

newsletter of the Southwest Marine/Aquatic Educators' Association

2008 Summer

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Tales from an NMEA Rookie(s): From Georgia's Grits and Collard Greens to California's Artichokes and Garlic

So our first NMEA conference was a success! Three of us from the Monterey Bay Aquarium flew to Georgia with fresh eyes and few expectations. Our goals were to enjoy the experience (and see alligators in the wild!) while absorbing as much wisdom as possible from the GAME crew who hosted the conference this year. I felt like we achieved both goals by the time we flew back to California.

There were many conference highlights. One was the collaboration that came from the conference. Meeting other marine educators from all over the country was exciting and inspiring. The meetings and betweensession chats were very useful and enjoyable. Many of the sessions were great as well. We benefitted from a presentation on plankton (as we are developing a new plankton school program) and participated in hands-on activities from Population Connection. I went to a couple of very useful sessions on the use of real-time data in curriculum. COSEE had many great presenters as well.

The entertainment, evening activities and field trips also added a lot to our experience at the conference. I heard the McIntosh County Shouters were extraordinary. Though I missed their show, my coworkers both bought their CD because they enjoyed them so much. Janisse Ray, author of "Ecology of a Cracker Childhood," was also a big hit. Reviews of her talk and book signing included words like "enriching" and "inspiring." The soiree on Skidaway Island was entertaining. The behind-thescenes tour of the local aquarium/marine center was interesting, too. There we held a baby alligator and various snakes. The blackwater paddling trip we chose for our field trip was an adventure. Who knew the term "blackwater" comes from the high amounts tannic acid in the oak trees that color the water?

Fast forward to NMEA 2009 in (continued on page 6...)

from the President -

Greetings SWMEA Members,

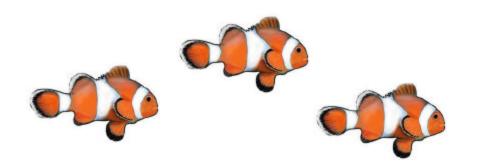
During these "lazy days" of summer, news is a little slow, but there are a few interesting articles/inserts to this month's newsletter you won't want to miss.

The first being information about the 2009 NMEA conference. As many of you know the location and dates have been changed. The new dates are June 29 - July 3rd, 2009. The new location is Asilomar Conference Grounds in Pacific Grove, California- not a bad second choice! In fact, I think this location will be perfect for our One World Conserving One Ocean theme.

The second is a short article on the South Coast Project of the California Marine Protection Act Initiative. The article and included hand-out give a brief overview to the purpose, process and public involvement aspects of the initiative. There are several Southern California-based SWMEA organizations and individuals involved in this initiative. It is and will continue to be a "hot topic" for our audiences, so it is in our best interest to stay well informed on this issues.

Please enjoy the other wonderful articles and activities in this quarter's newsletter and remember your contributions are what make our newsletter great. Without your continued submissions and support SWMEA (actually, Steven) wouldn't be able to generate a newsletter at all. Encourage your co-workers, peers and friends to submit articles, activities, resources, updates, and photos-often and early!

Thank you, Kristin SWMFA President



SWMEA Connection Call for Articles

We hope you enjoy the Summer edition of your SWMEA Connection newsletter. We encourage all members to contribute articles and other news regarding your facilities and what's happening in your neck of the woods (or desert or ocean, wherever you may be)!

The Fall edition of the SWMEA Connection is scheduled for a mid-November completion. It's never too soon to start thinking about items you would like to submit for inclusion. send any articles to Kellie at kkorhonen@dolphinquest.org or to me at sschenk@mandalaybay.com. Kellie and I both look forward to receiving your contributions, and to making the SWMEA Connection the most informative, interesting, and best looking newsletter out there!

Sincerely,

Steven and Kellie

California's Marine Protection Act Initiative - South Coast Project

Written by Emily Welborn, San Diego Coastkeeper

The Earth and its ocean are treasured resources that we must care for. For example, the ocean is not a limitless resource as we once imagined. Some compelling evidence of this observation includes:

- * Some fish populations in California are depleted to less than ten percent of historic levels, and many may take 50-100 years to recover to healthy, sustainable levels. If current conditions persist, some never will.
- * Almost 70 percent of kelp forests, key breeding habitat for healthy fish populations, have vanished in the last 50 years.
- * Fishermen are now catching less than half of what they did in 1990 and the fish they do catch are 45 percent smaller.

Our work as members of SWMEA is to bring information about these natural treasures directly to the people of California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, and beyond, to instill a responsibility to protect the ocean for future generations. Below is an outline of some important information regarding marine protected areas, the Marine Life Protection Act, and how you, as ocean advocates and educators, can get our public and student audiences involved in marine conservation.

Marine Protected Areas Marine protected areas (MPAs) are areas of coastal ocean (within three miles of shore) protected for the health of marine ecosystems. There are three types of MPAs that determine the amount of protection and the types of extraction activities allowed:

- * Marine conservation areas some recreational activities are permitted for take
- * Marine parks recreational fishing for certain species is allowed
- * Marine reserves fish, wildlife and habitat are protected from all fishing and resource extraction

A network of MPAs would ensure protection of entire marine ecosystems as opposed to fishing regulations that just protect a single species. Marine protected areas are supported by a wide coalition of local residents, marine biologists, divers, and ocean conservationists because they are a proven tool to replenish fish populations and restore the health of the ocean. These protected areas result in more diverse, abundant and larger marine animals and ecosystems further providing a more reliable source of food for larger animals such as marine mammals, sharks, and even humans.

Marine Life Protection Act

In 1999, California adopted the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA), the first state law in the nation requiring a comprehensive network of marine protect-

ed areas based on scientific knowledge and local expertise. After five years of delay, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger launched the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative in 2004 making implementation a state priority. The MLPA Initiative established a plan for MPA design in five phases by geographic area with the goal of statewide implementation of the law by 2011.

The initial phase (the South Central Coast) was completed in September 2007. MPA planning for the second phase (North Central Coast) is nearly complete and awaiting approval of the Fish and Game Commission. The launch of the third phase in the South Coast was announced on December 6, 2007. The fourth phase will be the North Coast followed by the fifth phase, San Francisco Bay.

The Process of Implementing the MLPA Initiative

The main groups involved in implementing the MLPA Initiative include the regional stakeholder group, the Science Advisory Team, the Blue Ribbon Task Force, and the Fish and Game Commission. The regional stakeholder group for each region is composed of community members with a diversity of perspectives including fishing interests, non-consumptive recreational users, educators, (continued next page...)

representatives of state and federal agencies and conservation representatives. The regional stakeholder group relies on public input and participation to effectively consider all perspectives and offer their advice regarding MPA network design to the Blue Ribbon Task Force.

Another group crucial to the MLPA implementation process is the Science Advisory Team composed of representatives from state agencies, universities and research centers with expertise in biological and social sciences. The charge of this group of experts is to develop scientific guidelines for MPA and network design, identify key habitats to be included in MPAs, species likely to benefit and appropriate size and spacing of MPAs based on scientific guidelines and potential socio-economic impacts. This information is then presented to the Blue Ribbon Task Force.

California's Secretary of Resources. Mike Chrisman. appointed a panel of policy advisors - the California MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) - to oversee implementation of the MLPA Initiative. The bipartisan BRTF is composed of knowledgeable and highly credible public leaders. The MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force is charged with advising the state on a policy framework to guide implementation of the MLPA, providing recommendations on longterm funding, and making specific recommendations for a network of MPAs. Final authority for adopting MPAs under the MLPA remains with the California Fish and Game Commission, appointed by the Governor.

Get Involved

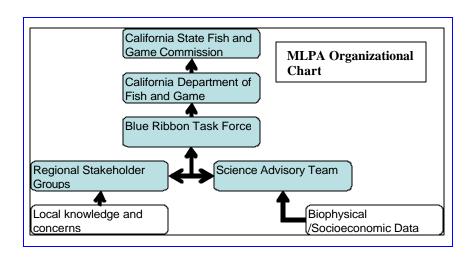
Success of the MLPA Initiatives relies partly on public participation - here is how you can get involved:

- * Visit www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa to voice your opinion and provide input on the MPA implementation process.
- * Stay on top of the process and public meetings by registering for MLPA updates at www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/mailinglist.asp
- * Send an email to the Fish and Game Commission directly to ask for strong ocean protection at www.caloceans.org



Notes

- 1 Pacific Fisheries Management Council, Groundfish Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation documents, 2005-2006.
- 2 Tegner, M.J., et al. Marine Ecological Progress. Series 146: 117, 1997.
- 3 Levin, Philip S. et al. "Shifts in a Pacific Ocean Fish Assemblage: The Potential Influence of Exploitation," Conservation Biology, 2005.



California's Marine Life Protection Act Initiative South Coast Project (2008-2009)

What is the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative? A public-private partnership designed to help the State of California implement the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA), using the best readily available science as well as the advice and assistance of scientists, resource managers, experts, stakeholders and members of the public.

Why this project? The Marine Life Protection Act was signed into law in 1999 and directs the state to redesign California's system of marine protected areas to increase its coherence and effectiveness in protecting the state's marine life and habitats, marine ecosystems, and marine natural heritage, as well as to improve recreational, educational and study opportunities provided by marine ecosystems.

What are marine protected areas? Marine protected areas (MPAs) are named, discrete geographic marine or estuarine areas designed to protect or conserve marine life and habitat. Examples within California that you may be familiar with include Goleta Slough State Marine Park, Painted Cove State Marine Conservation Area, Crystal Cove State Marine Conservation Area and San Elijo Lagoon State Marine Park.

What can I do in a marine protected area? There are three types of MPAs: state marine reserve, state marine park, and state marine conservation area, each with different rules about what activities can or cannot be done within each. In general, marine reserves do not allow any type of extractive activities (including fishing or kelp harvesting), marine parks do not allow any commercial extraction, and marine conservation areas do not allow some combination of commercial and/or recreational extraction.

When and where did the MLPA Initiative start? Redesigning MPAs along California's 1,100 mile coastline is such a large task that a regional approach is being used to implement the MLPA. The implementation of the act will occur in five study regions, in the following order: central coast (Pigeon Point to Point Conception), north central coast (Alder Creek near Point Arena to Pigeon Point), south coast (Point Conception to the California/Mexico border), north coast (California/Oregon border to Alder Creek near Point Arena), and San Francisco Bay (waters within San Francisco Bay, from the Golden Gate Bridge northeast to the Carquinez Bridge). The Central Coast Study Region was the first of these five study regions to complete the MLPA planning and implementation process. In April 2007, the California Fish and Game Commission adopted MPAs for the central coast that will function as part of a statewide network of MPAs. The Commission is now considering MPAs for the North Central Coast Study Region.

What are the basic steps in the MLPA Initiative process? An appointed regional stakeholder group makes proposals for MPAs with advice and guidance from other groups and the public; these proposals are reviewed by a science advisory team, and then by a policy level blue ribbon task force that makes recommendations to the California Fish and Game Commission, the decision-making body under MLPA.

When will the MLPA Initiative be in my area? Planning is getting underway for the South Coast Study Region, which runs from Point Conception to the U.S./Mexico border. Following the south coast will be the North Coast Study Region and then San Francisco Bay Study Region.

How do I get involved in the process? The success of the MLPA Initiative is highly dependent upon the active involvement of stakeholders and the general public in a variety of ways, including a regional stakeholder group, workshops, public meetings, and providing input on documents and MPA proposals as they are developed. The MLPA South Coast Project will afford many opportunities for public involvement, which will begin with a series of workshops in 2008. For more information visit www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa.

Shark Reef Aquarium Celebrates 8th Anniversary With New Exhibit

On June 20th Shark Reef Aquarium celebrated its 8th anniversary with the opening of the new Komodo Dragon exhibit. Currently the Komodo weighs 80 pounds but these beasts can reach 10 feet in length and weigh over 200 pounds. To celebrate his arrival, Starbucks coffee was out in front of the aquarium offering free Komodo Blend coffee to guests, and staff from

Starlight Tattoo offered everyone a free temporary tattoo of the Komodo Dragon.





NMEA continued from page 1

Monterey. As of now, we are in the thick of planning. Asilomar, a picturesque and seaside rustic resort designed by Julia Morgan (an early woman architect, also known for designing Hearst's castle), is going to be an ideal site. We hope you are all as excited about it as we are! Hopefully, you are all going to be involved and will all be able to come. If you have any questions about the conference or how you can play a role, please just email us or call.

And thanks again for all of the support and warmth you all shared with us "rookies." You showed us the spirit of NMEA and really made us feel that it truly is "One World Conserving One Ocean."

Cheers!



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Aquarium of the Pacific's Iliff Infectious Enthusiasm Program

By Sabreena Kasbati, Aquarium of the Pacific



Thanks to the support of donors at the Aquarium of the Pacific, an endowment has been established in honor of Warren Iliff, our first CEO, for his passion for education and conservation. Funds from this endowment are being used to support a new program for teachers -The Iliff Infectious Enthusiasm Program - to inspire the same passion in teachers.

In addition to immersing teachers in the excitement of marine science, teachers gain teaching tools and techniques to develop student interest in marine science in and out of the classroom. The program aims to accomplish this by helping teachers to:

- 1. Enhance their classroom atmosphere with a toolkit provided by the Aquarium containing a supply of lessons, bio-facts and posters for display
- 2. Expand the classroom to the outdoors by providing field trip experience and information to the teacher to give to students
- 3. Learn how to use Aquarium of the Pacific to its fullest potential from its resources for teachers and students and as a field trip destination (each teacher in this program receives a free field trip for their students)
- 4. Create ongoing and lasting interest in marine science

On August 11-13, we conducted the program for the first time. Sophak P. Kong, a 5th grade teacher at James Monroe Elementary in Long Beach, CA, received tours of the aquarium, experienced educator and volunteer work, took field trips kayaking the Newport Back bay and exploring Bolsa Chica Wetlands, experienced a sea lion encounter, worked with educators to develop lesson plans, and received a tool kit of supplies for his classroom.

The Aquarium hopes that this program will not only be of interest to teachers as a unique experience but will provide them with hands-on, useful tools to use in their classroom as well as a theme they are able to integrate in many different lessons in order to share Warren's enthusiasm with their students.



Sophak Kong Kayaking Newport Back bay



Miller, the Sea Lion, and Sophak Kong



June 29 - July 3rd, 2009

Mark your calendars and pack your sweatshirts! One World Conserving One Ocean, hosted by SWMEA, is all about making connections!

The conference will be held at Asilomar Conference Grounds in Pacific Grove, California, the site of the first NMEA National Conference in 1976.

The historic accommodations are reminiscent of the cozy cabins and lodges of a seaside summer camp, nestled in a forest of pines - and a very short walk from beautiful Asilomar Beach.

Sessions and workshops will take advantage of the rich and varied habitats of the Monterey Peninsula and Monterey Bay. In addition to high profile keynote speakers and engaging concurrent sessions, you'll choose one of five full-day field-based workshops focused on the rocky shore, marine mammals, sandy beach, deep sea, coastal wetlands or informal education programs at the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Special evening events will include

- * A bonfire at Asilomar on our first evening together
- * Tuesday night-on-your own at Monterey's Farmers Market and Fisherman's Wharf with an optional bay cruise
- * Our auction event at Asilomar on Wednesday and
- * A luscious dinner at Monterey Bay Aquarium on Thursday.

Optional day-long professional development workshops will be offered on Monday. Field trips, including SCUBA diving, kayaking, historic tours of Point Lobos, visits to local organic farms and wineries, whale watching and bike tours are scheduled for Friday.

The NMEA09 One World Conserving One Ocean website will be live next month: http://www.nmeaweb.org/

Northern California Regional Ocean Sciences Bowl

Your high school is invited to participate in the Northern California Regional Ocean Sciences Bowl, known as the Sea Lion Bowl. The Sea Lion Bowl, formerly known as the Otter Bowl in Monterey Bay, is one of 25 regional academic competitions that make up the National Ocean Sciences Bowl. The NOSB provides a venue for students who excel in math and science to receive regional and national recognition for their diligence and talents while broadening their awareness and understanding of ocean science.

The 2009 Sea Lion Bowl will be held on Saturday, February 21 at San Francisco State University. Sixteen to 18 teams teams will participate in a rigorous, daylong competition. The winning team will receive an allexpense paid trip to the national competition in Washington, DC, April 25-27, 2009. Additional prizes are awarded to the top teams and coaches, and all participants receive t-shirts and educational goody bags.



All Northern California public and private high schools are eligible to compete. A team consists of four active players and one alternate, and one coach. Resources and practice sessions are available to help teams prepare. There is no fee to compete, and some assistance may be available to help selected teams with expenses and preparation.

Volunteers are also needed to help run the competition. Please contact Erin Blackwood at 415-338-3757 or erin70@sfsu.edu for more information on competing or volunteering.



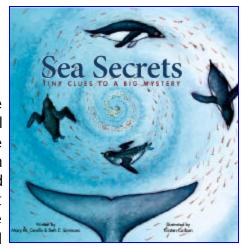
Psst...We've got a Secret..... and we'd like to share it! By: Beth E. Simmons

Sea Secrets: Tiny Clues to a Big Mystery is a new children's book expected to arrive on shelves by September, 2008. It is a story which invites young readers (ages 5 – 10) to join in a scientific research inquiry taking place thousands of miles across the Pacific Ocean. A hidden connection between three uniquely different animals – a seabird, a whale and a penguin exists. The reader, drawn into the fascinating world of science exploration, field-work and ocean discovery, is asked to uncover the link. The journey begins in the California Current and travels down to the polar waters west of the Antarctic Peninsula. Can you find the sea secret that links them all?

Inspired by authentic long-term scientific research from two marine sites -Palmer Station, Antarctica LTER and the California Current Ecosystem LTER - the Pacific Ocean acts as a backdrop to explore two ocean ecosystems and their food webs. Clues are revealed throughout the story to help readers learn basic ecological concepts ranging from the characteristics of animals and changes in the environment to diversity, adaptations, and the interdependence of organisms in the marine environment. The book encourages learning science as an inquiry process and promotes the interconnectedness of all things and their environments.

Today's readers are continually asked to forge new connections between science and their daily lives. Sustaining a sense of wonder and awe through reading continues to be a successful method by which to ignite that curiosity and promote growth in academic achievement. The very act of reading or being read to helps children's vocabulary and general knowledge and assists in promoting a lifetime of literacy experience. (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998).

Funded by the N a t i o n a l S c i e n c e Foundation and endorsed as a product of the International



Polar Year - Sea Secrets: Tiny Clues to a Big Mystery is a vehicle to encourage discussions on more complex topics. These topics can be explored further through a variety of resources. A supplemental activity guide is a growing collection of resources that will encourage further inquiry, taking readers beyond the pages. Aligned with national science standards, the guide will demonstrate the books appeal to a wide-ranging audience from K - 12 grade levels. A website http://cce.lternet.edu/outreach/seasecrets/ will also provide access to teaching and learning resources and will further the books utility. It is filled with kids art, additional photography from the each LTER site, recommended reading lists, downloadable lessons and other creative resources for using art and science to encourage reading.

Simmons (besimmons@ucsd.edu.) Education and Outreach coordinator for Palmer Station Long Term Ecological Research (LTER) and the California Current Ecosystem LTER at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in San Diego, California. She began her career as a teacher in the classroom and she continues to combine science and education to inspire children to explore the ocean.

Sea Secrets: Tiny Clues to a Big Mystery \$16.95 U.S.

Price higher in Canada
ISBN 10: 0-9779603-9-0
ISBN 13: 978-0-9779603-9-2
Text and illustrations . 2008
The Regents of the University of California

Come to Discovery Day at SF State Romberg Tiburon Center

Celebrate 30 years of science, education and stewardship

WHAT:

San Francisco State University's Romberg Tiburon Center for Environmental Studies (RTC) celebrates 30 years of science, education and stewardship at this year's annual Discovery Day, a behind-the-scenes look at the scientific research and activities conducted at the only marine science lab on San Francisco Bay. This annual festival of educational fun includes marine animal touch tanks, scientific exhibits, music, art and more. In addition to the exhibits by RTC scientists and students that highlight the center's contributions to understanding and caring for the San Francisco Bay environment and beyond, the festival will include science and art-related activities for children. Food and beverages will be available.

WHERE: Romberg Tiburon Center, 3150 Paradise Drive, Tiburon

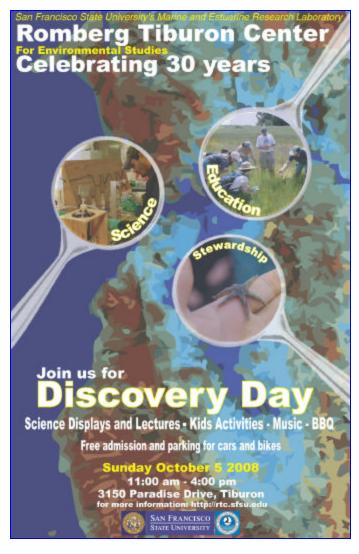
WHEN: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 5, 2008

ADMISSION AND PARKING FOR CARS AND BIKES ARE FREE

INFO: Call 415/338-3757 or visit http://rtc.sfsu.edu/

The Romberg Tiburon Center for Environmental Studies (RTC) is San Francisco State University's marine field station located 30 minutes north of San Francisco on the Tiburon Peninsula. The Center is the only academic research facility situated on San Francisco Bay. RTC scientists pursue their research in laboratories at the Center, at field sites around the world, and through collaborations with colleagues at other universities and institutions. The Center provides SF State students with graduate- and undergraduate-level courses as well as practical experience gained through research.

Directions: From Highway 101 north or south take the Tiburon/East Blithedale exit. Go east onto Tiburon Boulevard and continue 1.7 miles to Trestle Glen Blvd. Make a left turn onto Trestle Glen Blvd, and continue 0.6 miles until you get to Paradise Drive. Make a right turn onto Paradise Drive. Continue 2.9 miles on Paradise Drive to the second RTC entrance at 3150 Paradise Drive.



Project Exploration Inc. Provides Ocean Discovery



After our 31st season of success, Project Exploration prepares to teach more students about the ocean, climate change, conservation, and preservation.





THANK YOU to your educational facilities and wonderful staff for allowing our desert dwelling students to discover that the,

"Beauty of the sea is in the learning"!













All Puffed Up: A Balloon Fish Craft

By Sabreena Kasbati, Aquarium of the Pacific

In spring of 2008, the Aquarium of the Pacific's quarterly magazine Pacific Currents featured the Sea of Cortez. To obtain our younger members interest, the magazine offered a fun fish craft. We received some responses about this craft, and it was a hit around the office. We would love to share the idea. Below is the introduction to the craft and the directions for creating.

Balloonfish Creation

Would you like to explore the Sea of Cortez? You can discover some amazing animal defenses, making your very own balloonfish.

Balloonfish, or porcupine fish, are related to puffer fish, but balloonfish have spines and spots. When stressed or scared, both fish have the ability to swallow water to inflate. Balloonfish's spines stand up when inflated, making it difficult for a predator to eat them. Plus, sometimes these spines have venom which can be used in Chinese medicine. Due to these defenses, very few animals eat them. Some sharks, orcas (killer whales), dolphins, and tuna will eat young balloonfish. They have large eyes and have beaks to eat urchins, crabs, and other hard-shelled animals. They reach 1.5 feet (50 cm) and are found in subtropical waters all over the world.

Materials:

Balloon (or brown paper lunch bag, newspaper, rubber band), Black Permanent Marker, Tissue Paper, Pieces/ Paper Pieces, Glue, Paper Plate, Pencil, Scissors

Directions:

- 1. Blow up a balloon (body) and tie (tail) (or stuff newspaper into a lunch bag; rubber band the end).
- 2. Draw spots with permanent marker.
- 3. To create eyes, draw 2 large circles on the front sides of your fish
- 4. Draw a ring around each eye.
- 5. Draw a mouth on the fish.
- 6. Draw and cut out 4 fins.
- 7. Place glue on a paper plate.
- 8. Glue 2 fins to the sides of the fish (pectoral fins), 1 near the bottom of the tail (anal fin), and 1 near the top of the tail (dorsal fin).
- 9. Wrap a small paper piece around the pencil bottom and dip it into the glue. Place it on the fish (spines).
- 10. Repeat step # 9 over and over, covering the balloon with spines.





——— Upcoming Events ————		Become a SWMEA	
			member today!
	September 12-18	AZA Annual Conference at the Milwaukee County Zoo in Milwaukee, Wisconsin	The Southwest Marine/ Aquatic Educators' Association (SWMEA) is a marine educators network throughout Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah. Members receive four on-line newsletters each year, and a subscription to our listserve. Receive
	October 16-21	International Pacific Marine Educators Network Conference in Townsville, Australia	
	October 30-November 2	CSTA in San Jose, California	discounts on our semi-annual professional development seminars as well as discounts in
	June 29-July 3, 2009	NMEA Annual Conference in Pacific Grove, California	several SWMEA facilities. For more information
	September 12-18, 2009	AZA Annual Conference at the Oregon Zoo, Portland, Oregon	contact Amy Shulman at ashulman@mirage.com

The SWMEA Connection

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