



**SARAH THOMAS**

**Solo Trans-Monterey Bay Marathon Swim**

**Age 39 at time of swim**

**Date: SEPT 20-21, 2021**

**Course:** A Single Crossing of the Monterey Bay as defined by MBSA course and rules.

Swim route chosen was North to South, from Seabright Beach to San Carlos Beach.

**Straight Line Distance:** 25. statute miles

**Overall Swim Duration:** 15h, 39m, 42s

START/FINISH	LOCATION	LATITUDE/LONGITUDE	TIME
Start	Seabright Beach, Santa Cruz	N36° 57.725', W122° 0.389'	19:56:00
Finish	San Carlos Beach, Monterey	N36° 36.574' W121° 53.694'	11:35:42

**Observer 1:** ROBIN ROSE **Observer 2:** EVAN MORRISON

**Boat & Captain(s):** GREG GUBSER

**Swimwear/Equipment:** see report

**Planned Course:** Santa Cruz Harbor to Monterey (harbor to harbor)  
25.1 STATUTE MILES, 40.3 KILOMETERS

**Actual Course:** SAME AS PLANNED

**Final Swim Duration:** 15 HOURS, 39 MINUTES, 42 SECONDS

**Crew:** RYAN WILLIS

**Feeding Plan:**

See report/log.

**Swim Category:**

Unassisted Solo Marathon Swim

### Rules

1. This swim was conducted following Marathon Swim Rules as defined by the [Monterey Bay Swimming Association](#). These rules are based on those used by CSA, CS&PF, SBCSA, CCSF. These rules are often collectively referred to as "English Channel" rules, however there are minor differences with the actual rules for swimming the English Channel.
2. This swim was conducted in the spirit of marathon swimming as described here: [Marathon Swimmers Federation](#)



**SARAH THOMAS****Solo Trans-Monterey Bay Swim**

Female, US citizen, age 39 years, from Conifer, Colorado.

**Date:** 20-21 September 2021

**Course:** One-way, Santa Cruz (Twin Lakes) to Monterey (San Carlos)

**Straight-line distance:** 25.0 statute miles / 40.25 kilometers

**Total Elapsed Time:** 15 hours, 39 minutes, 42 seconds

	Location	Coordinates	Date/Time
<b>START</b>	Twin Lakes Beach Santa Cruz, Calif.	36.961976, -122.000233	2021-09-20 19:56:00
<b>FINISH</b>	San Carlos Beach Monterey, Calif.	36.609685, -121.894868	2021-09-21 11:35:42

**Pilot:** Greg Gubser

**Boat:** Mako 320

**Crew Chief / Feeder:** Ryan Willis

**Observers:** Robin Rose, Evan Morrison

**Swimwear/Equipment:** Standard porous suit, single standard silicone swim cap, standard swim goggles, zinc sunblock + SafeSea jelly protectant, light coat of grease for anti-chaffing. No watch.

**Feeding:** 1st Feed @ 1 hour, then every 30 minutes, from the boat. Primarily CarboPro or plain water. Occasional hot chocolate, cookies, Nuun.

**Rules:** Unassisted marathon swim rules as defined by the Monterey Bay Swimming Association (similar to and equivalent to English Channel rules).

## Observer Log

Time	Water Temp F	Air Temp F	Wind Speed knots	Strokes per min	Notes
19:56					Start, Twin Lakes Beach (Crow's Nest)
21:00	59	57	1-2	70	Great conditions, negligible wind, full moon.
22:30	57	56			On pace for <12 hours.
23:30			1-2		ST kicks a jelly..
0:05	56	57		69	
0:35	56	56		69	
1:05	56	56			Warm feed.
1:35	57	56		70	Warm feed. Sea lion popped up 100 ft away. Wind kicking up from east, 5-6 kts. Swells 4-6 ft. Peed.
2:05	56	56	5-6 E	69	
2:45	56.2	56		70	Asked for H2O next feed.
3:15	57	56		69	W ground swell + E wind. Boat rocking.
3:30	57	56			ST vomits, treads water 3 min.
4:05	57	56		65	RW: "Doing good?" ST: "Not really." Vomiting, coughing 3 min. "I don't have anything to throw up."
4:20				65	
4:30	57	56	8-10 E	66	Quick feed - warm H2O.
5:00	57	56	10-12 E	66	Increased wind + gusts. Warm H2O feed. Offered M&Ms - "not yet." Boat rocking.
5:30			12 E	68	Gusts to 15 kts. 6 ft+ NW groundswell.
6:00	57	56		63	Warm H2O feed. Can't keep anything down. "I've had more fun before."
6:30	57	56	4-6 E		Wind calming. 4 ft rollers. Warm H2O feed. Almost sunrise - pink sky.

Time	Water Temp F	Air Temp F	Wind Speed knots	Strokes per min	Notes
7:00			1 kt	66	Hot chocolate feed. ST looks stronger.
7:30	57	58		66	Hot chocolate feed.
7:56				66	ST switches out goggles. Choc milk feed. Says it's hard to use her hands.
8:05					Big sea lion jumped behind her. "That thing's moving!"
8:30	57	64	1	65	Feed warm water + choc chip cookies. 5-6 ft rollers. 2 sea lions in front of her, one behind.
9:00	57			65	ST still getting sick.
9:30	58	62	1-2	66	Feed hot chocolate + water. South wind predicted to rise soon, but we should be in lee of land. < 3 n.m. to go.
10:00	60	62		65	Feed water + cookies. ST picking up speed, ~1 hour to finish.
10:30				65	
11:00	60	64	1-2	68	Last feed! CarboPro + caffeine Nuun tab.
11:30					Approaching San Carlos Beach + jetty. Welcoming committee on shore. Patti B swims out to guide ST in thru kelp.
11:35					Finish. ST clears water @ San Carlos Beach.

## Narrative

Just before 8pm on Monday, September 20, 2021, Sarah Thomas entered the water from Twin Lakes Beach, Santa Cruz under a full moon and clear skies with minimal wind. Conditions seemed promising for her planned 25-mile swim across the full width of Monterey Bay.

Sarah swam out to the boat, idling about 75 yards offshore. After exchanging a few words with her pilot (Greg) and crew chief/husband Ryan, she settled into a 70 SPM groove on the port side. Swimming smoothly and well in excess of 2mph, Greg had no trouble matching her speed and keeping the boat next to her.

Three hours into the swim, Sarah was on pace for a sub-12 hour crossing, ahead of the existing course record of 12:42. Winds remained calm (Force 1), with water and air temperatures both hovering around 56-57F. Unfortunately, these ideal conditions were not to last.

Just after 1am (5+ hours elapsed), an east wind arose and, combined with a 4-6 foot ground swell out of the west, created rough conditions and significantly slowed Sarah's progress. At 3:30am (7.5 hours elapsed), Sarah took an uncharacteristically long feed (3 minutes) and was audibly sick.

The conditions continued to deteriorate through 6am (10 hours elapsed), along with Sarah's energy, stroke rate, and emotional state. Without any respite from the nausea, she had difficulty keeping her feeds down – and thus was not replenishing her calories. However, while clearly in some degree of distress, there was no doubt of Sarah's determination to finish the swim, and she powered on through the choppy bay.

Around 6:30am there was a noticeable lull in the wind. The sky brightened in the east, along with Sarah's mood. Ryan posted a memorable missive to Sarah's Instagram - "blue dot happy to see red dot" (blue dot being Sarah's LED light, red dot the sun). A couple hot chocolate feeds and continued calmer conditions seemed to perk Sarah up a bit - but the rough overnight conditions and now 12-hour immersion in cold water had visibly taken a toll.

As the city of Monterey came into sharper focus, Sarah continued to pick up speed and stroke tempo. Warmer water and air temperatures provided relief on the final stretch into San Carlos Beach. There was a thick kelp patch just offshore, but the "welcoming committee" on the beach alerted us to a small opening near the jetty. Monterey Bay soloist #2 Patti Bauernfeind swam out to help guide Sarah into the beach.

Sarah cleared the water at 11:35am - 15hr39min elapsed - to become the 10th person to complete an unassisted solo swim across the full width of Monterey Bay.

GPS Tracking

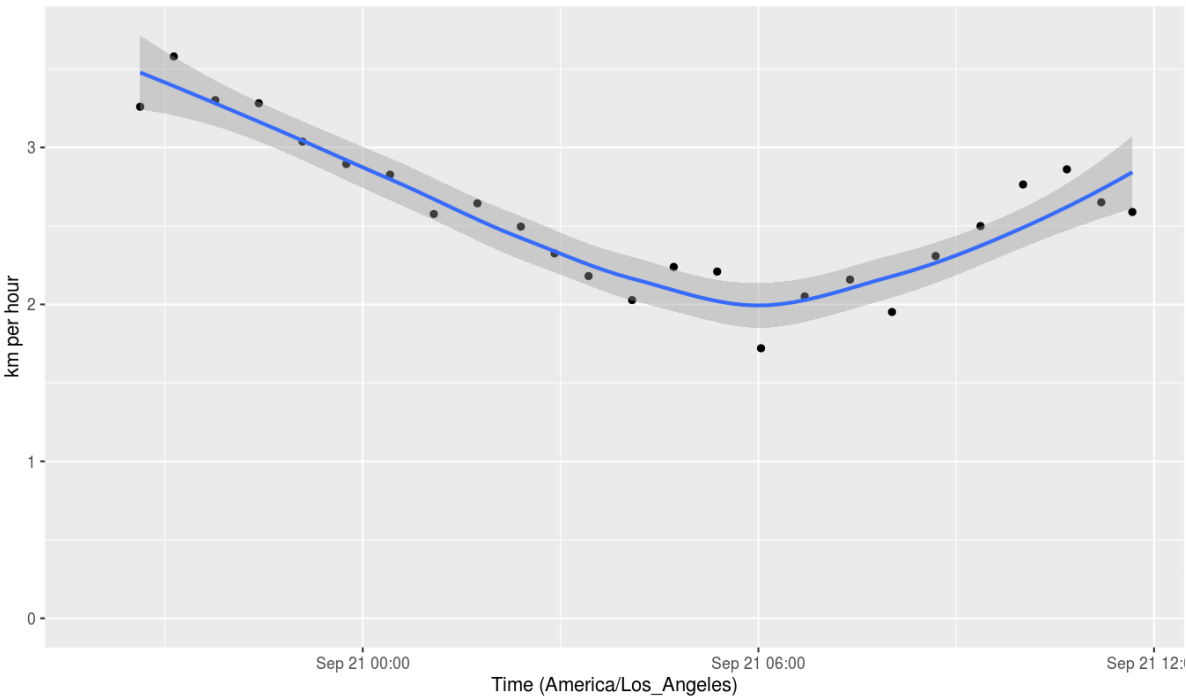
via track.rs (30 minute trackpoint frequency)



Progress Per Hour

Hour	Progress (meters)
9:00 PM	3387
10:00 PM	3752
11:00 PM	3077
12:00 AM	2861
1:00 AM	2634
2:00 AM	2584
3:00 AM	2351
4:00 AM	2096
5:00 AM	2193
6:00 AM	1790
7:00 AM	2046
8:00 AM	2029
9:00 AM	2229
10:00 AM	2716
11:00 AM	2751

Speed per Trackpoint



Temperature & Wind Data from NOAA buoys in Monterey Bay

Plots generated from NOAA National Data Buoy Center data.

