

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



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MAR 2 2016

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary
Marine Shipping Working Group
Attn: Ms. Morgan Visalli
University of California, Santa Barbara
Ocean Science Education Building 514, MC 6155
Santa Barbara, CA 93106

Dear Ms. Visalli:

Throughout the period of February 2015 through January 2016, members of the Coast Guard Sector Los Angeles–Long Beach Waterways Management Division participated in the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary’s Marine Shipping Working Group, whose purpose was to determine ways to improve air quality and reduce whale strikes due to commercial shipping. Throughout the process, our participants provided regulatory guidance and insight from the local Captain of the Port. The Working Group produced a draft final report that will be sent to the Sanctuary Advisory Council. Be advised that local Coast Guard representatives served on the working group for regulatory assistance and working group awareness, but any recommended actions that proceed through the Sanctuary Advisory Council will undergo further review by Coast Guard offices at the District, Area, and Headquarters levels.

Based on the review of the draft report, initial comments are as follows:

1. Technology-based approach:
 - a. Real-time infrared whale detection: The Coast Guard does not have any objections to mariners’ voluntary use of whale detection equipment.
 - b. Aerial whale surveys: The Coast Guard does not have any objections to the Navy, or any other interested party, conducting aerial surveys of whale movements.
 - c. Collect whale sightings from mariners: The Coast Guard supports efforts to encourage mariners to report whale sighting information.
 - d. Centralized whale data repository: The Coast Guard is willing to continue working with all interested stakeholders on identifying best practices for centralizing data, whether through NOAA server technology or other available sources.
 - e. AIS text messaging: The Marine Exchange of Southern California has expressed support for sending AIS text messages to mariners regarding whale sightings. If clear, appropriate guidance is put in place for the Marine Exchange’s use of AIS in this manner, the Coast Guard would be willing to work with the Federal Communication Commission and other involved agencies to determine the possibility of allowing a non-profit organization such as the Marine Exchange to utilize AIS in this manner.

- f. Best management practices: The Coast Guard does not have any objections to utilizing the knowledge and insight of experienced mariners and shipping industry representatives to establish best practices.
 - g. Vessel warning system: The Coast Guard does not have any objections to mariners' use of a system that would assist in safely avoiding whale strikes.
2. Spatial approach:
- a. Santa Barbara Channel Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) extension: The Coast Guard does not currently have any objections to an extension of the existing TSS.
 - b. Western route south of Channel Islands: The Coast Guard does not currently see a need to formalize the voluntary shipping lane south of Channel Islands. Mariners currently safely transit this area and we do not have evidence that any modifications would increase safety of navigation. Furthermore, any such lanes could impact existing Navy's Pacific Missile Testing Range and hazardous operations area and therefore require further review by appropriate federal agencies.
 - c. Expansion of the Area to be Avoided: So long as any expansion does not impact existing shipping lanes, the Coast Guard does not have any objections to expansion of these areas.
 - d. Vessel speed reduction: The Coast Guard does not have any objections to vessels reducing speed in areas of concern.
 - e. Particularly Sensitive Sea Area: Any recommendations requiring review by the International Maritime Organization will require further review by Coast Guard offices at the Headquarters level.

Thank you for allowing my Waterways Management Division to participate in this working group as we all seek to identify ways to improve air quality and reduce the risk of whale strikes. I look forward to our continued interaction as these proposals are reviewed by the Sanctuary Advisory Council.

If you have any questions please contact Lieutenant Commander Brandon Link at (310) 521-3860.

Sincerely,



J. F. WILLIAMS
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Captain of the Port
Los Angeles-Long Beach