



# Southern California Marine Institute

Spring 2014  
Newsletter

Southern California Marine Institute, 820 S Seaside Ave, Terminal Island CA 90731  
<http://scmi.us/> [scmi@csulb.edu](mailto:scmi@csulb.edu) 310.519.3172

## Message from the Director

*By Daniel Pondella II Ph.D.*

Schools are letting out and things are slowing down on the academic front, but not at SCMI. It is full speed ahead on Terminal Island. Not a day passes by without someone asking me about AltaSea. The good news is that AltaSea is progressing rapidly. A major event was the hiring of Rachel Etherington as the CEO of AltaSea. Rachel is dynamic, energetic and attacking this project with vigor. We've also partnered with AltaSea and the Cabrillo Aquarium to deliver the Discovery Lecture Series. The first lecture was by our own Chris Lowe, Ph.D. of CSULB on white sharks in southern California. As you can imagine, it was standing room only. There will be three more Discovery Lectures this year and we are planning six lectures annually, so stay tuned. On the waterfront the facility is improving daily. The seawater system is up and running, we just got a new compressor for the dive locker, the docks have all been redone and I just added a new research dive boat to the mix. As I look out the windows of my office, there is a constant stream of people associated activities along the waterfront. Don't worry, there's more to come.

## AltaSea's New CEO Rachel Etherington

At the SCMI Board of Directors meeting on May 5<sup>th</sup> board members were introduced to the new CEO of AltaSea, Rachel Etherington. Etherington began her position at AltaSea on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Her background is in the private sector with launching environmental and sustainable startups. Etherington founded Fauna and Flora International Australia in 2008 and was Director of the Blue Foundation in the UK. Etherington spoke passionately about the ocean environment and the importance of public awareness. She asked all the board members what they are most excited about the AltaSea projects. Board members expressed their enthusiasm for a world class marine research center that will bring together public and private research. More information regarding AltaSea can be found on their website: <http://www.altasea.org/>

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Director's Message
- 2 AltaSea's New CEO
- 3 R/V Yellowfin Research Cruise Highlights
- 4 What's that Wooden Box in the Utility Closet?
- 5 Earth Day
- 6 Discovery Lecture Series
- 7 New Arrivals
- 8 POLA High School Green Festival
- 9 Volunteer Internship Program
- 10 Staff Spotlight

### Important Dates

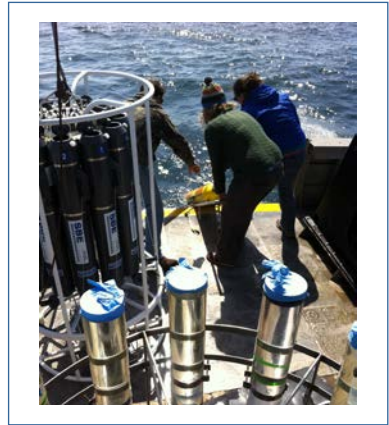
**Fall CSU Marine Biology  
Semester on Catalina**

August 25th - December 5th,  
2014

## R/V Yellowfin Research Cruise Highlights

By *Adriana Bell*

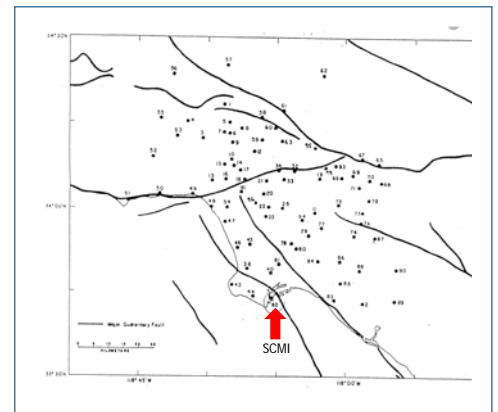
The whale breached just feet away from the R/V Yellowfin and flashed its white underbelly before diving back underwater. All of the crew and USC researchers aboard stopped their sampling and watched three other whales approach the boat. The water was calm with a clear visibility of at least five meters allowing all of us to see the whales' full bodies as they circled the R/V Yellowfin. They were Minke whales that are the smallest of the baleen whales. Minke whales have blue-gray coloring with a white underbelly and white squares on their pectoral fins. Minke whales are known to come close to boats and are very curious. This pod of four Minke whales was especially interested in the research USC researchers Willie Haskell, John Fleming, and Vickie Espinoza, were conducting on the R/V Yellowfin. Willie Haskell is a PhD. Candidate in Marine Geochemistry, researching gross photosynthetic production and nutrient cycling in the ocean. Aboard the R/V Yellowfin Haskell released two sediment traps that collect falling sediments in the water column. The researchers also used the CTD rosette to collect water samples and record ocean parameters such as dissolved oxygen, temperature, salinity, and pH. Haskell and his crew have been going out on the R/V Yellowfin twice a month to conduct their research. Below is a link to Haskell's research page: <http://earth.usc.edu/~whaskell/Research.html>.



## What's that Wooden Box in the Utility Closet?

This April USC Professor M.D. Trifunac visited SCMI to check on the device inside a wooden box that has been in the utility closet for over 20 years. The device is an accelerometer that is used to measure earthquakes. This accelerometer is number 82 of around 90 accelerometers in the Los Angeles region. The accelerometer records large seismic events on a roll of special film. Professor Trifunac is a part of USC Earthquake Engineering–Strong Motion Research Group that research strong ground motion for engineering application and earthquake response of man-made structures. Check out the link to USC Earthquake Engineering–Strong Motion Research Group website for more information on their research:

[http://www.usc.edu/dept/civil\\_eng/Earthquake\\_eng/](http://www.usc.edu/dept/civil_eng/Earthquake_eng/)



## Earth Day at Cabrillo Marine Aquarium

SCMI's Earth Day booth at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium was a great success this year. Over 150 public participants stopped by SCMI's booth. The booth displayed information about SCMI's research and educational programs including the Port of Los Angeles Water Quality Monitoring Project, XBT models and information, marine specimens and fossils, and a science quiz. The highlight of the booth was the SCMI touch tank with marine invertebrates, rays and a horn shark. Children and Parents were able to touch and learn about the marine animals that are found right in their backyard in the Los Angeles Harbor. SCMI Staff passed out brochures and small beach balls for the kids. Earth Day at the Cabrillo Aquarium is a wonderful opportunity for the public to learn about the new and exciting research and education programs happening at SCMI.



Brain Tufts, SCMI Aquarist, talks to kids about marine animals



Adriana Bell, SCMI Instructor, gives kids a science quiz on plankton.

## Discovery Lecture Series

SCMI has partnered with AltaSea and the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium for the Discovery Lecture Series. The lectures will be given by SCMI's member university faculty at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium. The first lecture on May 9, 2014 was given by Dr. Chris Lowe of California State University, Long Beach, on the Return of the Big Marine Predators to California Waters: A Sign Things Might Be Getting Better.

<http://www.altasea.org/discovery-lectures.html>

## New Arrivals



Two new vessels arrived at SCMI this spring, Occidental College's new research dive boat and Mountain and Sea Adventure's Wilderness Explorer vessel which transports k-12 students to Catalina Island science camp.




---

### Discovery Lecture Series Dates

August 1, 2014: Dr. Shawna Dark of California State University, Northridge

October 3, 2014: Dr. Richard F. Ambrose of University of California Los Angeles

December 5, 2014: Dr. Shana Goffredi of Occidental College.

---



## POLA High School Green Festival

SCMI has continued our effort to outreach to the community and increase public awareness of marine science research and education by attending Port of Los Angeles High School's Green Festival. SCMI set up a booth besides other environmental science participants such as the OC Coastal Keepers and USC Sea Grant. Our booth displayed pictures and information on SCMI's education and research opportunities. We also advertised our Volunteer Internship Program. The Green Festival was a wonderful opportunity to introduce high school students preparing for college the many programs offered at SCMI.



SCMI booth at POLAHS Green Festival

## SCMI Volunteer Internship Program

With SCMI's seawater filtration system live and running SCMI is looking for students interested in marine science and husbandry to intern. Our volunteer internship program is designed to introduce high school and college level students to marine science careers. Interns will learn basic operations at SCMI including supporting our Aquarist and Vessel Engineers. We are looking for students interested in marine science, marine biology, vessel engineering and animal husbandry. Students must be at least 16 year old. For more information and application details contact Adriana Bell at [adriana.bell@csulb.edu](mailto:adriana.bell@csulb.edu) (310) 519-3172 ext. 972.



Carrie Wolfe, SCMI Education and Research Coordinator talks to Students about the NOAA SOOP Program

## SCMI Staff Highlight

Meet Dennis Dunn R/V Yellowfin Captain.

Dennis began working at SCMI in 1984 working on the Research Vessels. He spent 13 years as Captain of the R/V Vantuna at Occidental College and returned to SCMI to Captain the R/V Yellowfin. Dennis got his start in commercial fishing boats. As Captain of the R/V Yellowfin Dennis plays a vital role in the research conducted at SCMI. His favorite research cruises include Dr. Larry Allen's Sand Bass project and the Santa Barbara Island cruises. The thing Dennis most enjoys about being Captain of the R/V Yellowfin is that the ocean is his office.



Captain Dennis Dunn with Occidental Student catching a lingcod fish

SCMI is now on Facebook! Find our page with the link below:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Southern-California-Marine-Institute/288351464597980>