



Proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary Newsletter Aug 2022



Sea Otter at Morro Bay Harbor
Photo: Robert Schwemmer/NOAA

About the Designation

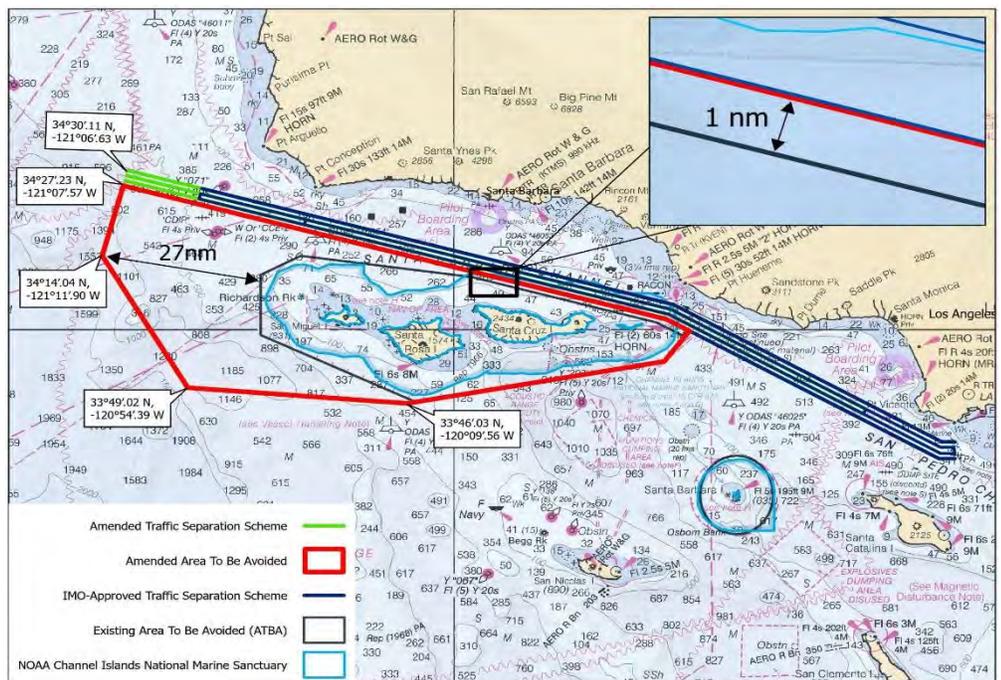
A large community consortium led by the Northern Chumash Tribal Council submitted a nomination for the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary in July 2015. NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) is currently considering sanctuary designation to protect the region's important marine ecosystem, maritime heritage resources, and cultural values of Indigenous communities. The proposed sanctuary stretches along 152 miles of coastline adjacent to San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties, and would provide a haven for marine mammals, invertebrates, sea birds, and fishes, create an overarching framework for community-based spatial management for many threats, and recognize Indigenous and tribal history and culture in the area.

Existing Conservation Successes

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries began the designation process for Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary in November 2021. Yet for many years, sanctuary staff have led or participated in numerous important initiatives within the area proposed for the sanctuary. Several are highlighted in this newsletter, which can show how a future sanctuary might address resource management issues and conservation opportunities in this area.

Whale Conservation: Separating Ships and Whales to Reduce Ship Strike Risk

Whales just got a little more breathing and feeding room in the Santa Barbara Channel/California central coast region. Amendments to the Santa Barbara Channel Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS), aka the shipping lanes, and the Area To Be Avoided (ATBA) were approved by a subcommittee of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). A separate IMO subcommittee is expected to adopt the recommended measures in November 2022 and they will come into force May 2023. These amendments were recommended by the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council's Marine Shipping Working Group back in 2015/16 and endorsed approved by the Sanctuary Advisory Council. Sanctuary staff worked with NOAA attorneys, the United States Coast Guard, EPA, Department of State and Department of Navy to



Map submitted to IMO for Channel Islands TSS extension and ATBA expansion

to advance the proposal to the IMO. Spatial management tools such as ATBAs and TSS are powerful tools to separate ships from sensitive ecological resources and to reduce the risk of environmentally harmful groundings and collisions. The 13 nautical mile extension of the TSS will queue ships farther west and off the continental shelf in deeper waters where there are fewer whales. The ATBA expansion covers important whale feeding habitat. The action demonstrates that whale conservation, safe navigation and commerce can share this important ocean realm.

Get Into Your Sanctuary

Beginning in 2014, sanctuaries have hosted Get Into Your Sanctuary day events to promote sustainable recreation in sanctuaries over the course of a weekend. In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the National Marine Sanctuary System, Get Into Your Sanctuary events will be held all summer long! The public is encouraged to participate in a variety of activities from June through September this year. Visit the [Get Into Your Sanctuary website](#) to learn about all the events happening around the country.

Get Into Your Sanctuary Photo Contest

Do you have any amazing photos from your visits to national marine sanctuaries? [Learn more about the photo contest](#) and submit your photos for consideration by Sept. 5. Winning photos will be announced in October.



A Family Fishing from Shore
Photo: Robert Schwemmer/NOAA

Public Information Session: Draft Framework for Indigenous Collaborative Management

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries invites public participation in an online information sharing session focused on Indigenous engagement and collaborative management to support the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary. During the 83-day public scoping comment period, ONMS received comments and suggestions on how Indigenous communities and local area tribes can be closely involved with the sanctuary. At this session, ONMS staff will share draft conceptual ideas being developed at this early stage of the designation process, respond to questions, and receive public feedback.

- Date: Friday, August 26, 2022
- Time: 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. Pacific Time
- Register: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3544239873057220367>

The Montebello

Did you know that within the boundaries of the proposed sanctuary lie the remains of the oil tanker Montebello? The 1921 tanker, carrying over three million gallons of crude oil, was sunk by a single torpedo fired by a Japanese submarine during World War II in December 1941, just two weeks after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The *Montebello* sits in 900 feet of water approximately seven miles southwest of Cambria. ONMS has led or participated in two missions to the shipwreck,

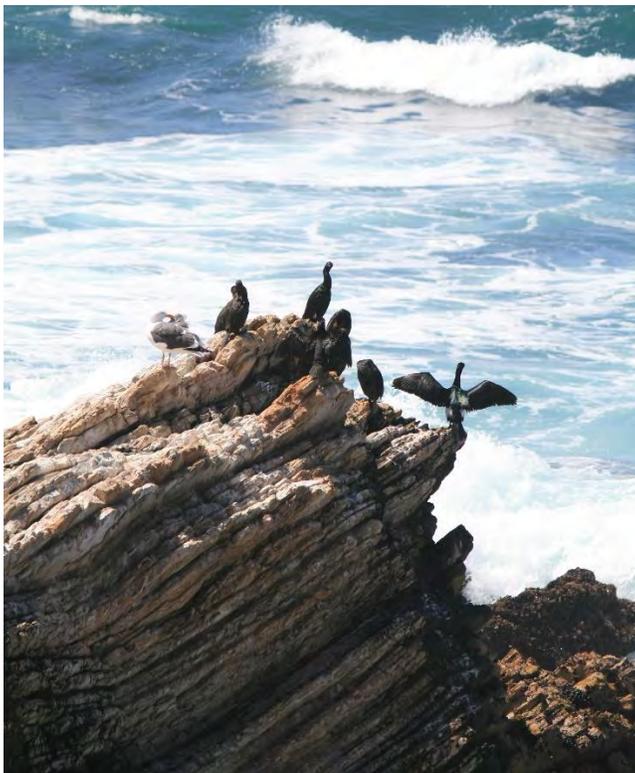


Montebello underway
Photo: Vancouver Maritime Museum

involving archaeologists, historians, and biologists to inspect the vessel and surrounding area for oil and wildlife. In September 2011, the USCG hired a salvor to assess the vessel and they determined there is no substantial oil threat from the vessel. In 2016, the *Montebello* shipwreck and remains were added to the National Register of Historic Places. Visit Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary's Coastal Discovery Center in San Simeon at William Randolph Hearst Memorial Beach, Friday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., to view the *Montebello* exhibit and other educational exhibits.

Did You Know?

Did you know sanctuary staff are available to speak to your group about the proposed sanctuary designation? If your group would like to learn more about the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, please contact [Paul Michel](#) to request a presentation to your group.



Resting western gull and cormorants
Photo: NOAA

The Designation Timeline

