

The Advocate, Thursday, December 28, 1978

Whale watch from Race Point

By Mary Bauer

Volunteers will soon be watching from the Old Harbor Life Saving Station for whales, porpoises and dolphins passing Race Point during their spring migration.

The whale-watching program is partially financed by CETA and is being supervised by the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies under Dr. Stormy Mayo.

The Old Harbor Life Saving Station, which was moved from Chatham to Race Point last spring, is one of the best whale observation points on the East Coast according to Mayo. Use of the top floor is being provided by the National Park Service.

Mayo and Janet McConaty, program coordinator for the Cetacean Research Center, agree that surprisingly little is known about the behavior and migratory patterns of the creatures, many species of which are on the point of extinction.

McConaty hopes to learn the population status of whales in the area, and information about their survival habits. She hopes to "bring attention to the whale, to protect it by making people know more about it, to create a more humanistic feeling to prevent the danger of their extinction."

Information gleaned by the observers will be turned

over to Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute and the University of Rhode Island.

At this point, even basic information is as scarce as it is essential.

"Finding out the number of whales is a big help," said McConaty. "This is not known for this area. For example, if one census turned up a lesser number of whales than a previous census, the purpose would be to educate the public on how few whales there are."

This and other information would also be turned over to the "Marine Mammal Conference" and the "Marine Mammal and Endangered Species: New England Workshop," which would make practical recommendations and formulate recovery plans for the endangered species. These groups also work closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department, McConaty said.

The information will provide the underpinning of management policies, Mayo said. These include recommendations of where whaling should take place; coastal pollution management; managing food sources; and possible controls on whale watching boats.

Generally, McConaty reported, the whales move from north to south in the fall to breed during the winter months. During spring and summer they return north.

Much of the traffic to be observed this spring will be moving from Florida and Bermuda to the Gulf of Maine, a rich feeding ground reaching from here to Canada. Movement is initiated by the change in water temperature. Observation will get underway the first of April when the whales will be appearing in the greatest numbers.

The training of volunteers includes showing slides to help in identification of the different species, and getting the people acquainted with the equipment and procedures.

Equipment will include a transit, the familiar engineer's surveying tool mounted on a tripod. By fixing its sights on the horizon, this tool aides in tracking the animal and establishing its distance from the observer.

Volunteers will use binoculars, and cameras loaned to the project by Pentax. Three cameras plus various lenses such as extra long and zoom are available.

Pictures will also be taken from the Dolphin III, for which Mayo serves as a guide. Cetacean Research is not being charged for use of the ship. The Dolphin III for several years has been taking an eager public on whale watching trips with astounding success.

Costs of the program are low at this time because of lack of overhead and donations of space and equipment from the National Park Service, the Dolphin III and Pentax.

Without their donations, Mayo said, there would be no whale program.

Only McConaty's salary is furnished by CETA. The program will be seeking funds in the future however, primarily through grants.

The project is also trading research data with the College of the Atlantic in Maine, which is conducting similar studies. Together, they hope to piece together data patterns and photos to identify individual whales and their growth through many years.

Provincetown Advocate, Thursday, January 5, 1978

Barge still sits

Because of heavy winds, contractor Jack Corey scrubbed Friday a second attempt to move the barge carrying the Old Harbor Lifestation from Provincetown harbor to Race Point.

The move was scheduled for about 11 a.m. so the barge could arrive at Race Point during high tide at about 2 p.m. But Corey called off the move at noontime.

Corey had arranged for a local fishing boat to help his tugboat tow the barge out of the harbor.

Meanwhile, workers at the Race Point site bulldozed an area onto which the two cranes would have lowered the station. The contractor recently discovered defects in the station's new foundation erected 500 feet from the Race Point bathhouse. Had the move proceeded Friday, the station would have been left on the beach for two or three weeks until a new foundation is prepared.

Corey said after scrubbing the move that he would wait at least a week before trying again. The move requires optimum weather and tide conditions.

Provincetown Advocate, Thursday, January 26, 1978

Station move scrubbed

By Jim Gilbert

The Old Harbor Lifesaving Station may sit in Provincetown Harbor until spring if efforts to move it this week are unsuccessful.

The latest attempt to move the station to Race Point Beach ended with a fizzle Tuesday when seas began to build off Wood End and Race Point.

Although at dawn Tuesday the winds were light, by 9 a.m., the time the tug was scheduled to depart from MacMillan Wharf with the Old Harbor Station barge in tow, the wind had increased to 15 miles an hour. By 10 a.m. the wind was blowing nearly 20 miles an hour.

Marsha Fader, an historical architect in charge of the move for the National Seashore, said she rode out around Race Point with Jack Corey, owner of the moving company, Middlesex Rigging and Contractors, in the tug *Taurus*. She said it was "quite a ride."

She said the tug and barge "really couldn't have made it."

The problem, Fader said, was that the steep, rolling waves off Wood End and Race Point made control of the barge difficult. She said control is particularly critical when the barge is pushed into shore in front of the two giant cranes waiting on the beach to lift the station off the barge.

The cranes will have to make a number of lifts up to the steep beach to get the station onto its new foundation.

Capt. Ralph Andrews' fishing boat, the *Capt. Bill*, will accompany the station and tug on its journey around Race Point. Capt. Andrews will serve as a guide and consultant to Corey.

Fader said she and Corey have decided to make every possible effort to get the barge out of Provincetown this week. She said if the move isn't made by Saturday, she and Corey will "sit down and talk

about postponing it until spring."

Corey is understandably anxious to get his cranes off the beach and working elsewhere. He said Monday he missed a good job in Seabrook, N.H., because his equipment was tied up.

In addition, Corey said it costs him "a tremendous amount" every time he mobilizes his crew for a try at a move. Corey will be paid \$119,000 by the Seashore for the move. The larger of his two cranes costs \$10,000 a month to rent.

He said if he can't move it soon, he may just "double up the lines" and leave it until spring. Corey employes carried a large anchor and heavy cable to the barge later Tuesday. Fader said she heard that the barge might be moored farther offshore so that no more damage would be done to Macara's Wharf.

But no final plans have been made. "I really don't want to talk about it now," she said. Fader had hoped to begin restoring the station this winter. It will be turned into a Lifesaving Service museum next to the Race Point bathhouse.

Fader said she is having a hard time planning her life around the station's move. She lives on Nantucket, works in Boston and keeps a Seashore house in Wellfleet. She said after so many false alarms, "It's getting hard to keep my hopes up."

That she is grasping for any source of optimism is evident by a discovery Tuesday. She said she wondered if it is a coincidence that both she, Corey and the tugboat are "Tauruses." She said she hopes it is a sign that the "persevering" bulls can get the job done soon.