

AHAB Monthly Meeting August 7th, 2019

Attendees (by phone): Kayla Schommer (AOOS), Kari Lanphier (Sitka Tribe), Dominic Hondelero and Kris Holderied (NOAA NCCOS), Steve Kibler and Amy Holman (NOAA), Andie Wall (Kodiak Area Native Association), John Harley (Alaska Coastal Rainforest Center), Gay Sheffield (Alaska Sea Grant), Kim Stryker (Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation), Dean Stockwell (UAF), Patryce McKinney (ADEC Lab), Rosie Masui and Jasmine Maurer (KBNERR), Alex Whiting (Native Village of Kotzebue), Cheryl Rosa (USARC), and Bruce Wright (APIA).

Updates by Region

Kachemak Bay/Cook inlet

Rosie Masui provided an update on the Kachemak Bay Research Reserve. There are a lot of *Alexandrium* in their phytoplankton samples. However, they haven't seen any PSP but are sending samples in soon. Historically they see PSP in the fall.

KBNERR is also a part of the COAST program where they consistently walk a beach in Seldovia with their local partners. They have recently started to see a few dead sea birds but are unsure of the magnitude of the situation. They will keep the network posted.

Kris Holderied and Dominic Hondelero provided a quick update from the Kasitsna Bay Lab. They have been seeing a lot of *Psuedo-nitzschia* in their samples but no domoic acid as of yet.

Aleutian and Pribilof Islands

Bruce Wright from APIA provided an update for his region. Most of the data still in the queue to be analyzed. The Bloom in Sandpoint started earlier than usual this year. Weekly mussel sampling in Sand Point indicates the PSP event began as early as March 2019 and peaked in May 2019 at 17,900 micrograms/100 grams, That's over 220 times the FDA limit for PSP in bivalves.

Southeast

Kari Lanphier from the Sitka Tribe of Alaska/SEATOR provided an update on the Southeast region. She was happy to report that it seems like PSP levels have finally started to go down in the region. The first sample they had above the regulatory limit was on April 9th. These high numbers continued into May, June, and the first two weeks of July.

They were seeing unprecedented high levels of toxins across all of their communities. In total there were 55 blue mussels collected and tested above the regulatory limit, with the highest one ranking at 4,000 micrograms of toxin per 100 grams of tissue or 50 times the regulatory limit. The high toxin levels in blue mussels appear to have peaked mid-June and have been on the decline since. SEATOR will continue to keep an eye on

butter clams for years to come, as they hold on to toxins much longer. Kari finished by noting that it has been an extremely warm and dry summer. Long time locals refer to 2018-2019 being the warmest years in memory.

Kodiak

Andie Wall from the Kodiak Area Native Association provided an update for Kodiak. Not much has changed in Kodiak since the last update, it is still pretty quiet. They recently sent in butter clams for testing that came back above the regulatory limit, but not drastically above.

They did have a weird incidence occur recently where surf clams were uprooting themselves on the beach and dying. They sent samples of these clams in for toxin testing and they only came back with 7 micrograms of toxins.

Arctic/Bering Strait region

Gay Sheffield of UAF-CFOS Alaska Sea Grant gave an update for the Bering Strait region. She spoke about a recent Algal Toxin Workshop held in Nome during July 16th-17th. This two-day workshop in Nome covered identification of algal species, monitoring techniques, impacts to the ecosystem, and current HABs research results for marine wildlife sampled from the region. The workshop also included presentations on changing environmental conditions in the Bering Strait region and the State's role in public health responses to algal toxin poisoning. The first day of the workshop was targeted for local entities and the public. The second day was designed to inform local healthcare professionals at the Norton Sound Regional Health Corporation hospital on the symptoms, response protocols, and reporting of algal toxin poisoning and botulism poisoning.

Gay also reported that they are having very warm sea surface temperatures in the region. Recent results from the completed NOAA-RACE Southern Bering Sea trawl survey indicate there are relatively large increases in ocean bottom temperatures in the southern Bering Sea. On north shore of Seward Peninsula, reports of small clams washed up after a storm event have been received, samples have been collected by community members, and these samples are being sent in to Nome.

Alex Whiting of the Native Village of Kotzebue also provided an update, reporting that they had an apparent cyanobacteria bloom on July 15th in Kotzebue. *Anabaena* sp. were identified. The Tribe will deploy SPATT bags to monitor for cyanotoxins starting this month working with Astrid Schnetzer from North Carolina State University and has begun sampling for cyanobacteria and phytoplankton with Ajit Subramaniam from Columbia University.

Updates from other Network members

Marine Mammals

Kathi Lefebvre provided an update on marine mammal sampling she is conducting at the WARRN-West lab. They are processing the samples from the multi-species die-off

in the Norton Sound region. They have received the samples from Gay Sheffield and have set up to begin analyzing for toxins. They hope to have results by the end of August. This is part of the NCCOS Harmful Algal Bloom Event Response funding to investigate potential algal toxin exposure in wildlife mortalities in Alaska's Norton Sound region.

Healy 1901 DBO Cruise

Don Anderson provided an update that the Healy 1901 DBO cruise has started and they will be taking samples for HABs (plankton and sediment) at most stations from the Bering Strait to the edge of the Beaufort Sea. I have no updates on initial observations thus far.

NOAA Congressional Staff in Anchorage

Amy Holman of NOAA let the Network know that NOAA has some of the congressional staff around this week and she will be talking to them about HABS.

Alaska Food Webs HABS Toxin Transfer

Steve Kibler of NOAA provided an update about an ongoing NPRB funded project looking at the transfer of HABS toxins through Alaska's food web. They just recently started year 2 of the project and are looking at PSP toxins in multiple levels of the lower food web. Last year they saw very low toxicity in the food web but hoping to find more out this year with more information. They are partnering with network members in Kodiak, the Southeast, and the Aleutian/Pribilof Islands. Steve will be presenting their findings at AMSS and sharing results with USGS to compare with their food web research results.

KBNERR works with locals to develop PSP flyer

Rosie Masui of KBNERR wanted to let the network know about a recent collaboration with NCOSS staff, Amy Homan, and the Alaska Native Villages of Port Graham and Nanwalek. They worked together to develop flyer about toxic shellfish. They worked with the local tribes to ensure the flyer had the right information, emergency services, and graphics that would be most useful for their communities. If you would like a copy of the flyer or to hear more about how it was created, please contact Rosie at rmmasui@alaska.edu

ELIZA testing lab coming soon to Kodiak

Steve Kibler of NOAA wanted to let the network know that plans are underway to establish an ELIZA testing lab in Kodiak. They are hoping to have this done by the end of the calendar year.

"Is my seafood safe to eat"- Presentation by Vera Trainer

For any network members interested, Vera Trainer of NOAA presented at a Webinar series put on by NOAA about SoundToxins. SoundToxins is a diverse partnership of aquaculture businesses, federal, tribal, state, and local governments, education

institutions, and Puget Sound residents that monitor for harmful algae to alert health and natural resource agencies of their abundance. The complimentary online database allows for near-real time viewing of “traffic-light” maps. This partnership has helped to minimize the risks to human health and reducing the economic losses to Puget Sound fisheries since its formation in 2006. The link for the recorded webinar can be found [here](#).

The next AHAB monthly call will be held **September 12th at 10 am AKST**.