



CALIFORNIA GRAY WHALE COALITION

PROTECTING THE MOST ANCIENT BALEEN WHALE ALIVE TODAY

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ACTION NEEDED.

We need Coalition members to write, yes write letters, to Dr Jane Lubchenco, Administrator, NOAA, Room 5128, 14th and Constitution Avenue Washington, D.C. 20230.

Letters should request Dr Lubchenco instruct NMFS scientists to undertake a proper population count during the forthcoming migration. It's important to point out that there has been no proper population count since 2001/2,

Letters can also point to the many Resolutions now which call on NMFS to undertake a comprehensive study of major threats which include:-

Climate change and its impact on primary prey; oil and gas leases across the whales' primary feeding grounds; exponentially increasing industrialisation along the migratory route. But by far the most critical issue is climate change.

Dr Lubchenco, prior to her appointment, made convincing statements of support for the genetic research undertaken by Prof. Stephen Palumbi and Dr.Liz Alter at Stanford. She has impeccable scientific credentials. The Coalition believes it is now important to direct all concerns to Dr Lubchenco.

DONATIONS PLEASE.

The Coalition is doing a mighty job and has made enormous progress since its inception in February, 2008. If you check out the website, you will see the membership of the Coalition has grown dramatically.

You can support our efforts by going to the donation link on the website. The link goes to Sea Sanctuary Inc., a 501 c 3. Sea Sanctuary is a minority founding member of the Coalition and is set up to take donations and grants.

FOLLOW THE LINK BELOW TO MAKE A DONATION ONLINE

LETS START WITH THE GOOD NEWS!

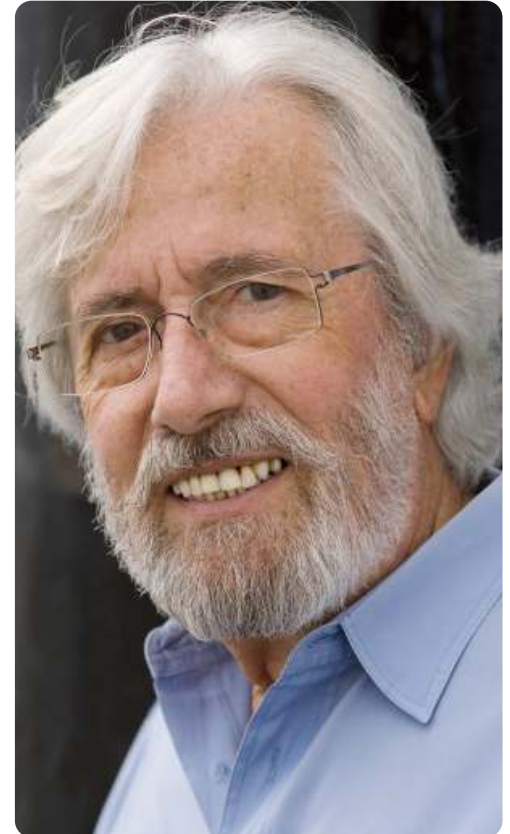
Jean-Michel Cousteau accepted the Coalition's invitation to feature on our home page supporting the Gray Whales.

“Gray Whales face many pressures, such as lack of food, coastal development, and increasing ocean noise. They need better protection.”

Honoring his heritage as the son of ocean explorer Jacques Cousteau. Jean-Michel founded Ocean Futures Society in 1999 to carry on this pioneering work.

Jean-Michel has produced over 75 films, including a magnificent documentary entitled " The Gray Whale Obstacle Course' in 2007 . If you haven't seen this documentary, we strongly suggest you rent or buy a copy. (DVD's are available on the Ocean Futures Society website). The documentary is excellent and provides a real insight into the appropriately named obstacle course which is the Gray Whales migratory route.

Ocean Futures Society is a California Gray Whale Coalition member.



Jean-Michel Cousteau

NMFS Stock Assessments flawed.

Each year, NMFS is required to do a Stock Assessment Report (SAR) on individual species of whales. In the 2009 SAR, Gray whales didn't rate any scrutiny from the previous year.

Every SAR since the population crash has been deeply flawed with inconsistent methodology and concerning censorship of major issues (such as the Alter/Palumbi

genetic research which showed an original pre-whaling population of 118,000). The documents always cite out of date data, and consistently violate s. 117 of the Marine Mammal Act which requires NMFS to use the best available science.

The Coalition continues to be deeply concerned by the mis-management of the Gray Whale by NMFS.

WEST COAST CITY COUNCILS COME ON BOARD

The Coalition has focused for the last few months on getting West Coast city councils, whose economies are enriched by whale watching and whale tourism, to support the Joint Resolution of the California Assembly & Senate.

This Resolution calls on Congress to direct National Marine & Fisheries Service to undertake a comprehensive study of major threats facing the Gray Whales and to undertake a proper population assessment.

So far, the following City Councils have passed Resolutions. San Diego City Council, Carmel-by-the-Sea, Ventura City Council, Monterey, Pacific Grove, and Seaside. We're expecting many more to follow. When

the mission is complete, we'll lobby the Congress and State politicians with these Resolutions.

We know its important to build up a major head of steam and the broadest community support if we're to persuade State and Federal politicians that they must act. City Councils which depend on whale watching and associated tourism for their economic health are now fully aware of the importance of proper protection for the Gray Whales.



Photo courtesy of James Dorsey

NMFS CONTINUES ITS MISMANAGEMENT OF GRAY WHALES.

It's now just on eight years since the last proper population count of Gray whales was undertaken by NMFS.

In spite of the lack of any substantive data, NMFS scientists continue to push the line that the Gray whales are fine; that the population is " probably around 20,000" without one shred of scientific evidence.

Calf counts are down, way down. The coastal counts demonstrate a continuing decline in calf numbers, a real indication of problems. As well, climate change is seriously impacting the primary habitat of the whales. Increased seawater temperatures and rapidly melting sea ice are putting the species at risk. The benthic community on which the Gray whale depends, relies on the detritus (crud-algae) which rains down from the melting sea ice to the ocean floor. With no sea ice, there's no major source of nutrients for Gray whale prey. Although NMFS would now have us believe that Gray whales are no longer specialist feeders but instead, feed on a vast variety of alternative food such as mysids, there's no research to support

these assertions. None. What we do have is a continuing decline of the species and a continuing refusal on the part of NMFS to undertake an urgently needed population count and research into the major threats.

In a letter to Representative Woolsey, the Congresswoman who brought the appropriations direction to Congress, NMFS claims that as the 2001/2002 census numbered 18,178 individuals and that number demonstrated an average rate increase of 1.9 per cent since 1967. This rate of increase does not represent a recovering species. To put the number in perspective, that's an increase of 4,402 whales in 35 years.

The Coalition remains deeply concerned by the failure of NMFS to fund and undertake critical research. We emailed our concerns to the recent Ocean Hearings held by the Obama Administration. Our California Director went to the Hearings in San Francisco but in spite of getting there early, was unable to make a statement because time ran out leaving many conservation organizations without the right to speak.

PROGRESS OF APPROPRIATIONS DIRECTION IN CONGRESS.

We're afraid to say that the Direction is bogged down in protocol/process discussions between Congress and the Senate.

We don't expect it will get support this year because of the various economic and political crises and the current focus on Afghanistan and public health.

The appropriations request joins a long queue of worthy causes which urgently need funding. But the Gray Whales are an item in Congress and the Senate.

PLEASE CONTRIBUTE

Donations can now be made online using our secure donation option and Paypal. Please follow the link below to the donation page on our website.