



NOAA NATIONAL OCEANIC AND
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
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NOAA Releases Plans for Managing and Protecting Cordell Bank, Gulf of the Farallones and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries

NOAA has released final revised management plans, regulations and a joint final environmental impact statement for Cordell Bank, Gulf of the Farallones and Monterey Bay national marine sanctuaries.

The plans include the expansion of Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary by 775 square miles to include the Davidson Seamount, one of the largest known underwater mountains in U.S. coastal waters and home to a wide variety of marine species.

“The new management plans offer a vision and course for protecting the rich marine ecosystems of three adjacent national marine sanctuaries in California while continuing to allow compatible, sustainable human uses,” said William J. Douros, West Coast regional director for the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. “The management plans for the three sanctuaries are tailored to address the challenges facing each sanctuary.”

The result of more than seven years of study, planning and extensive public input, these detailed documents are major revisions of the sanctuaries' original management plans and address key issues including ecosystem protection, wildlife disturbance, vessel discharge, water quality, non-native species and coastal development.

The final plans consist primarily of non-regulatory actions, but some changes to sanctuary regulations clarify and strengthen protections for marine habitats, sensitive species, water quality and submerged cultural and historical resources. Highlights of the regulatory changes include:

- protecting natural ecosystems from the introduction of non-native species
- restoring the original limitation of motorized personal watercraft to four areas off the harbors in Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, and including a wintertime zone for tow-in surfing at the famous “Maverick’s” surfing spot
- protecting the area’s water quality by prohibiting harmful discharges from cruise ships
- expanding protections for white sharks at the Monterey Bay and Gulf of the Farallones sanctuaries
- prohibiting discharges, beyond the boundaries of Cordell Bank and Gulf of the Farallones sanctuaries, that enter and damage the sanctuaries’ resources
- improving habitat protection at the Cordell Bank and Gulf of the Farallones sanctuaries by limiting or prohibiting activities that impact the sea floor

The management plans also include proposed actions to expand research, education, outreach, and enforcement programs, create and enhance partnerships, integrate

environmental monitoring networks, enhance wildlife protections, increase water quality monitoring, and reduce ocean impacts from coastal development.

The joint final environmental impact statement analyzes the potential environmental and economic impacts from activities and regulations outlined in the three management plans.

Management plans, regulations and joint final environmental impact statement are available by advance request at the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary office at 299 Foam Street, Monterey, Calif. 93940, 831-647-4201; the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary office at 991 Marine Drive, San Francisco Presidio, San Francisco, Calif. 94129, 415-561-6622; or from the Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary office at 1 Bear Valley Road, Pt. Reyes Station, Calif. 94956, 415-663-0314. The documents are also available at <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/jointplan> or by e-mail from jmpr.info@noaa.gov.

Review copies of the management plans and environmental impact statement are also available at public libraries near each location; please see <http://farallones.noaa.gov> for libraries carrying GFNMS documents.

Managed by the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, the three sanctuaries are located along the shores of northern and central California and share many of the same resources and issues. Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary encompasses 526 square miles of ocean off Point Reyes, north of San Francisco. The 1,255-square-mile Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary is located west of the San Francisco Bay area. Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary stretches along 276 miles of the central coast and encompasses 5,322 square miles of coastal and ocean waters. With the addition of the Davidson Seamount, the Monterey Bay sanctuary will encompass 6,094 square miles.

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On the Web:

Joint Management Plan: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/jointplan>

NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>

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