

RESOLUTION of the  
Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

**To support funding for Farallon Islands research and monitoring program**

At its meeting on August 2, 2024, the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (GFNMS) Advisory Council passed a resolution to send a joint letter (with the Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council) expressing support for the resolution letter to support funding for Farallon Islands research and monitoring program and requested to send it to the GFNMS and CBNMS Superintendent, Maria Brown.

Attachments: Joint Proposed Resolution to support funding for Farallon Islands research and monitoring program

*This resolution was passed with majority vote by a quorum of primary members (or alternate members serving in place of primary members) at a public meeting on August 2, 2024 held on-site in Point Reyes Station, CA. Council discussion regarding this resolution can be found in Meeting Highlights documentation at [https://farallones.noaa.gov/manage/sac\\_meetings.html](https://farallones.noaa.gov/manage/sac_meetings.html).*

***The council is an advisory body to the sanctuary superintendent. The opinions and findings of this letter/publication do not necessarily reflect the position of the sanctuary and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.***

**COVER LETTER**

**Support Funding for Farallon Islands Research and Monitoring Program**

August 2, 2024

Maria Brown,  
Sanctuary Superintendent

Dear Superintendent Brown,

By this letter, the Sanctuary Advisory Councils for Greater Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries are recommending that the Greater Farallones and Cordell National Marine Sanctuaries (GFNMS/CBNMS) share the attached resolution with the West Coast Regional Office and the National Office of the National Marine Sanctuaries for consideration.

Sincerely,



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Sarah Bates, Vice-Chair  
GFNMS Advisory Council



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Jeff Dorman, Chair  
CBNMS Advisory Council

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## **PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

### **Support Funding for Farallon Islands Research and Monitoring Program**

Whereas, protecting endangered species and sanctuary resources is a priority issue for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Whereas, the Farallon Islands, managed by the USFWS as the Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge, provide critical habitat for the largest seabird breeding colony in the contiguous United States, as well as five breeding pinniped species. The islands also play a significant role in the broader ecosystem of NOAA's Greater Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries (GFNMS).

Whereas, Point Blue Conservation Science has maintained a continuous research and monitoring presence on the Farallon Islands for 56 years, providing invaluable data that supports the management and conservation of both the refuge and the adjacent marine sanctuaries.

Whereas, citing budgetary constraints at the regional and federal level, the USFWS has notified Point Blue that it will no longer be able to provide funding for its research and monitoring program on the Farallon Islands starting in 2025. This funding cut threatens the continuity of vital ecological data and potentially impacts wider marine ecosystem management.

Whereas, the loss of continuous year-round data from the Farallon Islands will significantly impact the ability of the GFNMS to manage and protect marine resources effectively. The data collected by Point Blue is crucial for understanding predator-prey dynamics, seasonal migrations, and the health of marine populations, including whales, seabirds, and pinnipeds.

Whereas, the Point Blue research program has contributed to significant environmental policy reforms, including the prohibition of gill-netting to protect seabirds and the creation of Marine Protected Areas around the Farallon Islands. The long-term datasets provided by Point Blue are critical for ongoing conservation efforts and policy development.

Whereas, the discontinuation of year-round monitoring will hinder the ability to report and respond to environmental threats, such as vessel groundings and oil pollution events, which are integral to minimizing environmental damage and ensuring the health of the marine ecosystem.

Whereas, the absence of Point Blue's research team during the fall and winter months will reduce the sanctuary's ability to enforce regulations designed to protect sensitive environments and wildlife, leading to increased human disturbance and potential wildlife mortality.

Therefore be it resolved, that the Sanctuary Advisory Councils for Greater Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries hereby jointly recommend that:

1. GFNMS should communicate with the USFWS to explore alternative mechanisms to maintain a year-round presence on the Farallon Islands, ensuring the continued collection of critical ecological data.
2. GFNMS should communicate at all policy levels the importance of Farallon Islands data in supporting sanctuary management goals and highlight the potential impacts of data loss on marine conservation efforts.
3. GFNMS should engage the public and private sectors, as well as conservation organizations, to provide support and resources to sustain the long-term ecological monitoring and research activities on the Farallon Islands.
4. GFNMS will explore requesting and allocating funds from NOAA to support activities that directly benefit sanctuary management and contribute those funds to Point Blue's research and monitoring program on the Farallon Islands.

By taking these steps, we can ensure the protection of the Farallon Islands' unique ecosystem and support the ongoing conservation efforts critical to the health and resilience of the Greater Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries.