



2009 Ken Norris Memorial Lecture Series; Sea Otters – Barometers of Ocean Health

Santa Cruz, CA — What is happening to the California sea otter, and what does it mean to us? To help answer these questions, the 2009 Ken Norris Memorial Lecture Series at the Seymour Center at Long Marine Lab features six prominent marine scientists who will broaden our understanding of why sea otters serve as a barometer of ocean health. These free public lectures will take place Thursday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. on October 1, October 22, and November 12.

Few marine mammal species are as charismatic and beloved as the sea otter. Their frequent sightings and near-shore antics have made them an iconic symbol of the Monterey Bay and a poster “child” for the Endangered Species Act. Once hunted to near extinction for their fur and, more recently, accidentally captured and drowned in fishing nets, the sea otter has been a protected species since the enactment of the Marine Mammal Protection Act in 1972. The California sea otter population has recovered from fewer than 50 animals near Big Sur in the early 1900s to more than 2,600 animals along the California coast today.

Despite this good news, recent data indicates static or declining population. WHY? We don’t hunt them for fur. We don’t trap them in nets. They are a protected species. Three distinct lectures—*The Human Factor*, *Blooms and Bugs*, and *Exxon Valdez: Oil to Olive*—will cover the new obstacles facing sea otters today, what their declining population tells us about the health of our oceans, and what we are doing to prevent further decline of this compelling and important “keystone” species.

Lectures are free to the public. Seating is limited.

For more information, please call (831) 459-3800 or visit our website at <http://seymourcenter.ucsc.edu>.

Lecture schedule and speakers:

October 1: *The Human Factor* Tim Tinker ~ Research Wildlife Biologist, USGS and Adjunct Professor, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, UCSC. Keith Miles ~ Research Wildlife Biologist, USGS and Director, Davis Field Station, John Muir Institute of the Environment, UC Davis

October 22: *Blooms & Bugs* Raphael Kudela ~ Associate Professor of Ocean Sciences, UCSC Melissa Miller, DVM ~ joint appointment: California Department of

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NEWS RELEASE

Fish and Game and the UC Davis, Wildlife Health Center

November 12: *Exxon Valdez: Oil to Olive* Terrie Williams ~ Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, UCSC David Jessup, DVM ~ Senior Wildlife Veterinarian and Director, Marine Wildlife Veterinary Care and Research Center, California Department of Fish and Game, Santa Cruz

The Seymour Marine Discovery Center at Long Marine Laboratory is located at the end of Delaware Avenue, Westside Santa Cruz, on the bluffs overlooking Monterey Bay. The Seymour Center provides exciting and engaging ocean education programs for the visiting public and for students of all ages. It is dedicated to educating youth, families, and the general public about the role science plays in the understanding and conservation of the world's oceans. The Seymour Center is open six days a week, year-round, and serves more than 55,000 people each year.