

GREATER FARALLONES

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY





Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, an area of 3,295 square miles off the northern and central California coast, protects the wildlife, habitats, and cultural resources of one of the most diverse and bountiful marine environments in the world. The waters are a nationally significant marine ecosystem, and support an abundance of life, including breeding and feeding grounds for at least 25 endangered and threatened species; 36 marine mammal species; over a quarter of a million breeding seabirds; and one of the most significant white shark populations on the planet.

ABOUT THE ARTWORK

The Farallon Islands provide a dramatic backdrop to the highly productive and diverse marine ecosystem around them. Common murres can be seen nesting in colonies on the rocky cliffs and diving for food. Below the waves, a white shark takes center stage while sea lions swim among bull kelp forests. Other species offshore and along the rocky shore include Chinook salmon, blue rockfish, red abalone, sea stars, red and purple urchins, and pink encrusted algae.



◀ **WHITE SHARK** (*Carcharodon carcharias*)
White sharks are apex predators that migrate to the sanctuary each fall. They are typically found in areas where elephant seals and sea lions are abundant.

▶ **COMMON MURRE** (*Uria aalge*)
Common murres are black-and-white seabirds that look like flying penguins! They nest on steep sea cliffs and can swim down to over 100 feet to catch fish.



◀ **BULL KELP** (*Nereocystis luetkeana*)
Bull kelp is an ecosystem engineer, providing habitat, structure, and food for hundreds of thousands of species including red abalone.

▶ **NORTHERN FUR SEAL** (*Callorhinus ursinus*)
Once hunted for their luxurious and valuable fur, with protections in place, these seals have returned and breed on the adjacent Farallon Islands.



◀ **BLUE WHALE** (*Balaenoptera musculus*)
The largest of whale species dines in sanctuary waters annually on fingertip sized krill, eating up to four tons a day in spring and summer months.

▶ **CHINOOK SALMON** (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*)
Chinook (king) salmon feed on a variety of fish and invertebrates in the sanctuary to fatten up before moving up into the watershed to spawn.



LOCATION



QUICK FACTS

LOCATION

Off the California coast, from San Francisco north to Pt. Arena.

PROTECTED AREA

3,295 square miles

DESIGNATION

January 1981

HABITATS

- Bays and estuaries
- Continental shelf and slope
- Deep benthos
- Deep rocky reefs
- Islands
- Kelp forests (bull kelp)
- Open ocean
- Sandy and rocky shores

KEY SPECIES

- Tufted puffin
- Blue whale
- Common murre
- Dungeness crab
- Harbor seal
- Krill
- Steller sea lion
- Red abalone
- White shark
- Chinook salmon

BELOW

Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary reaches up to Manchester Beach, just north of Point Arena. Throughout the sanctuary there are three lighthouses (Point Arena, Point Reyes, and Point Bonita) warning mariners about the rocky headlands that have been the demise of hundreds of ships of the past. Today, visitors can visit each preserved lighthouse and get a glimpse back in time while overlooking sanctuary waters.



Photos: (Farallon Islands) James Mosicki; (white shark) Scott Anderson; (bull kelp) Keith Johnson; (blue whale) NOAA; (common murre) Sarah K. Schoen/USGS; (Chinook) Ryan Hagerty/USFWS; (background photo) Matt McIntosh/NOAA

AMERICA'S UNDERWATER TREASURES

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries serves as the trustee for a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 620,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington state to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. The network includes a system of 15 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments. For more information on the National Marine Sanctuary System, visit: sanctuaries.noaa.gov



○ National Marine Sanctuary
▲ Marine National Monument
■ Proposed National Marine Sanctuary
Scale varies in this perspective. Adapted from National Geographic Maps.