



*September eNewsletter*

### **CHANNELKEEPER ASSISTS WITH PLANKTON AND BIOTOXIN SAMPLING IN THE SANTA BARBARA CHANNEL**

A harmful algae bloom is currently causing distressed marine wildlife experiencing domoic acid toxicity to come ashore along California's coast. In only fifteen days—from August 15 through August 30—our colleagues at the Channel Islands Marine Wildlife Institute have responded to 102 strandings throughout Santa Barbara and Ventura counties, treating as many as twenty-one animals in one day.

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.

In the coming days, growth of the toxic algae *Pseudo-nitzschia* is expected to continue, according to forecasts from the California Harmful Algae Risk Mapping (C-HARM) system.

On September 1st, Channelkeeper coordinated with experts from the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project, the Southern California Ocean Observing System, and the University of Southern California to support research activities in the Santa Barbara Channel. Ph.D. candidate Kyla Kelly collected plankton and biotoxin samples onboard the RV Channelkeeper to help inform her research on how climate change stressors may impact harmful algal blooms. Our team was pleased to support this important work. It represents just one way that Channelkeeper is contributing to research about this critical issue affecting marine mammals in the Santa Barbara Channel.

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## CRUISE SHIPS RETURN TO SANTA BARBARA FOR THE FALL SEASON

Seventeen cruise ships are scheduled to visit Santa Barbara from September 16th through November 11th. Channelkeeper's cruise ship monitoring program will resume, engaging selected vessels as they arrive in our area.

The City of Santa Barbara requires ship captains to sign a commitment not to dump any waste within 12 miles of shore. As ships enter the voluntary no-discharge zone, Channelkeeper staff, aboard our 31-foot vessel, hail the captain via marine radio to remind the crew of the no-discharge commitment and to let them know that Channelkeeper will monitor for discharges during the ship's

time in the Santa Barbara Channel.

Cruise ships generate enormous volumes of waste. A typical cruise ship generates 30,000 gallons of sewage, 250,000 gallons of greywater (wastewater from galleys, showers, sinks, and laundry), 5,000 gallons of oily bilge water, 15 gallons of toxic chemicals, and seven tons of solid waste, as well as air pollution equal to that of 12,000 cars—every day.

By communicating with captains upon arrival, our cruise ship monitoring program aims to safeguard the coastal environment from pollution and provide accountability through watchful presence.

In the spring, Channelkeeper collaborated with the City of Santa Barbara's Waterfront Department to establish a voluntary vessel speed reduction to protect migrating whales from ship strikes and presented the City of Santa Barbara Harbor Commission with recommendations for the City's cruise ship program.

One of Channelkeeper's recommendations was the establishment of a special subcommittee to conduct a public process to re-evaluate the cruise ship program as it relates to the City's economic, environmental, and community goals and to develop recommendations regarding the future path of the program.

In April, the Harbor Commission voted to establish a formal process in which the public can participate in the evaluation of the City's cruise ship program by voicing their opinions and the Commission also approved the formation of a new Cruise Ship Subcommittee as a first step in the assessment.

The subcommittee has begun to convene and plans to announce the first opportunity for public participation in the near future.

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## GOLETA CITY COUNCIL CONSIDERS NEW PLASTIC ORDINANCE

The City of Goleta has recently taken a major step toward reducing single-use plastics with the passage of a comprehensive ordinance. Channelkeeper's Penny Owens addressed the Goleta City Council on August 16th in support of the new law. The council voted in favor of the ordinance and will review it and vote on it a second time during the September 6th City Council meeting.

The ordinance will ban all EPS (Styrofoam) products in the city, require that foodware accessories like straws and cutlery be 'non-plastic,' restrict plastic water bottles at city events, and limit the sale and use of Mylar balloons. We applaud the city for taking important steps to reduce plastic pollution.

Voice your support prior to the City Council's second reading of the ordinance! Send written comments to the Goleta City Council at [cityclerkgroup@cityofgoleta.org](mailto:cityclerkgroup@cityofgoleta.org) before September 6.

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## WATER QUALITY FIELDWORK WITH STUDENTS FROM VENTURA HIGH SCHOOL

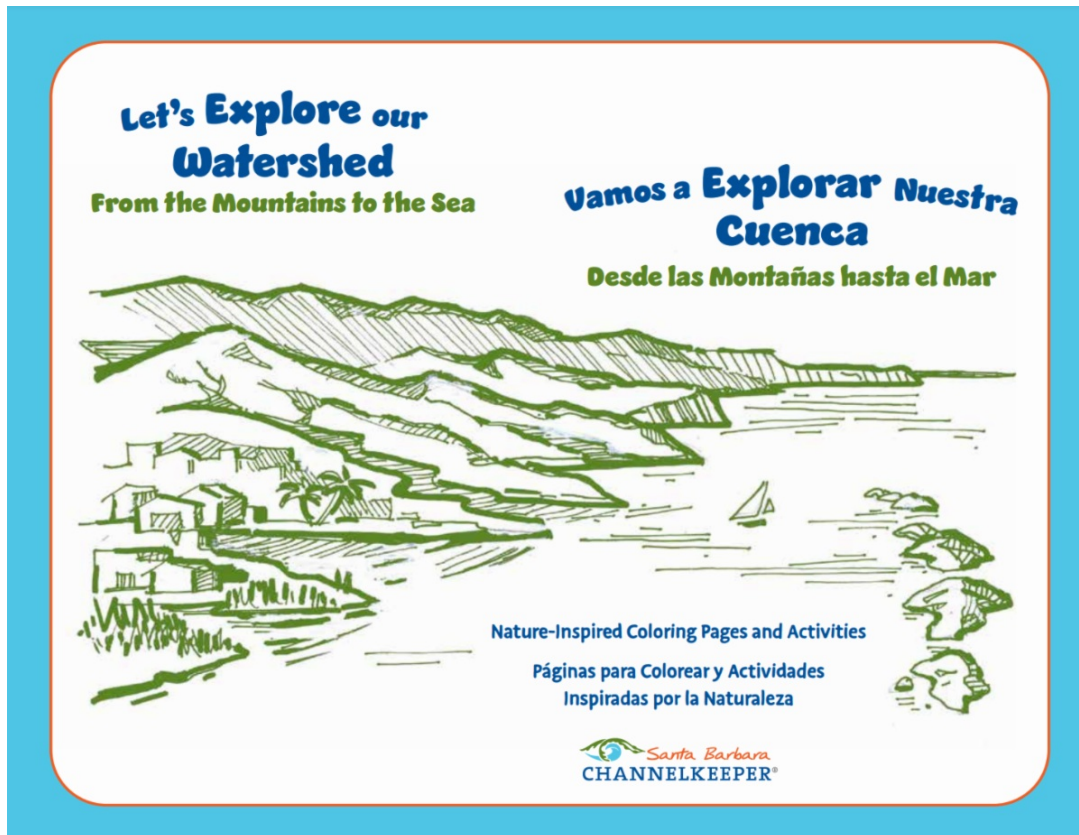
With the return of school, Channelkeeper is working with students from Ventura High School's Field Studies class, training them in water quality monitoring at sites along the Ventura River. We meet once a week for two hours of fieldwork during the school day.

Ventura High School Field Studies students are learning practical skills, such as how to calibrate water quality meters. They are setting up and deploying data loggers that collect continuous dissolved oxygen and temperature data. They are also learning about the parameters of their data collection for dissolved

oxygen, pH, conductivity, turbidity, bacteria, and flow rate insights.

Following our in-the-field data collection, the students will analyze the data to see if the different sites meet the water quality objectives for the Ventura River.

Working with these students to educate and inspire the next generation of environmental stewards is an important part of Channelkeeper's education program.



## CHANNELKEEPER PUBLISHES BILINGUAL ACTIVITY BOOK

This summer, to enrich our watershed curriculum, we worked with local artist Whitney Brooks Abbott to produce a bilingual watershed activity book filled with coloring pages and fun puzzles.

The book connects students to their watershed, introduces them to wildlife, and engages them in the process of keeping the environment clean. The text reveals how water moves through the watershed as well as the influence that humans can have on the environment. It inspires natural wonder and empowers students to take positive action.

As an added bonus, curious young explorers can scan the QR code for hands-on watershed activities on sbck.org. Channelkeeper received funding support through the California Coastal Commission's Whale Tail grant.

Printed booklets are available at Channelkeeper's office or you can download a copy below.

[Download & Print](#)





### **WATERSHED BRIGADE'S MICROTRASH CHALLENGE** **Coastal Cleanup Day - September 17th**

We hope you'll join us for the Microtrash Challenge at West Beach on Saturday, September 17th from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm!

For this Coastal Cleanup Day event, we'll meet in person to collect litter, paying special attention to pieces of microtrash. Any litter smaller than a golf ball can be considered microtrash, from tiny wrappers to water bottle caps, styrofoam bits, and discarded pieces of packaging and plastic.

Volunteers of all ages can join in the fun. There will be giveaway prizes for participants! Find more information and sign up below.

We encourage volunteers to bring their own gloves, buckets, and kitchen strainers for collecting microtrash, but we will also have cleanup supplies available at the event.

[Sign Up](#)

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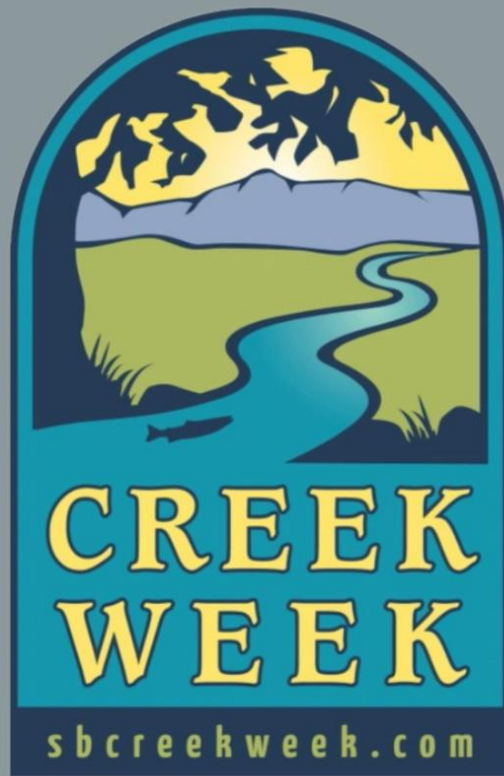
## HONORING THE VENTURA RIVER ON WORLD RIVERS DAY September 26

World Rivers Day provides an opportunity to celebrate our beloved waterways, recognize their value, and advance our stewardship. Rivers everywhere face an array of threats today and our very own Ventura River is in peril.

For twenty years, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper has advocated on the Ventura River's behalf to stop the City of Ventura from pumping it dry and establish flow thresholds to restore flows and ensure the river's health and ecological richness. We're pleased to report that our advocacy is making a difference by helping river ecosystems survive and allowing our community to enjoy the restorative power of the river.

In honor of **World Rivers Day, September 26**, we invite you to learn more about Channelkeeper's advocacy on behalf of the Ventura River and take a moment to reflect on the value of our beloved waterways.

[Read Blog](#)



**CELEBRATE CREEK WEEK 2022**  
**September 17 - 24**

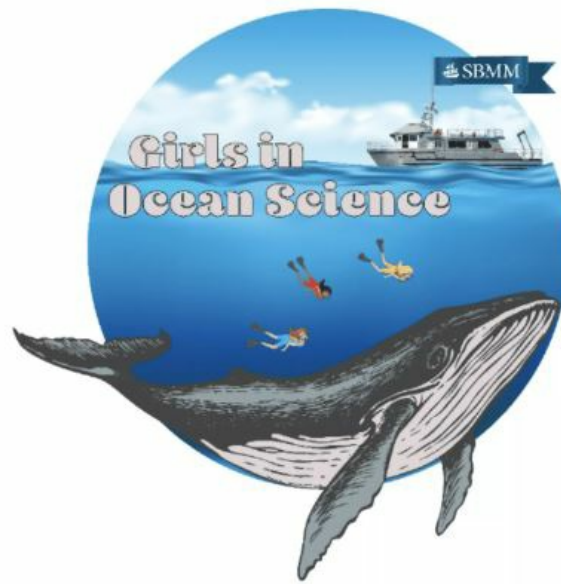
Creek Week is an annual community event celebrating our local creeks and ocean, with many groups sponsoring events throughout the week to help build awareness and stewardship of the natural riparian treasures of the South Coast. Creek Week is hosted by the Santa Barbara City Creeks Division, Project Clean Water, and the cities of Carpinteria and Goleta.

The fun begins on Saturday, September 17th with Coastal Cleanup Day and there are opportunities throughout the week to join in restoration project tours, beach and creek cleanups, and much more! With a week of outdoor events and virtual talks, there is something for everyone!

[Creek Week Events](#)

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## GIRLS IN OCEAN SCIENCE CONFERENCE 2022 October 1-2

Channelkeeper is thrilled to be part of the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum's conference again this year. The Girls in Ocean Science (GiOS) Conference will connect influential, female ocean experts with local students who are interested in ocean science. The goal is to encourage and empower young women to explore maritime and ocean science-based fields of study and careers.

The conference brings together bright minds to create idea-focused conversations and hands-on experiences that foster learning, inspiration, and wonder. Throughout the two-day program, female experts will share their lives, careers, and interests with local high-school students.

Participating student scientists will spend time conducting research in labs and on the water aboard a local vessel. Young women who love science or are just beginning to show an interest will come away empowered to explore the field further.

This wonderful event is sponsored by Steinmetz Family Foundation and scholarships are available.

[Learn More](#)

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## HELP CHANNELKEEPER WITH CLEAN WATER OUTREACH

Channelkeeper engages with the community at several local events to share information about our work to protect and restore the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds. We need volunteers to help out in the Channelkeeper booth at these events. This role involves speaking to interested community members about clean water issues and Channelkeeper's work and signing up new members and volunteers. Our most recent outreach occurred at the Pacific Pride Festival.

This fall, we are looking for volunteers to help out at the Harbor & Seafood Festival on Saturday, October 15th between 10 am and 5 pm. Volunteer shifts are approximately two to three hours each and we ask that volunteers attend a virtual training workshop beforehand to familiarize themselves with our current efforts. Email [penny@sbck.org](mailto:penny@sbck.org) if you'd like to learn more and help out at the festival.

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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  
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