

Farallon Islands Monthly Report

Report to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge

April 2018

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**Point Blue Conservation Science –**Point Blue advances conservation of birds, other wildlife and ecosystems through science, partnerships and outreach. Our highest priority is to reduce the impacts of habitat loss, climate change, and other environmental threats while promoting nature-based solutions for wildlife and people, on land and at sea. Visit Point Blue on the web [www.pointblue.org](http://www.pointblue.org).

**Island Visitors**

**Point Blue crew**: Gavan Borgias, Katie Douglas, Mike Johns, Holly Pickett, Amy Miles, and Pete Warzybok. **UC Davis crew**: Chris Tyson, Josh Hull. **USFWS/Contractors**: Jonathan Shore, Glenn Reynolds, Malcolm Chase, Conan Monson.

April 7: **“French Kiss”** (skipper Harmon Shragge) brought out Chris Tyson, Josh Hull, Amy Miles, and Holly Pickett. Two people toured the island.

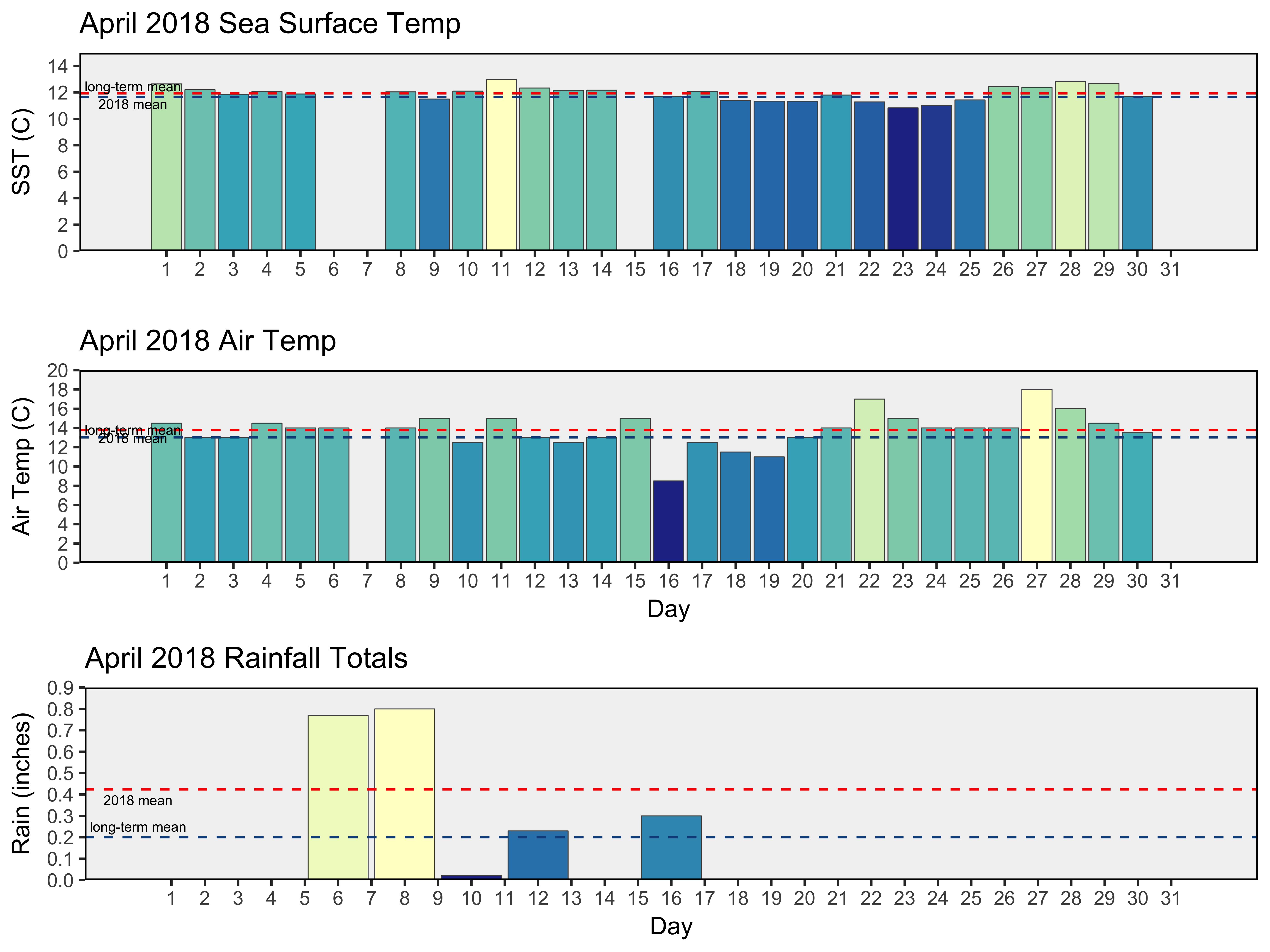
April 10: “**Huli Cat**” (skipper Tom Mattusch) brought out Jonathan Shore, Glenn Reynolds, Malcolm Chase (Water Solutions), and Conan Monson (Stantech) for a day trip to inspect cistern and water system. Deck hand Mike toured the island.

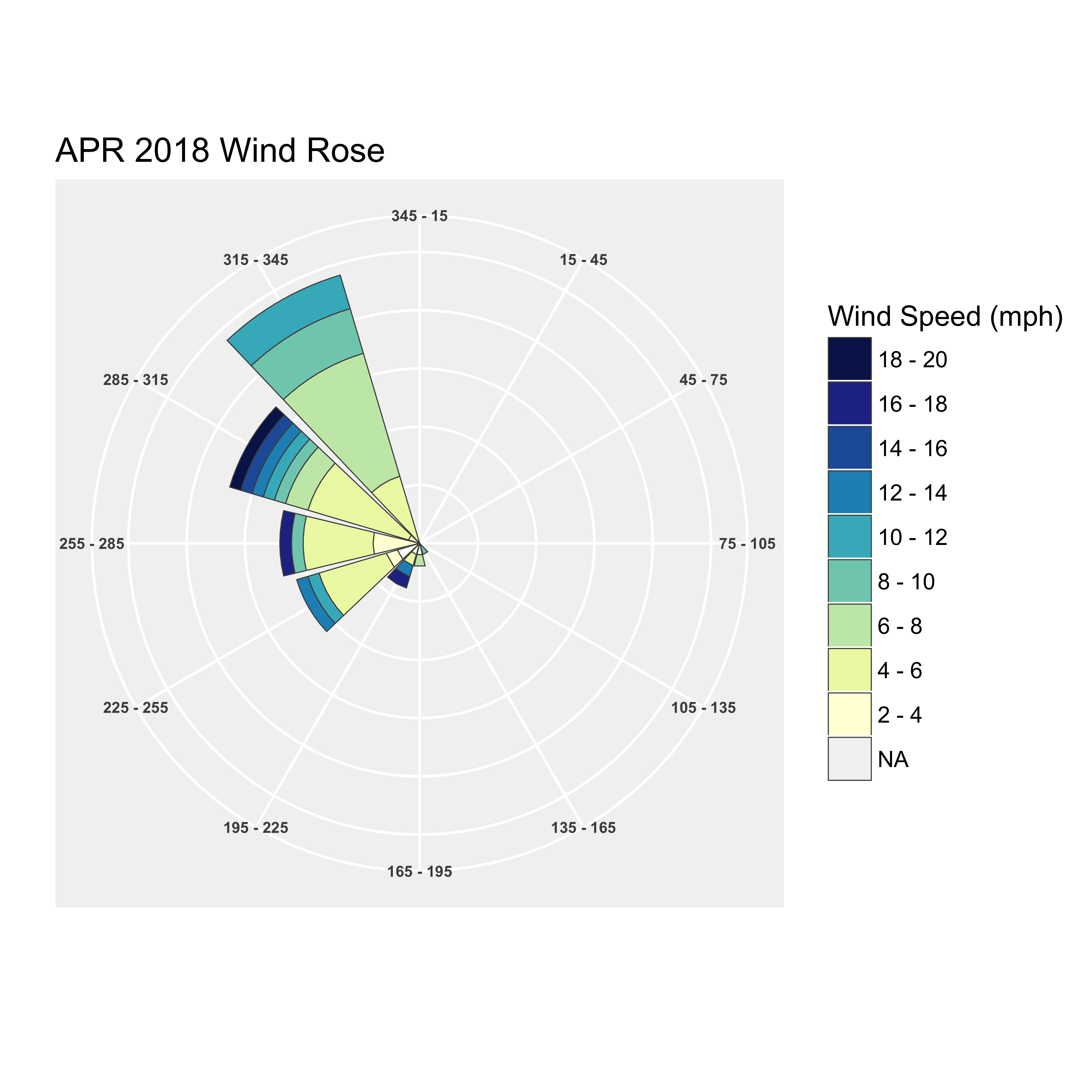
April 15: “**Kitty Kat**” departed with Josh Hull and Chris Tyson.

April 21: “**French Kiss**” (skipper Harmon Shragge) brought out Pete Warzybok. Departed with Mike Johns and Katie Douglas. Mike Mahoney (Palo intern) toured the island.

**Weather/Ocean**

Graphs depicting weather observations. Warm colors = higher values, cool colors = lower values, with monthly (red dashed line) and long-term mean (blue dashed line). Daily wind speed intensity (color scale) and direction binned into sectors (bars, 0-360). Larger bars = more wind from that direction.





**Oiled & Entangled Wildlife**

No oiled or entangled animals were observed.

**Breeding Birds**

**Storm-Petrels** – Standard mist netting for mark/recapture study was conducted twice during April. On April 10th there were 52 new ASSP and 6 recaptures at Lighthouse Hill. In addition, 18 birds were fitted with PIT tags and there were 15 blood samples collected for a study examining breeding hormone levels. On April 19th, there were 27 new ASSP, 3 recaptures and 1 new LHSP caught at the Carp Shop. Blood samples were taken from 15 birds and PIT tags were deployed. RFID readers were deployed on Lighthouse Hill in mid-April but there have been no detections to date.

**Brandt’s Cormorant** – Attendance at breeding colonies was sporadic throughout April but began to build later in the month. The first breed checks were conducted on April 10th. Sea lions continue to be an issue for nesting cormorants at the Sea Lion Cove colony so many birds have moved to a relatively new colony at Orca Cove.

**Pelagic Cormorant** – Breed checks began on April 11th. Although attendance at nest sites appears to be high, nesting activity has been minimal. No eggs have been seen as of the end of the month.

**Double-crested Cormorant** – Adults began attending sites on top of Maintop in early April. The first nest count surveys were conducted on April 26th with 120 birds and 40 well-built nests. No eggs or chicks have been seen.

**Western Gull** – Western gull nesting activity gradually built throughout the month with birds regularly attending territories, courting, fighting, and nest building. The first breed check of the season was conducted on April 22nd and the first eggs were observed on April 26th.

**California Gulls** – Only a handful of birds have been seen on the marine terrace.

**Common Murre** –Murres started regularly attending colonies island-wide in late March. Resighting efforts for banded birds were conducted daily at Upper Shubrick Point and Upper Upper throughout the month and attendance checks started on April 16th. The first egg was observed on April 29th.

**Pigeon Guillemot** –Colony attendance rose steadily throughout April. Daily morning raft counts were initiated on April 3rd and continued until April 29th. The high count was 3,500 birds on April 20th. The first breed check of the season was conducted on April 27th but no breeding activity was noted. As a fun note, a partially leucistic PIGU was observed off of Shubrick Point. It was all white except for black primary feathers and a bright red bill.

**Rhinoceros Auklet** –New nest boxes were finished and installed early in April in preparation for the breeding season. The first breeding bird was discovered in a camera site on April 17th and the first in nest boxes on April 21st. By the end of the month, approximately 50% of nest boxes were occupied.

**Tufted Puffin** – Tufted puffins have been observed roosting on land throughout April with a notable increase in attendance towards the end of the month.

**Cassin’s Auklet** –Peak egg laying occurred in late March this season setting things up for an early and productive season. The first chick was observed on April 21st. RFID readers were deployed on 40 boxes to continue a study initiated last season.

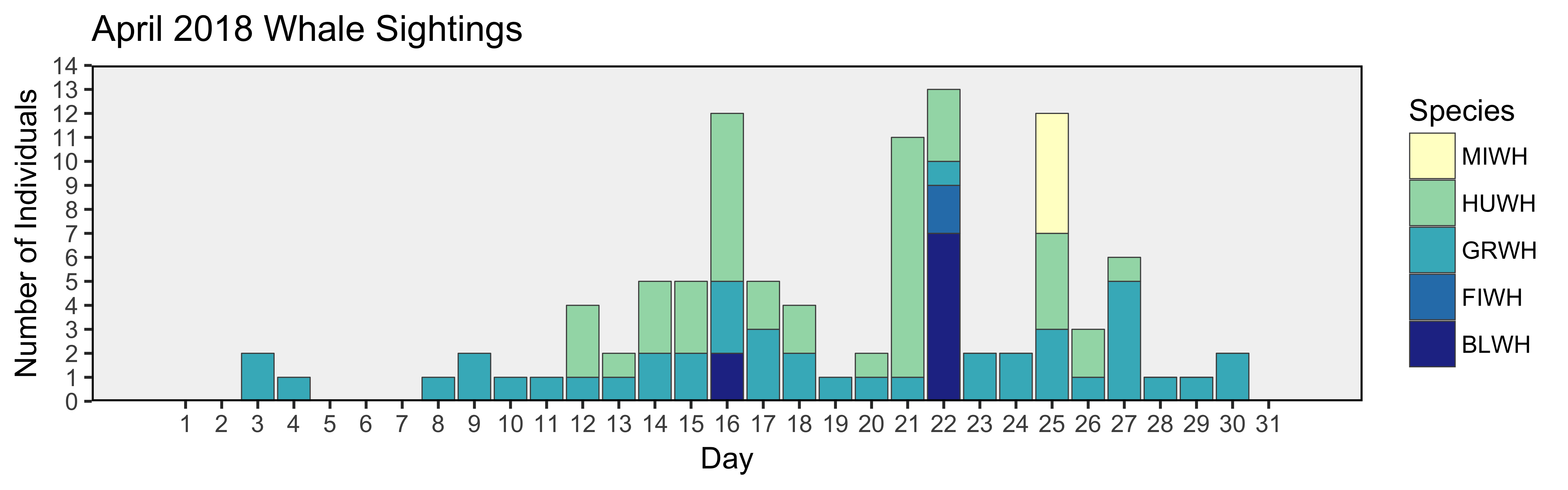
**Black Oystercatchers** – Standard monitoring studies for this species have been canceled this year, given the effort required to document breeding behavior for a small population of a non-target species. Opportunistic band resighting and breeding notes will still be recorded.

**Pinnipeds**

Weekly counts have been postponed until May 15th. This was chosen to reduce workload for island biologists until the window of long-term peak numbers for all species, as a way to reduce effort while still capturing high counts. The final Mirounga cow departed on March 15th.

**Cetaceans**

**Standard Survey** – Eleven one-hour standard whale watches were conducted this month from the Lighthouse using the Apple iPad and Spotter App. Daily high counts from standard watches and incidental observations are summarized below.



*UNWH = unknown baleen whale, MIWH = minke whale, HUWH = humpback whale, GRWH = gray whale, FIWH = fin whale, BLWH = blue whale, UNDO = unknown dolphin*

**Sharks**

No shark activity was observed.

**Salamanders**

A standard salamander survey wad conducted April 16th, with 49 salamanders found under cover boards. No Chytrid samples were collected.

**Owls**

A single burrowing owl was last seen at the entrance to Rabbit Cave on April 3rd. An old dead owl was discovered on Lighthouse hill at the end of the month.

**Crickets**

No cricket surveys were conducted this month.

**Mice**

No mice activity to report.

**Inverts and Intertidal**

# Nothing to report.

**Plants**

Nothing to report.

**Violations**

There were no violations this month.

**Maintenance**

Island biologists Johns and Warzybok conducted routine maintenance checks on the PV system and generators weekly. Monthly changes of water filters and outboard motor operation were also conducted as well as biweekly crane greasing. Specific fixes included replacing the back wall of the PIGU blind, replacing the latches on both the murre and corm blinds, replaced the UV bulb and sleeve in the house UV system, installing new stainless steal pole guides for the NL platform, and replacing the rotten sill plate on the door to the lighthouse.

**Maintenance Needs**

* Repair liner in the Gravity tank
* Cistern is losing water at a rate ~250 gallons per month and needs to be inspected. There appears to be a much more sizable leak when the cistern is above 8’6”.
* Settling Tank appears to have a leak in it when water is above 5.1 feet.
* Some of the wooden railing on Lighthouse Hill needs repair.
* New screens are needed on the PRBO house to keep out flies on “warm” days.
* Corrosion of the cart path rail system appears to be accelerating and will need to be addressed soon, perhaps repaired with the old galvanized pipe when the water lines are replaced. The cart is falling of the tracks in several places now.
* Several separations have been seen on the East Landing derrick slewing rope, possibly from jogging the slew. Perhaps tightening the slewing rope will mitigate this issue slightly until replacement.
* Several inches of water accumulate in the pipe shop after a good rain. A new threshold is needed to seal the door.
* Several grease points on the crane are having difficulty taking grease.
* NL mooring ball is no longer connected to the anchor and needs to be replaced.
* EL mooring anchor is upside down, causing a shortening of the chain and potentially compromising the integrity of the connection.

**Solar/Electric**

**PV System**

Distilled water reserves: 35 gallons

**Generator run times**

Kohler 15ROZ (Buffy): Not run

Kohler 30REOZJC (Speedwagon): 17.3 hours

Kohler 40REOZK (Zeke): 8.6 hours

Kohler 15ROY61 (Peevey): Not run

Webasto: 0 hours

Power Used this month: Start = 67,144; End = 67,890; for total of 746 kwh

**Fuel Reserves**

Diesel fuel used in April: 26.6 gallons

Drums: 4 x 55g = 220 gallons

Kohler 15ROZ (Buffy) Tank: Full

Kohler 30REOZJC (Speedwagon) Tank: Full

Kohler 40REOZK (Zeke) Tank: Full

Kohler 15ROY61 (PV) Tank: Full

Webasto Tank: 2/3 Full

Surplus gasoline for boat motors: 10 gallons

Safeboat tank: Full

Zodiac tank: Full

**Water Reserves**

Cistern: ~ 93,320 gallons (7’0”)

Gravity Tank: empty

Settling Tank: empty

Water use at house meter was 2,036 gallons

**Sightseeing Boats**

The **Kitty Kat** was seen 4 times with an average of 20 POB and Huli Cat was seen once with 18 POB.

**Non-breeding birds**

Pacific Loon, Eared Grebe, Black-footed Albatross, Pink-footed Shearwater, Sooty Shearwater,Northern Fulmar, Northern Gannett, Brown Pelican, **Great Blue Heron**, Canada Goose, Surf Scoter, **White-winged Scoter**, **Black Scoter**, Peregrine Falcon, Wandering Tattler, Whimbrel, Black Turnstone, **Bonaparte’s Gull**, Herring Gull, Iceland (Thayer’s) Gull, Glaucous-winged Gull, Glaucous Gull, **Sabine’s Gull**, Eurasian Collared-dove, Burrowing Owl, **Selasphorous Hummingbird**, **Western Wood-Pewee**, **Hammond’s Flycatcher**, **Dusky Flycatcher**, **Pacific-slope Flycatcher**, **Cassin’s Vireo, Warbling Vireo**, Rock Wren, **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, **Swainson’s Thrush, Hermit Thrush**, **Orange-crowned Warbler, Yellow Warbler**, Audubon’s Warbler, Myrtle Warbler, **Townsend’s Warbler, Hermit Warbler, Hermit x Townsend’s Warbler, Common Yellowthroat**, **Wilson’s Warbler**, **Yellow-breasted Chat**, Western Tanager, Spotted Towhee, Sooty Fox Sparrow, **White-throated Sparrow**, White-crowned Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Oregon Junco, **Brewer’s Blackbird**, and American Goldfinch.