April 30, 2019

PRESS RELEASES APRIL-MAY 2019

Reef Guardians heads to Russia with Cousteau Team to free Orca and Beluga in Whale Jail.

RGH Founder, Harry Rabin, was invited to join the Cousteau Team and Whale Sanctuary Project to head first to Moscow, for diplomatic meetings, and then on to Vladivostok and the infamous Srednyaya Bay in an effort to free 10 Orca and 87 Belugas held in the so-called Whale Jail.

The team was invited by both the Russian Ministry and the Governor of Vladivostok to assess the health of all the animals and determine if they could indeed be released back to the wild. Reef Guardians provided the team with an Infrared scope, Audio and video equipment, Drones and Hydrophones.

The Teams dedication and hard work led to an agreement in which the Governor of Vladivostok, ,stated the principal goal of rehabilitation and release. Subsequently, VNIRO, Russias equivalent to the United States Fish and Wildlife, recommended that there are no scientific reasons why the whales cannot be released, mirroring the Jean-Michel Cousteau/Whale Sanctuary Project team recommendations.

Harry Rabin during on camera Interview at the Orca pens in Srednyaya Bay.

Mutual cooperation between our scientists and Russia's is underway and we hope to soon return all Orca and Beluga back to where they were captured so they can be united, once again, with their families.

The team was led by Jean-Michel Cousteau and Charles Vinick of the Whale Sanctuary Project. Team members: Jeff Foster; head of assessment of Orca and Beluga,, Dr. Ingrid Visser leading Orca researcher from New Zealand, Katy Laveck Foster; Marine Biologist, Harry Rabin; Marine wildlife expert and scientific documentary filmmaker,

Charles Vinick and Jean-Michel Cousteau at Orca Pen 3.

David Gordon and Russ Abdrakhmanov; translators. Russian team members: Grigory Tsidulko; Marine Biologist , Dr. Tatiana Denisenko; Biologist and Activist Tatiana Beley.

L to R: Jeff Foster, Dr. Ingrid Visser, Katy Laveck Foster, Harry Rabin, Jean-Michel Cousteau, Dr. Tatiana Denisenko, Tatiana Beley, Grigory Tsidulko, Russ Abdrakhmanov., Charles Vinick, David Gordon

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Reef Guardians works with Heal the Ocean to locate leaking oil well heads and cap them.

Reef Guardians (RGH) has teamed up with California State Lands Commission, Interact and Hillary Hauser , Executive director of world renowned Heal the Ocean to locate leaking offshore abandoned oil well heads in Santa Barbara County. Since discovering crude oil on the beaches near Miramar and Hammonds beach back in March of 2017, Reef Guardians Founder Harry Rabin has spent the last 3 years locating and overseeing the capping of wells along with Hillary Hauser. Using technology provided by RGH they were able to follow the oil trail using drones right to one of it's sources. A wellhead known as the Becker well which was later capped in 2018.

Harry Rabin with Interact at Becker well capping.

The latest leaks are coming from another wellhead known as Treadwell. Reef Guardians was there to locate it and also sent samples to Dr. David Valentine at UCSB's Geology Lab to assess it's origins or "fingerprint" as coined by the scientists working with him. This is the same scientific technique that has been used to establish crude oil origins such as was the case during the Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf.

The work continues as an additional 3 unknown sources have being located in the same area as Becker and Treadwell. Over 192 offshore wells were installed in the early 1900's off of Summerland's Lookout Park, so the art of properly capping wells was not a practice even considered back when all the wells were shutdown due to financial losses. Unfortunately the ghost of mistakes past are resurfacing in the form of oil slicks and noxious fumes in the area today.

RGH will be deploying a new state of the art Boxfish ROV as well as aerial and underwater drones to get directly to the sources and mark their locations with GPS data so these wells can be properly capped like Becker. The goal is to get Treadwell and all of them capped by Spring of 2020.