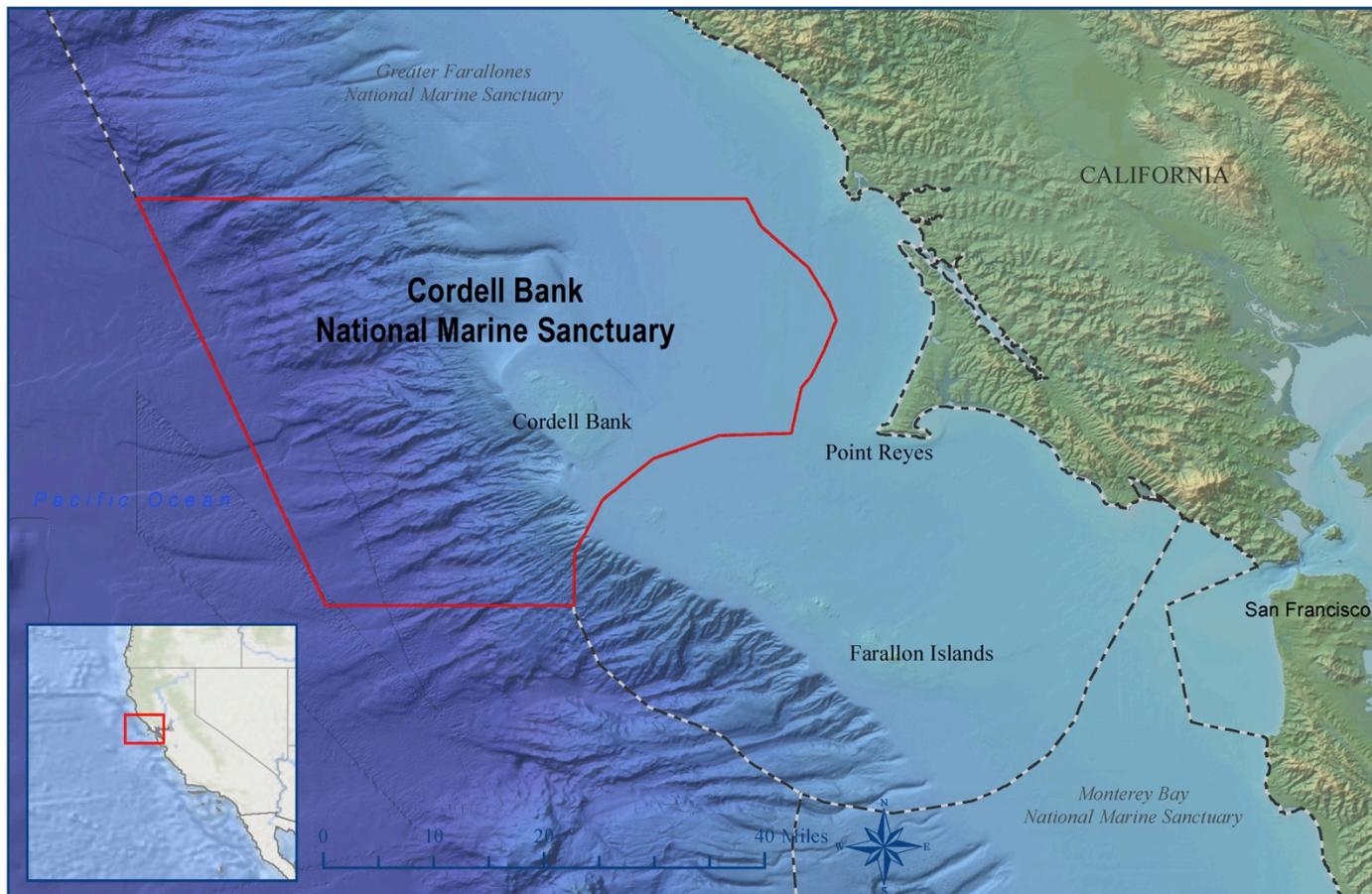


FY19 Accomplishments



BACKGROUND

Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary was established in 1989 to protect and preserve the extraordinary marine ecosystem surrounding the Cordell Bank. Bordered by the 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 14 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments.



Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary

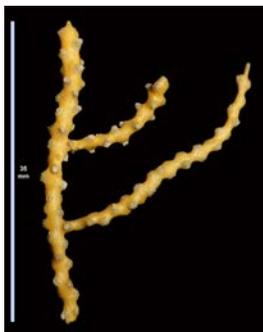


Photo: Gary Williams, California Academy of Sciences

The first specimen, or holotype, of *Chromoplexaura cordellbankensis* was collected in 2018.



Photo: Justin Holl/NOAA

Bob Schmieder, Cordell Expeditions diver and scientist, and John Armor, Office of National Marine Sanctuary Director, celebrate at the 30th anniversary of the sanctuary.



Photo: Jennifer Stock/NOAA

Jennifer Stock, education coordinator for Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary, prepares to host an episode of *Ocean Currents*.

New coral discovered in Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary

A small, yellow soft coral was named for its discovery on Cordell Bank, *Chromoplexaura cordellbankensis*. The specimen was collected by sanctuary scientists during a 2018 research expedition; however, reviews of imagery from past surveys indicate the coral has been on Cordell Bank since at least 2004, but had never previously been noted. Dozens of deep-sea corals thrive off the California coast, but many are still unknown to science. Deep-sea exploration and surveys provide crucial biodiversity data to support the protection of fragile rocky underwater habitat.

Celebrating 30 years of ocean stewardship

Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary celebrated 30 years of accomplishments in conservation science and monitoring, education and outreach, resource management, and building successful partnerships. A gala, co-hosted by the Cordell Marine Sanctuary Foundation, featured a keynote address from Office of National Marine Sanctuaries Director John Armor and the premiere of "The Cordell Bank: A National Treasure," a film produced by South Florida PBS as part of the "Changing Seas" series. Over 185 guests experienced the vibrant biodiversity of the sanctuary through a photo exhibit, ocean-themed virtual reality goggles, and a specimen of *Chromoplexaura cordellbankensis*.

Ocean Currents radio program receives recognition

A sanctuary-produced radio program, "Ocean Currents," was recently rated as one of the top ocean podcasts by Azula, a site curated by Oceana. "Ocean Currents" features topics related to current research, management issues, natural history, and stewardship associated with the marine environment and national marine sanctuaries. "Ocean Currents" is broadcast monthly on West Marin Community Radio KWMR, which helps connect local communities with the sanctuary and reaches a broader audience via the award-winning podcast.

Looking Ahead to FY20

- Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary will begin the production of a new sanctuary condition report, which will re-evaluate the health and status of sanctuary resources since the last report in 2009. The condition report will help inform an update of the sanctuary's management plan.
- Sanctuary staff will focus on improving compliance with vessel traffic speed reduction measures aimed to protect whales from ship strikes.
- Over the past 17 years, the R/V *Fulmar* has monitored the ecosystem health of Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary. This year, the collected data will be evaluated and summarized in a special report.