores varies per the experimenter. Pacific Coast labs from Alaska to UC Santa Barbara have cultivation projects underway that will ultimately provide a most successful method for their specific areas. Either Bodega or the Humboldt Marine Lab would be a good model for any future program that Noyo Center for Marine Science implements.

<https://baynature.org/article/scientists-try-a-field-of-dreams-approach-to-restoring-californias-bull-kelp-forests/>

GFA has targeted Fort Ross and Timber Cove to receive the first out-planting of sporophytes this summer, but only after manually removing several acres of urchins and composting them on land. As reported in “Bay Nature” magazine (Fall 2023), this is a ‘Field of Dreams’ attempt for seeding those areas considered to have the greatest restoration potential. The goal is to create kelp forests and spore banks that will naturally sustain, and hopefully seed adjacent areas. Interestingly, the Sonoma-Mendocino Bull Kelp Recovery Plan (CDF&W, April 2019) does not recommend restoration/recovery plans for Marine Protection Areas (MPA) which includes all the best Mendocino protected coves. This initial seeding program is funded for four more years and will only occur in the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary which does not allow any kelp harvesting. “Build it and they will come,” seems to be the strategic goal, but with no guarantees. Noyo Center will be organizing commercial divers to remove urchin from Kashia property on the Sonoma Coast in collaboration with this effort as part of our abalone broomstick program.



## Can We Restore Bull Kelp? – continued

So, what if that optimistic view doesn't work? Once the urchins took over the rocky substrate, the other kelp foragers were starved out. Ecologists call this situation an "alternative stable state," in which two very different ecosystems can exist in the same place and the same conditions. The barrens become stable and don't easily convert back to a kelp dominant environment.

This is due in part to the durability of urchins, who can live in a semi-starvation mode for many years, perhaps even decades. Examples of this phenomenon occurred in Hokkaido, southeastern Australia, and the Aleutian Islands, where urchin barrens have persisted for decades after replacing kelp forests, to a point where ecologists no longer consider them an 'alternative stable state,' but the new ecological reality.

In 2019 volunteer groups were authorized by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDF&W) to eradicate purple urchins (red urchins are commercially harvested), while at the same time Noyo Center organized commercial divers to remove urchin from kelp oasis zones, but with limited success. The "Barrens" remain barren of other herbivores, with an increased burden of biofilm algae that competes with kelp spores for foothold attachment. As the ocean gets warmer, our politicians endlessly debate the future of the planet, and yet everyone seems to agree that urchins have to go. CDF&W does allow eradication by smashing them in place at Caspar Beach only, but this led to controversy from some biologists who worry that the clouds of urchin gametes released will increase their populations.



Rachael Karm & Julieta Gomez inspect Bull kelp spore stock at Bodega Marine Labs. Photo: Alastair Bland

A wise man once said, "In the land of the blind, a one-eyed man is king," which is appropriate for our current dilemma. We really have no alternative to this "trial & error" method of restoration and will continue experimenting until we find out what works.

This summer's scheduled seeding at Fort Ross and Timber Cove will begin with laying out 200' x 200' quadrants on the urchin-cleared rocky substrate. Each quadrant (marked with drilled anchor bolts and elevated rope lines) will serve as a test plot. The lab-grown pipe twines with kelp sporophytes will be attached to the quadrant ropes which will serve as footholds for the spores to complete their seasonal growth cycle to maturity. An alternative method of placing mesh bags inoculated with kelp spores anchored within the quadrant will test if spore dispersal will seed the cleared substrate, and a third method will glue paver stones with kelp sprouts already attached in the lab.

Just like terrestrial farmers, the project divers will regularly cull invading urchins from the test plots, while monitoring the growth rates and documenting each method's progress for peer review and analysis. The hope for this first "crop" is that the bull kelp sporophytes grow to mature adults and successfully reproduce by releasing gametophytes for the next generation. If the initial seeding proves successful, the team has funding to expand the planting to 27 acres across three other favorable sites, over the next three years.

GFA program director Rietta Hohman and her team are optimistic, but also realists. Even if the first out plantings are successful, they realize that without constant culling, the urchins will simply eat the restored kelp, and "manual urchin removal is incredibly labor-intensive and not a sustainable model." "So bull kelp may only spread if we get lucky, or if a random factor like predators or disease, helps kill urchins on a regional scale." The other option is to ranch them to reduce grazing pressure in a sustainable way, which is a project under development at the Noyo Center Marine Field Station in Fort Bragg. Urchins can experience boom or bust cycles, and they are already starving and in a zombie-like state, but no one can predict when or if a "bust" will come. So, if the kelp doesn't take hold, she still considers the trials valuable because "even with failure, we still learn."



## Can We Restore Bull Kelp? – continued

Other partners in this initial project are eagerly awaiting results. Tristan McHugh, kelp project director of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), noted that TNC efforts at urchin removal in the Albion Cove did lead to a “response of kelp” at some sites, “but not a full-fledged recovery.”

TNC will continue with consistent, year-round targeted urchin removal, in hopes that the GFA kelp recovery program is viable. But, she stated, “We’re trying to restore an ecosystem, not just bull kelp, and a never-ending marine aquaculture project is not sustainable.” With that in mind, some biologists suggest re-introducing urchin predators. A likely candidate is the sunflower sea star, which was wiped out by a wasting disease beginning in 2013.

TNC and Oregon State University observed in lab experiments that the sea stars consume urchins at rates sufficient to both reset and maintain kelp forests. Once ubiquitous and now on the endangered species list, the University of Washington has a captive breeding program raising hundreds of sea stars, to study their life cycle and the disease that causes them to fall apart. They hope their work will lead to a restoration strategy that can be replicated elsewhere. Hopefully, the sunflower sea star can become a partner in our local effort to restore our kelp forests.

For more on sunflower sea star restoration visit the [TNC Website](#) or this article in [The Seattle Times](#).

## Whale Disentanglement

by Dobie Dolphin

Last month I wrote about the damage done to the 300,000+ whales found entangled in fishing gear. Of course, preventing entanglement is the best solution and using pop up fishing gear, ridding the ocean of lost or tossed gear, closing fishing seasons when whales are migrating, and lowering boat speeds all help, but once a whale is entangled, what can be done? Injuries from whale entanglement are not always life threatening and sometimes there is time and the right conditions for trained response teams to locate the animal and remove the entangling material.

NOAA Fisheries manages and authorizes all marine mammal entanglement response activities in the United States. A National Entanglement Response Coordinator works with many non-profit, academic, industry and government organizations, as well as individuals in coastal communities. NOAA Fisheries provides training, funding and some equipment to response personnel and organizations across the country.

Responding to entangled large whales is dangerous. Responders must undergo rigorous training that prioritizes human and animal safety, before they are authorized to closely approach or attempt to free an entangled whale. They are experts in marine mammal behavior, biology, and health; vessel operation; and animal capture and handling. Even so, trained, and authorized responders have died while attempting to rescue an entangled whale. Boats have been damaged and overturned, and people have been pulled overboard during disentanglement attempts.

Entangled animals that are stressed and injured pose significant risks and have been known to bite, injure, and kill well-intentioned rescuers, even those with training and experience. In addition to the risks to responders from animals, the specialized tools used by entanglement response teams, including knives, lines, nets, and large buoys—can also present dangers for responders.



This whale's tail made contact with the front of the small response vessel, lifting it partially out of the water.

Photo: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, taken under NOAA Permit #18786



## Whale Disentanglement – continued

There are five different levels of responders:

**Level 1:** First responders are trained to spot, and report entangled large whales and may be asked to assist in tracking and documenting entangled whales from a distance.

**Level 2:** Responders are trained to assess, and document entangled large whales and may be asked to assist higher-level responders with entanglement response activities.

**Level 3:** Authorized responders closely approach entangled whales for visual health assessments and may attach tracking devices (tags) to entangling material so entangled whales can be followed remotely and quickly located.

**Level 4:** Authorized responders use tools to cut and remove entangling gear. Level 4 responders can perform these activities on all whale species except North Atlantic Right Whales as disentangling this species is particularly dangerous.

**Level 5:** Authorized responder duties are similar to Level 4, except that responders may remove entangling gear from all species of whales and have additional training and experience in responding to North Atlantic right whales.

It's difficult to approach an entangled whale and each situation is different, so a well thought out plan is essential. Disentanglement efforts can take days, especially if the weather doesn't cooperate. In order to keep track of the whale until the team can continue its work, a satellite monitored transmitter is often attached to the entangling gear.

The first step in cutting the entanglement is to throw a grappling hook to grab hold of the tangled ropes or lines. Next, the team attaches a series of buoys. This keeps the whale at the surface and hopefully slows it down enough for the team to catch up to it in a small, inflatable boat. Once they're close enough, the disentanglement team uses a specially designed cutting tool (which can cut the line or rope, without injuring the whale), often attached to a long pole to cut away the tangle. After several passes, if all goes well, the whale is free! Once the whale is untangled, the team uses the grappling hook to collect and remove the debris from the water to avoid entangling more animals.

There are trained whale disentanglement teams all over the world. In the US teams are located on both east and west coasts, Alaska and Hawaii. RABEN (Red Nacional de Atención a Ballenas Enmalladas), the whale disentanglement network in Mexico, along the Pacific Coast and Baja California Peninsula, has fifteen trained teams of disentanglement experts with



Trained responders in the small inflatable celebrate after removing more than 100 feet of entangling line from a humpback whale, seen breaching in the background, near Makena Beach, Maui, Hawaii. Credit: Jason Moore/NOAA, taken under NOAA Permit #18786



Park Ranger Bethany Robichaud throws a grapple in a practice session at Glacier Bay National Park in June 2022.

180 members, all equipped with specialized gear to assist in the rescue of entangled whales. RABEN has responded to 148 reports of entangled whales and has rescued 57 whales in the last eight years, mostly grey whales and humpbacks. These are some of the whales that pass by the Mendocino coast on their way north and south.

Noyo Center volunteer Sara Sundberg is a level 1 first responder, and she encourages everyone to get their first level training, even though it might sound intimidating at first. Sara says, "We're all so connected to the coast here. We collectively have a lot of eyes on ocean watch every day. I feel like it'd be so massively helpful to get as many of us trained at Level 1 so we all know what the signs of an entangled whale could possibly look like, and then know how to helpfully report it to the right people as soon as possible."

Learn how to get your level 1 online training [HERE](#).



## Whale Disentanglement – continued

If you see an injured or entangled marine mammal, keep a safe and legal distance and call the Entanglement Reporting Hotline: **1-877-SOS-WHAL** or **1-877-767-9425** or The U.S. Coast Guard: **VHF Ch. 16**

### References

Canadian Whale Institute, Our Gear, The Making of a Whale Rescue Team [Website](#)

NOAA Fisheries, Trainings Prepare Teams To Respond to Entangled Large Whales in Alaska, September 22, 2022 [Website](#)

NOAA Fisheries Large Whale Entanglement Response, NOAA Fisheries authorizes emergency response to large whales with life-threatening entanglements [Website](#)

NOAA National Marine Sanctuaries, Whale Disentanglement [Website](#)

Welcome to RABEN Whale Disentanglement Network [Website](#)

## Volunteer Highlight: Toni Rizzo

Linda Francis

When Toni and I chatted, she was in New York tending her 94-year-old Mother not far from where she was raised. While she was born in Queens, she grew up in Baldwin, a small town on the South Shore of Long Island. Her home was on a peninsula with water on three sides just one-half block away from the Bay. Toni grew up in and on the water with motorboats, water skiing, clamming, swimming and more. Her paternal grandparents arrived at Ellis Island from Sicily while her mother's family came from Puerto Rico. She still has relatives in both places. Toni is the oldest of four kids, two brothers, and a sister.

After graduating from high school, Toni headed to college and got an AA in biology. With encouragement from her uncle, she headed to Puerto Rico and studied Marine Biology for a year. After one year, she moved back to the states to Colorado State University in Fort Collins where she got a degree in biology.

Toni landed a job as an assistant in a Denver hospital Pathology Department. After a year she moved to Grand Junction where she studied Cytology under a specialist in lung cancer, thereby learning how to identify cancer in cells. In 1975, Toni moved to a small hospital in Sheridan, Wyoming where she set up and ran the cytology lab. She married, built a home with her husband on fifteen acres in the foothills, and had her daughter JJ. While she had intended to go back to the lab, childcare in the area was lacking so she ran the lab and diagnosed from home. She also went back to school and got a degree in education and taught part-time in local schools. Toni also began her freelance writing career after winning a state essay competition, landing jobs with many publications, including *National Geographic World*.

After a divorce, Toni and her daughter moved to Salt Lake City where she supervised the Cytopathology Lab at the University of Utah Medical Center, engaging in research, diagnosis, and teaching in the fields of cancer and infectious diseases. And just to keep things interesting she got a MS in Medical Communication while there.

In 1990, Toni quit the university when she landed a job as a project writer to develop written and interactive computer educational programs for bio-tech employees and other medical professionals. This led to Toni becoming a full time freelance medical writer and consultant, work she did for the next 30 years. It was a career that took her all over the US and the world: Stockholm, Paris, Buenos Aires, and beyond, reporting on medical conventions for physician newsletters. She remarried and when JJ graduated from high school, she was ready to move from Utah.

Toni was ready to get back to coastal living. She landed on the Mendocino Coast, moving to Fort Bragg in 1998, where in 2013 she married Joe, a local artist. She was still writing full time and traveling until she retired in 2020.



**Volunteer Highlight: Toni Rizzo – continued**

Toni is an avid hiker, gardener, reader, and photographer. She has been collecting cacti and succulents for about 30 years and has a greenhouse, deck, and yard full of them. She loves to travel and camp in her VW pop-top camper, especially exploring the deserts and cacti of the southwest.

She has been volunteering for the Noyo Center since 2022 as a docent and a beach surveyor. She became the editor of the Pinniped Press last April which she likes because it brought her back to writing and loves marine biology science. Toni enjoys volunteering for the Noyo Center for the interesting and fascinating people she has met, the marine science research, saving the ocean, and educating people. And we are lucky to have a great editor for this newsletter!

**Whale Festival 2024 Photos**

Wendi Felson

The Noyo Center had a very successful Whale Festival celebration this year with numerous events throughout the month. We could not have done it without our volunteers putting in extra hours and sharing their knowledge at Science Socials, School Tours, Whale Watching Walks, and more. Here are a few highlights.



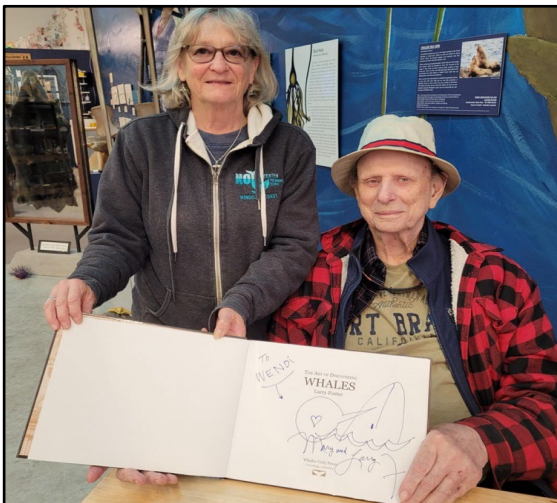
Dania Stoneham with school tour at the Field Station



Misha Morandi with sea star at the Field Station school tour.



School tour urchin activity with Elizabeth Pippin at the Field Station



Wendi Felson with her Whale book signed by author Larry Foster



Misha Morandi with school tour at the Field Station



## Whale Festival 2024 Photos - continued



Elizabeth Gomez at the Crow's Nest



Whale Watching tour lead by a Noyo Center volunteer on the Noyo Headlands

## Big Blue Whale Tour

Donna Worster

If you happen to see a picture of a happy smiling face holding an enormous bone, it's just someone who took a tour of the Big Blue Whale during whale festival weeks. A couple of weeks before the opening of the event, Sarah, Sara and Sue worked to freshen up her "digs." I had a couple of trial runs, and a couple of honest critiques and changed the program to start outside the barn with the door closed. I had assumed that everyone wanting to see the whale already knew the history, but being mistaken, I now give a brief history of her accident and recovery. They also helped by painting stripes on my driveway, 73 feet apart, illustrating how long she really is. Lord, she is BIG. Her fluke is the width of the barn!

When I open the door, the first sight is her skull on a platform. I explain it's a strange position as it had to be turned over to get hauled up a forty-foot cliff to be saved. From there I point to the largest of the bones on the floor, 19 feet, and ask for the group to imagine these bones extending from the other side of the skull far beyond the side wall. These bones are her mandible (jawbone in three pieces) and I also explain about her rostrum (a stiff snout protruding from the skull). Parts are hollow and this is where she receives all her communications and how it flows to her ear drums, and where her whale songs originate. Still standing in front of the platform, I show how the atlas bone is attached to the back portion of the skull and point out the vertebrae stored on the racks against the side wall, which make up the rest of her majestic body.

By now the group is really interested and follows me to where the flipper is hidden underneath a photograph. Curious minds can understand a picture better than the actual bones. Yesterday at the Field Station, I learned that her wrist bones are jokingly called "meatballs." With a little maneuvering a memorable picture can be taken with the hand over the whale's flipper.



## Big Blue Whale Tour- continued

On to the back of the barn there are two pictures of Betty are displayed—one is the iconic photo taken by Larry Wagner on the rocks in 2009, and one of the skeleton, which has been digitized using 3D technology. I often share the story of her injury and how the city of Fort Bragg had to get permission from the State and other agencies to collect her.

A few interesting notes:

- For two weeks the town was mobilized to save this precious treasure.
- The bones were buried for almost 2 years to let the beetles and bugs clean them.
- The blubber was sent to a fertilizer company in Willits, and some of the local schools used the fertilizer to feed the plants they grow, allowing her to come alive again, only in a different form.



ET

Photo: Donna Worster

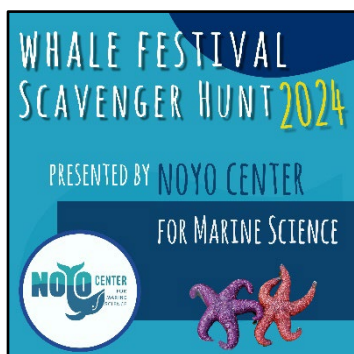
If anyone in the group is the right size, the hyoid bone (that's the bone that keeps your tongue from going into your stomach!) is on a table and can be picked up for an interesting photo op, which on one occasion a couple of college students found really entertaining. There are a couple of side bones that I pass around, resulting in comments like, "oh these aren't that heavy."

I bring up the baleen and pass around the pieces and talk about where it grows and how large her mouth is when she eats the krill, also available for viewing—295,000 calories in a single gulp. She can hold 100 men in her mouth! I will explain how sleek she is and because of her size the world is hers to roam. She is at the top of the food chain while healthy and can swim up to twenty miles an hour but usually cruises at five miles per hour. I just read she can go for six months without eating. She doesn't need long flippers as the humpback does or a head like the sperm whale. Her strength is in her sleek shape and her fluke.

There are posters on the wall that show sizes of the various whales. The blue whale is always easy to find. There are also enlarged pictures of the work done on the inlet when she beached and numerous pictures of school children and their discovery with the cleaned bones. I explain about the various coloring in the bones caused by the color in the soil where they were buried from 2009 to 2015. It's encouraging to hear the many questions and be able to answer most of them. My teachers should all receive praise. They were so patient with me and I'm still learning.

By now, with all the questions answered, I proceed to the platform under the picture of the fluke that holds the final back bones and end up showing off little "ET." He is the second to the last bone and has more character than all the rest.

The invitation to see Betty Blue whale is still valid, it just needs to be scheduled. A special thank you to Dobi Dolphin, a dedicated volunteer, for staying on after her visit to help with one of the groups, and Lynne Sullivan and Trey Petrey for pitching in on Friday.



### All New Scavenger Hunt

Looking for something fun to do with out-of-town visitors or bored kids or just wanting to get to know this area better? There is a new Scavenger Hunt game available with new questions, new places to visit and things to learn about this area and the ocean environment. The hunt takes about a half day or more to "find" all the answers. The game can be played individually, as a group or as teams competing with one another. The Scavenger Hunt packet can be purchased at the Discovery Center for \$15 and includes questions and the answers.

**North Coast KelpFest!** is a celebration of Art+Science+Food+Film coming to Fort Bragg and Mendocino for an entire month from May 18-June 16. The [website](#) is now live and where you will find a full listing of workshops and activities planned for the festival. It all begins with a festive art opening at Mendocino Art Center on May 18<sup>th</sup> and a photography exhibit at the Noyo Center Marine Field Station – check the website for gallery hours. The festival will close on Urchin Festival weekend with a celebratory Kelp Happy Hour! and science social program at the Field Station on June 15. Many of the workshops and outings will sell out, so check out the full listing soon.

There are volunteer opportunities for many of the activities and events taking place at the Field Station, as well as other venues. We especially need assistance at the Field Station on the weekends so that we can remain open to the public to see the underwater photography of [Abbey Dias](#), [Patrick Webster](#), and [Marco Mazzo](#).

Stay tuned for other Field Station updates and check in with [wendi@noyocenter.org](mailto:wendi@noyocenter.org) for more information.

Noyo Center is proud to be a part of KelpFest! along with our friends: [@MendoParks](#) [@MendocinoArtCenter](#) [@JosielSelin](#) [@AboveBelow\\_Kelp](#) [@WordofMouthMendo](#) [@MendocinoFilmFestival](#) [@Nature\\_org](#) [@CityFortBragg](#) [@VisitMendocino](#) [@OPC\\_California](#) [@CAsaGrant](#)

**North Coast KelpFest!**  
Art + Science + Food + Film

INFO & EVENT REGISTRATION: [NORTHCOASTKELPFEST.ORG](http://NORTHCOASTKELPFEST.ORG)

**May 18 - June 16, 2024**  
**MENDOCINO & FORT BRAGG**

Bull kelp forests once stretched along the Pacific Coast from Monterey to Alaska, yet since 2014 they have been devastated by warming oceans and other impacts. KelpFest! explores the beauty and benefits of kelp, and efforts to help it recover.

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| <p><b>Art</b></p> <p>Discover how kelp forests through an artist's eye and soon create your own. Inspire us out of your own.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Month-long art exhibit featuring local artists and artists.</li> <li>• Art workshops for adults, young children, and families to continue their interests.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Science</b></p> <p>Meet the researchers who protect the ecosystem. Discover the science of kelp forests and their benefits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low tide walk with seaweed to learn and make observations.</li> <li>• Kelp restoration project demonstration.</li> <li>• Speaker panel with local experts.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Food</b></p> <p>Get a taste for helping, art! Discover how and traditional culture, sea life, and sea urchin and sea vegetables.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Panel discussion of sea urchin as a no-waste food getting of fame.</li> <li>• Taste the Noyo Center Lunch + Beach project.</li> <li>• Tastings of local sea food.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Film</b></p> <p>Dive into the deep with stunning photography at the Mendocino Art Center's kelp forest.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentary screening followed by panel discussion with researchers and artists.</li> <li>• Photography and video exhibit at Noyo Center Marine Field Station.</li> </ul> |
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Logos for Word of Mouth, Noyo Center, Fort Bragg, Mac Mendocino Art Center, Mendocino Blue Economy, The Nature Conservancy, Mendocino Film Festival, Mendocino Magic is Real, and Above Below.

### Calendar

- Monday, April 1, 6 pm: Monthly Pinniped Press Zoom meeting. All welcome. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85648325119>
- Saturday, April 6, 10 am: New Volunteer Orientation, Field Station
- Sunday, April 7, 10 am: All Volunteer meeting at the Field Station
- Wednesday, April 10, 10 am: Docents monthly meeting, Crow's Nest
- Friday, April 12, 9 am: Executive Board meeting, Field Station
- Saturday, April 13, 10 am: Beach Survey Program meeting/walk to MacKerricher harbor seal haul out. Meet at north Ward Avenue parking lot.
- Sunday, April 14, noon: Environment group annual meeting and potluck, Field Station. This year's honoree is Sue Coulter.
- Friday, April 26th, 9 am: Mussel collection. Meet at Enchanted Trailhead (just N. of Montessori school on Hwy 1)

The Pinniped Press team: Jim Rolfe, Dobie Dolphin, Wendi Felson, Linda Francis, Donna Worster, and Toni Rizzo, with Trey Petrey. Pinniped Press logo design by Sharon Bowers.

If you have photo or writing skills or have a particular idea for an article, want to join a great group, or send a letter to the editor, write to Toni at: [editor@noyocenter.org](mailto:editor@noyocenter.org)



**Who to call? When you find:**

- A live marine mammal, call The Marine Mammal Center at (415) 289-7325.
- A dead marine mammal, call Sarah Grimes, our Stranding Coordinator, at: (707) 813-7925.
- An injured bird call The Bird Rescue Center at: (707) 523-2473
- Most other wildlife, call Wild Life Rescue at: (707) 526-9453