Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary

Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (GFNMS), an area of 3,295 square miles off the northern and central California coast, protects the wildlife and habitats of one of the most diverse and bountiful marine environments in the world. The region’s unique combination of seafloor contours, ocean currents and wind patterns, fueled by the sun, triggers an abundance of life in these waters. The sanctuary is a globally significant, extraordinarily diverse and productive marine ecosystem that supports a variety of wildlife and valuable fisheries. It provides breeding and feeding grounds for at least 25 endangered and threatened species; 36 marine mammal species, including blue, gray and humpback whales, harbor seals, elephant seals, Pacific white-sided dolphins, and one of the southernmost U.S. populations of threatened Steller sea lions; over a quarter of a million breeding seabirds; and one of the most significant white shark populations on the planet.

Research and Monitoring
Conservation science protects the sanctuary by providing management with current data on marine life and ecosystem health. Research, monitoring and habitat mapping promote an understanding of ecosystem structure and function, detect environmental problems, and track the health and trends of habitats and marine life in the sanctuary. The sanctuary evaluates and addresses adverse impacts from human activities on sanctuary resources. Areas of special focus include reducing the threat to whales from ship strikes, protecting breeding seabird colonies and white sharks from human disturbance, and minimizing risks from oil spills and vessels. By ensuring a healthy ocean, we help make marine and coastal ecosystems more resilient to the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification.

Education and Outreach
The vision of the sanctuary is to create an ocean literate, involved public that can make informed environmental decisions. Public programs include exciting and engaging learning experiences for all ages: whale watching, tidepooling, kayaking, lectures, workshops, classes and exhibits. School programs use the ocean’s enormous appeal to teach science and provide interactive programs for teachers and students at the shore, in the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Visitor Center, and in their classrooms. Programs promote an ocean conservation ethic, and foster active stewardship.

Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary is full of amazing habitats, with many ways to enjoy them. In the fall, sanctuary waters host one of the largest concentrations of white sharks in the world. The sanctuary provides crucial habitat for more than a quarter of a million breeding seabirds, like these common murres.

Point Arena Lighthouse sits near the northern boundary of Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary.

http://farallones.noaa.gov
### Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary

**Location**  
Off the northern and central California coast

**Protected Area**  
3,295 square miles

**Designation**  
January 1981

**Habitats**  
- Bays and estuaries  
- Continental shelf and slope  
- Deep benthos  
- Deep rocky reefs  
- Islands  
- Kelp forests  
- Open ocean  
- Sandy and rocky shores

**Key Species**  
- Ashy storm petrel  
- Blue whale  
- Common murre  
- Dungeness crab  
- Harbor seal  
- Krill  
- Steller sea lion  
- Tufted puffin  
- White shark

**Find Us**  
991 Marine Drive, The Presidio  
San Francisco, CA 94129  
415-561-6622

**On the Web**  
Email: farallones@noaa.gov  
https://www.facebook.com/GFNMS

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**Tiny krill, a shrimp-like zooplankton, form the base of the sanctuary’s globally significant food web.**

**The sanctuary is home to one of the southern-most U.S. populations of threatened Steller sea lions.**

**Endangered blue whales, the largest animals ever to have lived on earth, feed in GFNMS in summer and fall on huge swarms of krill.**

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**Office of National Marine Sanctuaries**  
Network of marine protected areas  
Encompasses more than 600,000 square miles  
Established October 1972

**On the Web**  
sanctuaries.noaa.gov  
www.facebook.com/NOAAOfficeofNationalMarine Sanctuaries  
Instagram: @noaasanctuaries  
Twitter: @sanctuaries  
Tumblr: @noaasanctuaries

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**National Marine Sanctuary System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Olympic Coast</th>
<th>Wisconsin - Lake Michigan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater Farallones</td>
<td>Thunder Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cordell Bank</td>
<td>Stellwagen Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>Papahānaumokuākea</td>
<td>Mallows Bay - Potomac River</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale</td>
<td>Monitor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monterey Bay</td>
<td>Gray's Reef</td>
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<tr>
<td>Channel Islands</td>
<td>Florida Keys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Samoa (U.S.) (Including Rose Atoll)</td>
<td>Flower Garden Banks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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