

WEST COAST REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Krill Harvest Prohibited along the West Coast

In August 2009, NOAA published a regulation prohibiting the harvesting of krill (small shrimp-like crustaceans key to the marine food web) in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) off the coasts of California, Oregon and Washington. While the three states currently have regulations prohibiting the harvesting of krill within three miles of their coastlines, there was no similar federal restriction within the EEZ, which stretches from three to 200 miles from the coast.

The krill prohibition was adopted as Amendment 12 to the Coastal Pelagic Species Fishery Management Plan, which was developed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The krill harvest prohibition was originally proposed to the PFMC and NOAA Fisheries Service by the West Coast Region of the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. It reflects strong teamwork within NOAA and a commitment to addressing the issues raised by the PFMC and the sanctuary advisory councils for national marine sanctuaries in California. The rule preserves key ecological relationships in the California Current ecosystem, which includes five national marine sanctuaries.

NOAA Partners Test New Research Vessel *Okeanos Explorer*

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries' West Coast Regional Office has been assisting NOAA's Office of Ocean Exploration and Research in developing exploration targets of mutual interest in sanctuary waters to field test the new NOAA research ship *Okeanos Explorer* as part of general shakedown of the vessel. This effort culminated in July 2009 with a multi-day multibeam sonar mapping field trial off the central and northern California coast, during which researchers mapped approximately 2,200 square miles of the seafloor at high resolutions. Areas mapped included the deep portions of Cordell Bank and sections of Gulf of the Farallones and northern Monterey Bay national marine sanctuaries. In addition, areas adjacent to Cordell Bank and Gulf of the Farallones national marine sanctuaries were mapped. The location of the World War II-era ship *USS Independence* was also confirmed during this mission.

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NOAA Cordell Bank NMS (non-voting): Dan Howard
Alternate: Kaitlin Graiff

NOAA Monterey Bay NMS (non-voting): Paul Michel
Alternate: Karen Grimmer

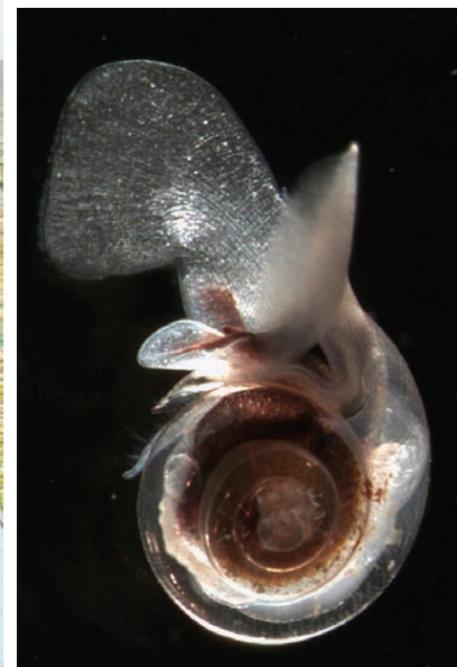
NOAA Fisheries (non-voting): Patrick Rutten
Alternate: Natalie Cosentino-Manning

U.S. Coast Guard: CAPT Thomas Cullen
Alternate: LTJG Brittany Steward

2009 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Scot Anderson



Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary covers nearly 1,300 square miles of coastal and ocean wilderness west of San Francisco. The sanctuary is home to some of the largest concentrations of white sharks and blue whales on Earth, along with one-fifth of California's breeding harbor seals and hundreds of thousands of breeding seabirds. The sanctuary also protects numerous estuaries, bays and beaches for the public to enjoy. Established Jan. 16, 1981.



Scot Anderson

White Shark Conservation Gets a Boost

In 2009, in an effort to protect one of the most important white shark populations in the world, Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary enacted new regulations to ensure the sharks are not disturbed during their fall feeding season. New sanctuary regulations now prohibit attracting a white shark anywhere in the sanctuary, or approaching within 50 meters of a white shark inside a two-nautical-mile radius around any of the Farallon Islands, located about 27 miles off San Francisco. In order to implement the new regulations, sanctuary staff have initiated the White Shark Stewardship Project that includes permitting, public and boater outreach, naturalist training, school education programs, monitoring, and coordination with the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement.



Signage Promotes Ocean Literacy in North-Central California

In new partnerships with the National Park Service's Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Audubon Canyon Ranch and the San Mateo County Parks Department, Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary has installed seven new interpretive signs in strategic scenic locations along the coast of Marin, San Francisco and San Mateo counties overlooking the Gulf of the Farallones and northern Monterey Bay sanctuaries. The new signs include famous Seal Rock at San Francisco's Land's End; Bird Island overlooking the northern entrance to the Golden Gate; the elegant egrets and shorebirds of Audubon Canyon Ranch adjacent to Bolinas Lagoon; a guide to Stinson Beach coastal wildlife; and a general overview of the features and mission of the area's national marine sanctuaries. This brings the coastal signage scheme to total of 22 designed to enhance the visitor experience and foster an appreciation of the region's coastal resources.



Saving America's Largest Shale Reef

Duxbury Reef, the largest shale reef in North America, is home to hundreds of species of marine invertebrates and algae. The Duxbury Reef Restoration Project, funded by the Cape Mohican Trustee Council from a 1996 oil spill, has completed a site characterization and documented initial visitor use patterns, incorporating changes in condition found in the aftermath of the 2007 *Cosco Busan* oil spill. Through education and stewardship, Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, with the California Academy of Sciences, is increasing public awareness of sensitive reef habitat with the training and placement of docents at the reef itself and at the academy's California Coast exhibits. The project facilitates the natural recovery of intertidal habitat at the Duxbury Reef Marine Reserve. Special docents work as roving interpretive naturalists and contribute toward ongoing monitoring research. While on the reef, these naturalists teach visitors about the natural history of intertidal animals and plants, as well as tidepool etiquette to prevent the reef from being "loved to death."



Lights! Camera! Action! San Francisco Film Festival is a Hit!

The Sixth Annual San Francisco Ocean Film Festival was again a compelling "cinemaquatic" event, drawing an estimated 3,700 ocean enthusiasts to view films on marine science and exploration, conservation, saltwater sports, and coastal cultures. This world-class celebration featured over 40 international documentary, fictional and animated films. The festival offered free student programs, media arts awards and public discussions. A special session spotlighted the Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank sanctuaries and other marine protected areas. A program and expert panel discussion on white sharks quickly sold out. In-depth discussions with filmmakers and content specialists created a unique public forum on the environmental, social and cultural importance of marine resources, and a portal for increasing ocean literacy and discovering our blue planet. Plans are underway for the expanded 2010 festival at the Aquarium of the Bay, whose Fisherman's Wharf location makes it uniquely situated to reach out to visitors from around the world.

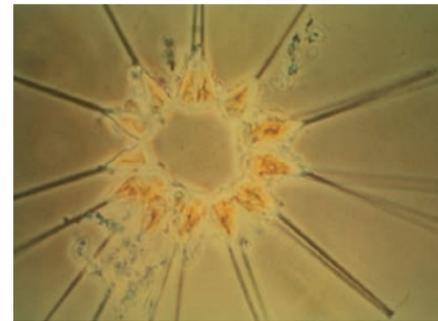
Seabird Protection Network Spreads its Wings

The Seabird Protection Network achieved a new milestone in summer 2009 when the network, which began as a regional program of Gulf of the Farallones and Monterey Bay national marine sanctuaries, formed a statewide partnership with dozens of agencies and non-governmental organizations. Funded by oil spill restoration funds, the Trustee Councils for the *T/V Command* and *Torch/Platform Irene* Oil Spill agreed to develop coordinated management and expanded strategic partnerships. Seabirds that nest and roost on cliffs or offshore rocks are highly susceptible to human disturbances, which can result in nest abandonment or entire colony abandonment. The network, addressing both conflict and compatibilities, employs marine spatial planning and targeted education and outreach to reduce seabird impacts from vessels, hikers, aircraft and recreation. Currently administered by Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, the network will enhance seabird colony protection through creation of additional chapters in other areas with critical seabird habitat throughout California.



Going Green: Reducing Our Carbon Footprint

To minimize its carbon "footprint," Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary launched its action plan for greening operations at its San Francisco headquarters. In Phase I, it completed energy, transportation and waste audits, establishing a baseline for resource use from facilities and operations. Measurable targets, specific actions and evaluation metrics, and potential partners were identified. The audit included work-related travel and use of the sanctuary's research vessel *Fulmar*. This plan was developed by the Farallones sanctuary advisory council's green operations working group, as part of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries' Blue Seas/Green Communities Initiative. Other participants included the San Francisco Department of Environment, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and BAR Architects. A remodel of the site's historic buildings has begun, for which Gold LEED certification will be sought.



Gulf of the Farallones Finalizes Beach Watch Online System

The design phase of the new Beach Watch online query system was completed and tested by conservation science, resource protection, education, operations staff and managerial staff in 2009. The system was funded by the San Francisco Foundation in the aftermath of the 2007 *Cosco Busan* oil spill to address the need for remote access to real-time Beach Watch data. During an environmental disaster such as an oil spill, mortality event or vessel grounding, Beach Watch coastal monitoring data will be available online to sanctuary staff, incident command and partner agencies and organizations. The system provides access to 16 years of Beach Watch data on live and dead birds and marine mammals recorded on beaches from Bodega Head to Año Nuevo. This milestone meets the sanctuary's Vessel Spills Strategy to track distribution and numbers of species of concern and habitats in relation to probable spill trajectories.



Scientific Collaborations Yield Critical Ocean Data

The Farallones Sanctuary Ecosystem Assessment Surveys (SEAS) gather information on physical and biological open ocean and shoreline conditions. SEAS evolved into an expanded regional ecological monitoring program through collaborations with Cordell Bank and Monterey Bay marine sanctuaries, PRBO Conservation Science, San Francisco State University's Romberg Tiburon Center and the University of California's Bodega Marine Laboratory. During SEAS pelagic habitat cruises, scientists carried out shipboard research in the California Current ecosystem, one of the most productive ocean areas on the planet. They documented high biological productivity in certain parts of the food web, especially tiny marine animals known as krill — primary prey for giant blue whales and tiny seabirds called Cassin's Auklets.