



## EVALUATING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF CRUISE SHIP VISITS

Cruise ships are back. On September 22nd, the first cruise ship of the City of Santa Barbara's fall season arrived. Sixteen ships are scheduled to visit through November.

Channelkeeper was on the water to hail the captain of the Celebrity Solstice to confirm the ship's compliance with the City's voluntary no-discharge agreement. The City of Santa Barbara requires ship captains to sign a commitment to not dump any waste within 12 miles of shore. Channelkeeper has not observed discharges from cruise ships within this zone during this year's observations. Once the ships leave the 12-mile zone, ships are allowed to dump sewage, greywater, and other waste streams in the Santa Barbara Channel, and the ocean in general. This too is an important concern.

Discharges to the Santa Barbara Channel was just one of the environmental impacts that Channelkeeper highlighted in comments during the Santa Barbara Harbor Commission's first Cruise Ship Subcommittee meeting held on September 22nd. During the meeting, City staff presented a summary of its cruise ship program. Commissioners discussed plans for future meetings to explore topics of interest and for eventual recommendations the Subcommittee plans to make to City Council. A number of community members attended the meeting and expressed concern about the environmental impacts of cruise ships.

Channelkeeper is asking the City to closely examine the environmental impacts of the cruise ship industry and to better align its program with the City's own goals and commitments. According to a recently drafted report by Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District, a typical cruise ship visit can produce over **80 tons of carbon dioxide** just while sitting at anchor at Santa Barbara. These emissions are relevant to Santa Barbara's commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2035 and should be addressed.

Though some cruise lines are investing in "cleaner" ships and ship technologies to meet new industry standards, many ships maintain outdated technologies. Two of the ships visiting Santa Barbara this season, the Crown Princess and Ruby Princess do not have Advanced Water Treatment Systems onboard to treat sewage. Most of the ships that visit Santa Barbara are equipped with scrubbers, devices that use seawater to remove Sulphur dioxide pollutants from engine exhaust. These systems dump the toxic pollutants directly into the ocean, however, essentially converting air pollution to water pollution.

The cruise ship industry also has a checkered history of compliance with environmental regulations. Princess Cruises, a regular visitor to Santa Barbara, was convicted and sentenced in 2017 for felony charges for deliberately dumping oil into the ocean and covering it up. In 2019, the company was convicted for six violations of probation.

Channelkeeper continues to work on the water and in Harbor Commission Subcommittee meetings to protect the Channel and surrounding communities by minimizing environmental harm from cruise ship operations. We also believe that Santa Barbara has an opportunity to be a leader and to incentivize greater progress by the cruise industry by strictly limiting visitation based on factors like size, technologies, practices, and compliance history.

If you have concerns about Santa Barbara's cruise ship program and you would like to get involved, look for an invitation in the coming weeks to sign our petition and voice your opinions. Channelkeeper will also keep you updated on future opportunities to weigh in and support measures to address the existing cruise ship program.

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### CHANNELKEEPER SUPPORTS PLANKTON AND BIOTOXIN SAMPLING IN THE SANTA BARBARA CHANNEL

In recent weeks, a harmful algae bloom has caused marine wildlife experiencing domoic acid toxicity to come ashore along California's coast. Domoic acid is a potent neurotoxin naturally produced in phytoplankton (tiny floating plant-like organisms) by the algal diatom genus *Pseudo-nitzschia*. An overabundance of this phytoplankton is sometimes referred to as a "harmful algal bloom" or "red tide."



Red tides are naturally occurring, however human inputs of nitrogen to the ocean, as well as warming ocean waters and other potential factors, may contribute to larger, longer, and more frequent blooms.

Large blooms of toxin-producing algae can be harmful, threatening the health of marine mammals and seabirds and affecting humans through exposure via the food web. When wildlife consumes filter-feeding bivalves or fish that feed on the toxic algae, domoic acid transfers to larger marine creatures up the food web. As the toxin transfers to predators such as seals, sea lions, and birds, it can cause seizures, brain damage, and sometimes death.

Channelkeeper is assisting domoic acid response efforts in the Santa Barbara Channel. Funded by donor contributions, and in part by the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science, Channelkeeper supported two offshore sampling events in September, in partnership with experts from the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project and the Southern California Ocean Observing System. The data and observations collected during these sampling events, paired with several other sampling efforts in the larger region, will provide a better understanding of the geographic extent and magnitude of the bloom event. Initial results indicate the bloom was largely concentrated offshore.

Read this news [release](#) from NOAA to learn more about the regional response to the recent domoic acid event.



## CELEBRATING CHANNELKEEPER'S CLEAN WATER WORK

Thank you, community! Our hearts are full from Channelkeeper's Sunset Cruise '22 aboard the Condor Express. The festive mini-fundraiser aboard the popular whale-watching boat was a delightful Sunday adventure that provided an opportunity for executive director Ted Morton and staff to meet in person with supporters, celebrate the organization's accomplishments, and touch on present and future directions.

Penny Owens, education and community outreach director, talked with guests about Channelkeeper's education and MPA Watch programs, while Ben Pitterle, science and policy director, fielded burgeoning interest in Channelkeeper's cruise ship watchdog program.

Guests enjoyed hors d'oeuvres from Via Maestra, drinks provided by Rivahil Winery and Firestone Walker Brewing Company, and a lively raffle with prizes from Channelkeeper and longtime supporter Patagonia.

The late afternoon excursion was a prelude to the Blue Water Ball, Channelkeeper's traditional fundraising bash, which will take place at the Cabrillo Pavilion in March.

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### **HONORING THE CLEAN WATER ACT ON ITS 50th ANNIVERSARY**

Within the last fifty years, the Clean Water Act, a U.S. law enacted to regulate pollution discharges and establish water quality standards, has significantly helped reduce pollution and improve water quality on the South Coast and across the nation.

Channelkeeper leverages the Clean Water Act to stop pollution, to prevent habitat destruction, and to set water quality standards that ensure our waterways are healthy for both wildlife and people to use and enjoy. In fact, the Clean Water Act forms the backbone of our work.

Over the past two decades, Channelkeeper has used the Clean Water Act to improve water quality along the South Coast by holding polluters like Halaco Engineering Co., the Ojai Quarry, and Southern California Edison accountable to clean up their operations. We have also used the Clean Water Act framework to effect policy changes to better protect our community from sewage overflows, industrial pollution, and agricultural discharges.



Read our latest blog post to learn more about how the Clean Water Act has improved the health and safety of the ocean, creeks, wetlands, and rivers in our area and how it continues to help keep our waterways, wildlife, and community vibrant.

[Read Blog](#)



### INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF OCEAN SCIENTISTS

There's a saying that if you see it, you can be it. That's the power of representation to expand young people's perceptions of what they can achieve. Channelkeeper was honored to participate in the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum's Girls in Ocean Science Conference 2022 on October 1st and 2nd. Education and Outreach Director Penny Owens shared her experiences with marine science and technology and offered guidance to 53 young women exploring their own career paths in ocean science.

Throughout the two-day program, young scientists learned about all kinds of ocean science in labs led by female researchers and graduate students. Some of the topics covered included plankton and all the larval stages of many sea creatures, sand rays and their sense of smell, black sea bass identification using their individual spot patterns, kelp forest ecology and steps to conduct a survey transect, and efforts to prevent ship strikes to whales in the Channel with practice identifying whale songs. Students also had the opportunity to spend time on the water on the Double Dolphin and the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary's research vessel, Shearwater.

We believe that connecting students with powerful women in this field will inspire the next generation of female scientists and empower them to solve some of the environment's most pressing issues.



### WATERSHED BRIGADE VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE ON COASTAL CLEANUP DAY

Tens of thousands of Californians turned out on September 17th to take part in the 38th Annual California Coastal Cleanup Day, the state's largest annual volunteer cleanup event, organized by the California Coastal Commission.

This year there were more than 600 organized cleanup sites along the California coast. Statewide, 27,185 volunteers picked up 220,861 pounds of trash and an additional 29,702 pounds of recyclable materials, for a total of 250,563 pounds or 125 tons.

In Santa Barbara County, a total of **1,305** volunteers turned out for Coastal Cleanup Day and collected **6,557 pounds** of trash and recycling. Local efforts were organized by Explore Ecology.

Channelkeeper was a site captain at West Beach and we'd like to thank the **29 volunteers** and the UC Climate Stewards that came out to help clean up the beach and participate in the Channelkeeper's Watershed Brigade's Microtrash Challenge! We combed through the sand from the Santa Barbara Harbor to Stearn's Wharf and collected 101 pounds of microtrash—hundreds of tiny pieces of styrofoam, cigarette butts, plastic water bottle caps, drinking straws, fiber bits, and wrappers—that we were able to keep out of the ocean and the food





**SANTA BARBARA HARBOR AND SEAFOOD FESTIVAL**  
**October 15**  
**10:00 am to 5:00 pm**

The Harbor and Seafood Festival is a fun, interactive day that celebrates Santa Barbara's maritime community and the abundance of the Santa Barbara Channel.

The Harbor and Seafood Festival began decades ago as a boat parade and annual "Blessing of the Fleet." Today, the free, family-friendly event provides an opportunity for our community to meet fishermen, learn about ocean-related topics, and enjoy an array of freshly caught seafood. Channelkeeper will be on site with information and ocean-inspired games. Be sure to stop by our table and learn more about our work. For more information, visit [harborfestival.org](http://harborfestival.org).

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**MISSION CREEK CLEANUP**  
**Honoring the 50th Anniversary of the Clean Water Act**  
**October 22**  
**9 am - 12 pm**  
**Oak Park, Santa Barbara**

This month we're celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act by conducting a cleanup of Mission Creek, an important Santa Barbara waterway.

Mission Creek winds its way from the mountains, through the city, past neighborhoods, parks, and the downtown urban landscape, before emptying into the ocean at East Beach. Throughout its course, the creek collects litter and trash that is ultimately deposited into the Santa Barbara Channel. Our goal this month is to clear several sections of Mission Creek of trash.

We will meet as a group at Oak Park in Santa Barbara. Then, we will split up into small groups and head to different locations along Mission Creek throughout the City to East Beach. Participants will return to Oak Park after the cleanup to weigh our trash and gather statistics.

We hope you'll join us! Sign up below! Channelkeeper will provide buckets, trash grabbers, and gloves. You just need to show up with your hat, water, and sunscreen! Participants will also be entered into a drawing at the end of the month to win Clean Water Act 50th tee shirts and tote bags!

[Sign Up](#)



## BECOME AN MPA WATCH VOLUNTEER!

Channelkeeper's MPA Watch program conducts surveys of human use activities in our local marine protected areas (MPAs) at Campus Point MPA (IV/Goleta), Naples MPA, and Kashtayit MPA (Gaviota State Beach). The data collected helps to inform MPA monitoring and enforcement efforts. Surveys involve walking a designated transect along the beach at the MPAs mentioned above and recording all human use activities observed on the beach and just offshore. Volunteers are asked to conduct just 3 surveys per month.

The fall volunteer training workshop will take place virtually on **Thursday, October 20th from 5:30 to 6:30 pm**. Following the online workshop, there will be several opportunities to join a one-hour field training session at Campus Point in the Campus Point MPA. Click below to sign up for the volunteer training workshop.

[Sign Up](#)

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## SUPPORT CLEAN WATER

Want to make a difference for the environment and your community? Making a tax-deductible contribution to Santa Barbara Channelkeeper today is an investment in clean beaches, healthy watersheds, and a more sustainable future.

[Donate](#)

KEEPING WATCH FOR CLEAN WATER  
SINCE 1999





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