

FY17 Accomplishments



BACKGROUND

Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary was established in 1989 and is an area of 3,295 square miles off the northern and central California coast. It protects the wildlife, habitats, and cultural resources of one of the most diverse and bountiful marine environments in the world. The waters within Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary are a nationally significant marine ecosystem, and support an abundance of life, including many threatened and endangered species.

Greater Farallones 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: Jamie Hall/Greater Farallones Association

New citizen scientists are trained for Farallones Beach Watch along the Sonoma/Mendocino coasts.



Photo: Jenna Batchelder, Greater Farallones Association

Students prepare to launch their remotely operated vehicle (ROV).



Photo: NOAA

Abandoned wrecks may contain chemically treated wood and other harmful materials that can affect marine organisms.

Increasing sanctuary engagement

Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary's "Beach Watch" increased volunteer participation and engagement in the sanctuary by training a new cadre of citizen scientists. Volunteers collected baseline data on live and dead birds and mammals, human activities, oil pollution, wildlife entanglements, beach wrack, coastal erosion, and status of adjacent streams and lagoons. Over 150 "Beach Watch" citizen scientists now survey 58 beaches from Point Arena in Mendocino County to Año Nuevo in southern San Mateo County. Data from this long-term monitoring detects changes in coastal conditions and informs ecosystem management practices.

Inspiring the next generation

Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary inspired the next generation of ocean stewards by increasing environmental and ocean literacy through hands-on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs. Students discovered the sanctuary's coastal ecosystems through field investigations, intertidal monitoring, experiments, plankton trawling, crab fishing, birdwatching, dissections, and fabricating remotely operated vehicles (ROVs). Field and classroom programs used marine life's enormous appeal to inspire 9,000 K-12 students' passion, cultivate their knowledge, and empower and equip them to address our changing climate and other ecological issues.

Restoring Ecologically Significant Habitat

In 2017, Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary removed illegal moorings, abandoned docks, and "ghost" vessels from Tomales Bay. The bay is recognized as a Wetland of International Importance on the Ramsar List. Water quality had suffered from sewage input, contributing to an "impaired" rating. Fish-spawning seagrass habitat was damaged by poorly-sited moorings. The Vessel Mooring Program, involving federal, state, and local agencies, designated mooring zones and upgraded the sewage infrastructure. New procedures require vessel insurance and mooring leases, and promote use of eco-friendly materials, enabling recreational boaters to partner with the sanctuary in restoring and preserving the bay.

Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Looking Ahead to FY18

- Travelers will see the expanded, renamed Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary on regional maps, signs, and exhibits at museums and aquaria attracting over 2.6 million visitors per year.
- Based on 2017's successful doubling of its weeklong summer marine science field camps, this year Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary will inaugurate a new, year-round habitat exploration youth program.
- 2018 will mark the 25th Anniversary of Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary's "Beach Watch" citizen science coastal monitoring.