

Director's Perspective

The past year saw several significant changes at SCCWRP, the largest of which was a move to a new facility in Westminster. Our new home has nearly 17,000 ft² of space and includes modern chemistry, biology, and toxicology laboratories, a 15°C aquarium room, and a conference room. The staff of SCCWRP searched for a building, planned the labs, moved, and got the place up and running. Their hard work and dedication made our dream of a new facility a reality. We are particularly grateful to the SCCWRP Commission for their support and guidance during the project. While some of our visitors lament the loss of the interesting scenery of our old location, the new facility will help to keep us a vital, useful, and productive marine environmental research agency.

This report features the results of projects accomplished in the last year. We have continued our survey of contaminant inputs to the ocean off Southern California and herein we report on discharges from municipal wastewater treatment plants and oil

platforms. In the past three years, we have estimated contaminant emissions from municipal and industrial wastewater discharges, oil platform discharges, dredge material disposal, hazardous material spills, and dry- and wet-weather surface runoff. We summarize the results of two decades of measuring near-bottom currents off the coast, and we describe the dynamic nature of the nearshore water column. We have continued to develop sophisticated analytical chemistry techniques to trace materials around the nearshore environment and report on some of those techniques here. We also present in a series of articles, the results of our lab and field investigations into the biology of the small red brittlestar *Amphiodia urtica*, and into the causes of its absence from sediments near municipal wastewater outfalls.

While the quality of California's coastal waters has improved significantly over the past two decades, serious problems persist in some areas and new problems will appear in the future in other

areas. Environmental managers in California are increasingly faced with tough decisions about the environment, often with only incomplete information. Our goal is to provide the best information possible to decision-makers about the sources, fates, and effects of anthropogenic contaminants in the coastal marine environment. To that end, SCCWRP has taken the lead in facilitating and coordinating regional ocean monitoring in Southern California. The benefits of a regional monitoring program will be greater cost efficiency, the ability to address specific questions about environmental conditions, the ability to alter and redirect monitoring efforts, and more effective use of monitoring information in decision-making. You will be reading more about our efforts in regional monitoring in this annual report in coming years.

Jeffrey N. Cross, Director
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