

SOUTHERN
CALIFORNIA
ASSOCIATION OF
MARINE
INVERTEBRATE
TAXONOMISTS



July–December, 2015

SCAMIT Newsletter

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Aperture and lateral views of *Pseudomelatoma* sp
 OC1 Barwick 2014
 (Bight 2013 Station 9161, 17JUL2013, 50m)

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The SCAMIT newsletter is not deemed to be a valid publication for formal taxonomic purposes.

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13 JULY AND 2 SEPTEMBER 2015, BIGHT'13 QC RECONCILIATION, LACSD

The July and September 2015 SCAMIT meetings were related to the Southern California Bight Regional Monitoring Program (Bight'13) infaunal identification QC. They continued the Bight'13 re-identification/reconciliation meetings that began in June and reported in NL Vol. 34, No. 1.

As before, these meetings involved comparison and review of the many species reported by the originating taxonomist and re-identified by a secondary (QC) taxonomist.

Taxonomists representing each of the seven laboratories participating in

Bight'13 infaunal taxonomy attended these meetings. This effort is wide-ranging and extremely beneficial for validating reported data and helping taxonomists reconcile their identifications, and providing SCAMIT with direction for future meetings and areas of taxonomic intercalibration in need of work.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Visit the SCAMIT website at: www.scamit.org for the latest upcoming meetings announcements.

27 OCTOBER & 1 DECEMBER 2015, SYNOPTIC DATA REVIEW MEETING, SCCWRP

The October and December 2015 meetings were used for the Synoptic Data Review (SDR) of the polychaete and non-polychaete data, respectively. At these meetings the regional infauna data – species data summarized by abundance, frequency of occurrence, laboratory, and habitat – are compared for the entire Bight survey. Differences in reported species that were not discovered through the re-identification/reconciliation process are discussed and resolved, and



Participants of December 2015 non-polychaete Synoptic Data Review meeting, hosted by the Los Angeles County Sanitation District Marine Biology Laboratory. From left to right: Wendy Enright, Dean Pasko, Megan Lilly, Kelvin Barwick, Terra Petry, Greg Lyon, Chase McDonald, Larry Lovell, David Gillett, Nick Haring, Matt Hill, Katie Beauchamp, Erin Oderlin, Danny Tang, Robin Gartman, Tony Phillips (hiding behind RG), Ken Sakamoto, Laura Terriquez, Ron Velarde, Don Cadien



data is consolidated as necessary to ensure a uniform treatment of taxa across all laboratories and habitats. Following this meeting and the conclusion of the resulting data changes, the final dataset is generated and data analysis may begin in earnest. Stay tuned for the report documenting the benthic conditions in the Southern California Bight. Previous reports from Bight'94, Bight'98, Bight'03 and Bight'08 can be found at www.sccwrp.org (Research Areas/Regional Monitoring).

12 SEPTEMBER 2015, SCAMIT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ANNUAL MEETING

Attendees: Don Cadien, Dean Pentcheff, Larry Lovell, Dean Pasko, Erin Oderlin, and Leslie Harris

Larry began the meeting by describing the year's three biggest accomplishments. The Bight'13 meetings were a huge success in terms of voucher confirmations, collaboration on specimens for FID (further identification), and generally getting people together to discuss the taxonomy of local species. Finally, the clean-up of the Taxonomy Toolbox has begun and we have had several meetings that addressed certain taxa (e.g., sipunculids, ascidians). The Taxonomic Database Tool is on the web, along with a User's Guide. The Database Tool has seen a lot of use from Don who is using it extensively for his arthropod reviews; but has otherwise been underutilized. This fact generated discussion about how to turn that around. Leslie asked about whether a Google search hits the Database Tool? It does not. Dean Pentcheff mentioned that it can be engineered to have Google "hit" the database tool by telling Google how to "find" it more easily. We also discussed putting the Tool more prominently on the website, and continuing to foster its usage. Hopefully with its more prominent position on the SCAMIT webpage, members will be encouraged to begin using the tool.

Dean Pentcheff also mentioned that Regina Wetzer and he are embarking on a new taxonomic project focusing on marine invertebrates, now that their involvement in the insect study at the NHMLAC is complete. This new focus has several goals in common with SCAMIT's. Generally, Regina wishes to create a single point of reference for SCB marine invertebrate taxonomy. Such a direction might align well with the SCAMIT Database Tool. We discussed setting up a separate meeting to talk about how the two organizations' goals may overlap. Don asked whether such a partnership might require SCAMIT to reconsider its limitation of reporting monitoring data and agency records, etc. Dean Pentcheff countered that the effort didn't require such a change, that he and Regina have an idea to create a system that meets needs at multiple levels and different purposes. Larry brought up the past efforts between SCAMIT and CBRAT, the more recent efforts involving Dancing Coyote Environmental, and the potential for coordination across several groups, in particular the possibility of having the NHMLAC host the CBRAT website.

Larry closed his remarks with a comment about succession of leadership within SCAMIT. How can we encourage and develop members to fill-in as the old guard begins to retire? We need folks to take the lead on generating taxonomic information and leading workshops, as well as taking on SCAMIT leadership positions (e.g., president, secretary, etc.). This led to some general discussion and a wonderful segue to Vice President Leslie's summary of SCAMIT meetings.

Leslie noted that she has been having problems getting volunteers, other than the usual suspects, to lead meetings, and those folks are beginning to burn out. We're continuing to address the Taxonomic Toolbox, which has training benefits, fitting within SCAMIT's mission and goals. However, one suggestion was to try to foster a mentorship approach where new and old guard team to lead a meeting on a particular topic. Since Erin, a taxonomist-in-training, was present



as the new Treasurer, there was some discussion (reassurance) that the person leading a meeting need not be the expert on a problem. Rather he/she need only be a conductor/facilitator of a meeting. Leslie suggested bringing data to a meeting (e.g., morphometrics data on species variability as a topic for discussion). Dean Pentcheff suggested that perhaps focused topics (genus- or species-level topics) might be more helpful and less intimidating. Erin suggested that “problem-driven” meetings vs. taxa-driven ones might also be helpful. She noticed that their training with different taxonomists from different agencies has been an eye opener as to approaches, etc. More general questions were discussed, such as variability of character states and discussions about how to address that variability. Other ideas that might foster helpful discussion include when to pull back on your identification and when to move forward with erecting a provisional species. We also discussed the need to encourage the “old guard” to speak slowly, and at a level less technically intimidating to introductory level taxonomists. Sometimes we get stuck in the minutia and lost in esoteric topics, forgetting that others less familiar with the taxa under discussion may not be following along very well. In the end, we asked Erin if she, Greg Lyon, and Craig Campbell could come up with a set of questions that might form good discussion topics. Don then suggested that one topic for a meeting could be “How does an organism’s natural history and ecology show in its taxonomy?”

Generally, however, Larry noted that the Taxonomic Toolbox efforts can go on for years, and create good topics for SCAMIT meetings in the absence of specific taxonomic workshops.

Dean Pasko suggested that one of our failings of leadership is following up on the Action Items generated at different meetings. For example we’ve not followed up well on the action items from the toolbox meetings. So Dean was given the task of getting the Action Items from toolbox meetings and forwarding them on to Larry and Leslie for consolidation and follow up. [Editor’s note: I’m working on it!]

That topic led to the Secretary’s summary of the status of the Newsletters (NL). Dean provided the Executives with a table summarizing the status of each NL. Larry commented that we used to get summaries from the presenters in the past, which then became incorporated into the NL minutes. In other words, presenters provided their own minutes, and the Secretary’s job was to compile, edit, and publish. We had some discussion on the best way to handle this topic. Dean noted that he has made an effort to send out draft minutes to the presenter and other primary players soon after the workshop as a substitute for the presenter having to produce a set of minutes. In the end we noted that we should make sure that each presenter provide his/her meeting notes (talking points and presentation) to the Secretary, and that Dean should continue to get draft minutes out quickly for review.

We also recognized the difficult nature of producing the meeting minutes over the past two years due to the many Bight-related meetings, often three and four per 2-month period and involving detailed discussion on individual species, provisional species, etc. This led to discussion of how to deal with the provisional nature of the “voucher/ID sheets” that were created for Bight’13 and presented at the meetings. It was suggested that we include a 2-slide/page pdf of various presentations for inclusion in the NLS, as long as the presenters give their permission. Consequently Dean was assigned the Action Item to get approval for release of the various Bight’13 presentations to the web or in NLS.

In addition, we decided that Larry and Dean should remind each presenter that they will get a set of minutes for review, in a timely manner, and ask them to kindly edit and return them within a week.



Dean Pentcheff, our Webmaster, said “The website is working!” noting that he was happy to continue working as Webmaster. He commented that the recent problem of the SCAMIT email server at LACSD is solvable. [Note from Larry: It was solved by Dean!] He also noted that the Taxonomic Toolbox updates would be no problem, and with the completion of the insect effort at the NHMLAC, his time will be freed-up a little. He never did pursue a website to host the taxonomic images, and that turned out to be a good thing given our discussions of following a different path for hanging images in the website and toolbox.

Don mentioned that the hierarchy of the toolbox is in need of an update to reflect the changes in higher level classifications. Dean explained how the original construct/agreement included linking the hierarchy of the toolbox to the taxonomy in the taxonomic database (still in Ed 7); but the database has never been updated because the two are not linked. There was considerable discussion of the efforts required to synchronize the two.

Our new Treasurer, Erin Oderlin, summarized our financial and membership status. SCAMIT has over 150 paying members – though some are asking where the NLs are – and that we still have \$7,000 of potential publication grant money available. There was discussion [again] of how to make that money more available to members with better advertising! Dean Pentcheff thought he could do something more prominent on the website and in the toolbox advertising the availability of this money for out of pocket costs; illustrators, page charges, open access fees, and other direct expenses to those interested in publishing taxonomic information. Our Database fund has \$3,267 still left in it. One proposal, to which Leslie quickly volunteered, is to pay some pre-determined amount to update or prepare voucher sheets identified in the Taxonomic Toolbox meetings as being in need of fixing. This idea didn’t get too much traction, however, and we concluded the discussion of the treasury with the idea that overall we’re in good financial shape.

Larry brought up the idea of SCAMIT’s investment CD, and that Erin continue to research how we might ladder them to build interest on monies not being utilized. We had just rolled over a 9-month CD and could purchase another when the time was right. Our expenses from last year were <\$1,000, and we brought-in more than that from membership; However, we had less printing costs than in years past, so that surplus could be a little misleading.

Dean Pentcheff discussed the collaborative university/researcher effort that he and Regina have been developing with UCLA and, more recently, with USC researchers and students. It is similar to partnerships that entrepreneurs do with college engineering students. Their experience with UCLA was excellent, and USC has job experience and research-oriented efforts that they are working with now. Dean thought SCAMIT might be able to develop a partnership to help move along the Database Tool or Taxonomic Toolbox efforts. He volunteered to pursue discussions with UCLA and USC principals for potential collaborations with SCAMIT.

Don summarized the efforts of the Species Review Committee. The Committee was able to get Ed 10 of the List out with only a slight delay. There should be little significant changes in Ed 11, or the process. But Don said that there will have to be another Editor to the Species List, as he may not be able to do it much longer. Once the database synchronization is complete, the Species List editing and new list creation could become much easier. Management/editing will be easier with most changes coming from the SCAMIT Species List Committee by approval of changes submitted by members. We’re still looking for a July 1 completion of Ed 11. We didn’t implement all the Bight’13 new introductions in Ed 10, but these will be available for addition following the conclusion of the Bight’13 QA meetings.



Before we could finally adjourn, we had an additional discussion of how to handle the taxonomic images that individual SCAMIT members have and how to database those images. We get hung up on the metadata, and the collection system. We revisited Dean Pentcheff's suggestion about bringing in someone from one of the local schools and use the database money to reimbursement the students for fuel, food, and associated costs, while not necessarily providing "pay" for the intern. We need to develop a plan with specific constraints and requirements so that the effort is clear. The NHMLAC-USC effort will begin in the January/February timeframe, but we would first need to develop a list of constraints relative to the workload, task someone with being the single point of contact for oversight, and have the student work to develop the scope according to their ability and time.

Dean Pentcheff then discussed the issues that arose with Guelph (Biodiversity of Life Data Systems, Biodiversity Institute of Ontario, University of Guelph) and the SCCWRP-SCAMIT-Guelph effort that had fallen through years ago. He announced that they are now able to use barcoding technology to identify species and communities. They have made significant efforts towards getting over the backload of stalled projects that were due to the Canadian government taking a more conservative approach to funding (allowing only Canadian-based enterprises to receive government money, not foreign). Consequently many international efforts were abruptly discontinued. Guelph is processing about a million specimens/year now.

He mentioned that Regina and he would be approaching SCAMIT and SCCWRP to backfill the barcoding database that had been developed. Don mentioned that many agencies had continued to collect EtOH preserved materials for this purpose Larry raised the issue of the agencies being asked to help get specimens via their interaction with SCCRWRP and the Annual Research Plan.

As it was now approaching 3:15 PM and we had started at 11:30 AM, it was time to adjourn...so we did!



SCAMIT Treasury Summary

2014 – 2015

Below is the treasurer’s report for 2014-15. Once again we are **not** raising dues thanks to so much continued support from all of you! We have over 150 members across the US and worldwide. SCAMIT did not award any publication grants this past year but we have funds to do so. Please help get the word out that these funds are available. As stipulated in our grant policy, we have **\$6,806.43** or 25% of our operating budget of \$27,225.71, excluding database funds, available for publication grants this year. The taxonomic database tools on our website were maintained by our webmaster. The database expense totaled \$480.00

Account Balances (as of 4/29/15)

Checking	\$16,998.88
Certificate of Deposit	\$10,018.90
Cash	\$207.93
Database Fund	\$3,267.05
Total	\$30,492.76

INCOME

2014 Membership dues	\$1,870.00
Interest from CD	\$5.99
Total	\$1,875.99

EXPENSES (GENERAL ACCOUNT)

Meeting refreshments	\$186.13
Annual Luncheon	\$160.00
Website Content & Design	\$480.00
Total	\$826.13



Please visit the SCAMIT Website at: www.scamit.org

SCAMIT OFFICERS

If you need any other information concerning SCAMIT please feel free to contact any of the officers at their e-mail addresses:

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The SCAMIT newsletter is published every two months and is distributed freely to members in good standing. Membership is \$15 for an electronic copy of the newsletter, available via the web site at www.scamit.org, and \$30 to receive a printed copy via USPS. Institutional membership, which includes a mailed printed copy, is \$60. All correspondences can be sent to the Secretary at the email address above or to:

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