

**Blue Ocean Society for Marine Conservation**

A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to inspiring passion in people to conserve the marine environment, through education and research in New England.

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## This Season's Surprising Sightings



By Dianna Schulte

At the beginning of each whale watch trip, our naturalists and interns discuss with our guests which animals we may see during the trip. Typically, we mention fin, humpback and minke whales along with Atlantic white sided dolphins- the four most commonly sighted species of marine mammals near Jeffreys Ledge in the Gulf of Maine.

This year threw us for a loop. We began our season by seeing an Atlantic bottlenose dolphin during the very first trip! Although these animals are commonly seen near the shore in the



A rare (to us) sperm whale seen during summer 2010! Photo: Dianna Schulte

southeast U.S., another form of the species, known as the offshore form, is found north of North Carolina, but typically much further offshore: in the Gulf Stream and along the edge of the continental shelf (over 200 miles from our coast).

As the summer progressed, normalcy seemed to dominate most of June and July. Humpback whales were scattered about, fin whales surprised us with some amazing feeding displays from time to time, and the dolphins were seen regularly. The season was looking like it would be comparable to others. Until...

**Where did all these right whales come from?**

One here, and another there. Before we knew it, the areas where we had been watching our fin, humpback and minke whales were taken over by this critically endangered species! Only about 425 right whales remain, so seeing just one from a distance is thrilling. But as August went on, seeing the distinctive V-shaped blow in the distance was becoming more of the norm. Why were these right whales here and not in the Bay of Fundy, where they are typically known to be during that time of year? We had plenty of plankton for them to eat but does that



Atlantic White-sided Dolphin. Photo: Jen Kennedy

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### Surprising sightings, cont. from page 1

mean the Bay of Fundy didn't have as much? So many questions...

In the midst of all these right whales, we saw many sei whales. Then another type of whale that used to be commonly sighted but now is rare was back in the neighborhood! Pilot whales! Though pods of these whales were only seen twice, it gives us hope that pilot whales won't be strangers anymore.

So you may think seeing an offshore bottlenose dolphin, a critically endangered species (right whales) regularly and a species that used to be a regular but now is not (pilot whales) would be the most amazing events of the season, but you would be wrong. More surprises waited.

Our eyes couldn't believe what they were seeing next. During 13 separate trips, between August 18 and September 18, our incredibly lucky passengers witnessed the extremely rare sighting of a sperm whale- the largest toothed whale! This was absolutely incredible and a sight most people will never have



Sei Whale. Photo: Melanie White

the chance to see. The last sperm whale sighting on Jeffreys Ledge was in 1995- the year I started my career in whale watching. Two or three sperm whales were seen on August 18, but soon, only one remained in the area. He was seen only sporadically and taking 20-45 minute dives and a bit difficult to wait for. After nearly three weeks of no sightings of this rare, pelagic visitor we thought he was long gone until the morning of September 18

when we saw him yet again!

All of these sightings of rare whales are humbling. We think we know what we should be seeing, but the whales certainly do not live by our rules or ideas. Every day is a different experience and a reminder that we still have so much to learn.

**View photos and trip reports at <http://whalesightings.blogspot.com/>**

## What's the SCOOP?



By Steven Johnson

Look out for the upcoming articles, posters, and events for our latest conservation campaign, SCOOP, or the Seacoast Canine Owners Outreach Program. We're hoping this project, funded by the NH Department of Environmental Services, will be a Seacoast-wide phenomenon by next summer.

SCOOP, in a word, is all about poop. Namely dog poop. Or, to be technical about it, pet waste. The pet waste that's left behind on our beaches is made up almost entirely of E. coli bacteria, which can cause serious health and



environmental hazards if left to biodegrade in the sand.

We're hoping that we can count on our supporters and the dog owners of the Seacoast to help protect our marine environment and volunteer for upcoming community events, video presentations and fundraisers to help prevent pet waste.

We'll need canine models to represent Scoopy Doo, SCOOP's official campaign mascot. **Think your dog is cute enough to be in movies, or be featured online with their own bio? We want to hear from you!**

For more information on how you can help, contact Steve Johnson, Special Projects Coordinator at [steve@blueoceansociety.org](mailto:steve@blueoceansociety.org) or 603-431-0260.

## Adoption Updates

Adoptable animals seen this season:

### Finbacks

Fjord  
Ladder

### Humpbacks

Owl (with calf!)  
Pinball  
Satula

### Stripes

Dolphins were sighted 36% of the trips this year, as compared to 20-25% in an average year!

### Gills

Basking sharks were seen 32 times this year.

### Sunny

Ocean sunfish were seen 13 times this year.

**Adopt a marine creature at [www.blueoceansociety.org](http://www.blueoceansociety.org)**

## 16-Year Old Helps Marine Life With New Campaign

Here Andrew Hayford, a junior in York High School, in York, ME, discusses his experiences working on an ocean pollution campaign with Blue Ocean Society for Marine Conservation, which was funded by a grant from the National Environmental Education Foundation.



I started my project with a presentation to kindergarten and 2nd-graders about the importance of our oceans.

We talked about what types of trash hurt marine life and what we could do about it ~ take care of our planet and ask people to pick up after themselves!

Four classes created original artwork that depicted an ocean theme. I was really amazed at their talent!

We selected the winning entries, and Blue Ocean Society brought their inflatable fin whale to the school and did a presentation to all of the students to thank them.

The artwork was incorporated into decals and we asked businesses to participate in our "Keep Our Beaches Clean Campaign" and post the decals. We also asked them to pledge to do actions from an "ocean-friendly" checklist, which included things like using 'take only what you need' signs, not using pesticides or even helping with a beach cleanup. Just about every business that I visited put up a decal.

A couple of businesses really stood out as being ocean-friendly. **Lucia's Kitchen** was adamant about not using Styrofoam, and using eco-friendly takeout containers. She keeps all of her utensils and napkins behind the counter to limit unnecessary use. She also has real-

ly good homemade chicken pot pie!

I also met with Judd Knox, the President of **York Hospital**. He talked about the hospital's use of environmentally-friendly products, and said there's really no difference in cost anymore, and no excuse for not using them.

I'm really proud of all the businesses that joined our ocean-friendly campaign. The Town of York also incorporated the children's pictures into signs about our smoke-free beaches, which in turn reduced our cigarette butt litter.

My favorite parts of the campaign:

- I really liked meeting people in the businesses and was somewhat surprised to find that many businesses are already incorporating eco-friendly practices both to do the right thing for our environment, but also to be competitive.
- It wasn't hard to find businesses in York that could do 5 things on our checklist. I'm wondering if this is just York, or if all businesses are becoming eco-savvy.
- I really liked working with my former teachers in the elementary school and their students. The students are really receptive, and if they learn the right things to do about our environment when they're young, it stays with them the rest of their lives.



Andrew (at right) with students displaying their winning artwork in front of our inflatable whale.

**Here's all of the businesses that earned the ocean-friendly title (in order of sign-up). Thank You!**

Roast Cafe & Bistro, Cape Neddick  
 The Marketplace, Cape Neddick  
 Cat N Nine Tails, Cape Neddick  
 Lucia's Kitchen, Cape Neddick  
 Cape Neddick Lobster Pound,  
 Cape Neddick  
 Shore Road Market, Cape Neddick  
 Coastal Elementary School, York  
 Village Elementary School, York  
 Columbarry House, Cape Neddick  
 Cranberry Hill Antiques Custom  
 Lighting, Cape Neddick  
 Freedom Salon & Spa, York  
 Hannaford's Supermarkets, York  
 York Hospital, York  
 Caldwell Banker Realty, York  
 Pie in the Sky, Cape Neddick  
 Sunrise Hotel, York Beach  
 The Grand View, York Beach  
 The Sea Latch Motor Inn, York Beach  
 The Oceanside Store, York Beach

**We're hoping to expand this campaign next year. If you're interested in becoming involved, contact Andrew at [andrewblueocean@yahoo.com](mailto:andrewblueocean@yahoo.com), or visit [www.blueoceansociety.org](http://www.blueoceansociety.org)!**



The seven winning decals from all four York Elementary School classes

**Blue Ocean Society for Marine Conservation**

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**Visit us online!**  
**[www.blueoceansociety.org](http://www.blueoceansociety.org)**

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## Upcoming Events

**Saturday, October 16**

**Beach Cleanup**

10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Jenness Beach, Rye, NH

*All supplies provided, Volunteers are encouraged to bring work gloves and a travel mug.*



*Atlantic White-Sided Dolphin Calf.  
Photo: Dianna Schulte*

**Wednesday, November 10**

**Blue Ocean Holiday Social**

5:30-7:30 p.m.

The Press Room

77 Daniel Street, Portsmouth, NH

**Saturday, November 13**

**Beach Cleanup & Food Drive**

10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Jenness Beach, Rye, NH

*We'll be collecting donations for area food pantries! All supplies provided, Volunteers are encouraged to bring work gloves and a travel mug.*

**Saturday, December 4**

**Beach Cleanup & Food Drive**

10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Jenness Beach, Rye, NH

*We'll be collecting donations for area food pantries! All supplies provided, Volunteers are encouraged to bring work gloves and a travel mug.*

### Join Us for the Blue Ocean Holiday Social!

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**Wed., Nov. 10, 2010**

**5:30-7:30**

**The Press Room**

**77 Daniel St.**

**Portsmouth, NH**  
.....

- ~ Meet our staff
- ~ Hear about our successful season and future plans
- ~ View the season's best photos
- ~ Free appetizers
- ~ Cash bar
- ~ Blue Ocean Society merchandise available for your holiday shopping!