



Wandering & Wondering

John Maybury

STATE OF THE OCEAN

Several reports released in June 2011 underscore the urgency of ocean protection efforts like California's Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA). Scientists warn that climate change, overfishing, habitat loss, and acidification are driving marine systems to the brink, and cite marine protected areas as a critical part of the solution to buffer against growing pressures and to allow nature to rebound. On June 20, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (iucn.org) published a study that concluded the state of our oceans is more serious than previously thought, warning "this is a very serious situation demanding unequivocal action at every level. We are looking at consequences for humankind that will impact in our lifetime." A June 21 story in the San Francisco Chronicle noted that "damage to marine life would harm its ability to support humans." While the findings are grim, the IUCN report does offer concrete steps we can take to reverse the downward trend in ocean health. The report summary specifically calls for the need to "establish a globally comprehensive and representative system of marine protected areas to conserve biodiversity, to build resilience, and to ensure

ecologically sustainable fisheries with minimal ecological footprint." The same week, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration released a report that called for more marine reserves and protected areas in U.S. waters, particularly in coastal areas. It noted their value both for wildlife and for people: "Establishing a marine reserve not only protects and helps to restore the habitats and populations of organisms within the reserve, it can also support and enhance the habitats and populations throughout a region. This in turn supports human communities by protecting places and resources valued by people for their intrinsic and economic values." Finally, a study published in Nature on June 22 underscored the worldwide importance of the California current, likened to the Serengeti, for the survival of top ocean predators like sharks, sea turtles, and tunas. The study emphasized the value of protecting habitat "hot spots."

YOUR INNER EDITOR

I am starting a new blog called Inner Editor. Please check it out and feel free to comment about items on the site or email me postworthy items (my email address is at the bottom of this column). Let me know what

you think of the new blog at PacificaRiptide.com/inner_editor

BOOK OF THE WEEK

"The Watchman's Rattle: Thinking Our Way Out of Extinction" by Rebecca Costa (order from Florey's Book Co. on Palmetto in Sharp Park near the public library)

SWAMI SEZ

"I see in the future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of my country. As a result of the war, corporations have been enthroned and an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until wealth is aggregated in a few hands and the Republic is destroyed. I feel at this moment more anxiety for the safety of my country than ever before, even in the midst of the war." (Republican President Abraham Lincoln, November 21, 1864)

SITSEER

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NATURE BOY

This week's beautiful Pacifica nature shots are from Rockaway Headlands, photographed by Erik Piro.

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