



Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary



Sanctuary Office Report

Volume 21, Number 1

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: NOVEMBER 3, 2023 - JANUARY 26, 2024

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

National Ocean Service (NOS) Announces NOS Strategic Plan

National Ocean Service (NOS) announced the release of its new [NOS Strategic Plan for 2024-2028](#). This plan serves as an excellent framework to collaborate across NOS more efficiently and effectively, and will streamline NOS priorities in response to our nation's growing need for ocean and coastal products and services. It helps tell the NOS story and describes its critical role in filling important needs for our nation and our coastal communities. For more information, visit the new [Strategic Plan landing page](#) and view a special video message. In the strategic plan, there are many connections to work at ONMS. From enhancing equitable access to historically underserved communities, to ensuring coastal resilience and adaptation, and advancing stewardship of our public resources - the priorities for NOS are in clear alignment with priorities at ONMS.

ONMS Continues Indigenous Speaker Series

The ONMS' Indigenous Community Engagement Team has organized an Indigenous Speaker Series in partnership with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. The Indigenous Speaker Series is a platform for centering Indigenous Peoples' Voices, Knowledge, Approaches, and Solutions through training and discussions. The first few sessions were held in October and November, welcoming over 150 participants so far, and will continue through next year. The speaker series demonstrates ONMS' commitment to working with Indigenous partners and also recognizes that for ONMS to fulfill its transformational vision for the next 20 years, we need to "embrace Indigenous, cultural, and tribal significance, and invest in meaningful engagement with tribal and Indigenous communities that rely on the ocean and Great Lakes as an integral part of their identity, culture, and well-being" and "embrace the concept of collaborative management with tribal and Indigenous communities and as appropriate, codify those approaches in management plans and agreements."

ONMS Releases New Climate Resilience Plan

This week, the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries released an updated [Climate Resilience Plan for 2024-2026](#) to guide work on climate change issues over the coming three years. This new plan will be administered by the ONMS Climate Team and builds on the success of the previous ONMS Climate Resilience Plan (2021-2023). The plan leverages the tools, capacity and community building, and science developed during the implementation of the previous plan as a foundation for an increased focus on climate-informed management actions. The plan emphasizes mitigation, adaptation, and resilience building activities, while maintaining and strengthening the science, education, and outreach programming that is foundational to climate-informed management. Further, the plan will help ONMS achieve multiple goals and objectives of its 2022-2027 Strategic Plan, as well as the newly released NOS Strategic Plan. This new Climate Resilience Plan demonstrates ONMS' role as a national and global leader in climate-smart MPA management.

MONTEREY BAY NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY NEWS
AND PROGRAM UPDATES

SANCTUARY MANAGEMENT

NOS Employee Recognition Ceremony Honors Two MBNMS Staff

On Wednesday, January 16, NOS Assistant Administrator Nicole LeBoeuf and ONMS Director John Armor presented Jazmine Mejia-Muñoz with the NOS Team Member of the Year Award for 2023 in recognition of her tremendous work with the MBNMS agricultural community on ag plastics research and development, resulting in successful diversion from the waste stream and our sanctuary waterways. Dawn Hayes was also presented Diversity and Inclusion award as part of the Working Toward Racial Equity Team (Anne-Marie Runfola, Jean Alupey, Justin Holl, Claire Fackler and Katie Denman) for their efforts over the past two years to develop a program to initiate systemic change within ONMS to better support the recruitment, employment, and retention of Black, Indigenous and People of Color across all hiring levels. Recognition is a key element of staff retention. Nominating staff and affiliates for these annual awards reinforces the value of the work they do and importance of their role in our overarching goal of marine conservation and stewardship.



NMSF Event in San Francisco

On Tuesday, December 12, MBNMS staff Amity Wood and Lisa Wooninck joined the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation’s event: *Protecting Our Treasured Waters: National Marine Sanctuaries on California’s Northern Central Coast* held in San Francisco. The evening was led by CEO Joel Johnson and featured distinguished speakers Dr. Rick Spinrad (Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere at NOAA), Dan Haifley (Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Foundation Board of Trustees), Deb Self (Greater Farallones Association), and Amity Wood (Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary). Afterwards, a Solutions Panel discussed how the public can protect the critically important waters of sanctuaries while championing marine conservation efforts. Public outreach and education brings community significance and relevance for increased awareness, protection, and stewardship of our treasured underwater places for now and future generations.

RESEARCH AND MONITORING

MBNMS Research Activity Panel Holds Quarterly Meeting

On December 8th, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) [Research Activity Panel](#) (RAP) held a virtual meeting. Agenda items and presentations included: Estuarine Marine Protected Areas Monitoring Program update; summary of October and November Advisory Council meetings; research community newsletter discussion; updates on Monitoring and Research on Offshore Wind and Marine Life; and Ricketts Award discussion. The MBNMS Research Activity Panel (RAP) is a working group of the MBNMS Advisory Council (AC). The RAP meets four times per year, and advises AC and sanctuary staff on basic and conservation science issues.

Monitoring of the 2017 Mud Creek Landslide Shows Dynamic Intertidal Recovery

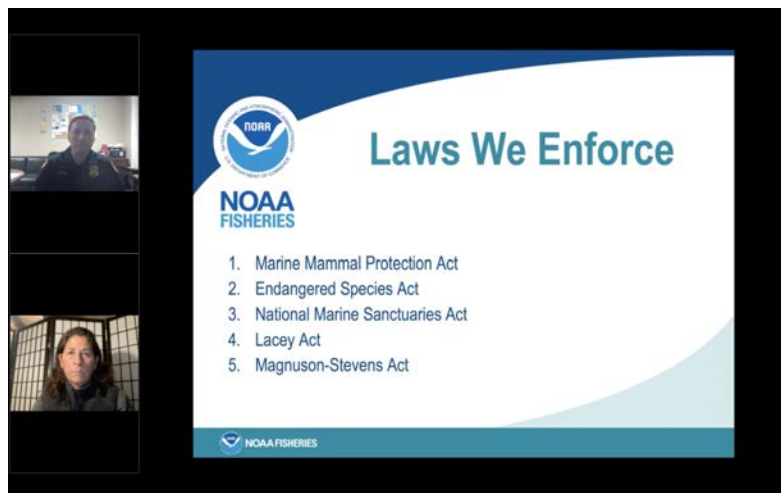
Staff conducted a photographic survey of the Mud Creek slide in Big Sur on Monday. The slide added 15 acres of new land to California, and then began to move up and down the coast, burying the intertidal under several feet of sand and rock. Endangered black abalone were killed and critical habitat was lost, at least temporarily. Photos depict dramatic changes at the up coast site, where in November of 2017 it was mostly a sandy beach, but by December 2023 most of the material had either moved offshore or downshore, driven by longshore drift. Monitoring landslides is key to understanding both the short-term and long-term dynamics of material moving into the sanctuary. These data guide permitting decisions by sanctuary staff and highlight the effects of side-casting by the Department of Transportation on the sanctuary.

RESOURCE PROTECTION

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Staff Host a Webinar on “How to be a Good Witness”

On October 25, NOAA’s Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) Officer Sam Reigner, Sophie Debeukelaer, Karen Grimmer (Resource Protection) and Lisa Uttal (Education) hosted an all MBNMS volunteer webinar entitled “How to be a good witness.” The purpose of this webinar was to provide information about humans and wildlife interactions, what to do and who to call as a Bay Net/Team OCEAN volunteer.

The webinar included discussing multiple organizations that respond to wildlife harassment and disturbance and what volunteers can do to address wildlife disturbances. Key activities for Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Team OCEAN kayak and Bay Net Shoreline naturalist programs is preventing wildlife disturbances in the sanctuary and while they are in the field, to also educate the public about the sanctuary and natural and cultural history of the area and provide education to people recreating in the sanctuary. Sam Reigner is the only OLE officer assigned to a very large geographic area, so the volunteers are the eyes and ears to help to prevent and document wildlife disturbances.



MPWC Maintenance and VR2 Receiver Replacement Mission

On October 24th and 25th MBNMS and WCRO staff collaborated to perform MPWC buoy maintenance and recover and replace VR2 shark receivers. Over the two days the team successfully affixed new reflective tape and property signs to all of the Monterey MPWC buoys, and replaced all three VR2 shark receivers. MBNMS maintains MPWC buoys which mark zones where MPWC users are allowed to operate their craft within the sanctuary.

35' Sailboat Goes Aground and Breaks Apart on Rocky Beach North of Santa Cruz

On the morning of October 25th, a 35' sailboat went aground on the rocks just north of Santa Cruz. The vessel broke apart within an hour of the Sheriff Department being notified. The Responsible Party had insurance and a salvor was hired. They had three days of a minus tide during daylight to remove much of the loose debris, approximately 3300 lbs. The keel, engine and parts of the hull remain buried in the nearshore environment until later in the month when the tide cycle is more conducive to a safe recovery during daylight. It is important to act quickly to salvage vessels that go aground before the turbulent conditions break them apart and scatter debris on beaches and nearshore.



Meeting on Healthy Soils, Carbon Sequestration and Biodiversity

MBNMS staff organized an event attended by 70 growers and agricultural professionals for a field day at Braga Fresh in Salinas Valley on 11/1/2023. The day showcased practices growers can use to store carbon in soil and remove CO₂ from the atmosphere. Braga Fresh and MBNMS demonstrated reduced tillage in large scale vegetable production as one such practice. Our hope is to discover ways that these practices can become feasible and profitable for large scale growers so that more farmland can be put into healthy soils, carbon storage practices. California's cropland covers about 25% of California's land area and amounts to 27 million acres. Management practices on 50% of this land represents large carbon storage potential and the removal of millions of tons of CO₂ from the atmosphere.

Serious Humpback Whale Entanglement in Monterey Bay

On November 11, 2023 a humpback whale was sighted in Monterey Bay and the disentanglement team responded immediately. This is the fourth entangled humpback sighted in Monterey Bay in 2023. The whale was tightly wrapped around the head with what was identified later as CA Dungeness crab pot gear. Analysis by experts on the video and photos stated that the gear was likely on the whale for at least three months or more. According to CDFW, based on the tags, the whale had picked up the gear in the Point Reyes region. The response team was able to reach the whale, although because of the head wrap, it was too challenging to effectively attach telemetry gear. The team was not able to track the whale after it departed, and to date (Nov 17) it has not been re-sighted or rescued. NMFS has confirmed 25 entangled whales along the West Coast in 2023 (9 gray, 14 humpback and 2 Orca) and 16 of the 25 were entangled in California. Four entangled humpback whales were sighted in Monterey Bay, three of which were entangled in "unknown" gear meaning experts were



not able to confirm to which fishery the gear belongs. Based on the 3-year rolling average impact score (3.39 excluding the 11/11 entanglement) from the number of entanglements in CA and the high concentrations of whales present, CDFW continues to delay the season opener for the commercial Dungeness crab fishery for all fishing zones. Whale entanglements are identified by the West Coast Region as part of the Whale Conservation priority as entanglements represent one of the major threats to large whales, including endangered humpback and blue whales.

First Flush: Volunteers Collect Water Quality Data in the Rain for the 23rd Year in a Row

In the early morning on Saturday, November 18, 2023, 22 volunteers participated in the annual water quality monitoring event called First Flush. These 22 volunteers were split up into teams to monitor 13 storm drain outfalls that flow into MBNMS located in cities on the Monterey Peninsula and in-land during the first major rain of the season. Storm drain outfalls were sampled for common urban pollutants such as surfactants, metals, nutrients, and bacteria. The Dry Run was conducted on September 16th in advance of the rain to help us understand what is in the runoff during the dry weather. This year, a couple of new analyses were added on such as human-sourced bacteria for outfalls that flow into an Area of Special Biological Significance (ASBS) and additional surfactant analyses to hopefully determine the source at five historically high surfactant loading outfalls. This was the 23rd year of this program and concentrations in the runoff have been declining based on the long-term data that has been collected through this program. First Flush is a long-term citizen science program funded by local municipalities and MBNMS to better understand the quality of water flowing into the sanctuary prior to and during the first significant storm of the season. After over 20 years of collecting this data, we are seeing improvements in runoff water quality. This program provides an excellent opportunity for community engagement and valuable data to inform and prioritize best practices.



Whale Disentanglement Training

On November 15 and 16, MBNMS staff members attended a whale disentanglement training. The R/V Fulmar towed two ropes, acting as the trailing line frequently encountered behind entangled whales. Participants operated rigid inflatable boats (RIBs) and practiced disentanglement operations. Actions practiced included trailing line acquisition, deployment of telemetry buoys, getting “in tow” behind the whale, advancing up the trailing line and deploying buoys designed to keep a whale at the surface, so responders can safely perform disentanglement. Whale entanglements are identified by the West Coast Region as part of the Whale Conservation priority as entanglements represent one of the major threats to large whales, including endangered humpback and blue whales. Disentanglement response efforts help free some entangled individuals, as well as collect information on the cause of entanglement.



24hr HAZWOPER Training

On the week of November 17, MBNMS resource protection staff members participated in a 24 hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) safety course put on by the California Office of Oil Spill Prevention and Response. The course covered safety on sites where potential hazardous materials may be present. It was great to take this certification course with professionals who respond to vessel incidents, oil and other hazardous material spills regularly. The course covered all required HAZWOPER material, but the focus was on scenarios that sanctuary emergency response staff are more likely to encounter. HAZWOPER training enhances safety knowledge for responders who may be on scene at a spill or vessel incident. The 24 hour version is designed for the “site worker” who may be in the vicinity of hazardous materials but is not expected to handle or dispose of them.

MBNMS Law Enforcement Technical Advisory Committee (LETAC) Held Hybrid Meeting

On December 7, 2023, the MBNMS Enforcement Coordinator facilitated the third meeting in 2023 of the LETAC, in hybrid mode. Twenty two law enforcement officials participated including NOAA OLE (three staff), US Coast Guard Station Monterey (two staff), CDFW North Coast District, CA State Parks (Monterey, Santa Cruz & San Simeon Counties), Santa Cruz Harbor, Monterey Harbor, US Fire Service, Monterey and Santa Cruz District Attorney offices and the new director of BLM. The meeting had a special focus on large whale strandings, and we invited the NMFS Stranding Network Coordinator to join the discussions. The whale strandings have been problematic as some have landed in high use areas of the shoreline. A sub group will be following up with a separate meeting to put a plan in place for quick response to non-ESA whales that may strand on a busy beach. The group also discussed a variety of law enforcement issues in the Sanctuary including black abalone poaching, derelict fishing gear and entanglements, and use of harbor pump outs. Coordinating and collaborating with other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies increases enforcement cases and outcomes for MBNMS, as there are limited NOAA OLE officers in the region at this time.

Site selected for Beneficial Use Project

MBNMS staff coordinated with many agencies and partners including Ducks Unlimited (DU), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), California Coastal Commission, Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve (ESNERR), Moss Landing Harbor District, and California State Parks to identify beneficial use locations to place sediment the USACE plans to dredge from the Moss Landing harbor federal channel in June 2024. MBNMS staff worked closely with DU and ESNERR to contemplate if the material could be used for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s (CDFW’s) Wildlife Area levee project in Elkhorn Slough and the sanctuary was very familiar with this project and its proponents since activities below the mean high tide line for this project were permitted by MBNMS. MBNMS staff helped facilitate a resulting agreement between USACE and CDFW to accept up to 25,000 cubic yards of dredged material, primarily sand, from the Moss Landing Federal Navigation Channel to use in Pond 1 in the CDFW’s Moss Landing Wildlife Area. In 2021, as part of the MBNMS management plan review process, NOAA revised the MBNMS regulations to address resource protection concerns in the sanctuary by adding a definition for the phrase “beneficial use of dredged material” and new regulatory language to clarify MBNMS’s ability to authorize beneficial use of suitable dredged material from four public harbors adjacent to MBNMS for habitat protection or restoration purposes within MBNMS. This project will be the first beneficial use project to occur in this region and the inter agency group identified several other potential beneficial use sites in the Moss Landing area. This group is motivated to keep meeting every four to six months to keep the momentum and plan for future beneficial use projects.

Micro and Macro Plastic Monitoring

Resource Protection staff have begun monitoring the four main rivers entering Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary for both micro and macro plastics with the goal of better understanding the source of plastic pollution into MBNMS. Precipitation events are the most likely time for plastic to be dislodged from the shorelines of rivers and carried into the ocean, so the focus of our monitoring effort will be during the rainy season. Better understanding the source and transport of plastic pollution provides guidance for where to direct efforts to clean up and to prevent pollution.

Virtual MBNMS Webinar on Proposed Deep Sea Coral Research and Restoration Areas

On December 15, 2023, MBNMS staff provided a virtual webinar for all interested stakeholders on proposed deep sea coral research and restoration areas being considered for full protection from fisheries from the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC). The webinar provided information on the proposed areas in MBNMS to be protected and why, deep sea coral outplanting techniques, and the GF-developed GIS decision support tool followed by a Q&A session with the ONMS, NMFS and PFMC team. Forty four people participated in the webinar virtually with a good diversity of staff from NOAA, state agencies, environmental NGOs, harbors, deep sea coral scientists and fishermen. ONMS is working collaboratively with GFNMS, NMFS and PFMC staff throughout this action, from developing a scoping document for the September 2023 Council meeting, to reviewing an analytical document prepared jointly for the March 2024 Council meeting. 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.



Cleanup Continues for Vessel Incident Northwest of Santa Cruz in MBNMS

Over the week of December 15, 2023, salvage efforts for a 35' sailing vessel, which broke apart in the cliffs northwest of Santa Cruz, have continued. The original incident occurred in October, but access to the wreck site was limited to negative tides. Last week the remaining loose debris (rigging, wood, sails etc.) was pulled from the cove where it was trapped. Additionally, a large piece of hull which was being tracked was accessed and removed with heavy equipment. The salvor discovered that inside the concrete shell of the keel were dozens of loose lead ingots, about the size of bread loaves. By breaking the concrete shell, they were able to get the lead up to a safe section of rocks, above the high tide line, to be removed at the next suitable low tide. Two large pieces of hull, and the engine are still missing, but otherwise cleanup efforts have been thorough. Vessel incident response is a core function of Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary resource protection. Vessel incidents can harm sanctuary resources by release of marine debris and toxic pollutants. Effective response in this instance resulted in the majority of the debris from this incident being safely removed and disposed of.



Media Coverage of Marine Debris Along the Shoreline of MBNMS

There has been good media coverage of the [report](#) released on 10/24/2023 regarding analysis of the type, location, causes and solutions related to marine debris collected during beach cleanups by citizen scientists over a five year period from 2017-2021. Here are the latest news articles:

- NBC Bay News Monterey Bay “shoreline report reveals massive trash problem”
- NBC Bay News “Climate In Crisis”
- PATCH “Trash On Monterey Bay Shoreline Threatens Ecosystem: NOAA”
- Santa Cruz Sentinel “Local marine trash report cites eating, drinking, and smoking as primary debris sources”
- Monterey County Weekly “A new report on marine debris identifies the challenges, but also the opportunities, for keeping trash out of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary”
- KSBW “Million pieces of trash collected in Monterey Bay in the past 5 years”

In addition, there is a television and radio interview: NBC Bay Area “Marine life threatened by trash in Monterey Bay” (in English, with a Spanish version to follow). The radio interview will be aired with KCBX Public Radio.

Celebration of World Soil Health Day at Marks Ranch

Together with the Big Sur Land Trust, MBNMS staff led a community event at Mark’s Ranch in Salinas on November 4, 2023 to discuss how to build soil health while removing CO₂ and other greenhouse gasses from the atmosphere on rangeland. Community members included teachers, educational professionals, ranchers and retirees. The event was held at the end of a three year study to increase soil health and pasture performance through compost addition and native seeding. Study results showed an increase in forage, a lessening of soil compaction, and the establishment of increased numbers of native plants. California’s rangeland covers 40% of California’s land area and amounts to 54 million acres. Management practices on 10% of this land represents large carbon storage potential and the removal of millions of metric tons of CO₂ from the atmosphere.

EDUCATION, VOLUNTEER AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS

36th Ed Ricketts Memorial Award and Lecture Event Held at Sanctuary Exploration Center

The 2023 Ed Ricketts Memorial Award was presented to Tim Thomas (Maritime Heritage and Fisheries Historian) and Linda Yamane (Rumsen Ohlone Artist, Historian, and Culture Bearer), on the evening of November 9, 2023 at Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Exploration Center (SEC) in Santa Cruz. Both recipients are Monterey area cultural historians who have made significant contributions to the field of historical ecology. Mr. Thomas spoke about the early collection of the White Abalone by the young Japanese American abalone diver Roy Hattori, and the unresolved history of its scientific name. Ms. Yamane shared her journey of discovery of her Native heritage culture, through language, songs, baskets, boats, dance regalia, and material harvesting; all of which reflect the richness of the Monterey Bay area, the relationship its indigenous people have always had with the land, and the depth of their resourcefulness and esthetic values. The hybrid event was well-attended with approximately 30 people at the SEC and 94 viewing online. The event was made available via GoToWebinar; and the recording will be posted on [MBNMS Ricketts web page](#), and [ONMS Education Webinar Series Archive](#). The Ed Ricketts Memorial Award is for lifetime achievement in the field of marine conservation, science, or education based in part on Ed Ricketts’ exemplary ability to study natural history and share knowledge in a compelling fashion. This year marks the 36th presentation of the award. The Ed Ricketts Memorial Lecture was created in 1986 to honor scientists who have exhibited exemplary work throughout their career and advanced the status of knowledge in the field of marine science. Recipients are selected by the Research Activity Panel of Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Award history can be viewed at: <https://montereybay.noaa.gov/research/ricketts.html>.



MBNMS Education Team Members Receive Diversity and Inclusion Award from Lynker

MBNMS Education Team members Ariel Hunter, Rebecca Gustafson, Sophia Barwegen and Michele Roest received a Diversity and Inclusion award from Lynker in recognition of their role in prioritizing hands-on marine science educational experiences for low-income, under-represented youth from inland communities. Besides implementing three new, innovative programs to engage this community, the staff leveraged funding from non-profit partners and grants to support additional bilingual education staff and interns. They developed programs to reach multigenerational families in their communities, youth at school (both in person and virtually) and hosted student field trips to the coast. Through a California State Parks Outdoor Equity Grant, Sanctuary Exploration Center staff launched a bilingual program providing community-based and field trip experiences for youth and families from Watsonville, CA. They provided in-person field trips for eleven 4th grade classes to the Sanctuary Exploration Center (SEC) and Santa Cruz beach and wharf to perform hands-on oceanography surveys, reaching an estimated 330 students. Their Dia de la Comunidad weekend event reached over 200 families, engaging them in marine science and recreation opportunities. Four community college students were hired to assist with the educational programs (community colleges are historically underrepresented in paid intern opportunities). Through funding from the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, the team initiated a pilot program to engage with 16 classes from Salinas schools, serving an estimated 480 students. In 2024, staff will coordinate field trips and cover costs for four of these classes to visit the SEC. In 2023, the team also hosted virtual programs on topics such as Kelp Forests, Deep Sea, and Sounds in the Sanctuary. By partnering with the CA-based non-profit One Cool Earth, the team hosted over 30 presentations with San Luis Obispo County 3rd and 4th grade classes (over 600 students). One Cool Earth funded field trips for select low-income inland classes to attend in-person field trips at the Coastal Discovery Center in San Simeon. First-generation and low-income students are at major disadvantage for experiencing the outdoors and pursuing ocean conservation careers. NOAA has placed a priority on providing science and marine education programs to encourage individuals and communities to be involved in stewardship activities and decisions that conserve, restore, and protect our underwater parks. These experiences also prepare a diverse range of students for the workforce.



Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Staff Complete 2023 Monthly Finding Sanctuary Articles in Two Local Newspapers

In 2023, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary was invited to contribute to monthly “Finding Sanctuary” articles in the Santa Cruz Sentinel and Monterey Herald local newspapers. As of December 2023, content was contributed and 11 monthly articles were written, approved and published by two newspaper outlets. At the beginning of the year, themes, stories and messages were identified by MBNMS staff and then given timing and relevance, articles were generated. Some stories and themes include Chumash designation, Get Into Your Sanctuary, Iconic Kelp Forests, Sanctuary Advisory Council, Black Abalone Restoration, Blue Mind, NOAA Marine Debris Report release, Microplastics and Water Quality to name a few. Finding Sanctuary articles required to be 600 word articles so the challenge was to be concise and have just a few messages for each article that were reflective of MBNMS and our current activities. These articles strengthen the relationship between MBNMS and local communities and heightens the awareness of not only the sanctuary, our priorities, but also of our Superintendent Lisa Wooninck and the activities MBNMS staff engage in with regard to research, education and resource protection.

Three Ernest J Hollings Scholars Visit Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS)

Three Ernest J. Hollings Scholars completed their site visit to MBNMS from Jan 15-17. Coming from Massachusetts, Florida and Washington State, all Hollings scholars were able to meet up in person with their mentor Lisa Uttal in preparation for their summer internship. The Hollings internship program helps to increase undergraduate training in oceanic and atmospheric science, research, technology, and education and foster multidisciplinary training opportunities. These scholars will be engaging in a variety of education and outreach activities at MBNMS this summer, including analysis of a long term volunteer program data set, assisting with the coordination of the Office of the National Marine Sanctuary's Annual Get Into Your Sanctuary event, and getting involved with Team OCEAN and Bay Net volunteer programs. Hollings Scholars play a significant role in supporting MBNMS during the summer. Through this internship, MBNMS staff member Lisa Uttal mentors and immerses the students in the sanctuary, while also preparing them for public service careers with NOAA and other natural resource and science agencies at the federal, state and local levels of government.



Coastal Discovery Center Report: October 27, 2023 through January 26, 2024

Total Visitors: 1,796

In Person Field Trips: 1

Virtual Field Trips: 6

The Coastal Discovery Center now has 23 docents that make outreach possible. The Coastal Discovery Center's goals are to: encourage 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.

Sanctuary Exploration Center Report: October 27, 2023 through January 26, 2024

Total Visitors: 5,686

In Person Field Trips: 9

Facility Rentals: 1

Guests were drawn into the Sanctuary Exploration Center by a variety of programs and activities, including the Ed Ricketts Awards Ceremony and the launch of a new ROV in the deep sea exhibit, featuring the CSUMB faculty and students who built it. 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.

NEWS COVERAGE

[Offshore wind companies may want to reduce marine sanctuary off California's Central Coast](#)

San Luis Obispo Tribune-Wind energy companies are worried about the size and boundaries of the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary off the Central Coast.

[A new report on marine debris identifies the challenges, but also the opportunities, for ...](#)

Monterey County Weekly-A view from the coastline of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

[Finding sanctuary | Volunteers keep an eye on water quality in Monterey Bay ... - Santa Cruz Sentinel](#)

Santa Cruz Sentinel-What we do on land greatly impacts our oceans. Ten major watersheds drain into Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, carrying everything from ...

[Rachel Kippen, Our Ocean Backyard | Local marine trash report cites eating ... - Santa Cruz Sentinel](#)

Santa Cruz Sentinel... cigarette butts, and wrappers comprise the majority of marine debris retrieved in Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary by count at 59%.

[A name nearly lost to time — Monterey resident discovered a new species, but he wasn't credited](#)

Monterey Herald-Thomas received the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary 2023 Ed Ricketts Memorial Award, alongside Linda Yamane, for his lifetime of work in ...

[A new marine sanctuary off the Central Coast could aid in the discovery of over 140 shipwrecks](#)

KCLU-This national marine sanctuary would also almost fill in a big gap of unprotected ocean space along the California Coast. There are already a number ...

[Biden's climate and tribal goals conflict on California's coast - POLITICO](#)

Politico-The 5,600-square-mile Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary would be the first indigenous-nominated marine sanctuary in the federal network, ...

[A wind farm and a marine sanctuary walk into a bar... - Politico](#)

Politico... National Marine Sanctuary to accommodate offshore wind cables is facing pushback from Indigenous tribes. ... National Marine Sanctuary off the Texas ...

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.

Follow MBNMS on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/MBNMS) (<https://www.facebook.com/MBNMS>), [Instagram](#) (@mbnms) and [Twitter](#) (<https://twitter.com/mbnms>)

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Emely Cortez – Education Specialist (SEC)

Lilah Wise – Program Assistant (SEC)

Lisa Uttal – Education Specialist/Media Coordinator

Michele Roest – Prog. Coordinator & Community Liaison

Rebecca Gustafson – Volunteer Coordinator (SEC)

Richard Stanley – Sr. Maintenance Specialist (SEC)

Sophia Barwegen – CDC Coordinator

Steven Vargas - Maintenance Specialist (SEC)

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Jazmine Mejia-Muños – Ag. Water Quality Coord

Pamela Krone – Water Quality Monitoring Coordinator

Keegan Angerer – Resource Protection Specialist

Rebecca Roberts – Water Quality Coordinator, CMSF

Alena Anousinh – Water Quality Program Associate, CMSF

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Andrew White – Network Manager and Webmaster

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>

- Contact Information -

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