

FY17 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.

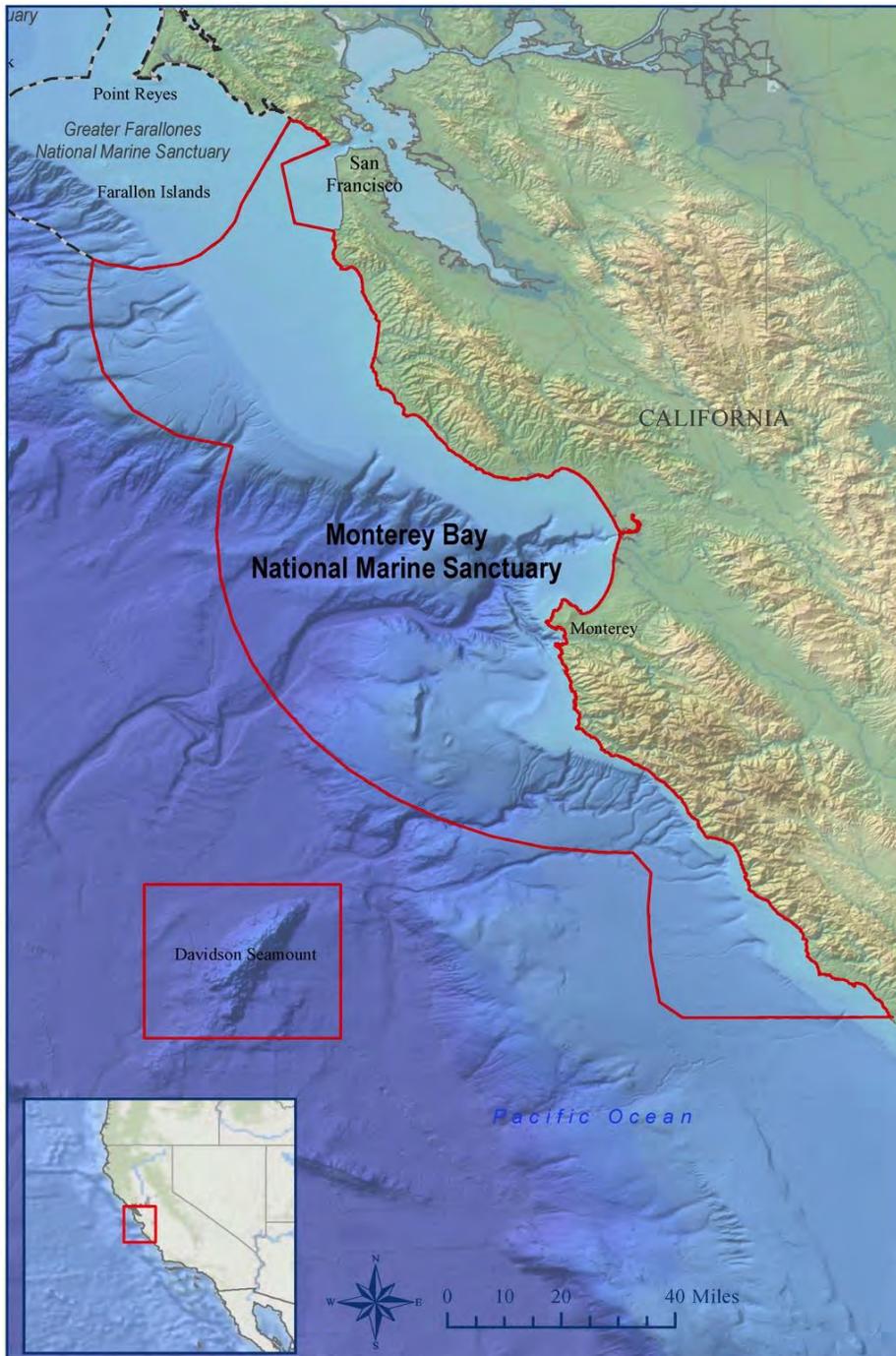




Photo: Amity Wood/NOAA

Community members attend *Movie Night on the Beach* in Monterey for the 25th anniversary.

25-year milestone in ecosystem protection is achieved

In recognition of 25 years since designation in 1992, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary hosted year-long **community engagement events to highlight the sanctuary's significance to the region's economy and identity through ocean protection, research, education, and stewardship programs.** Outreach events included an eight-part science **speaker series, a community "Ocean Fair" and movie night on the beach, and an anniversary gala** with longtime sanctuary champions and supporters. A new local chapter of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation was launched in Monterey Bay, and will be instrumental in helping to support future sanctuary programs.



Photo: Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute

The ROV took a sample of bubblegum coral for transplantation experiments.

Study of Deep-sea coral at Sur Ridge continues

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary teamed up with Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute for an expedition at Sur Ridge, a place of incredible deep-sea coral and sponge assemblages, located about 20 miles off the central California coast. Using a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) aboard the R/V *Western Flyer*, the team revisited transplanted corals from 2016 to track individual coral growth. This research will help the sanctuary understand environmental and biological requirements for settlement and growth. Researchers were also able to identify areas that have been damaged and are in need of future coral restoration in the sanctuary.



Photo: Karen Grimmer/NOAA

The Tucker trawl sampled krill and other zooplankton at three depths.

ACCESS cruises expand to Monterey Bay to address whale entanglement
Applied California Current Ecosystem Studies (ACCESS), a collaborative long-term ocean ecosystem monitoring program between Point Blue Conservation Science and Cordell Bank, Greater Farallones, and Monterey Bay national marine sanctuaries, expanded surveys of whale and crab-pot distribution and abundance data from Año Nuevo to Southern Monterey Bay. The 2017 ACCESS cruise gathered data to help inform a Dungeness Crab Fishery Working Group in forecasting the co-occurrence of whales and crab pots for the 2018 crab season, and contributed to a draft Risk Assessment and Mitigation Program developed collaboratively by experts.

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Looking Ahead to FY18

- A draft management plan review document will be released that will initiate scoping meetings and a 60-day comment period for feedback from partners, stakeholders, and the public.
- Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary will continue to promote recreation and **tourism through "Get Into Your Sanctuary" day, Whalefest, and Monterey Beach Sportsfest** events, and host multiple community engagements.
- Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary will complete two research cruises at Davidson Seamount collaborating with the FSV *Bell M. Shimada* and the E/V *Nautilus*.