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OCEAN CONSERVATION SOCIETY HONORED IN COUNCIL PRESENTATION

Posted by David Graham-Caso 417.80sc on August 26, 2015 · Flag · Add your reaction

Calling ocean research "necessary to protect our health and to protect the future of our planet," Councilmember Mike Bonin today hosted a special presentation honoring the Westside-based Ocean Conservation Society (OCS) and OCS President and founder Dr. Maddalena Bearzi.

OCS, which is the only nonprofit and research organization conducting year-round and long-term research on marine mammals off LA's coast, is also one of the few organizations of its kind in the world. The group conducts long-term marine mammal research and educational conservation-oriented projects, working everyday to protect oceans and their inhabitants, focusing mainly on whales and dolphins.



"Knowing more about dolphins and whales is not just important in order to protect those species - it is important to our own health as well," said Bonin. "Our ecosystem is inextricably linked and I am incredibly grateful for the work that Dr. Bearzi and her team at OCS do to study and protect our oceans and marine life."

OCS, which was co-founded in 1998 by Dr. Bearzi and Capt. Charles Saylan, conducts research projects focused on different species of marine mammals present off California's coast and their interactions with other species, including humans. The organization's main study area is the Santa Monica Bay, but some of its educational and research studies comprise the entire California coastline waters, such as the *Be Whale Aware Campaign*.

"Unfortunately, our animals are not the only ones in trouble" said Dr. Bearzi. "our organization is now facing a hard time and we are in need of immediate support to continue our long-term research work that now encompasses almost two decades."

"Why is monitoring dolphins important?" Dr. Bearzi explains, "These animals are predators feeding at the top of the marine food chain. As such, they are key bio-indicators of the health of our environment. If dolphins get sick, we can get sick too."

According to OCS research, the ocean area off Los Angeles' coast is an important year-round foraging hotspot for coastal dolphin populations. OCS' current research includes monitoring bottlenose dolphins in Santa Monica Bay that have been found to suffer skin lesions and physical deformities in order to shed light on the occurrence and frequency of these diseases. A list of other current OCS studies and more information about the organization is available at: <http://www.oceanconservation.org/>

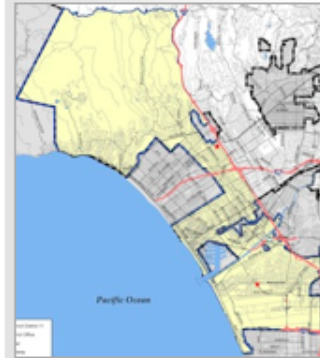
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