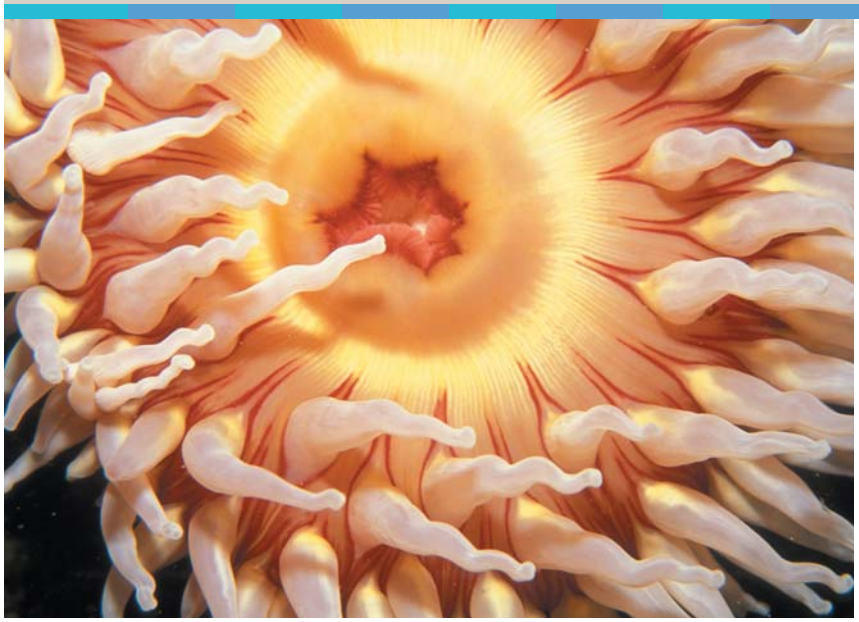
JMPR
SURFACING
A Citizen Guide to the Joint Management Plan Review
FALL 2006



NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES

NOAA

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The Important Role of Public Participation:
A Message from the Sanctuaries

Our national marine sanctuaries embrace part of our collective riches as a nation. In California, these special places protect some of the world's most diverse and productive ecosystems, where lumbering elephant seals breed, giant kelp forests flourish, and shipwrecks tell haunting stories of our maritime history.

Active and informed public participation is a valued element of managing these national treasures. For more than thirty years, the National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP) has engaged the public in helping to create new sanctuaries, develop resource protection strategies, address complex issues such as water quality and vessel traffic, and – more recently – to review and update sanctuary management plans.

Using the lessons learned from these experiences, the NMSP helps communities become more aware of the issues that affect their sanctuaries and actively engages user and interest groups, agencies, and the public in an open dialogue about how best to shape the sanctuaries' future direction and management.

The NMSP is currently updating the management plans for the Cordell Bank, Gulf of the Farallones, and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries in what we call the Joint Management Plan Review. For each sanctuary, this includes a review of current and future priorities for resource protection, education, and research programs; the program's resource and staffing needs; performance measures; and the regulatory goals and sanctuary boundaries.

We strongly encourage members of the public, interest groups, and other stakeholders to comment on these draft management plans once they are published. To help you understand the process – and your role in it – more clearly, this summary provides brief descriptions of "action plans" contained in the draft management plans that have been proposed for each sanctuary and information on how to make your voice heard.

Many of you live on or near the shores of our remarkable coastal and ocean jewels. This is your chance to have a say in the future of your sanctuary, and we welcome your input.

David F. Howard
— **Dan Howard**
Manager, Cordell Bank
National Marine Sanctuary

Maria Brown
— **Maria Brown**
Manager, Gulf of the Farallones
National Marine Sanctuary

Holly Price
— **Holly Price**
Acting Superintendent, Monterey Bay
National Marine Sanctuary

Joint Management Plan Review: Where Do We Stand?

The NMSP is presenting the Draft Management Plans and Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Cordell Bank, Gulf of the Farallones, and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries after extensive public input, issue prioritization, and recommendations from each site's Sanctuary Advisory Councils (*see sidebar, page 3*).

The process to revise and update the three management plans has been thoughtful and collaborative with our agencies and the public. Our efforts to listen to and incorporate these community interests have extended our schedule to release the draft management plans. The various documents described below in the process summaries can be viewed on the Internet at **www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov/jointplan.**

More information

Selecting the Issues to be Addressed in the Management Plans

The NMSP selected the issues to be addressed in the Joint Management Plan Review (JMPR) following an extensive public process of scoping and issue prioritization. The following list outlines public involvement in the management plan review process – and the steps that have taken place in developing the "action plans" that will define how these sanctuaries will operate in the future.

- Twenty public meetings took place during the "scoping" comment period between November 2001 and January 2002, from which the sanctuaries received more than 12,500 comments. Through a series of workshops in April 2002, Sanctuary Advisory Council members provided feedback and recommendations on the resource issues to be addressed. The results from the workshops are published in the Report on Sanctuary Advisory Council Prioritization Workshops (May 13, 2002).
- Based on input from the Sanctuary Advisory Councils, the selection of priority issues to be addressed in the JMPR was announced in August 2002.

Developing the Action Plans

Following selection of the priority issues, NMSP staff developed a work plan (Priority Issue Work Plan, December 4, 2002) that characterized the issues to be addressed, identified potential working group members, outlined the timelines for completion, and described the potential products to be created as part of the working group or internal team efforts.

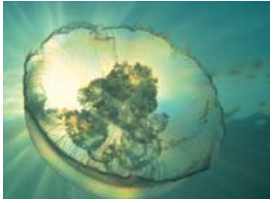
- Working groups met for four to six months to develop action plans. Sanctuary staff presented the plans to each Sanctuary Advisory Council, which reviewed and modified many of the strategies and activities in the action plans.
- In the summer of 2003 the Sanctuary Advisory Councils provided their recommended action plans and other proposed actions to the NMSP. NMSP staff from the sites and headquarters then reviewed the recommendations and modified the proposals as necessary to form the basis of the draft management plans.

Generally, the action plans are the means by which each sanctuary:

- organizes the priority resource management issue identified in the scoping and prioritization processes; and
- describes the necessary action to address them.

The plans are typically divided into strategies and include a description of what must take place to implement each strategy.

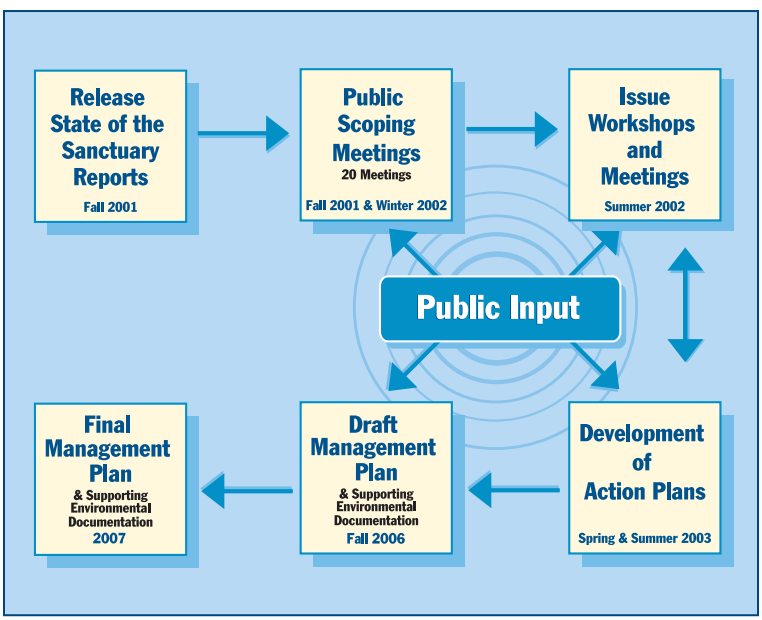
For each sanctuary, the working group meetings described above focused on developing recommendations for their respective Sanctuary Advisory Council. The working groups met approximately once a month to develop the action plans and recommendations summarized in this report.



Joint Management Plan Review: What's Next?

The Draft Management Plans and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement are scheduled to be released to the public in the fall of 2006. Upon release of the documents, the sanctuaries will hold information workshops and public hearings in locations throughout the region. Please check our website for updates and hearing schedule.

The NMSP strongly encourages you to provide comments on the management plans and to participate in the public hearings. Following the public comment period, the program will prepare a final management plan and publish the final regulations in the *Federal Register*.

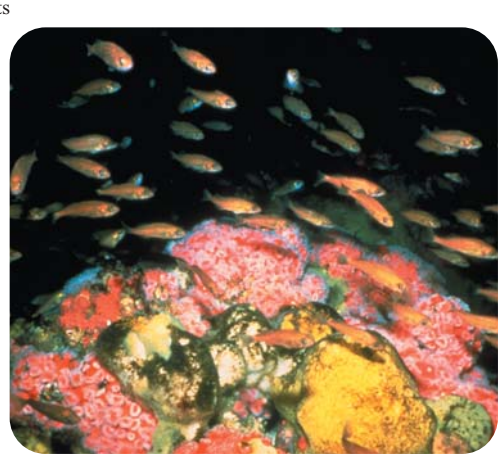


Getting Involved

This is an important time for you to participate in the management plan review.

You can get involved in the process by attending public information workshops, reviewing the Draft Management Plans and the Draft Environmental Statement and providing comments in writing (via e-mail or regular mail). Members of the public may also provide oral comments at the public hearings. The NMSP will provide ample notice of each meeting – in the local media and on the sanctuaries' web sites.

You may also wish to contact Sanctuary Advisory Council members or attend Advisory Council meetings and express your views. Sanctuary Advisory Council meeting agendas are posted on the individual sanctuary web sites, and all meetings are open to the public.



Partnerships, the Sanctuary Advisory Councils, and the National Marine Sanctuary Program

Partnerships are vitally important to the operation of national marine sanctuaries. Each sanctuary works with local, state, and federal agencies in addition to regional stakeholders, research institutions and other non-governmental organizations in order to carry out t he NMSP's mission. The sanctuary program relies on its many partners to leverage the scarce resources that are available to implement the various resource protection, research, and education programs. It will continue to rely on these partnerships to implement the new management plans.

One of the strongest partners for each of the sanctuaries is its Sanctuary Advisory Council. Dedicated Sanctuary Advisory Council members have laid a strong foundation for the sanctuaries' structures, policies, and procedures. The councils provide advice to the sanctuary managers on management priorities, programs, and activities.

These Sanctuary Advisory Councils have proven to be a powerful voice for the general public, responding to citizen concerns, ideas, and needs. They provide a public forum for their constituents, working to improve communications and bringing the concerns of stakeholders to the attention of sanctuary managers and NOAA leadership in Washington, D.C.

Constituents are encouraged to communicate with their SanctuaryAdvisory Council representatives and to attend Sanctuary Advisory Council meetings as a means of raising or commenting on various sanctuary-related issues. Advisory Council members for each sanctuary – and their contact information – can be found on page 12.

Proposed Action Plans:
Cordell Bank, Gulf of the Farallones, and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries

The following are brief summaries of the recommended action plans that make up the foundation of the sanctuaries' proposed management plans. These plans, as recommended by the Sanctuary Advisory Councils, identify the strategies and activities to be implemented by each sanctuary in order to address its priority issues.

Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary

BACKGROUND

About fifty-two miles (forty-five nautical miles) northwest of the Golden Gate Bridge, at the edge of the continental shelf, Cordell Bank rises from the seafloor. Although most of the bank lies under about 200 feet of water, this submerged island rises to within 120 feet of the ocean surface along a few of its ridges and pinnacles.

Upwelling of nutrient-rich ocean waters and the bank's topography create one of the most biologically productive areas on the West Coast. The site is a lush feeding ground for many marine mammals and seabirds. Algae and invertebrates proliferate. Endangered humpback whales along with Dall's porpoises, albatross, shearwaters, and countless other marine species flourish in this extraordinarily rich marine environment. However, few people have seen this special part of the California seafloor due to its depth, currents, and distance from the mainland.

The significant value of this marine habitat was officially recognized in 1989 when 526 square miles (397 square nautical miles) of Pacific Ocean including and surrounding Cordell Bank were designated as a national marine sanctuary.

www. cordellbank.noaa.gov

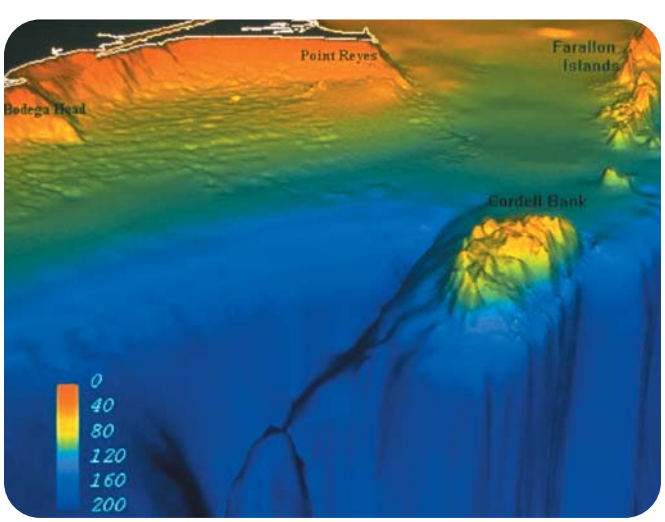
DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN AND PROPOSED ACTION PLANS

The Draft Management Plan will be a revision of the original management plan, adopted with sanctuary designation in 1989, and will be focused on how best to understand and protect the sanctuary's resources. It will include five action plans that will guide the sanctuary for the next five years. Following is a list of the proposed action plans, with a brief summary of each:

Education and Outreach:
This plan includes the development of a lecture series, interpretive signage, a video, an interactive CD-ROM, and media outreach. The sanctuary will also develop a volunteer base to help communicate sanctuary messages to a broader audience. The education staff will conduct an assessment of the sanctuary's audience, create an Education Working Group of the Sanctuary Advisory Council, involve teachers in sanctuary projects, and educate adults through Point Reyes National Seashore Association field seminars.

Ecosystem Protection:

- *Impacts from Fishing Activities:* Sanctuary staff will profile regional fishing activities and communities to better understand the evolution of fishing activities in the sanctuary. In addition, staff will characterize sanctuary resources (habitats, species, and processes) to better understand

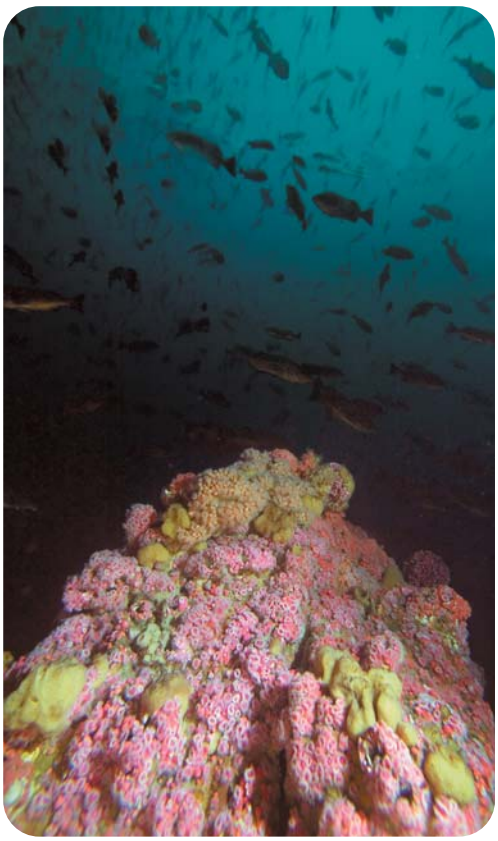


sensitive areas. Based on these findings, staff will determine if a process is needed to further evaluate fishing activities and their impacts on resources.

Partnerships with Community Groups: The sanctuary will engage a broader community in the implementation of the sanctuary's management plan. In particular, the sanctuary will develop partnerships with the research community to leverage opportunities and expertise, maximize the Sanctuary Advisory Council's potential as a link to the community, use media opportunities, and identify partnership mechanisms to raise and manage additional sources of revenue and in-kind resources.

Conservation Science: Sanctuary staff will work to characterize oceanographic features; map sanctuary habitats; and monitor the soft-bottom, hard-bottom, and pelagic communities. The sanctuary will also compile existing knowledge about the ecosystem from museum collections, data archives, and literature indexes.

Administration: In order to implement the management plan, the sanctuary will strengthen its administrative infrastructure by adding staff, facilities, financial resources, and partnerships. In addition, it will establish a regular enforcement presence in the sanctuary, review and revise its emergency response plan, regularly review the effectiveness of programs in attaining sanctuary goals, review and revise regulations and permitting procedures, and continually track emerging issues for their potential impacts on sanctuary resources.



Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary

BACKGROUND

Just north and west of San Francisco Bay, a large expanse of the Pacific Ocean was designated in 1981 as the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary. This 1,255-square-mile area (948 square nautical miles) is larger than the state of Rhode Island and protects open ocean, nearshore tidal flats, rocky intertidal areas, wetlands, subtidal reefs, and coastal beaches within its boundaries.

The Farallon Islands lie thirty miles (twenty-six nautical miles) west of the Golden Gate Bridge and are a national wildlife refuge, offering resting and breeding sites for marine mammals and seabirds that are lured to the area by nutrient-rich waters. The sanctuary is home to thousands of seals and sea lions as well as the largest concentration of breeding seabirds in the continental United States.

The resources are protected by managing human activities that may damage habitats and species, supporting restoration projects to revitalize disturbed areas, and conducting monitoring programs that provide information to assess changes from natural and human disturbance.

www.farallones.noaa.gov

More information

DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN AND PROPOSED ACTION PLANS

The Draft Management Plan will be a revision of the original management plan, adopted with sanctuary designation in 1981, and will be focused on how best to understand and protect the sanctuary's resources. It will include nine action plans that will guide the sanctuary for the next five years. Following is a list of the proposed action plans, with a brief summary of each:

Water Quality:
Under this plan, the sanctuary will function as a coordinating body for a water quality monitoring program, work with other agencies to address land-based impacts and those from marinas, encourage mariners and ranchers to employ best management practices, consider a future prohibition on vessel discharge within the State Water Quality Protection Areas, and support the continuation of the state's Mussel Watch program. Additional administrative actions include the creation of a Water Quality Working Group and Sanctuary Advisory Council seat, hiring a water quality specialist/coordinator, conducting an inventory of all water quality research and monitoring projects, and supporting the California Coastal Commission's Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials program to educate local decision makers.

Wildlife Disturbance:
In order to understand human impacts on wildlife, staff will create an easily accessible database of wildlife disturbance information and data, use volunteers to monitor and record impacts on sanctuary resources from human activities, and coordinate with other agencies to monitor impacts from vessels and low-flying aircraft. To reduce disturbances, the sanctuary will use interpretive and law enforcement efforts to address inappropriate human behavior, develop and distribute wildlife viewing guidelines, and use the media to increase public awareness of wildlife disturbance issues.

Ecosystem Protection:
These are two distinct, yet complementary action plans that have been coupled due to their common goals and objectives.

- *Impacts from Fishing Activities:* Sanctuary staff will profile regional fishing activities and communities to better understand and evaluate impacts on sanctuary resources. In addition, staff will characterize sanctuary resources (habitats, species, and processes) to better understand sensitive areas. Based on these findings, staff will determine if a process is needed to further address fishing activities and their impacts on resources. It will also conduct outreach about the significance of sanctuary maritime communities and place a regional sanctuary representative on fisheries management councils.
- *Ecosystem Protection:* Under this plan, the sanctuary will create a Living Resource and Habitat Protection Working Group of the Sanctuary Advisory Council. This group will evaluate the need to provide special protection for sensitive habitats and living resources (using tools such as zoning) and will develop a community-based process for evaluating marine reserve status for Estero Americano and Estero de San Antonio.

Introduced Species:
The sanctuary will develop and maintain a native and introduced species inventory and database; develop programs to detect introduced species in estuarine, rocky intertidal, and pelagic environments; work with volunteers to improve early detection; and develop a rapid response plan and streamlined permit process. To facilitate prevention, early detection, and rapid response, the sanctuary will convene a Technical Advisory Council to advise on how to continue to address this complex issue over time.

Impacts from Vessel Spills:
This plan directs staff to assess the risk of spills by profiling vessel activities in the sanctuary, improving the current drift analysis models, and maintaining vessel and living resource monitoring programs. Vessel

spill risk will be reduced by continually updating and improving response programs and conducting outreach to the maritime industry about the Vessel Traffic System and sanctuary regulations. The action plan also includes creating a Vessel Spills Working Group of the Sanctuary Advisory Council, adding a representative of the maritime trade industry to the council, and ensuring staff participation at regional vessel traffic forums.

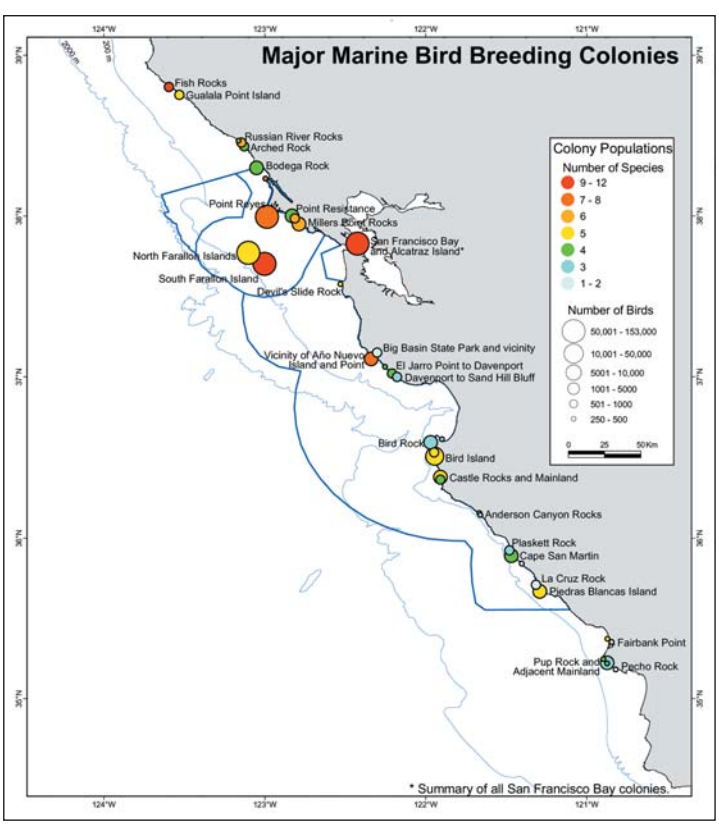
Education:
Sanctuary staff will continue to improve and expand the following established programs: K-8 and high school classroom and field trip education, visitor center programs and exhibits, Sanctuary Explorers Camp for inner city children, professional development for teachers, LiMPETS (Long-Term Monitoring Program and Experiential Training for Students), volunteer programs under the Sanctuary Naturalist Corps, media and marketing, and sanctuary lecture series and outreach events. New programs include a sanctuary naturalist certification program; a high school internship program; an expanded visitor center, interpretive signage, and exhibits; and a traveling watershed exhibit. The education program will also address the education and outreach needs of the issue-based action plans.

Conservation Science:
The research program will continue to expand and improve the Beach Watch monitoring program, conduct research to determine permit conditions for white shark viewing and to assess the effectiveness of new regulations, host a biennial research workshop to facilitate information exchange among researchers active in the sanctuary, and complete research strategies from all issue-area action plans.

Resource Protection:
Under this plan, the sanctuary will track, evaluate, and address new and emerging issues; continuously review sanctuary regulations; maintain a formalized permit program; develop and maintain an effective law and interpretive enforcement program; update the emergency response plan and train staff on its implementation; formalize a plan to assess and repair damage to sanctuary resources; evaluate boundary modification alternatives; and continue to conduct

collaborative planning and management efforts through partnerships and community-based processes. To address concerns regarding the Farallon Islands Radioactive Waste Dump, the sanctuary will convene a group of agency scientists to evaluate its status, make recommendations on how impacts will be addressed, and develop an outreach campaign to inform the public on its status and potential threats.

Administration:
The sanctuary will build on its existing administrative structure to create a comprehensive and coordinated framework that provides support for achieving the goals of the management plan. This plan proposes expansion of the existing office and visitor center space; increased vessel access; basic staffing support; development and maintenance of partnerships with agencies, organizations, and the public; and evaluation of current programs using performance indicators.



Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

BACKGROUND

Stretching from Marin to Cambria, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary encompasses 276 miles of shoreline and 5,322 square miles (4,625 nautical miles) of ocean, extending an average distance of thirty miles from shore. At its deepest point, it reaches down 10,663 feet (more than two miles).

The sanctuary was established for the purposes of resource protection, research, education, and public use. Its natural resources include our nation's largest kelp forest and one of North America's largest underwater canyons. It is home to one of the most diverse marine ecosystems in the world, including thirty-three marine mammal species, ninety-four seabird species, 345 fish species, and numerous invertebrates and plants. This remarkably productive marine environment is fringed by spectacular coastal scenery, including sandy beaches, rocky cliffs, rolling hills, and steep mountains.

www.montereybay.noaa.gov

More information

DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN AND PROPOSED ACTION PLANS

The Draft Management plan will be a revision of the original management plan, adopted with sanctuary designation in 1992, and will be focused on how best to understand and protect the sanctuary's resources. This management plan will include twenty-two proposed action plans that will guide the sanctuary for the next five years. The majority of the action plans are grouped into four main marine management themes: coastal development, ecosystem protection, water quality, and wildlife disturbance. Two additional sections, partnerships and opportunities as well as operations and administration, comprise action plans and strategies that address how the sanctuary will function and operate. Finally, five cross-cutting plans will be implemented in conjunction with the other two sanctuaries. Following is a list of the action plans with a brief summary of each:

Coastal Development

Coastal Armoring:
The armoring of the coastline for protection of private and public structures continues to expand throughout the sanctuary and can lead to loss of local beaches. This action plan proposes to address coastal armoring issues in coordination with the California Coastal Commission, and other stakeholders to develop regional approaches to evaluating alternatives to hard armoring.

Desalination:
Increased demand for water in various communities adjacent to the sanctuary, together with advancements in technology, has made desalination an attractive source of fresh water. The sanctuary proposes development of a regional program and policy regarding desalination facility locations. The action plan also includes development of facility siting guidelines and a modeling and monitoring program for desalination discharges.

Harbors and Dredge Disposal:
The sanctuary will continue to review plans to dispose dredged material in approved locations at sea or along the shoreline. This action plan proposes several agency coordination improvements, review of permit processes for efficiency, and the development of review guidelines. It would also implement a sediment monitoring and reduction program, address fine grain material disposal at sea, and evaluate alternative disposal methods for the four harbors in the sanctuary.

Submerged Cables:
The installation, operation, and removal of submerged cable may disturb sensitive habitats and negatively impact areas of the seafloor. Implementation would provide administrative guidelines for applications and define sensitive sanctuary habitats that should be avoided. This would include a program to provide siting guidelines in a geographic information system (GIS) to identify environmental constraints.

Ecosystem Protection

Bottom Trawling Effects on Benthic Habitats:
The effects of bottom trawling on benthic habitats in areas of the sanctuary are not completely known. Implementation of this action plan would include development of a program to examine where trawling occurs and its impacts, and if necessary, to present potential protective measures

to the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Pacific Fishery Management Council, and the California Department of Fish and Game.

Big Sur Coastal Ecosystem Plan:
The sanctuary is proposing development of a program to coordinate and integrate resource management plans from seven coastal agencies with jurisdiction in the Big Sur area. Implementation would include identifying potential methods and locations of disposal associated with landslides and maintenance of Highway 1 in Big Sur.

Davidson Seamount:
The Davidson Seamount is a pristine undersea volcano that is proposed for inclusion in the sanctuary. Implementation would involve a boundary expansion to allow for additional protection of the seamount, additional regulations, and a new management zone. The action plan identifies monitoring, research, enforcement, and education activities focused on the seamount.

Emerging Issues:
This action plan provides a framework for staff to evaluate and adequately address emerging resource issues in a timely and responsible manner. The strategies outline a process to provide adequate staffing and operations.

Introduced Species:
The introduction of non-native species can destroy natural biological communities and potentially harm commercial activities. The sanctuary would develop a program to prevent introduction, collect baseline information, and develop a research and monitoring program. The action plan also includes development of a detection and response program.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs):
The action plan outlines how the sanctuary will examine the utility of additional MPAs to maintain the ecological integrity of biological communities. It also outlines a program for identifying various types of ocean uses, integrated management, MPA design criteria, socioeconomic impact analysis, MPA enforcement, outreach, and monitoring. This plan also provides a framework to identify how the sanctuary will coordinate with the National Marine Fisheries Service, Pacific Fishery Management Council, and California Department of Fish and Game on this topic.

Sanctuary Integrated Monitoring Network (SIMoN):
The action plan outlines how SIMoN integrates and interprets monitoring in the sanctuary, facilitates new monitoring programs and disseminates information through tools such as the SIMoN website (www.mbnms-simon.org), annual symposium and technical and public reports.

Water Quality

Beach Closures and Microbial Contamination:
In the past ten years, beach closures and warnings due to microbial contamination have become more common. This action plan provides a program to: identify sources of contamination; research pathogen sources; increase monitoring, education, and enforcement; expand notification and

emergency response; and develop a database and a source control program to reduce beach closures and postings due to microbial contamination.

Cruise Ship Discharges:
Cruise ships can carry upwards of 4,000 people, and the discharge of waste may harm water quality and resources. The sanctuary proposes to prohibit discharges from cruise ships and conduct outreach and coordination with the cruise ship industry, providing it with information about the sanctuary. The sanctuary would also monitor and enforce potential cruise ship discharges.

Water Quality Protection Program Implementation:
Pollutants running off the land often lower the quality of water as both a habitat and resource for recreational and commercial use. The sanctuary has four existing action plans that are in place to prevent pollution and faciltate water quality improvements as part of the Water Quality Protection Program: Urban Runoff; Regional Monitoring, Marinas and Boating; and Agriculture and Rural Lands. The implementation action plan updates and integrates the four existing plans into the sanctuary management plan to address pollutants and their sources.

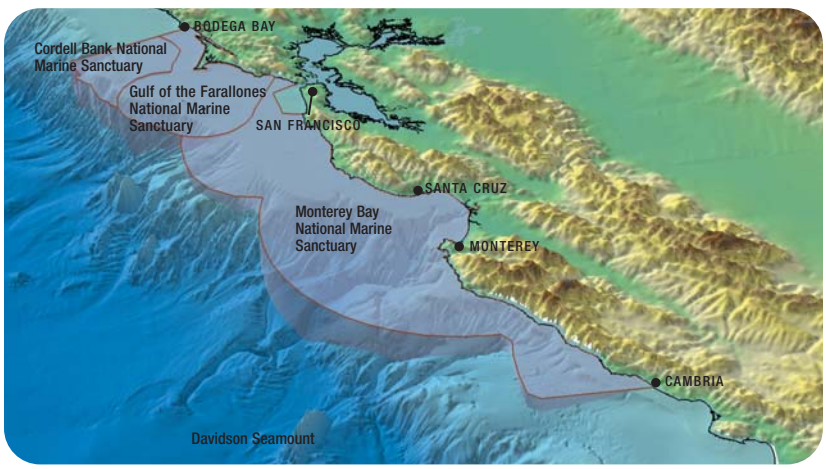
Wildlife Disturbance

Marine Mammal, Seabird, and Turtle Disturbance:
Various activities that occur on the water, in the air, or on land have the potential to harm the sensitive wildlife that inhabit the sanctuary. Through increased monitoring, education, outreach, and enforcement, the sanctuary will address disturbance to

marine mammals, birds, and turtles from vessels, aircraft, shore-based activities, marine debris, commercial harvest, and acoustic disturbance.

Motorized Personal Watercraft (MPWC):
Although most MPWC activities were to have been banned in 1992 when the sanctuary was designated, MPWC have increased with the development of larger and more powerful watercraft. The sanctuary is proposing an updated definition of MPWC in order to address the original intent of the existing sanctuary regulation, which was to restrict them to four zones near the four harbors. This action plan includes education and enforcement procedures and exploration of the need for certain exceptions.

Tidepool Protection:
The sanctuary will evaluate and prioritize high-visitation tidepool areas and address possible impacts associated with potentially excessive use. The action plan includes education and enforcement programs, and monitoring the development of guidelines for tidepool access and enjoyment.



Partnerships and Opportunities

Fishing-Related Education and Research:
The sanctuary will work with the fishing community and various organizations to: develop education programs; enhance stakeholder communication; promote understanding of sustainable fisheries; increase involvement in education and research; promote fishery, socioeconomic, cultural, and historical data collection and distribution; and help educate the public on the role of healthy ecosystems and fish stocks.

Interpretive Facilities:
This action plan describes the need for and location of interpretive facilities including visitor centers, kiosks, virtual experiences, and signage at various locations along the coastline. Implementation would include development of a Sanctuary Visitor Center in Santa Cruz and provide for a key education and outreach tool component for all of the priority action plans.

Ocean Literacy and Constituent Building:
This action plan addresses the need to cultivate an informed, involved constituency who cares about ocean resources. The sanctuary will implement an integrated outreach program to improve ocean literacy, engage volunteers, collaborate with local business, develop K-12 programs and implement the sanctuary's existing multicultural outreach program MERITO.

Cross-Cutting Action Plans

The management plans also include several cross-cutting plans, which would be implemented through coordination among each of the three sanctuaries. The following action plans will be included as appendices to the sanctuary management plans:

Community Outreach:
This action plan will build awareness about the existence and purpose of the three sanctuaries and why they are relevant to their communities. Implementation will identify how sanctuaries work with constituents and how groups can become engaged in helping the sanctuaries accomplish their goals.

Ecosystem Monitoring:
This action plan provides a framework to coordinate the various monitoring activities and to conduct a monitoring needs assessment. The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary will also coordinate with the other sites in expanding its Sanctuary Integrated Monitoring Network (SIMoN) to integrate the numerous ecosystem monitoring operations throughout the sanctuaries.

Maritime Heritage:
Implementation of this action plan will establish a maritime heritage program at each of the three sites, outline how the West Coast maritime heritage program will conduct a submerged site inventory and assessment, identify and address submerged hazards, and provide for extensive education and outreach.

Northern Management Area (NMA):
This action plan outlines how this area will be managed given the transfer of management and administrative functions from the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) to the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (GFNMS) in the NMA, an area of the MBNMS extending from the Santa Cruz-San Mateo county line north to the adjacent GFNMS boundary.

Overview of the National Marine Sanctuary Program

The NMSP resides within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Ocean Service. The program manages fourteen marine protected areas that encompass marine and freshwater resources from the state of Washington to the Florida Keys, from Massachusetts to American Samoa, from Lake Huron to the Gulf of Mexico, and the newly created Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument.

The marine sanctuary system contains many unique and special marine features, including kelp forests; deep-ocean gardens; near-shore coral reefs; areas for whale feeding, reproduction, and migration; deep-sea canyons; and underwater archaeological sites. Sanctuaries range in size from the one-quarter square mile of American Samoa's Fagatele Bay to the more than 5,300 square miles of Monterey Bay, California – one of the largest marine protected areas in the world. Together, these sanctuaries encompass nearly 18,000 square miles of coastal, open-ocean, and Great Lake waters and habitats.

The NMSP provides oversight and coordination among the thirteen sanctuaries and the marine national monument. It also ensures that the management plan prepared for each sanctuary is consistent with the National Marine Sanctuaries Act and provides a general budget to estimate expenditures for program development, operating costs, and staffing.

The National Marine Sanctuaries Act

The National Marine Sanctuaries Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. §1431 et. seq.) is the legislative mandate that governs the NMSP. It authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to designate as national marine sanctuaries areas of the marine environment or Great Lakes with special national significance due to their conservation, recreational, ecological, historical, scientific, cultural, archeological, educational, or aesthetic qualities. The Act directs NOAA to manage the areas as the National Marine Sanctuary System.

The purposes and policies of the Act are:

(1) To identify and designate as national marine sanctuaries areas of the marine environment which are of special national significance and to manage these areas as the national marine sanctuary system;
(2) To provide authority for comprehensive and coordinated conservation and management of these marine areas, and activities affecting them, in a manner which complements existing regulatory authorities;
(3) To maintain the natural biological communities in the national marine sanctuaries and to protect, and, where appropriate, restore and enhance natural habitats, populations, and ecological processes;
(4) To enhance public awareness, understanding, appreciation, and wise and sustainable use of the marine environment and the natural, historical, cultural, and archeological resources of the national marine sanctuary system;
(5) To support, promote, and coordinate scientific research on, and long-term monitoring of, the resources of these marine areas;
(6) To facilitate, to the extent compatible with the primary objective of resource protection, all public and private uses of the resources of these marine areas not prohibited pursuant to other authorities;
(7) To develop and implement coordinated plans for the protection and management of these areas with appropriate federal agencies, state and local governments, Native American tribes and organizations, international organizations, and other public and private interests concerned with the continuing health and resilience of these marine areas;
(8) To create models of, and incentives for, ways to conserve and manage these areas, including the application of innovative management techniques; and
(9) To cooperate with global programs encouraging conservation of marine resources.

A complete version of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (as amended) is available at **www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov**.

More information

Sanctuary Advisory Council Member Seats

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www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov/jointplan

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The Sanctuary Advisory Councils provide advice to the sanctuaries on management priorities, programs, and activities. They are also a powerful voice for the general public. Constituents are encouraged to communicate with their representatives.

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