

2013 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



SHIPPING LANES ADJUSTMENT TO PROMOTE SAFETY

In 2013, shipping lanes approaching San Francisco Bay were modified in order to increase safety for mariners and protect whales. Since many feeding and migration areas overlap with shipping lanes, slow moving whales are highly vulnerable to ship strikes. Extending the three lanes in the approach to San Francisco Bay is expected to reduce the co-occurrence of ships and whales within Cordell Bank and Gulf of the Farallones national marine sanctuaries. The International Maritime Organization amended the Traffic Separation Scheme as a result of a proposal by NOAA and U.S. Coast Guard.



EXPANDING SANCTUARIES

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries initiated a public process to expand the boundaries north and west of Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank national marine sanctuaries. Following a public scoping period, a draft environmental impact statement and revised management plan were prepared and are expected to be released in the spring of 2014. This proposed expansion will protect nationally significant seascapes and biologically productive source waters.



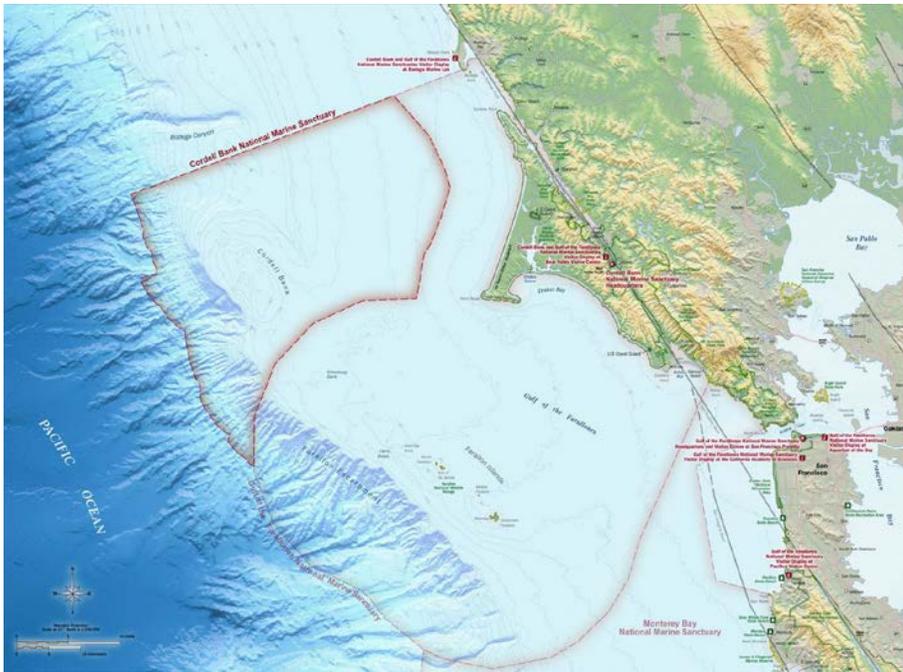
ROCKFISH CONSERVATION AREAS COLLABORATIVE STUDY

In 2013, a collaborative study was undertaken in order to evaluate the success of Rockfish Conservation Areas put in place in 2002. Scientists and recreational anglers worked together to catch fish in areas that had been closed for 11 years and compared lengths and levels of species diversity with historical data. This study focuses on Cordell Bank as a study area (among other California sanctuary locations) and preliminary data show positive results indicating larger and higher quantities of fish. This study informs managers about the efficacy of closed areas and informs long-term management of an economically valuable species.



PERMANENT CORDELL BANK GALLERY OPENS

The sanctuary celebrated the opening of a permanent Cordell Bank gallery as part of a massive renovation of the Natural Sciences Gallery at the Oakland Museum of California. The exhibit brings the beautiful and abundant, yet remote and largely inaccessible, Cordell Bank national marine sanctuary into an active, urban community museum in the Bay area. The sanctuary will continue to work together with the museum to offer enrichment programs at special events, lectures, film nights and student programs so as to further increase awareness about this offshore jewel that is largely unknown.



Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary gets its name from the underwater mountain that rises to within 115 feet of the ocean's surface off Point Reyes, California. Upwelling of nutrient-rich deep water supports a flourishing ecosystem on and around Cordell Bank, making the 529-square-mile sanctuary a productive feeding destination for diverse marine creatures. Common sanctuary inhabitants and migratory visitors include whales, dolphins, sea lions, seabirds, rockfish and Pacific salmon. Established May 24, 1989.

LOOKING AHEAD

- The sanctuary will continue to work on the proposal to expand Cordell Bank and Gulf of the Farallones national marine sanctuaries. NOAA aims to issue a Record of Decision by the end of 2014.
- The sanctuary is sponsoring the student film competition at the 11th San Francisco International Film Festival. With the sanctuary's involvement, film submissions have more than tripled and film topics have covered a wider range of ocean conservation issues. The festival takes place March 2014.
- With the use of a remotely operated vehicle, sanctuary researchers will take a closer look at the fragile and dense invertebrate communities of the shallow reefs on Cordell Bank.

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries is committed to supporting lives and livelihoods across the nation and in sanctuary communities through socioeconomic research and monitoring to understand the economic and social drivers of sanctuary resources and improve management practices.

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM



Scale varies in this perspective. Adapted from National Geographic Maps.

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries serves as the trustee for a system of 14 marine protected areas encompassing more than 150,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington state to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. The system includes 13 national marine sanctuaries and the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. For more information on the National Marine Sanctuary System, visit: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>