



Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary



Sanctuary Office Report

Volume 21, Number 2

ABOUT THE SANCTUARY

Designated in 1992, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS or Sanctuary) is a federally protected marine area offshore of California's central coast. Stretching from Marin to Cambria, MBNMS encompasses a shoreline of 276 miles and 6,094 square statute miles of ocean.

Supporting one of the world's most diverse marine ecosystems, it is home to numerous mammals, seabirds, fishes, invertebrates and plants in a remarkably productive coastal environment. MBNMS was established for the purpose of resource protection, research, education and public use of this national treasure.

A REPORT FOR THE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

REPORTING PERIOD: JANUARY 26, 2024 - MAY 5, 2024

**NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION (NOAA) AND
OFFICE OF NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES (ONMS) NEWS**

Re-Launching ONMS Notes From the Field

Join ONMS behind the scenes for a look at research taking place above and below the water. Learn fun facts about scientific instruments and techniques, get updates on long-term monitoring projects, and meet some of our staff, partners, and volunteers who make it all happen! Be sure to check back each week for the latest field notes.

<https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/notes/>. This web series will give sites opportunities to get information out to ONMS HQ public audiences when there's not enough time or information to develop a feature-length webstory, but we still want people to know about it. Scientists and scholars can help rebuild public trust in science with better and stronger public outreach efforts. Taking people "behind the science" through weekly field notes will communicate research processes in ways that are engaging, relevant, and accessible to public audiences.



Cohort 2 of the NOAA Ocean Guardian Youth Ambassadors Kicks Off with High-Interest

Nearly 500 youth aged 13-18 applied for the 2024 [NOAA Ocean Guardian Youth Ambassador Program](#) that provides the knowledge and skills to become an environmental leader at their school or community. 250 Youth Ambassadors were accepted into the program and are now part of a nationwide network of

young people who share ideas, experiences, and support for ocean conservation and stewardship efforts. Throughout the year, youth learn about MPAs, ocean and climate literacy, ocean acidification, blue carbon ecosystems, and other topics, as well as learn skills like public speaking and event planning. Cohort 2 is made up of students from nearly every state (all but 13), and the following territories: American Samoa, Guam, Northern Marianas Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Take a sneak peek at the [Cohort 2 Student Portal](#) to see the Youth Ambassador Toolkit, social media tiles, year in review, 2024 schedule, etc.



NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY NEWS

10 Animals You’ve Probably Never Heard of From Our Annual Photo Contest - Beneath the surface of your national marine sanctuaries and marine national monuments lies a treasure trove of biodiversity, housing countless fascinating and often lesser-known creatures. In this article, we delve into the lives of 10 intriguing marine species, each boasting its own set of captivating characteristics. These animals were photographed by members of the public and submitted to the [Get Into Your Sanctuary Photo Contest](#) over the past few years.

Sanctuaries Lead Protecting Whales International Workshop

Greater Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries, in partnership with Greater Farallones Association and the California Marine Sanctuary Foundation, held a virtual 3-day workshop, [Protecting Whales in a Changing Climate](#), on January 17-19, 2024. The event, which was interpreted live in Spanish, gathered over 100 scientists and managers representing 16 different countries and First Nations to discuss and collaborate on management approaches to reduce ship strike risk to whales. Speakers from seven different countries presented their work, including novel research and modeling to better understand ship strike risk and climate change impacts, and vessel management measures to reduce risk. Attendees discussed the challenges and opportunities for reducing ship strike risk to whales, the role of MPAs in whale conservation, and collaborations to strengthen national and international partnerships in MPAs that can result in greater protection for whales in a changing climate.

ONMS Publishes Draft Sanctuary Designation Documents for Papahānaumokuākea

On March 1, NOAA released draft designation documents proposing a [national marine sanctuary](#) in the marine portions of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. The proposed sanctuary would complement and supplement existing authorities, including the area's designation as a marine national monument, which will continue to be in effect. NOAA would co-manage the proposed sanctuary with the State of Hawaii, in close coordination with the Monument co-trustees, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as the State of Hawaii. Sanctuary designation would add the conservation benefits of a national marine sanctuary by applying additional protections and management tools to augment and strengthen conservation for the marine areas of Papahānaumokuākea. Public comment will be open through May 7, 2024. Comments will be accepted in both English and ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i.

Educators Very Interested in Exploring Ocean Mysteries

As part of the [National Marine Sanctuaries Webinar Series](#), 546 formal and informal educators, students, and other interested members of the public registered for the *Exploring Ocean Mysteries: From Dynamic Shores to the Deep-Sea* on February 20, 2024, presented by Rick and Krista Reynolds of Engaging Every Student and Tracy Hajduk of the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. 145 people attended the live presentation that focused on the curriculum that makes it easy to teach the seven Ocean Literacy Principles while meeting Next Generation Science and Common Core Standards, and Climate Literacy. 85% of attendees who completed the follow-up evaluation agreed that the content of the webinar made them understand that national marine sanctuaries and marine national monuments help protect the ocean and Great Lakes. 54% stated they plan to use the content from the webinar within the next year with 39% not sure yet. 79% of attendees are ‘very likely’ to attend a future presentation in the National Marine Sanctuaries Webinar Series (98% if you combine ‘Very Likely’ and ‘Likely’) and 98% are ‘very likely’ and ‘likely’ to recommend this webinar series to others.

Research Vessel (R/V) Shearwater Still At The Boatyard For Major Maintenance

R/V Shearwater underwent work at the Ventura Harbor Boat Yard for over 2 months. New engines were installed and tested for the first time during the week of 2/26/2024. Major hull pitting repairs were conducted and the boat is now back in the water. The first day of scientific operations was April 1st. The most significant yard work ever done on the Shearwater was conducted: a new engine was installed. This will extend the life of the Shearwater by at least 5 years, and keep smooth operations running at Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. Researchers are looking forward to the season to start.

**MONTEREY BAY NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY NEWS
AND PROGRAM UPDATES**

SANCTUARY MANAGEMENT

ONMS hosts 2nd Cross-Pacific Indigenous Exchange in Monterey

The Office of National Marine Sanctuary was honored to organize, implement, and facilitate the 2nd Cross-Pacific Indigenous Exchange. The Exchange was held April 8 - 10, 2024, in Monterey and Seaside, CA, and was supported by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. We are grateful to the Esselen and Rumsen Homeland Peoples for welcoming us to Seaside and Monterey, and we are grateful to all the Indigenous Peoples and governments who continue to care for the lands and waters we passed through during our time together. The Exchange welcomed 68 peoples, including 38 Indigenous Leaders, to build relationships with each other and the ONMS. Throughout the Exchange, discussions were held on topics related to equity, tools to support equitable partnerships, how Indigenous governments and communities want to be engaged, and much more. The Exchange's success was largely due to the equitable approaches and Indigenous methodologies used in the planning and implementation of the Exchange. For example, an Indigenous Advisory Planning Group was established and funded to aid planning and agenda development. We will have more to share in the near future about commitments and requests made.

Weblink: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NT3W3Dmkqu6BRJhdJorkBbQvPfvIBMK7/view?usp=sharing>

RESEARCH AND MONITORING

Annual NOAA diver training completed

Dr. Steve Lonhart, MBNMS UDS and NOS Line Office Diving Officer, led the Annual Refresher Training for NOAA divers within the MBNMS dive unit and two OMAO divers from the Okeanos Explorer. On Wednesday Steve taught a Basic Life Support course, which is good for 2 years. On Thursday divers first completed a required swim test (everyone passed), and then led diving and rescue skills at the Breakwater for 12 total divers. And on Friday Steve completed the training by instructing an emergency oxygen provider course and covering all NOAA classroom materials. This annual training prepares all divers for emergency situations while diving operations are underway, refreshes life-saving skills, and allows divers an opportunity to share experiences from the past year that will help prepare them for the coming year of field operations while diving.

MBNMS participates in international effort to develop site selection guidelines for kelp restoration

Dr. Steve Lonhart, research team MBNMS, was one of 15 kelp experts invited to a working group held at the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis in Santa Barbara, CA. Participants from around the world met for 3 days of discussion and planning as part of a 2-year grant to the Kelp Forest Alliance. "Kelp forest restoration is a growing initiative in 21 countries that can improve ecosystem health, rebuild fisheries, renew coastal economies, mitigate climate change, and connect people to the ocean. However, changing oceans and crowded coastlines make it subject to failure. Barriers to success include poor ecological suitability, low ecosystem connectivity, future inhabitability, cultural sensitivities, and conflicts with marine users. Additionally, existing marine policy is often poorly adapted for restoration and can hinder project implementation. There is no comprehensive framework for kelp restoration site selection, and there is little analysis on modifying marine policy for restoration. This Morpho project will unite leaders in ecology, spatial analysis, and marine policy with community members and rights holders to provide a holistic vision for where and how restoration should happen." This collaboration will create a framework for kelp forest restoration site selection and a policy document integrating marine restoration activities into marine policy. By integrating perspectives into restoration planning and tailoring kelp forest conservation into policy at all levels, this project will ensure better outcomes for ecosystems, Indigenous peoples, coastal communities, and climate resilience. By addressing the challenges and optimizing restoration efforts, the project will maximize the benefits of kelp forest restoration across the globe.

Microplastics beach surveys begin in Monterey Bay

On March 14 and 15, two Monterey Bay beaches were sampled for microplastics as part of a larger project titled, “From Watershed to Whales,” which is collecting samples from rivers, beaches, offshore ocean water, and biological material (krill, fishes, whale fecal material). This two-year project just began and is funded through Ocean Protection Council and California SeaGrant as part of the state’s larger marine debris strategy. Initial results of one sample show hundreds to thousands of microplastics (up to 40 pieces per liter of beach sand). MBNMS staff, California State University Monterey Bay student volunteers, and private citizen volunteers came out to help with the sampling effort. Four beaches will be sampled quarterly over two years. Microplastics are a major priority for MBNMS. Although microplastics are a global issue, it is important to understand the distribution, type, and source of microplastics to determine if local policy efforts will help to reduce microplastics entering the sanctuary, especially if the majority of microplastics found come from local sources.



RESOURCE PROTECTION

Mission to inspect the integrity of the mooring assemblies beneath three Motorized Personal Watercraft buoys

On January 19, sanctuary staff conducted a mission aboard the RV *Tegula* to inspect the four Motorized Personal Watercraft Buoy moorings in Monterey. Using a Seabotix ROV, staff successfully surveyed the mooring assemblies from the surface to the seafloor to look for any issues. Weather conditions were optimal to collect high-definition video, which will be used for further analysis. MBNMS is responsible for the management and maintenance of the motorized personal watercraft moorings. The mooring assemblies can have potential issues including getting snagged, improper components in the “chafe” zone, or an excess of encrusting organisms on critical parts. Catching those issues early could prevent the loss of a buoy.



Water Quality team members hosted a booth at EcoFarm (Ecological Farming Association Conference)

On January 17-19, 2024, RP team members Lindsay Brown, Rebecca Roberts, and Alena Anousinh, joined by CA Sea Grant’s Tanya Torres and Flipping Iron’s (recycling processor) Adolfo Toscano hosted a booth at EcoFarm (Ecological Farming Association) in Asilomar. We highlighted the NOAA SeaGrant Ag mulch recycling project- showcased the ‘MegaBinder’ that mechanically retrieves plastic mulch from fields and showed videos of the prototype dry-wash processing line that removes contaminants from the plastic mulch to make it recyclable. We spoke to ~150 people about our project and ~25 people took our surveys. It was a successful event and many people were interested about different end-of-life options for ag plastics, encouraged about commercial scalability, and excited to see the



outcome of our project. A priority of MBNMS is marine debris. At EcoFarm, we spoke to growers and agricultural professionals about technologies that increase plastic yield from fields and highlighted the NOAA Sea Grant Ag Mulch Recycling Project to increase awareness of our work to make plastic mulch recyclable. We also shared flyers for opportunities to recycle drip tape to reduce the chance of ag plastics from becoming marine debris.

Joint Memo on Tanker Reef is supported by CA Fish and Game Commission

On February 14, 2024, the CA Fish and Game Commission (FGC) discussed two options regarding urchin take at Tanker Reef, Monterey. CA Fish and Wildlife, MBNMS and Ocean Protection Council had submitted a joint memo to the FGC, which outlined their preferred option regarding continued unlimited recreational take of urchins at Caspar Cove, Mendocino County and Tanker Reef, Monterey County. Under FGC code, the two areas have had exemptions that allowed urchin take over a three year period in order to understand the efficacy of community led culling activities as a restoration tool for kelp. The first option would extend the sunset date for Caspar Cove for another five years and allow the exemption at Tanker Reef to sunset on April 1, 2024. The second option would extend the sunset date for Caspar Cove for another five years and extend the sunset date for Tanker Reef for all or a portion of the existing boundaries for another five years. Consistent with the original intent of the temporary regulations, and stipulations outlined for Tanker Reef in a previous 2020 memo, CDFW, MBNMS, and OPC recommended the Commission adopt Option 1, which would allow the exemption at Tanker Reef to sunset on April 1, 2024, as intended and currently specified in regulations. The Commission unanimously passed a motion to adopt Option 1. A number of recreational divers had invested much time and effort into the removal of urchins in a 100m x 100m grid and surrounding areas. In August 2023, the G2KR led divers chose to end removal efforts, almost eight months prior to April 1, 2024. Agency biologists and REEF Check are continuing to monitor changes in urchin and kelp densities to understand what happens to kelp and reef habitat when culling efforts stop, and a final report will be published. This will help inform future management measures for iconic kelp in MBNMS. The protection and restoration of iconic kelp is an MBNMS and CA state priority. Ongoing state and federal efforts will advance understanding of effective restoration techniques, and enable resource managers to develop solutions to the kelp issues.

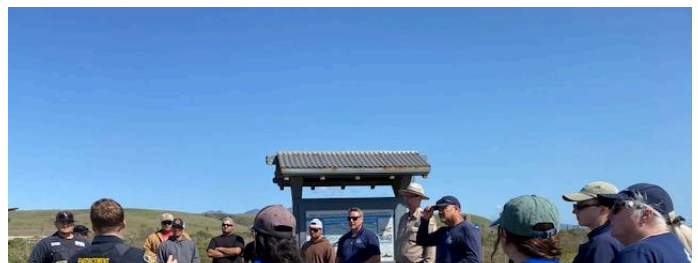
Microplastic River Monitoring

On January 22-24, 2024 the Water Quality River Monitoring Team sampled the San Lorenzo, Pajaro, and Carmel Rivers with the help of six volunteers. We monitored for microplastics at the surface level and at half of the depth of the channel. While collecting our microplastic sample, we also conducted a visual survey for macroplastics floating down the channel and to the ocean. We successfully captured peak flows, with the San Lorenzo peaking at 3,950 cfs. Microplastics are the most common type of marine debris, with each stage of degradation posing risks to marine life. These debris can be ingested and bioaccumulate within marine systems and food webs. When wildlife ingests plastic it can cause life-threatening issues, such as reduced feeding efficiency, nutrient uptake, and fitness. The purpose of this monitoring is to understand the types and quantities of microplastics and macroplastics entering the Sanctuary with the long-term goal of minimizing the transport of plastics into the marine environment.



Cargo Vessel *President Eisenhower* loses containers

On February 6th the C/V *President Eisenhower* lost 24 shipping containers overboard approximately 15 miles outside of MBNMS boundaries west of Monterey Bay. An initial response involved an overflight by USCG to locate the containers. One was sighted floating just east of the Davidson Seamount. The responsible party sent a tug to retrieve the container but they were unable to locate it. On Sunday, March 3rd, cotton bales and wine barrels were reported washing up on beaches in southern MBNMS and San Luis Obispo County beaches. Because the material is raw cotton and not considered a hazardous material, the USCG and CA Office of Spill



Response did not respond. The cotton bales were confirmed by APL to have originated from the C/V President Eisenhower. MBNMS, NOAA OLE, and the responsible party took the lead in the response. During an overflight, an estimated 48 - 500 lb. bales were observed on beaches stretching approximately 100 miles. There is much coordination happening between researchers, NOAA, CA State Parks, and others. Photos documented the removal of a bale on a beach at the Piedras Blancas elephant seal rookery. An overflight is planned today at the CINMS where more bales have been observed. Because this incident occurred in a national marine sanctuary, we were able to take the lead coordination role initially as the USCG was not involved and did not set up an Incident Command structure. The cleanup contractor, California State Parks, and others involved in the response are familiar with those protocols and helping to keep the response moving forward in an organized fashion.

Pacific Fishery Management Council votes to move forward with MBNMS Deep Sea Coral Research and Restoration Areas

MBNMS staff attended the Pacific Fishery Management Council's March meeting in Fresno to discuss moving forward with the three proposed deep-sea coral research and restoration areas for groundfish fishery protections. MBNMS is coordinating closely with PFMC and NOAA Fisheries to designate three areas that are deeper than 1,500 ft and are already protected from bottom trawling. NOAA proposes to protect these coral outplanting areas from being crushed by pots/traps, while also minimizing impacts to fishermen. The Council voted to move forward with Sur Ridge and two revised smaller areas at Año Nuevo and Ascension canyons as the range of alternatives. MBNMS plans to conduct further outreach with fishermen who may have some overlap with their fishery in the shallower areas of the canyons. PFMC will revisit the topic at their June meeting for a final decision. ONMS has a long-term need for deep-sea coral research and restoration areas so that these activities may occur without intentional impacts to the seafloor from bottom-contact fishing gear. This will be the first action taken by PFMC to protect deep-sea coral areas in national marine sanctuaries.

EDUCATION, VOLUNTEER AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS

“Otterly Artistic” Kids Workshop Creates Murals for Display at Sanctuary Exploration Center, April 27th, 2024

On Saturday, April 27th, the Sanctuary Exploration Center hosted a kid's art workshop centered around sea otters and their importance as keystone species to local ecosystems. 16 kids and 8 parents attended free of charge, with supplies provided by the Center. They learned about sea otters from an SEC staff member who also shared her personal experiences researching kelp forest ecosystems. Under the guidance of local artist Tina Fuller Somers, participants helped collectively create two large murals depicting sea otters in kelp forests and eelgrass beds. These murals (photographed below) will be displayed in the Center's exhibit hall with signage about the project through the first week of June. One of the Sanctuary Exploration Center's goals is to foster a more personal connection with the sanctuary and the ocean's relevance in people's daily lives. Providing activities that merge conservation messages with the arts can generate that sense of relevance and open new perspectives.



Engaging youth in these conservation messages through expressive arts can create a sense of fun and exploration that encourages them to seek out connections to science and the ocean later in life.

Watsonville Earth Day Event

On Sunday, April 21, staff and interns assisted with the Earth Day event that was hosted by the City of Watsonville. We made shark, whale, and jellyfish



crowns with the children and got to read some facts about these creatures in our sanctuary. We also shared some insightful information with the public about future events, school field trips, ocean Q&A, and more information about coming to our visitor center. We made over 270 crowns with the children and also gave them a lot of facts about their species. There were over 900 attendees at the event and about 589 total visitors at our booth. Every year the City of Watsonville hosts Earth Day in their historic city plaza. This year was the first time back since pre-covid. The involvement of Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary staff in the Watsonville Earth Day event has the potential to heighten awareness and motivate action toward marine and wetland conservation within the local community. Through interacting with participants and sharing information about school field trips, self-awareness in voluntary decisions to save the planet, and much more. The staff effectively imparted knowledge about environmental issues and inspired individuals to take proactive measures in guarding marine ecosystems. This outreach endeavor not only aids in preserving the marine environment but also nurtures a sense of environmental responsibility among community members, empowering them to enact meaningful change in their own lives and surroundings. Moreover, events such as these serve as forums for cooperation and networking, facilitating collaboration among organizations and individuals united in support of a shared cause, thereby enhancing the impact of conservation endeavors.



MBNMS participates in Monterey Whalefest 2024

The 14th annual Whalefest was held April 13-14, organized by the Monterey Fisherman's Wharf Association and volunteers to celebrate Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and the diversity of whales migrating through the sanctuary. This year's festival attracted thousands of people and featured a science symposium of marine researchers and sanctuary experts, 30 partner exhibitors, local musicians and performers, family activities, kid's art, a life-sized inflatable whale, and research vessel tours. Superintendent Lisa Wooninck gave a presentation during the symposium on *"Iconic Kelp in MBNMS"* and Jazmine Mejia-Muñoz, CMSF/MBNMS Agriculture Water Quality Program Coordinator, delivered a talk *"Cultivating Plasticulture Solutions through the Agriculture Water Quality Alliance."* In addition, staff and volunteers hosted a booth during the event with over 300 visitors stopping by to learn more about the sanctuary. Whales are a charismatic megafauna and an effective public engagement interest to promote national marine sanctuary support. As the NMSS grows, sharing NOAA efforts and collaborations is important to demonstrate the balance between unique place-based management and benefits from being part of a system of marine protected resources. Furthermore, public engagement is a hallmark of sanctuary outreach to increase awareness and gain support for the NMSS.



Sanctuary Exploration Center begins spring Docent training

The Sanctuary Exploration Center began its 2024 spring Docent volunteer training. The current class has 11 new docents-in-training, as well as some current docents looking to refresh their skills and knowledge. In-person training will be once a week throughout the month, with an additional virtual webinar portion each week. This hybrid structure makes it more accessible to volunteers from across the range, and docents from the CDC can attend as well. Docents welcome and engage with visitors who come into the Sanctuary Exploration Center. These volunteers are key to educating visitors about

MBNMS, reaching approximately 40,000 visitors a year. Without volunteers, the Sanctuary Exploration Center would not be able to reach visitors at this level.

Sanctuary Exploration Center Hosts Annual Volunteer Appreciation

Sanctuary Exploration Center hosted its annual Volunteer Appreciation to show appreciation for the work done by volunteers throughout the year. The party included ocean-themed block printing and a presentation about SEC numbers throughout the 2023 year. Qualified volunteers received ONMS pins for 5 and 10-year service, and three volunteers received 100-hour gifts. About 30 volunteers attended the event. Volunteers help run the SEC through docent work or helping in our gift store. With about 43 current volunteers, the SEC could not provide the programming or open hours it does without the help of many dedicated volunteers. Appreciation parties help volunteers feel appreciated and aid in the retention of volunteers from year to year.

New Coastal Sign Installed near Sensitive Harbor Seal Rookery

Along with resource protection partners California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Stanford University, MBNMS designed, fabricated, and installed a new coastal sign overlooking an important harbor seal beach rookery at Hopkins Marine Station in Pacific Grove. This site, located along the Monterey Recreation Trail, receives tens of thousands of visitors each year and serves as a shoreline interpretive station for our Bay Net volunteers to engage with the public about the sanctuary and responsible wildlife viewing. The new sign utilized ONMS best practice graphics, logos, maps, and met accessibility standards. The interpretive messaging focused on harbor seal protection and incorporated ONMS wildlife viewing guidelines, reporting numbers for violations and enforcement, and state MPA information. Most visitors to MBNMS explore coastal access areas, including beaches and walking paths along the shoreline. Here, visitors interact with sensitive wildlife and coastal habitats and presents an opportunity to educate about protection and the responsible enjoyment of those natural resources.



MBNMS attend community event for World Wetlands Day: Feb 3rd, 2024

Saturday, February 3rd, was World Wetlands Day and there was an event held in the City of Watsonville. Monterey Bay Explorers Interns, hired through the OEP Grant, joined Emely Cortez (Education Specialist) at the event. The interns presented a watershed model presentation to the children and gave the community workbooks and coloring books, brochures with more information about the Sanctuary Exploration Center. About 379 visitors approached the booth, engaged in the activity, and received information about becoming a volunteer as well. It was a great turnout for the event. It was said that the crowd count was almost near pre-pandemic times. World Wetlands Day was created into a public event to raise awareness of the freshwater wetlands



that remain in the City of Watsonville. There are 6 sloughs throughout the whole city. The City of Watsonville and its organizations such as Watsonville Wetlands Watch work very closely to help maintain the health of the wetlands and practice restoration as a community to come together and work in protecting the environment.

Carmel Earth Day Event

On April 20th, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary staff set up a booth at the Carmel Earth Day event in Devendorf Park, where 122 people engaged in discussions about marine debris and conservation efforts. Attendees were informed about the effects of marine debris and were encouraged to take action to reduce it in their daily lives, such as minimizing single-use plastics and participating in beach clean-up initiatives. Additionally, the staff promoted volunteer programs within the sanctuary, motivating community members to get involved. The booth served as an effective platform for raising awareness and inspiring individuals to contribute to the preservation of marine ecosystems, fostering meaningful dialogue, and empowering attendees to make a positive impact on the environment. Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary staff's participation in the Carmel Earth Day event lies in its potential to raise awareness and inspire action towards marine conservation within the local community. By engaging with attendees and providing information about marine debris and volunteer opportunities, the staff effectively educated individuals about environmental issues and encouraged them to take proactive steps to protect marine ecosystems. This outreach effort not only contributes to the preservation of the marine environment but also fosters a sense of environmental stewardship among community members, empowering them to make a tangible difference in their own lives and surroundings. Additionally, events like these serve as platforms for collaboration and networking, allowing organizations and individuals to come together in support of a common cause, ultimately amplifying the impact of conservation efforts.



Earth Day Celebration in Cambria

San Simeon staff and volunteers hosted a booth at an Earth Day event hosted by a local nonprofit organization. The theme for the event was Planet vs Plastics. We brought a watershed model and demonstrated what happens to plastics that are littered on land (they end up in the ocean), offered coloring pages and free posters to attendees where we spoke with about 125 people. Contacts were made and strengthened with local government representatives, other environmental nonprofits and the general public. Public and community outreach raises awareness and inspires action towards marine conservation. Engaging attendees and providing information about marine debris and volunteer opportunities encourages community members about environmental issues and encourages them to take steps to protect marine ecosystems.



Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Staff host a 2024 All Volunteer Programs Informational Session

On February 28, staff hosted a MBNMS Volunteer Programs recruitment Webinar with 60 registrants and 32 participants. A brief introduction to the sanctuary system and MBNMS was followed by presentations from the individual volunteer program coordinators for our visitor centers, Water Quality Monitoring, Bay Net, and Team OCEAN. In addition to the staff presentations, on hand were 2 volunteers who spoke on behalf of their individual



experiences with their respective programs. Because MBNMS volunteer opportunities are located in different locations, new volunteers were able to learn about the incredible depth and breadth of our programs and the many opportunities we offer in one webinar. This webinar was a continued effort to bring together all MBNMS volunteer programs under one umbrella so that the coordinators can be in concert with each other in providing volunteers with consistent messaging, programming, enrichments, email announcements, and volunteer recognition.

MBNMS staff interviewed by digital media marketing group Edges of the Earth

Under cloudy and rainy weather in the sanctuary, Edges of the Earth (<https://www.edgesofearth.com/>) media company came to visit MBNMS and staff members to get out in the sanctuary and to conduct interviews about some of our top priority activities and resource protection issues. Interviews included Iconic Kelp Forest (Steve Lonhart), Plastics, and Microplastics (Chad King and Pam Krone). Additionally, Team OCEAN (TO) Coordinator Lisa Uttal and TO staff Dean Peterson accompanied Edges of the Earth kayaking in Elkhorn Slough as naturalists to discuss MBNMS and “Conscious Exploration”. Edges is working with global, national, and local partners and teams to help tell the right conservation and ecotourism story in key regions—above and below water. Their goal is to tell stories about people who are on the frontlines of ocean conservation and the habitats, marine animals, and communities being supported. They are headed to Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary after their Monterey trip. Stories will be over the next months to tell conservation and ecotourism stories in MBNMS. These outreach/media efforts heighten awareness of MBNMS and bring to the forefront the important activities we are doing for sanctuaries. Edges of the Earth publishes with media outlets such as Forbes, Flash Pack, Oceanographic, Girls that Scuba, and have a PR team in the States to promote stories with other mainstream media. They chose MBNMS as one of their many global destinations and plan to return in June.



MBNMS February *Finding Sanctuary* Article Published in two newspaper outlets

The *Finding Sanctuary* article entitled: “Plastic waste is everywhere” was published in both the Santa Cruz Sentinel and the Monterey Herald. A link to a pdf of the article is [here](#). These monthly articles are published each month and represent current research, education and resource protection stories and activities of Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary staff. Outreach with these articles heightens awareness of Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary within our local community and informs the public about our current activities.

Marine Mammal Center picks up live stranded Olive Ridley Sea Turtle in Santa Cruz county

The Marine Mammal Center Monterey Bay Operations was called to respond to a live Olive Ridley Sea Turtle on La Selva Beach in Santa Cruz County on Saturday, March 2. Staff Rebecca Gustafson was volunteering with TMMC during that time and assisted with the rescue. Olive Ridleys are not commonly found on the beaches of MBNMS as the water temperature is often too cold. Animal was taken to TMMC hospital in Sausalito to be assessed by vet staff, and transferred to the Monterey Bay Aquarium for continued care.



Sanctuary Exploration Center Report: January 26, 2024 through 5/3/2024

Total Visitors: 4,478

Field Trips: 21

Facility Rentals: 2

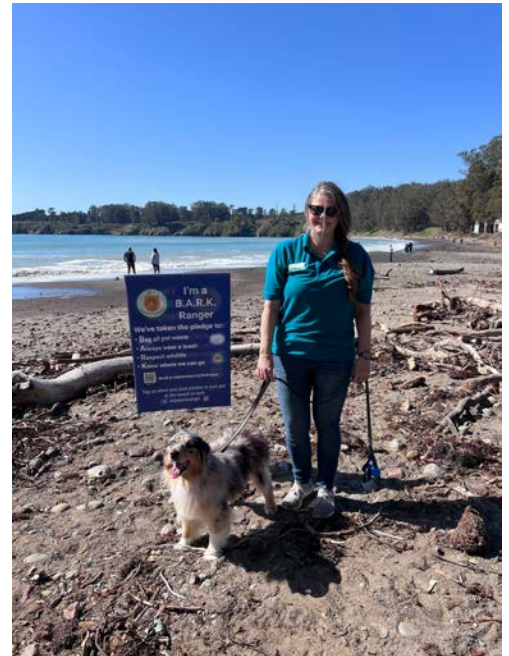
Guests were drawn into the Sanctuary Exploration Center by a variety of programs and activities, the kickoff meeting for Bay Net and Team OCEAN's spring training, as well as a beach cleanup event with MBNMSF and the Santa Cruz Warriors (24 participants) in addition to the events above. The Sanctuary Exploration Center's goals are: to educate visitors about the sanctuary's unique and fascinating coastal and marine environment, to foster a more personal connection with the sanctuary and the ocean's relevance in people's daily lives and to encourage stewardship of the sanctuary and a better understanding of how to responsibly enjoy and protect the ocean.

Coastal Discovery Center Report: January 26, 2024 through 5/3/2024

Total Visitors: 1,025

Field Trips: 26

The end of January marked the completion of the Coastal Discovery Center's facilities renovations which included painting and placing new ceiling tiles in the interior of the office as well as new flooring in the visitor center and office side of the building. On Saturday February 24th, the Coastal Discovery Center, Friends of the Elephant Seal, and State Parks hosted a respectful wildlife viewing and B.A.R.K. Ranger Day at W.R. Hearst Memorial Beach. The Coastal Discovery Center hosted a scavenger hunt and a marine mammal craft, State Parks had a table with various marine mammal pelts and skulls, and Friends of the Elephant Seal had a table promoting their B.A.R.K. Ranger program (dog owners could sign their dogs up to be wildlife ambassadors). The Coastal Discovery Center now has 24 docents that make outreach possible. Several of the field trips are in partnership with One Cool Earth (an environmental non-profit in San Luis Obispo) and California State Parks and include a plankton lab, beachcombing, and a watershed lab. The Coastal Discovery Center's goals are to: encourage the protection of the Sanctuary's resources through education and outreach, to increase public awareness and appreciation of our coastal environment, to allow visitors to learn about and understand the unique characteristics of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, to create a sense of personal stewardship for California's coastal ecosystems, and to contribute knowledge and information shared among regional marine education research and resource protection.



NEWS COVERAGE

[FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration Announces Temporary Pause on Pending ...](#)

The White House... national marine sanctuaries as part of the President's goal of conserving 30% of lands and waters by 2030, delivering billions of dollars to ...

[Indigenous Governance Principles Can Guide More Equitable Conservation](#)

The Pew Charitable Trusts-Sea otters groom and rest in a kelp bed in the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary along California's central coast. This would be ...

[Crab-Eating Sea Otters Help Protect California's Marshlands, Study Finds | KQED](#)

KQED... National Marine Sanctuary along California's Central Coast on Sept. 20, 2023, in Morro Bay. The sanctuary would be the first national marine sanctuary ...

[Sea otters restore degraded California estuary, slowing erosion by 90 percent](#)

NationofChange Image Credit: NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. Sea otters started recolonizing their former habitat in a central California coastal

[California Offshore Wind Goals Threatened by Marine Sanctuaries - BNN Bloomberg](#)

BNN Bloomberg "We need to get the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary designated, even if it means lowering the northern boundary," said Sam Cohen ...

[Clean energy, conservation collide on California coast - The Columbian](#)

The Columbian-Even if it excludes Morro Bay, the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary would extend that protected zone another 134 miles ...

[Former SLO Mayor Heidi Harmon urges community to 'rally behind' offshore wind | Opinion](#)

San Luis Obispo Tribune... National Marine Sanctuary | Opinion. October 24, 2023 5:00 AM.

[Clean energy and conservation collide in California coastal waters - Tech Xplore](#)

Tech Xplore "We need to get the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary designated, even if it means lowering the northern boundary," said Sam Cohen ...

[Finding sanctuary | Plastic waste is everywhere - Santa Cruz Sentinel](#)

Santa Cruz Sentinel-Pam Krone, water quality specialist for Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and the California Marine Sanctuary Foundation (CMSF) recently ...

36 Years of MBARI's Favorite Deep Sea Discoveries Packed Into 2 Minutes - The Inertia

The Inertia-The whole idea behind it was to operate independently but collaborate with anyone willing and able, and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary was ...

<https://www.noaa.gov/news-release/noaa-proposes-national-marine-sanctuary-in-papahnaumokukea>

NOAA proposes national marine sanctuary in Papahānaumokuākea

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Chumash Marine Sanctuary declared a Mission Blue Hope Spot - Oceanographic Magazine

Oceanographic Magazine-The proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary was recognised as a Mission Blue Hope Spot yesterday. The collaboration between the ...

Web Site (<https://montereybay.noaa.gov>)

★ ★ **Check out these MBNMS Advisory Council webpage links!** ★ ★

Advisory Council Meeting Agendas & Minutes

<https://montereybay.noaa.gov/sac/sacma.html>

Advisory Council User Group Newsletters (seats and working groups/sub-committees)

<https://montereybay.noaa.gov/sac/advisory-nwsltr.html>

Please take a few moments to peruse the site. Your feedback is greatly appreciated.

Comments and suggestions can be sent to andrew.white@noaa.gov.

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Haven Parker – Program Support Specialist/ AC Coord

Get involved and stay informed!

To learn how to get involved in the Sanctuary visit:

<https://montereybay.noaa.gov/getinvolved/welcome.html>

Sign up for the MBNMS listserv to receive email notices about upcoming Sanctuary events, and public meetings of the Sanctuary Advisory Council and Working Groups:

<https://montereybay.noaa.gov/intro/elists.html>

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