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**Superintendent Statement: Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary**

**Ships, vessels advised to slow down due to sudden influx of blue whales off San Francisco**

NOAA's Greater Farallones and Cordell Bank national marine sanctuaries off San Francisco are advising the shipping industry and all vessel operators to avoid endangered blue whales that have suddenly moved into the sanctuaries in large numbers to feed. The sanctuaries are working with the U.S. Coast Guard to notify mariners to be on the lookout for the whales, and maintain slow speed and maximum possible distance to avoid deadly collisions. On June 13 biologists with Point Blue Conservation Science sighted at least 47 blue whales from the Farallon islands in a one-hour period, and 23 blue whales a few days prior.

Today, blue whales are listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The Eastern North Pacific population, the West Coast stock of blue whale populations, have seen no significant increase since the early 1990s, despite being protected. The primary threats currently facing blue whales are vessel strikes and entanglements in fishing gear.

The largest animal on the planet, blue whales can eat up to six tons of krill each per day. Their enormous size dictates that they maximize feeding effort when food is available, and this sometimes takes them into dangerous waters. While focused on feeding, they are not likely to recognize or evade a ship's approach.

To report a dead, injured or stranded marine mammal, please call the West Coast Marine Mammal Stranding Network: 1-866-767-6114. For law enforcement, harassment, and other violations, please call the NOAA Enforcement Hotline: 1-800-853-1964.

**-Maria Brown, Superintendent,  
Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary**

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