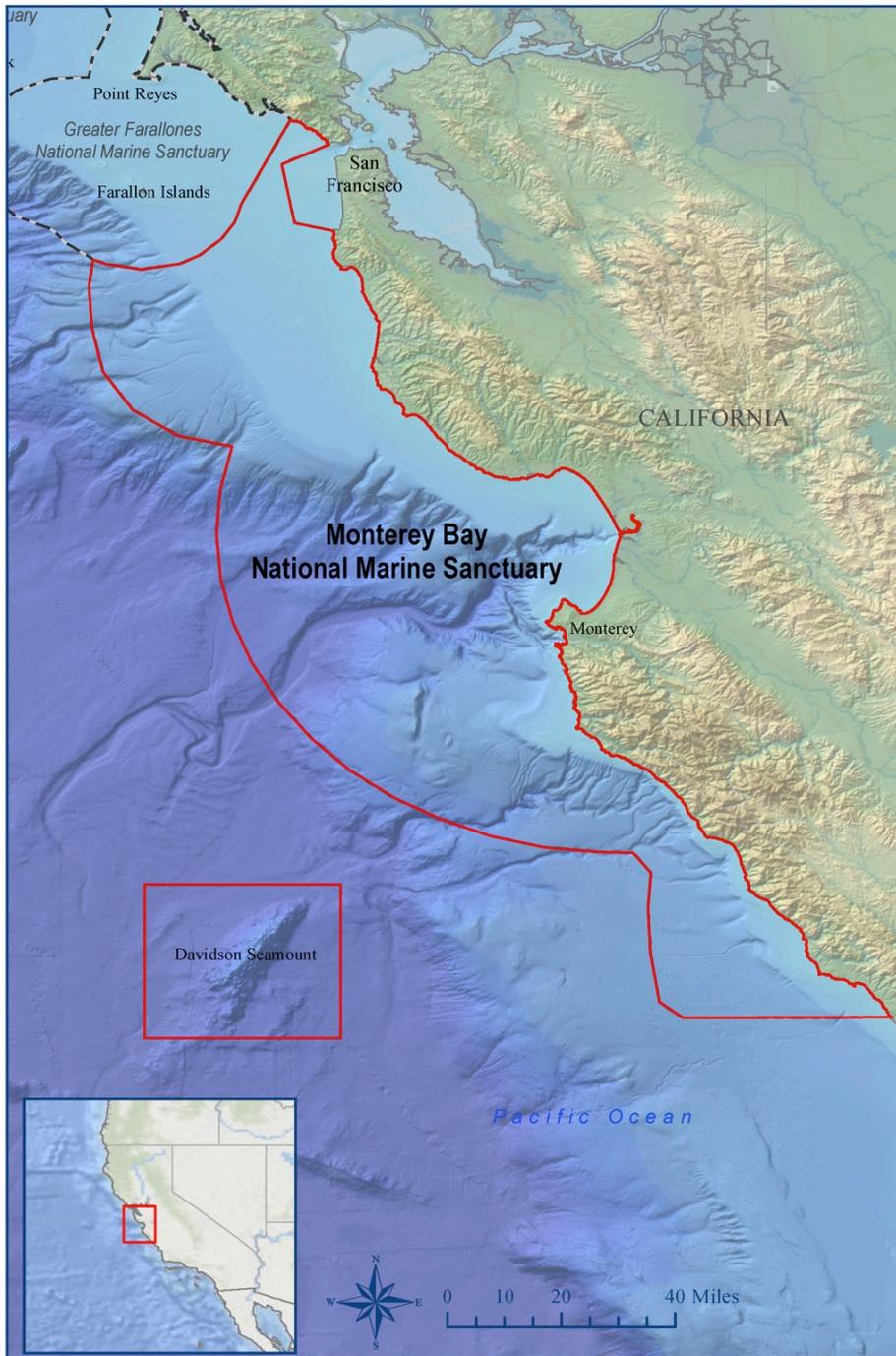


## FY18 Accomplishments

### BACKGROUND

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary was established in 1992 to protect and preserve pristine beaches, jewel-like tide pools, lush kelp forests, steep canyons and an offshore seamount teeming with life -- from tiny shrimp to giant blue whales. Known as the "Serengeti of the Sea," the sanctuary is home to 34 species of marine mammals, more than 180 species of seabirds and shorebirds, 525 species of fish, an abundance of invertebrates and algae, and 26 threatened or endangered species. The sanctuary's seafloor also holds historic and cultural treasures.

Monterey Bay 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.



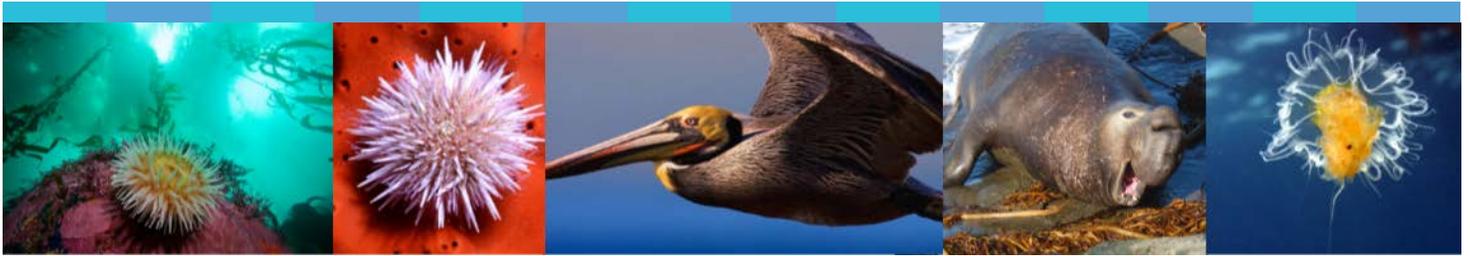


Photo: Karen Grimmer/NOAA

Test slant-well construction for desalination project.



Photo: Marie Macguire

Leatherback Turtle Day celebrated at the Sanctuary Exploration Center.



Photo: Amity Wood/NOAA

Deploying a manta trawl net to sample the sea surface for microplastics above Davidson Seamount.

### Completion of National Environmental Policy Act Review on Large Desalination Project

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary published a Final Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Impact Statement in collaboration with the California Public Utilities Commission for the Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project, which will provide 9.6 million gallons per day of drinking water to the Monterey Peninsula. Consistent with sanctuary and California desalination guidelines, the project allows for authorized brine discharge to be mixed with existing waste from a nearby sewage treatment plant. All potential impacts to the sanctuary would be reduced to less-than-significant levels through implementation of mitigation measures.

### Community Engagement Highlights Sanctuary Significance

A number of special events at national marine sanctuary visitor centers highlighted the significance and relevance of the sanctuary in ocean conservation and protection through community engagement and support. Strengthened by collaborative partnerships, education and outreach efforts at the Sanctuary Exploration Center and Coastal Discovery Center they reached over 6,000 community members through public events such as Get Into Your Sanctuary Day, the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Ocean Fair, Save the Vaquita Day, Leatherback Turtle Day, First Fridays, Save Our Shores Waves and Wildlife Photo Exhibit, and the International Global Waves Conference.

### Oceanographic and Biological Surveys Conducted above Davidson Seamount

Scientists from the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, Point Blue Conservation Science, and Applied Marine Sciences, Inc. conducted regional characterization of the physical and biological components of the ocean ecosystem above Davidson Seamount aboard NOAA Ship *Bell M. Shimada*. Research included marine mammal and seabird observations, plankton tows, midwater krill trawls, echo-sounder data collection, sea surface microplastics, and water sampling for persistent organic pollutants and harmful algal blooms. Data will be used to relate spatial patterns of bird and mammal distribution and prey and oceanographic patterns and identify resources at risk from human threats.

### Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Looking Ahead to FY19

- As the sanctuary continues the management plan review process, a draft document is projected for release in 2019 that will initiate scoping meetings and a 60-day comment period for feedback from partners, stakeholders, and the public.
- May 2019 will mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Snapshot Day, a sanctuary-wide volunteer water quality monitoring event that increases public awareness about key issues and highlights the essential role volunteers play as stewards of sanctuary watersheds.
- A research expedition to Davidson Seamount with Ocean Exploration Trust aboard the *E/V Nautilus* will be conducted October 2018. Researchers will use remotely operated vehicles to explore deep-sea communities and geological features while livestreaming to audiences around the world.