



## CALIFORNIA GRAY WHALE COALITION

### PROTECTING THE MOST ANCIENT BALEEN WHALE ALIVE TODAY

P. O. Box 50939 Palo Alto, CA 94303 Ph: 650 322 4729

Email: [info@californiagraywhalecoalition.org](mailto:info@californiagraywhalecoalition.org) • [www.californiagraywhalecoalition.org](http://www.californiagraywhalecoalition.org)

## Dear Coalition Members and Friends,

**The Coalition has been working hard on the campaign to have a comprehensive review of all major threats facing the California Gray Whale. We see this is an essential first step to seeking relisting under the Endangered Species Act.**

**As much has happened over the past six weeks, we will break the newsletter up into relevant sections for easy reading.**

## POLITICAL EFFORTS.

Following on from our successful lobbying of the California Assembly and Senate for a Resolution ( see website) the Coalition's next step was to move this Resolution forward in the new Obama congress.

Prior to the historic election victory by President Obama, Coalition Founder, Sue Arnold met with key staffers from the offices of Sen. Barbara

Boxer, Sen. Diane Feinstein, Speaker Pelosi and Governor Schwarzenegger in the weeks leading up to the election. Her quest ? To gain support for the new Congress to take up the California Joint Resolution and to support funding of a comprehensive review of all major threats facing the Gray Whales.

Sen. Boxer's office was particularly supportive and thanks to the Deputy Director at Speaker Pelosi's office, we were able to identify several Congress people who might be willing to move forward with the California Joint Resolution.

At our second meeting with the Deputy Director of Governor Schwarzenegger's office, we were also given again, good indications of support for the Coalition's efforts.

In February, Sue Arnold and Robin Mankey, California Coalition Director, met with Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey, California's Sixth Congressional District Representative, together with Coalition members Cindy Macado from Marin Humane Society and Michael Stocker, Ocean Conservation Research.

A veteran campaigner and long term Congress person, Rep. Woolsey was more than delighted to take up the cause

of the Gray Whale and thanks to her efforts and the efforts of her key

staffer, an appropriations request for \$1.2 million has been attached to the budget papers.

As we have no faith in any National Marine & Fisheries (NMFS) assessment of the major threats facing the Gray Whales, the Coalition was extremely happy that the language of the appropriations request specifies that the National Academy of Sciences undertake the comprehensive review. Rep. Woolsey is on the Science Committee in Congress and in contact with the National Academy of Sciences.

The path through the Congress is not an easy one, particularly in these grim economic times. The Coalition is happy to have the task in such capable hands.

At the forthcoming California Democratic Party State Convention, a Resolution supporting

Rep. Woolsey's efforts and underlining the major threats facing the Gray Whale will be put forward. We'll let you know how that transpires.



Image courtesy of James Dorsey.

## GRAY WHALE STATUS.

**Sue Arnold and Robin Mankey went to San Ignacio Laguna on February 12 to spend three or four days at the Laguna checking out the status of the whales.**

We were very happy to see more whales than last year's sparse numbers. We witnessed sexual activity which was not visible at all same time last year.

Some of the whales seemed smaller and this may be an indication of the larger numbers of single whales at that time.

It was good to see an increase but looking at the big picture, this increase is statistically insignificant. Reports along the West Coast of USA indicated that around 10 per cent of the 2009 migration was emaciated. As well, there were questions about the water temperature in the San Ignacio Laguna and whether last year's aberrant temperatures acted as a disincentive for whales to come into the Laguna.

**NEW WEBSITE LAUNCHED**

**Click to visit our new look website:**  
[www.californiagraywhalecoalition.org](http://www.californiagraywhalecoalition.org)

## MEETING IN SAN IGNACIO LAGUNA.

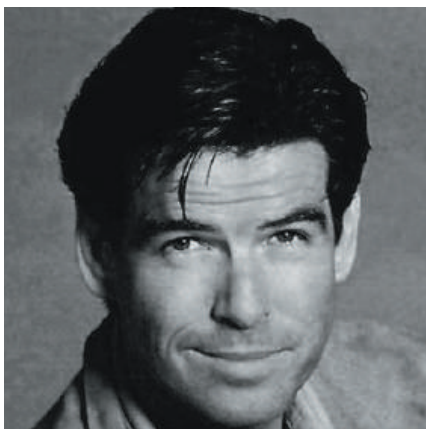
**The Coalition was fortunate enough to have a meeting with Mexican whale watching operators at the Laguna.**

A somewhat difficult meeting as it had to be in Spanish and English and accompanying translation difficulties, nevertheless the issues raised by the Mexican operators are critical for the whales and continuing tourism to the Laguna.

One of the major problems for the Mexican groups is that they are deprived of broad information about the whales. With little opportunity to hear what's happening with climate change; changes in the whales' migration route; the political machinations and information on NMFS population estimates; these guys are starved for information.

In response to these concerns, the Coalition has agreed to put out a regular update to the Mexican operators so that they can be kept abreast of the campaign and any news on the Gray Whale.

We urge organisations and groups wanting to go to Baja to see the whales to continue making the journey. Bad publicity and the economic downturn have made for a tough year out at the Laguna. We had no problems in Mexico, no problems going to Baja - and as always, we were grateful for the kindness, friendship and warmth offered by the Mexican people.



## PIERCE BROSINAN SUPPORTS THE COALITION.

**It's taken some time but Hollywood actor and whale conservationist Pierce Brosnan has agreed to support the work and aims of the Coalition.**

We're grateful to have the recognition by a man who has worked tirelessly for whales.



Image courtesy of James Dorsey.

## THE COALITION IS GROWING.

**Thanks to the International Community Foundation in San Diego, we have been able to make contact with key Mexican conservation groups and to obtain vital information on the threats to Gray whales in Mexico.**

These groups have been extremely helpful as we seek to construct a GIS (Geographic Information System) of the threats to the Gray Whales along the Mexican Pacific Coast and Sea of Cortes. These threats are significant and have the potential to create massive changes and more problems for the whales.

The Coalition has engaged a public relations company to encourage the tourist and hospitality industry to join the efforts to ensure the Gray Whale receives the highest level of protection based on comprehensive scientific research.

As well, our webmaster has redesigned the website which looks fantastic!

A great resource for anyone seeking more information.

## MORE THREATS.

**We're attaching the latest nightmare, a massive military range of the coast of Oregon, Washington and California.**

As well, the extent of threats in Mexico is awesome, particularly in Magdalena Bay, Lopez Mateos where currently 300 whale watching permits have been given out by the Mexican government.

There's still time to get to Baja and see the whales. Please check out the website for recommended tourist operators who are members of the Coalition.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP THE COALITION

We urge member groups to assist us in inviting interested organisations to join the Coalition. In the coming months, we will be requesting that member organisations notify their member base of action in the Congress which will need to be supported by emails and phone calls.

And of course, any donations are always gratefully accepted.

*With regards, Sue Arnold, CEO*

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