



Odor is gone, but bill isn't

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SANTA CRUZ— The smell of rotting anchovies is gone from the Small Craft Harbor, but still remaining is an \$84,000 bill to be paid by the Port District for clean up of the mess caused by hundreds of tons of dead little fish.

The cleanup cost will be paid from Port District money reserves, which total \$94,000 in this year's budget, said Harbormaster Steve Scheiblaue.

Scheiblaue said it cost \$30,000 to aerate the harbor to improve water quality.

The water oxygen level dropped to zero after millions of anchovies swam into the harbor entrance on the weekend of July 21, but did not turn back into Monterey Bay. The result was the anchovies clogged the harbor mouth and died, along with about 75 species of other kinds of fish and shellfish.

The last time the anchovies did this — in 1980 — Scheiblaue said it was seven weeks before the obnoxious odor finally disappeared.

But, at that time, and in other instances of mass anchovy deaths at the harbor in 1964 and 1974, no aeration treatment was used.

Scheiblaue said by using the aeration treatment in this year's instance, cleanup crews were able to return the harbor mouth "back to normal" within 20 days.

Also, said Scheiblaue, the aeration treatment meant that the acid level in the water — that can be damaging to boats — was less than what it was during the 1980 occurrence.

Now, Port District staff and commissioners will evaluate whether it was worth \$30,000 to aerate. They will be comparing the damage to boats from this year's anchovy die-off with damage from 1980.

Sixty of the harbor's 1,000 boaters pulled their boats from the harbor to avoid damage, Scheiblaue estimated.

The acid level this year was about 30 to 40 percent of what it was in 1980, he said. "It remains to be seen what damage that level of acid did to the boats this year," he added.

The Port District depends on fees paid by boat owners and by rents paid by harbor businesses for its revenues.

Tuesday, commissioners agreed to pay the \$4,000 from reserve funds.



Worker cleans up anchovy mess at harbor

Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel