

PRESS RELEASE



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EDC Brings Topic of Ocean Acidification to Local and National Spotlight

Santa Barbara, CA- A little over a year ago the Environmental Defense Center (EDC) launched an effort to bring both local and national attention to the emerging topic of ocean acidification. EDC's hopes were recently realized when all thirteen National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Councils (SACs) took action recognizing ocean acidification as a significant long term threat to the conservation of marine resources.

"Our goal is to bring the critical issue of ocean acidification to the attention of not only the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS), but to the nation as a whole. The fact that the Advisory Councils at all thirteen of the National Marine Sanctuaries have passed resolutions and motions on a topic that we helped bring to their attention highlights the importance of the issue," said Linda Krop, Chair of the CINMS Conservation Working Group (CWG) and Chief Counsel at the EDC.

EDC's work on the issue of ocean acidification was recognized locally when the CINMS Advisory Council unanimously adopted EDC's CWG report: "**Ocean Acidification and the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary: Cause, effect, and response.**" This comprehensive report examines the current body of scientific research on the chemistry of ocean acidification, biological impacts, ecosystem effects, and provides recommendations for Sanctuary Managers ([Ocean Acidification Report](#)).

Often referred to as the "other carbon dioxide (CO₂) problem," ocean acidification is a process that is making the oceans more acidic as atmospheric CO₂ emissions increase. Calcifying marine creatures including corals, coralline algae, urchins, lobsters, abalone, and small ecologically important groups of planktonic swimming snails have difficulty developing their shells in more acidic water. Since many of these marine creatures provide habitat and food for other marine life, their loss would have a devastating ripple effect on the foodweb.

EDC's report gained national spotlight when it was presented at the 2009 SAC Summit- an annual meeting hosted by the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. Motivated by what they learned at the SAC Summit, individual Sanctuary representatives took the topic of ocean acidification back to their SACs for further discussion. Now less than a year later all thirteen SACs have adopted resolutions and motions of support recognizing the threat ocean acidification could pose to the marine environment. "EDC and the SAC's Conservation Working Group have definitely been leaders on the topic of ocean acidification. They took the initiative

to prepare an excellent, well-researched report and effectively advocated for the topic to be brought to a larger national audience,” said Chris Mobley, CINMS Superintendent. For their work on ocean acidification and identifying and minimizing new and rising threats to the Santa Barbara Channel the CWG also received the Office of the National Marine Sanctuaries’ **Partner of the Year Award** for 2009.

The CINMS Superintendent also noted that “The topic of ocean acidification has been galvanizing on many levels for Sanctuaries and this is the first time we have seen all of the nation’s SACs take action on the same issue.” With all SACs on board, the EDC is looking to work with the Sanctuaries Program to implement one of the report’s recommendations-- to develop a regional approach to ocean acidification. Recent scientific study has identified unpredicted acidification of ocean waters off the Pacific coast, due in part to the upwelling that occurs in this area. As a result of our report and with support from west coast SACs, the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries has launched a West Coast Ocean Acidification Task Force, and EDC’s Chief Counsel Linda Krop serves as the SAC representative on the Task Force. EDC will help the Task Force determine how to best implement a coordinated regional approach on the topic of ocean acidification.

To learn more about the CINMS Advisory Council attend the SAC’s Friday March 19th meeting. In attendance will be Dan Basta, the Director of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The meeting will be held from 9:00 am – 3:30 pm at the Robert J. Lagomarsino Visitor Center Auditorium, Channel Islands National Park Headquarters 1901 Spinnaker Drive Ventura Harbor, CA, 93001.

Since 1977, the Environmental Defense Center has worked to protect and enhance the local environment through education, advocacy, and legal action. For thirty-three years the Santa Barbara based environmental non-profit has empowered community-based organizations to advance environmental protection. Their program areas include protecting coast and ocean resources, open space and wildlife, and human and environmental health. EDC works primarily within Santa Barbara, Ventura and San Luis Obispo counties.

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