

# GENA BENTALL

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I am an ecologist, naturalist, and educator. My interest in fostering awareness and concern for the complexity and interconnectedness of the natural world is the primary factor underlying my objectives. It is my goal to find innovative outreach techniques to engage the public with a deep understanding of the effects (both good and bad) of humans on the ecosystems of which they are a part. I have an interest in the critical interactions between predator and prey in our changing world with the goal of learning strategies to best protect and conserve wild places and the "wildness" of our non-human neighbors. My goal is to merge both my passion for ecological questions with my desire to share that passion with others so that we all may not only better understand our world but become good stewards as well.

## EXPERIENCE

**AUGUST 2015 – PRESENT**

**PROGRAM COORDINATOR/FOUNDER, SEA OTTER SAVVY**

Sea Otter Savvy is a collaborative education and outreach program supported by USFWS, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California State Coastal Conservancy, and the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Our mission is to foster community awareness and involvement to reduce human-caused disturbance to sea otters and promote responsible wildlife viewing.

**OCTOBER 2012 – SEPTEMBER 2014**

**WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST, US GEOLOGICAL SURVEY**

Field Research Coordinator for sea otter population study based in the San Luis Obispo county area. Responsible for managing staff, interns and volunteers collecting field data on radio-tagged wild sea otters in intensive study area spanning 56 miles of central California coastline. Implement data collection protocols consistent with established standards and oversee adherence to those standards. Ensure data collections goals are met. Participate in and supervise daily data collection by tracking radio-tagged otters, and recording data on spatial use, survival, reproduction, foraging and activity budgets. Submit regular project updates to Principal Investigator and funding agencies. Give presentations summarizing data for this project as well as related research at workshops, meetings, and conferences. Participate in wild sea otter tagging and instrument retrieval.

**JANUARY 2007 – SEPTEMBER 2012**

**RESEARCH BIOLOGIST, MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM**

Sea Otter Research and Conservation Program:

Participate in all aspects of long term wild sea otter field research study, including capture, tagging and tracking of radio-tagged wild otters, and subsequent data processing.

Plan, supervise and execute remote field research expeditions, including leading 2 summer field seasons in the Commander Is., Russia. Give oral presentations at schools, special events and professional conferences. Carry out and publish ongoing ecological research. Supervise and train volunteers, interns and professional colleagues from partner institutions on field equipment,

techniques and methods associated with data collection. Manage and organize MS Access database, process spatial data in ArcGIS, process time-depth recorder data, and compile data from these sources when requested by collaborating agencies. Compile and organize photo and video resources into a sea otter ethogram ([Inner Otter video ethogram](#)) and a sea otter prey directory for use in training new volunteers and staff.

**SEPTEMBER 2005 – SEPTEMBER 2006**

**RESEARCH TECHNICIAN, ALASKA SEALIFE CENTER**

Assisted with planning and execution of large-scale sea otter population study in the Commander Islands, Russia. Duties include training of field staff (American and Russian), organization of field station, intensive multi-seasonal monitoring of VHF radio-tagged study animals in a remote region, under all kinds of weather conditions, data compilation in an MS Access database, and data analysis.

**NOVEMBER 2005 – JUNE 2006**

**CONTRACT BIOLOGIST, MONTEREY BAY SANCTUARY FOUNDATION**

Product: *The effect of the Moss Landing Power Plant thermal discharge plume on the distribution and behavior of sea otters*. Published by the Sanctuary Integrated Monitoring Network: [https://sanctuariesimon.org/regional\\_docs/monitoring\\_projects/100292\\_report.pdf](https://sanctuariesimon.org/regional_docs/monitoring_projects/100292_report.pdf)

**SEPTEMBER 2003 – SEPTEMBER 2005**

**WILDLIFE RESEARCH TECHNICIAN/GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCHER, US SANTA CRUZ**

Developed and implemented sea otter foraging study at remote island site. Responsible for data collection at the site, organizing capture crews of > 20 skilled personnel, and supervising field technicians. Analysis of data and compilation and presentation of results including oral presentations at annual sea otter research meetings and international conferences.

**JULY 2001 – SEPTEMBER 2003**

**FIELD TECHNICIAN/CREW LEADER, US GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WESTERN ECOLOGICAL RESEARCH CENTER**

Daily field tracking of wild sea otters equipped with VHF transmitters and rear flipper tags. Daily use of telemetry equipment and GPS. Collection of foraging and demographic data for long term population dynamics study of federally listed, threatened species. Supervised crew of technicians, interns and volunteers at field station.

**JANUARY 1999 – JUNE 2001**

**FIELD TECHNICIAN, OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY**

Assisted professor and graduate students with field and laboratory research. Lab focuses on amphibian behavior and ecology. Supervising professor: Dr. Andrew Blaustein.

## EDUCATION

**JUNE 2001**

**BACHELOR OF ARTS, ZOOLOGY, OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY**

As an undergraduate in Zoology I worked as Lab Technician in the lab of Dr. Andy Blaustein where I assisted graduate students with their projects on amphibian behavior and conservation and carried out my own undergraduate research project. In the final term my focus turned to Marine Biology and I enrolled in the full quarter, immersive Marine Bio 350 course at the Hatfield Marine Science Center in Newport.

## AWARDS

- Society for Marine Mammalogy Student Award: Runner up Best Pre-Doctoral Oral Presentation, 16th Biennial Conference, 2005
- Friends of Long Marine Laboratory Student Research Award, 2004
- Howard Hughes Medical Institute Undergraduate Research Fellowship, 2000
- Sigma Xi Grant-in-Aid of Research, 2000
- Clara and Fred Horne Scholarship for Women in Science, 2000
- Waldo-Cummings Outstanding Student Award, OSU 1999, 2000

## PUBLICATIONS

N.M. Thometz, M.M. Staedler, J.A. Tomoleoni, J.L. Bodkin, G.B. Bentall, M.T. Tinker; Trade-offs between energy maximization and parental care in a central place forager, the sea otter. *Behavioral Ecology*, 27 (5): 1552–1566.

Bentall, G. B., Rosen, B. H., Kunz, J. M., Miller, M. A., Saunders, G. W. and LaRoche, N. L. (2016), Characterization of the putatively introduced red alga *Acrochaetium secundatum* (Acrochaetiales, Rhodophyta) growing epizoically on the pelage of southern sea otters (*Enhydra lutris nereis*). *Mar Mam Sci*, 32: 753-764.

Tim Tinker, M., Guimarães, P. R., Novak, M., Marquitti, F. M., Bodkin, J. L., Staedler, M., Bentall, G. and Estes, J. A. (2012), Structure and mechanism of diet specialisation: testing models of individual variation in resource use with sea otters. *Ecology Letters*, 15: 475-483.

Newsome, S. D., Bentall, G. B., Tinker, M. T., Oftedal, O. T., Ralls, K., Estes, J. A. and Fogel, M. L. (2010), Variation in  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  and  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$  diet–vibrissae trophic discrimination factors in a wild population of California sea otters. *Ecological Applications*, 20: 1744-1752.

M. Tim Tinker, Gena Bentall, James A. Estes (2008), Food limitation leads to behavioral diversification and dietary specialization in sea otters *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Jan 2008, 105 (2): 560-565.

## SKILLS

- Ecology
- Conservation Issues
- Research
- Data Analysis
- Data Collection
- Wildlife Biology
- Animal Husbandry
- Endangered Species
- Scientific Illustration
- Birds
- Microsoft Access  
Databases
- Data Management
- California native plants

- Marine Biology
- Field Work
- Telemetry
- Web Design
- ArcGIS
- Science
- Technical Illustration
- Natural History
- Boating
- Science Outreach
- Science Journalism
- Science Writing
- Social Media
- Volunteer Management