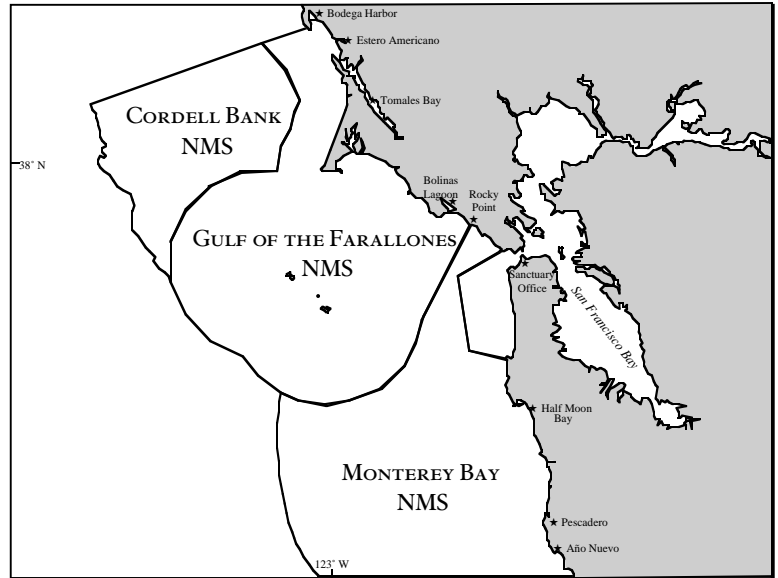




OUR NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES

In 1972, in response to a growing awareness of the intrinsic environmental and cultural value of our coastal waters, Congress passed the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act. The Act authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to designate the jewels of our nation's coast as National Marine Sanctuaries to promote comprehensive management of their significant ecological, historical, recreational, and esthetic resources. There are now twelve National Marine Sanctuaries and three are located within the greater San Francisco Bay Area. The Gulf of the Farallones was designated as a National Marine Sanctuary in 1981, Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary was designated in 1989, and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary was designated in 1992.



GULF OF THE FARALLONES NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY (GFNMS)

Exceptional Marine Habitat



Gusting winds, ocean currents, and the rotation of the earth combine each spring and summer to produce an explosion of marine life in the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary west of the Golden Gate of California. This Sanctuary harbors a fascinating array of plants and animals, from huge whales to tiny, brightly colored sea snails. The largest and most diverse eastern Pacific populations of seabirds and pinnipeds (seals and sea lions), south of Alaska, occur in this area. The Farallon Islands, in the midst of the expanse of the Sanctuary, are home to the largest concentration of breeding seabirds in the continental United States. Large flocks of Cassin's Auklets, Common Murres, Western Gulls, and the threatened Brown Pelican feed on the small fish and crustaceans that are abundant in the surface waters of the Sanctuary. These food resources also support one fifth of California's harbor seals and a rapidly growing

population of northern elephant seals. Large numbers of whales and dolphins, including the California gray whale and the endangered Pacific humpback, blue, and fin whales are found in the area. A complete spectrum of marine habitats including estuarine, intertidal, pelagic and deep oceanic environments can be found in the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary.

An Important Economic and Social Resource

Within the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary are nurseries and spawning grounds for commercially valuable species such as Dungeness crab, Pacific herring, and rockfish. The Sanctuary encompasses some of the most heavily used fishing grounds on the west coast of the United States. It supports many large commercial fisheries including a large percentage of San Francisco's bottom-trawling and salmon-trolling fleet. Sportfishing for salmon, rockfish, halibut, and other species is a very popular activity that generates revenue for the partyboat fleets operating out of San Francisco Bay, Half Moon Bay, and Bodega Bay. Whalewatching, birdwatching, and offshore excursions are other uses of the Sanctuary that are steadily growing in popularity. And of course, the Sanctuary contains the west coast's busiest shipping lanes.

(continued)

MONTEREY BAY NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY (MBNMS)

Our Neighbor to the South

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, our nation's largest Marine Sanctuary, spans over 4,025 square nautical miles of coastal waters off central California. Within its boundaries are a rich array of habitats, from rugged rocky shores and lush kelp forests to one of the deepest underwater canyons on the west coast. These habitats abound with life, from tiny plants to huge blue whales. With its great diversity of habitats and life, the Sanctuary is a national focus for marine research and education programs.



Both Cordell Bank and the northern area of Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries are managed by the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary staff. For more information, contact the Farallones Marine Sanctuary Association at (415)561-6625 or visit www.farallones.org



Blue whale

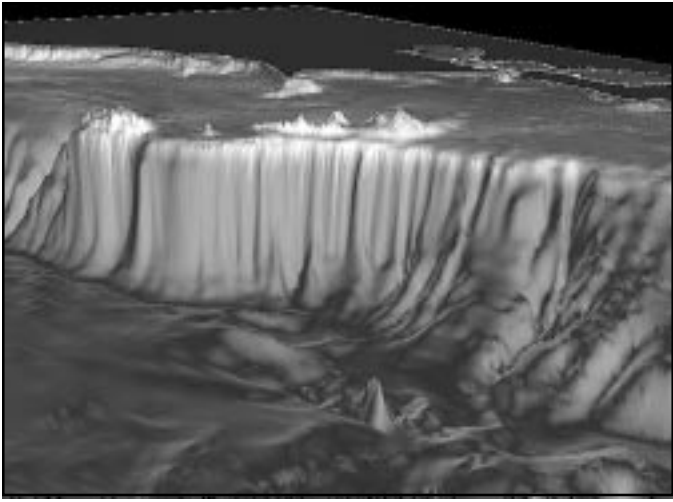


Photo by Phillip Colla



Ocean sunfish

photo by Ivory Clies



Computer imagery courtesy of USGS Woods Hole

Computer imagery showing Cordell Bank, the Farallon Islands, and the dropoff of the continental shelf off the coast of San Francisco.

CORDELL BANK NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY (CBNMS)

Underwater Island of Diversity

Cordell Bank is the northernmost seamount on the continental shelf of California. Located on the edge of the dropoff, about 25 miles west of Point Reyes, the Bank is 9.5 miles long by 4.5 miles wide and rests on a seafloor area of 21 square miles. The Sanctuary encompasses the Bank and a surrounding buffer zone, protecting a total of nearly 400 square miles.

A Highly Productive Environment

Around Cordell Bank, a combination of oceanic conditions and undersea topography creates an amazingly productive marine environment. The Bank rises to within 115 feet of the surface of the sea, yet only a few miles to the west the seafloor plummets to depths of 6,000 feet. The prevailing California Current brings nutrients to the upper levels of the Bank,

while the upwelling of rich, deep-ocean waters stimulates the growth of plankton.

These nutrients, combined with an unusually high degree of light penetration, lead to a

unique assemblage of subtidal and oceanic species, including an exceptional assortment of algae, invertebrates, fishes, and foraging marine mammals and seabirds. Many of the marine mammals found in the waters of Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary are endangered or threatened and the protection of the Bank and its surrounding oceanic habitat is helping their numbers recover.

