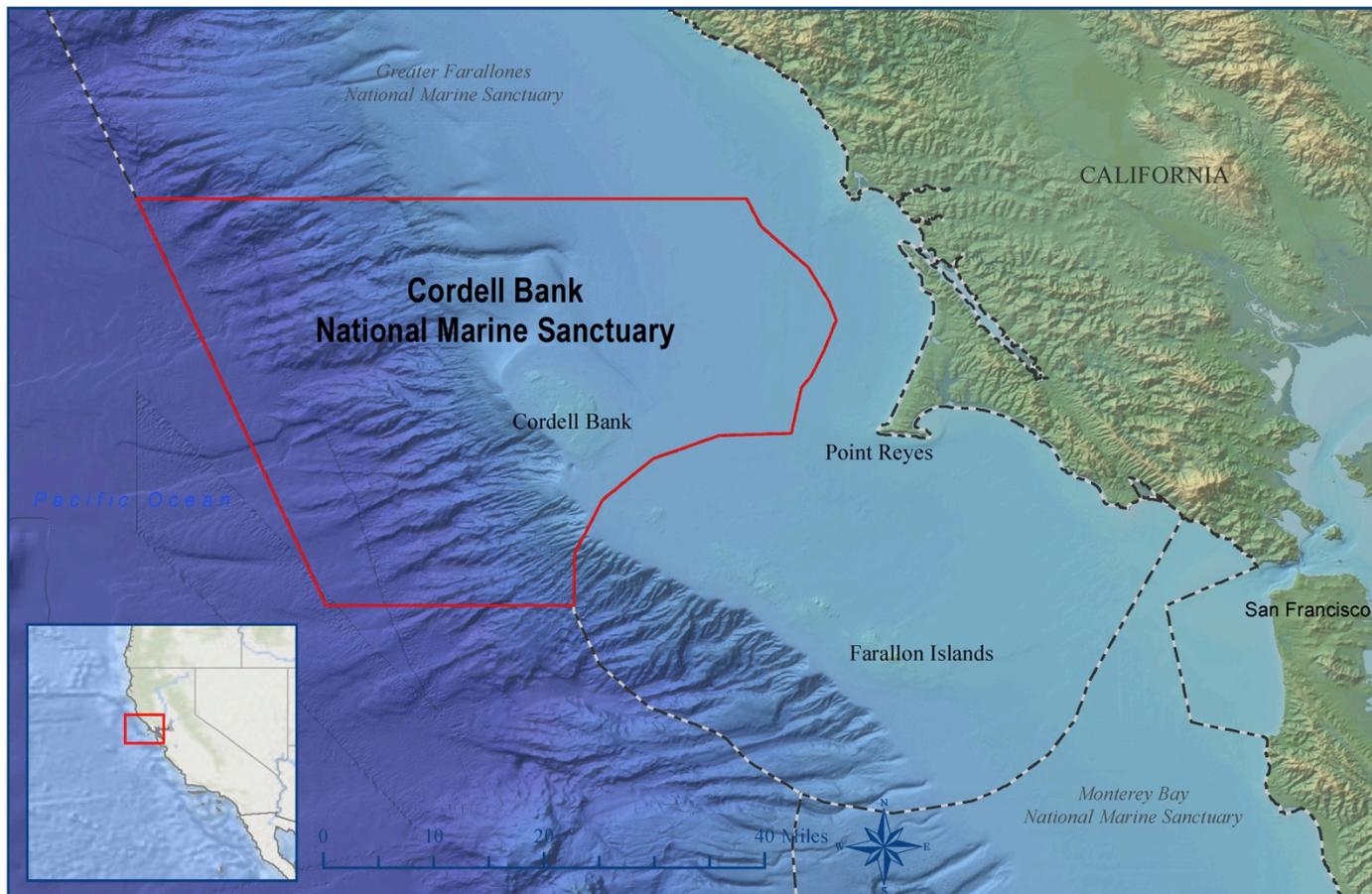


FY16 Accomplishments



BACKGROUND

Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary was established in 1989 to protect and preserve the extraordinary marine ecosystem surrounding the Cordell Bank. Surrounded by soft sediments of the continental shelf seafloor, Cordell Bank emerges with a rocky habitat, providing home to colorful and abundant invertebrates, algae, and fishes.

Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary is part of the National Marine Sanctuary System, which is a network of underwater parks encompassing more

than 600,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington state to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. National marine sanctuaries are managed for the conservation of their natural and cultural resources, while supporting sustainable recreation, tourism and compatible commercial activities. The network includes a system of 13 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments.



Photo: NOAA

Ships pass through national marine sanctuaries to enter the Port of Oakland shipping facility.



Photo: Jaime Jahnke/ACCESS/ONMS/Point Blue

Scientists prepare a water sampling rosette on the R/V *Shimada*.



Photo: Michael Carver, CBNMS

Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary and Point Reyes National Seashore staff cut the ribbon at the opening ceremony of the new Ocean Exploration Center.

Voluntary speed zone established to protect whales

Ship strikes are a major threat to recovering endangered and threatened whale populations, including blue, humpback, and fin whales. In response, Central California national marine sanctuaries established a voluntary Vessel Speed Reduction zone for commercial ships that pass through traffic lanes in sanctuaries. Along with the National Marine Fisheries Service, sanctuaries are assessing the shipping industry's commitment to travel at 10 knots or less in shipping lanes that pass through sanctuaries. Now in its third year, data are being analyzed to quantify the conservation benefit of this management strategy.

Sanctuaries partner to conduct ocean research

Adding to a 13-year data set, the Applied California Current Ecosystem Studies (ACCESS) partnership completed three research cruises in Cordell Bank and Greater Farallones national marine sanctuaries in 2016. The multidisciplinary collaborative with Point Blue Conservation Science supports marine wildlife conservation and healthy marine ecosystems in northern and central California by conducting ocean research to inform resource managers and policy makers.

New sanctuary center opens at National Park Service visitor center

In collaboration with the National Park Service, Cordell Bank and Greater Farallones national marine sanctuaries celebrated the opening of the Ocean Exploration Center at the Point Reyes Lighthouse highlighting the spectacularly rich ocean environment of North-central California. The "Lighthouse" attracts more than 100,000 visitors annually. The exhibit features 3-D models of ocean mammals, sharks, and seabirds, painted murals depicting life below the surface, and panels describing ocean wildlife and habitats protected by the national marine sanctuaries and national seashore.

Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary Looking Ahead to FY17

- The sanctuary plans to survey benthic (seafloor) habitat using remotely-operated vehicles to characterize and monitor habitat and explore new areas.
- Ship strike reduction efforts will continue in collaboration with the shipping industry, the United States Coast Guard and NOAA, which may include incentives offered through the Bay Area Air Quality Management District.
- The sanctuary will continue to work on expanding education and outreach in collaboration with Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary in the northern region of the sanctuaries.