

# The Haliotis Herald

The White Abalone Captive Breeding Program Newsletter

December 2024

Issue 3

## A Busy Spawning Season

In 2024, we conducted **seven** spawning events throughout the program! Four were held at the Bodega Marine Lab (BML), two at Moss Landing Marine Labs, and one held simultaneously across our southern California partner institutions. Nighttime spawning seems to be working really well, and we harvested almost **7.5 million eggs** this year! We also started the 2025 spawning season a few months earlier, with a spawn in early January at BML where we collected nearly 8 million eggs in just one night! We also had a wild-origin male who was collected over 7 years ago spawn for the first time, injecting new genetics into the program. More on the results from this 2025 spawn in the next newsletter!



## White Abalone in the News

White abalone was featured in the KQED Bay Curious episode "California's Beloved Abalone Sea Snails are Struggling. Here's Why" [Read and listen here!](#)



Left, top: An early February spawn at BML. Left bottom: Nighttime spawning necessitates red light hand lamps to keep the abalone in the "dark." Right, top: We had a big spawning event with partners from CDFW, CMA, AOP, and UCSC! Right, bottom row: A bucket of eggs with a spawning female, and shellfie with Alyssa, Isaac, and LightHawk pilot Mitzi and her husband (info on next page!)

## Myrtle Moves Up North & Spotlight on LightHawk

In July, Myrtle, our newest-collected wild-origin white abalone, was flown from the AOP to BML. Myrtle has since joined the other wild-origin white abalone in the program, passing health exams with flying colors, and we look forward to encouraging her to spawn in captivity! Transport of Myrtle to BML was no small task, and the generosity of LightHawk volunteer pilot Michael Baum made it possible. We were able to minimize transport stress and have husbandry manager Nora Frank accompany Myrtle on her journey up north. Back in February, a series of atmospheric river storms gave us a 24-hour window of appropriate weather to transport abalone. Not only did LightHawk volunteer pilot Mitzi Saylor help us get larvae out in a rapidly narrowing weather window, but she and her husband also came to BML to the night before and helped us spawn the animals (pictured on previous page).



### Supporting Team White Abalone

Every gift helps us to feed our animals, conduct research, create new white abalone, and grow them big enough to go into the wild. Thank you for your generous support – we couldn't do it without you!

GIVE

### Director's Note

This year was one of great accomplishments for Bodega Marine Lab's (BML) White Abalone Culture (WAC) Lab and for the White Abalone Captive Breeding Program. I am once again filled with deep gratitude for the incredibly hard work of our team at BML, as well as all of our partners from Alaska to Mexico. We had an incredible production numbers again, partners conducting self-led spawns, more program-wide training, and more. The team continues to grow and collaborate, the necessary work to save this endangered species. We sometimes work all night, braving storms to get to these little snails, and share our knowledge far and wide.

Here at BML, Leela, who committed three years of incredible work saving white abalone (most notably transforming our data process!) moved on in November. Genece Grisby is our newest Junior Specialist and started in November! The WAC Lab conducted several experiments on abalone reproduction and spawning led by Lauren Ashlock, as well as worked with CDFW on sperm cryopreservation research. We are in the process of designing and building more broodstock conditioning systems.

**Lastly, an ask.** During this time of uncertainty and upheaval, I want to extend my warmest thank you to our supporters. The WAC Lab is entirely funded by federal grants, so we are feeling anxious, but cautiously optimistic. In any capacity in which you are able, I ask that you voice your support for federal funding for restoration, science, aquaculture, and more. Thank you again for your support of the program and we look forward to sharing more great news in the 2025 spawning season!

Gonad or go home,  
*Alyssa R. Frederick*

