



National Marine Sanctuaries, West Coast Region

Presentation to Pacific Fishery Management Council on ONMS Coordination Report

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Informing the PFMC of West Coast Sanctuaries Activities/Programs



ONMS/NMFS/PFMC communication and coordination continuously improving

Seventh annual ONMS coordination report with following topics:

- Nominations and designations
- Condition reports
- Management plan reviews
- Climate vulnerability assessments
- Deep-sea coral and kelp research and restoration
- Indigenous workshops
- U.S. Forest Service partnership
- 50th anniversary of ONMS
- New shipping protections for whales



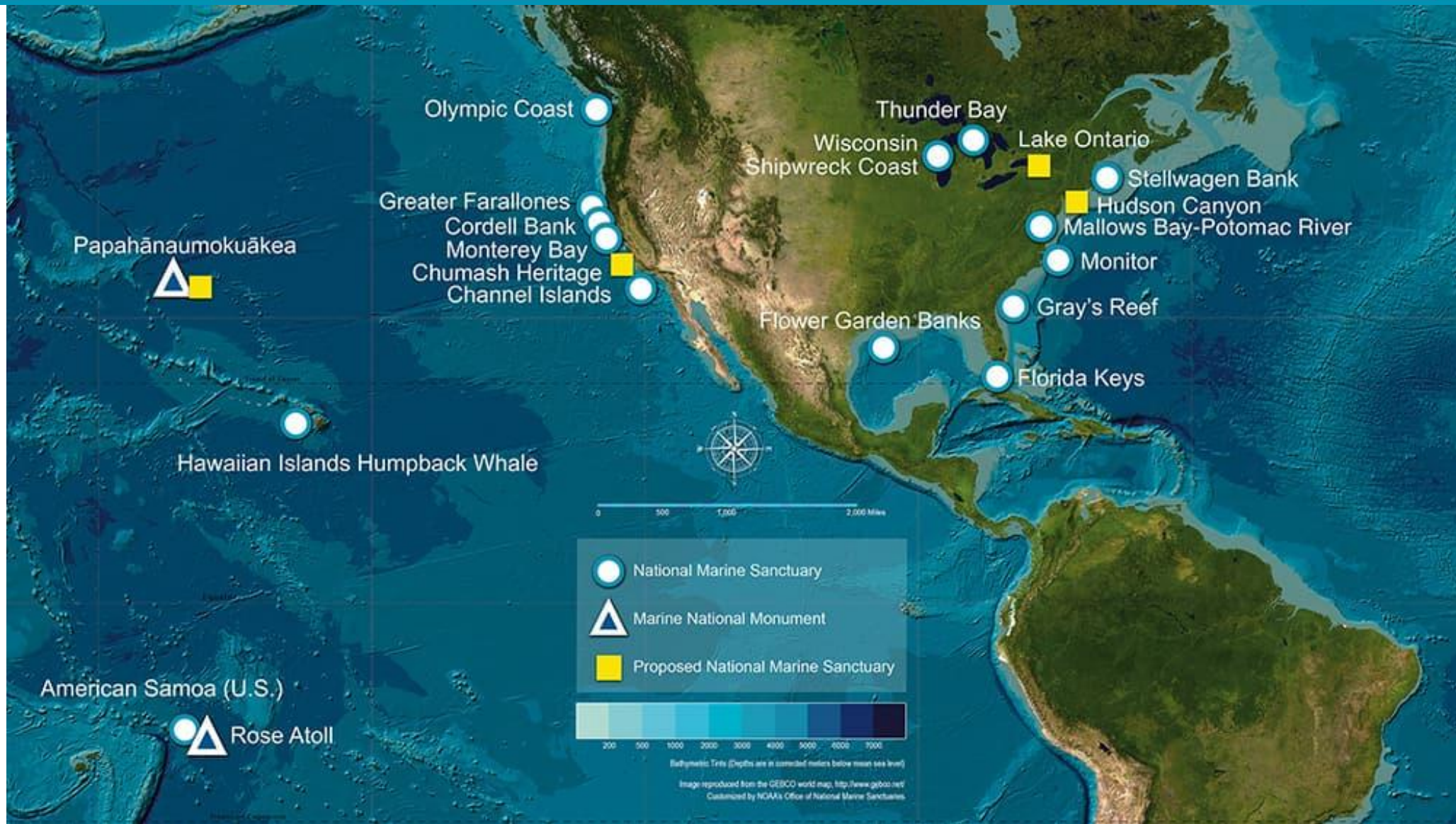
What are National Marine Sanctuaries?



“Areas of the marine environment with special conservation, recreational, ecological, historical, cultural, archaeological, or esthetic qualities...” – National Marine Sanctuaries Act (section 301)

- NMSA primary objective: resource protection of marine areas (Great Lakes included) of special national significance, while promoting sustainable uses
- Raising public awareness and understanding through education and outreach
- Improving management through research (e.g., historical, conservation science, social science)
- Helping coastal economies by promoting and protecting healthy resources
- Facilitating public use compatible with resource protection

National Marine Sanctuary System



Status of Sanctuary Nominations and Designations To Date



- **In Inventory of Candidate Sites**

- St. George Unangan Heritage (St. George Island, Pribilofs, Bering Sea, AK)
- Alaġum Kanuuġ (St. Paul Island, Pribilofs, AK)
- Lake Erie Quadrangle (PA)
- Mariana Trench (CNMI) - undergoing 5-year review

- **Nominations Under Review**

none

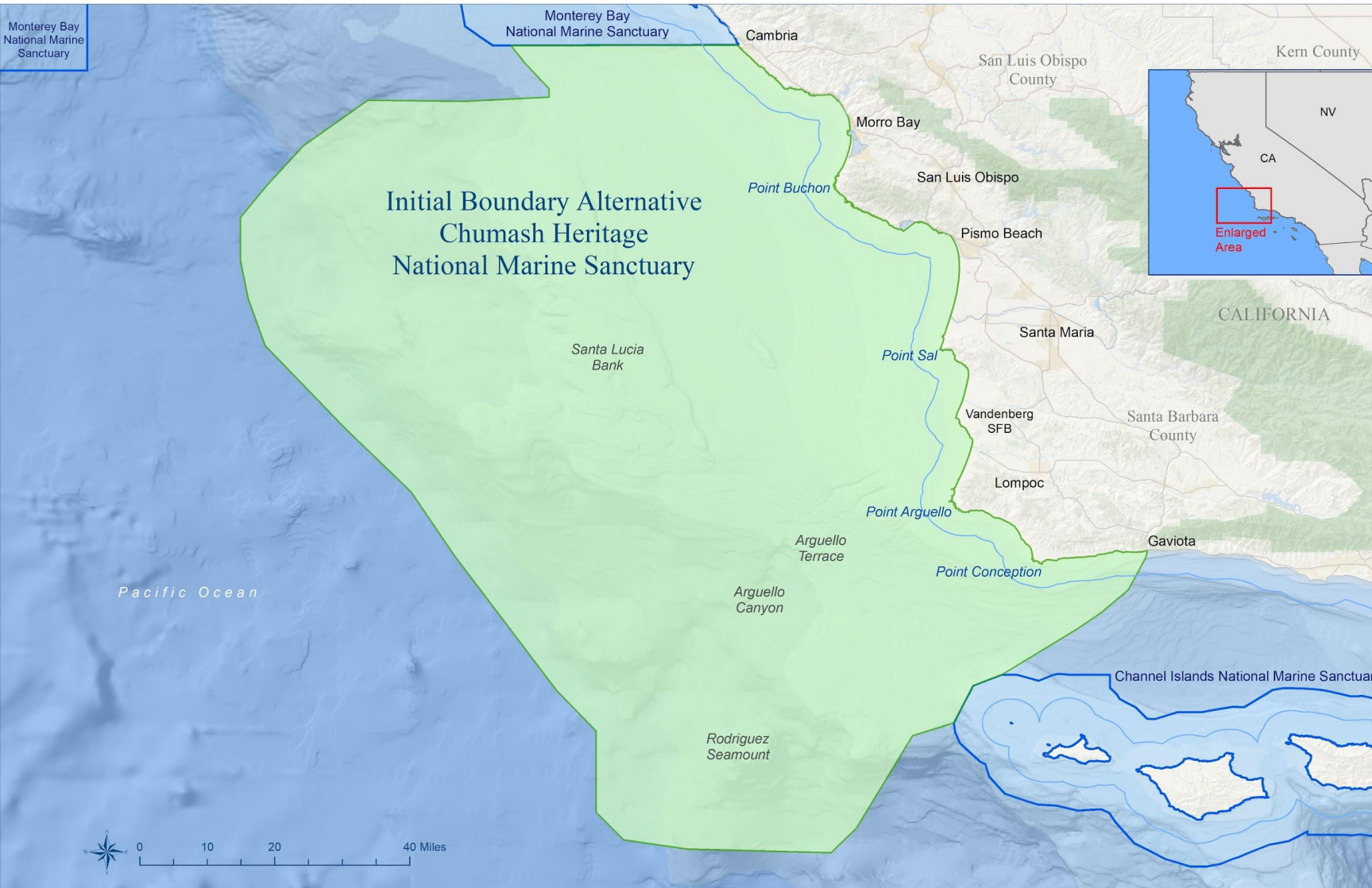
- **Designations in Process**

- Lake Ontario (NY)
- Papahānaumokuākea (HI)
- **Chumash Heritage (CA)**
- Hudson Canyon (NY)

- **Declined by NOAA**

- Aleutian Islands (AK)
- Southern CA Offshore Banks (CA)
- Eubalaena-Oculina Banks (FL)
- Shipwreck Coast (Lake Superior, MI)

Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS) Designation



Goals for the Proposed Sanctuary:

1. Protect nationally significant natural and historical resources
2. Guide comprehensive ecosystem-based management for myriad threats to these resources
3. Recognize and aid public awareness of Indigenous tribal heritage and culture in the area

CHNMS Designation Process



- Scoping comments and input from tribes, federal agencies, state agencies, and local governments have helped NOAA shape the draft management plan, regulations, and determine what boundary and regulatory alternatives to evaluate in the draft EIS
- ***If NOAA anticipates needing regulations that would regulate fishing, NOAA staff will bring any such need to the PPMC for its consideration, feedback, or action***
- NOAA intends to distribute for public review and comment, a draft management plan, draft regulations and terms of designation in a proposed rule, and draft environmental impact statement, **likely in the spring of 2023**
- NOAA will consider all public comments prior to moving forward with a sanctuary designation
- If NOAA decides to pursue designation, the agency will prepare final documents for the sanctuary management plan, regulations, and environmental impact statement
- **The process to designate will take ~12–15 more months to complete**

CHNMS Designation Timeline

Step 1:

- Nov 2021 – NOAA initiated designation process
- Dec 2021 – Jan 2022: Public scoping meetings were held (virtually)

Step 2 (Current Step):

- Feb 2022 – Present: Review of public comments and preparation of draft designation documents

Step 3:

- **Target: Spring 2023 – NOAA will release draft designation documents and public comment period will begin**
 - ***Opportunity for PFMC to submit comment during June 2023 meeting***

Step 4:

- Throughout 2023: NOAA will prepare final designation documents

Step 5:

- Target: First half of 2024 – NOAA will publish final designation documents

Step 6:

- Target: 2024 – NOAA will designate CHNMS



Condition Report Updates for OCNMS, CBNMS, and GFNMS



- **Condition reports precede management plans** and are periodically updated and reviewed (5–10 year timeline)
- Condition reports evaluate status and trends of sanctuary resources:
 - Update to past condition report
 - Integrate with partner processes
 - Incorporate NOAA IEA indicators
 - Use of confidence scores
- Each process collaborative with NMFS – use of IEA indicators

- **OCNMS:** released in March 2022
- **CBNMS:** likely release in spring/summer 2023
- **GFNMS:** likely release in winter 2023/2024
- **New:** Sanctuary Watch platform provides web-enabled, interactive tools to track and better understand the changing nature of sanctuary ecosystems

Status:	Good	Good/Fair	Fair	Fair/Poor	Poor	Undet.
Trends:						
Conditions appear to be improving	▲					
Conditions do not appear to be changing	—					
Conditions appear to be declining	▼					
Undetermined trend	?					
Question not applicable	N/A					

Management Plan Reviews (MPRs) for CINMS, OCNMS, and GFNMS/CBNMS



CINMS MPR:

- **Final documents** released today (March 9, 2023)
- **No amendments** to regulations or terms of designation
 - NOAA did not adopt any new or modified actions or regulations; thus no new fishing regulations
 - Re-write of key action plans

GFNMS/CBNMS MPR:

- Will treat both sanctuaries as one management unit
- Process will begin after release of condition reports (may start in late 2023)

OCNMS MPR:

- **Public scoping period** open until April 3, 2023
 - ONMS held four public scoping hearings, one virtual in Feb. '23
 - Submit process still open - submit comments via <https://www.regulations.gov> (Docket # NOAA-NOS-2023-003)
- **Regulatory changes and/or boundary modifications may be considered** based on review of public scoping comments
- **ONMS will be re-writing action plans**
- **Release of draft documents:** expected mid-2024

Climate Vulnerability Assessments (CVAs) for GFNMS/CBNMS, OCNMS, and additional west coast sanctuaries



Purpose of CVAs:

- Identify how/why focus resources (habitats, species, ecosystem services, maritime heritage resources) are likely to be affected by future climate conditions
- Provide expert-driven, scientifically-sound assessments to enable marine resource managers to respond to, plan, and manage for the impacts of climate change

GFNMS/CBNMS CVA:

- Updating original CVA (published 2015) for use in upcoming MPR process
- Summary report anticipated spring 2023

OCNMS CVA:

- OCNMS Advisory Council convened working group to conduct CVA
- Adaptation and mitigation strategies were also developed as part of the CVA
- Summary report anticipated late 2023

CVAs for Additional West Coast Sanctuaries:

- ONMS plans to conduct further CVAs at other west coast national marine sanctuaries
- CVA process is being initiated in early 2023 for MBNMS and CINMS
- **MBNMS:** Summary report anticipated late 2023
- **CINMS:** Summary report anticipated early 2024

Research and Restoration

Draft Restoration Plan for the YFD-70 Dry Dock

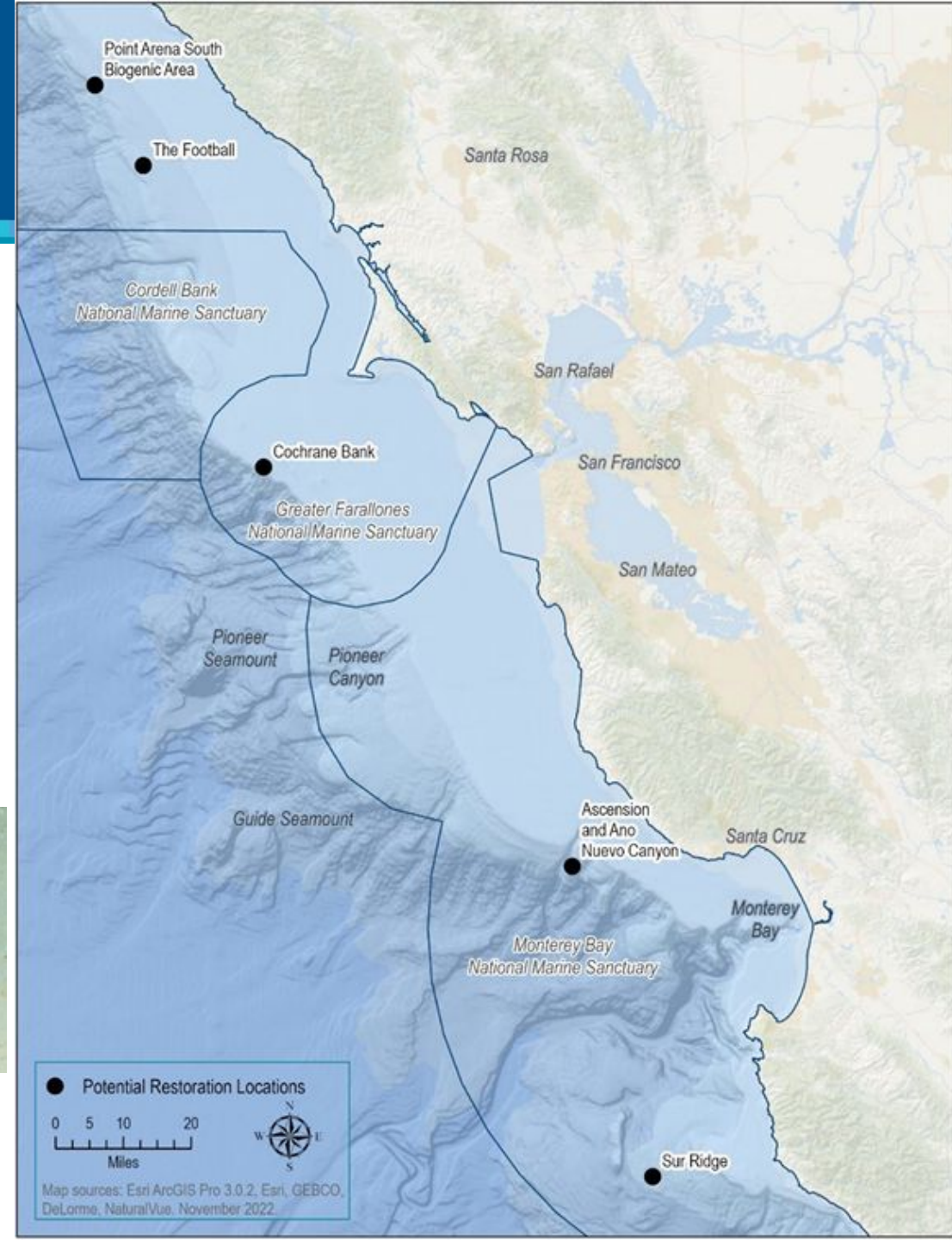
2 proposed restoration projects:

1. Remove objects/vessels/vehicles of all sizes that can be derelict, abandoned, grounded, or sunken and discarded from multiple sensitive habitat types in MBNMS and GFNMS; and
2. Outplant corals in 2-5 suitable habitat locations within MBNMS and GFNMS.

Public comment period open until March 15, 2023



Ptilosarcus (sp.)
found off the coast
of central CA



Outreach and Partnerships



- **“Big Watershed” U.S. Forest Service – ONMS Partnership in California**
 - **New exhibit:** salmon in Sanctuaries and National Forests
 - Initiating discussions with NFWF and National Forest Foundation (and USFS & ONMS) on **habitat restoration that will improve connecting watersheds**
 - **New signage** to help show the public - Sierras/National Forests connect a big watershed to sanctuaries
 - **Sharing institutional knowledge** - climate change assessments and adaptations in protected areas

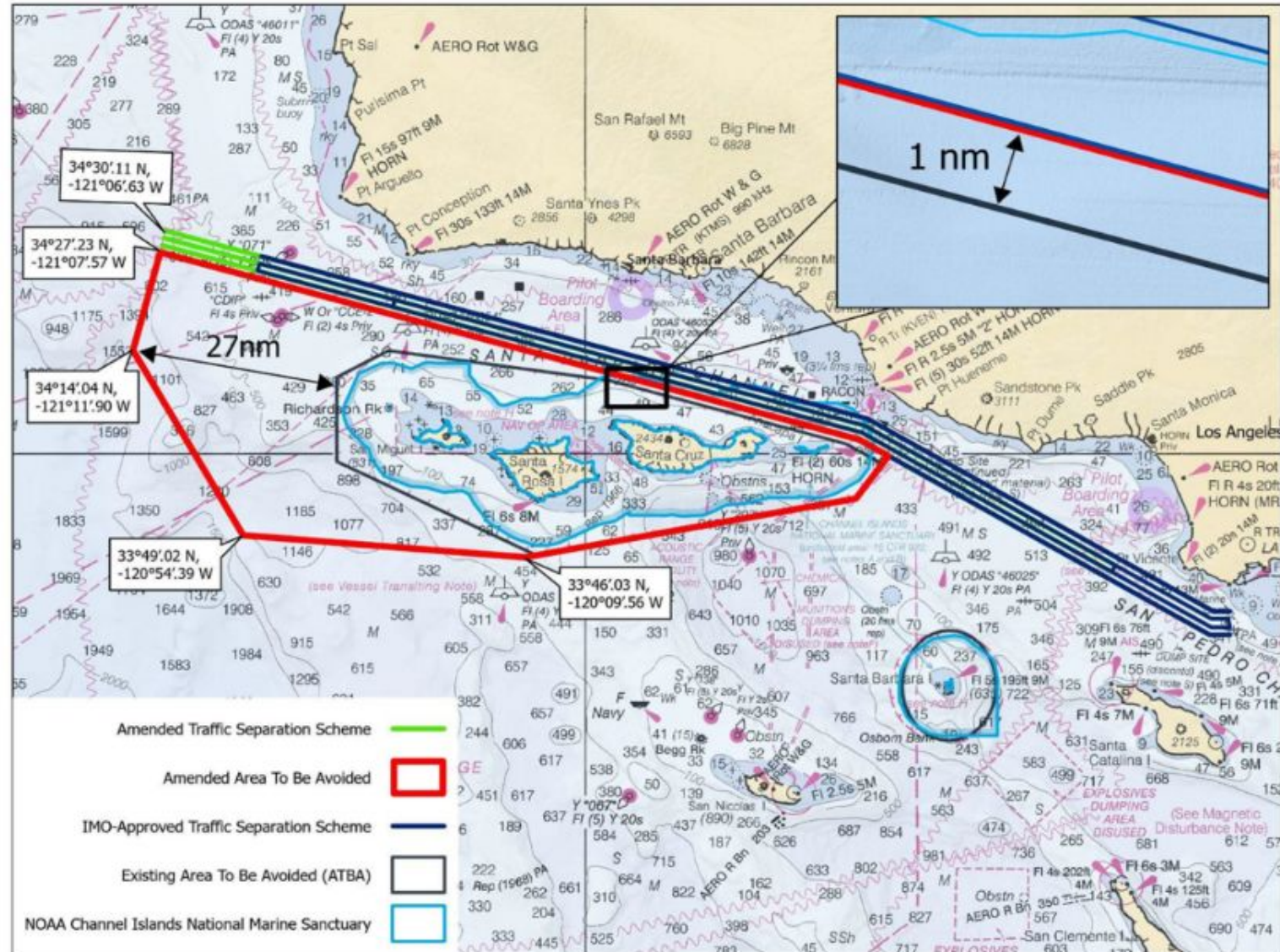


Resource Protection



Shipping and Whales

- IMO adopted proposal to expand Area To Be Avoided (ATBA) and extend vessel traffic lanes (traffic separation scheme or “TSS”) west of, in, and around CINMS
- Will enhance navigation safety and protect whales from ship strikes in an area containing some of the highest densities of commercial maritime traffic in the world
- **Goes into effect June 2023**



30 x 30 Connections to Sanctuaries



- **On the California Side**

- ONMS has met with OPC staff to explain Sanctuary regulatory and non-regulatory programs
- ONMS and OPC staff have discussed how to “value” Sanctuaries
- Have discussed ideas for enhanced biodiversity protection - like whale conservation measures, marine debris, and watershed conservation initiatives. Have not discussed fishing regulations.

- **On the Federal Side**

- Federal agencies have had discussions about many elements of America the Beautiful, 30 x 30
- As products are ready, there will be announcements

Opportunities to Coordinate among ONMS & PFMC 'Family' (Fishermen, Managers, Scientists)



Shared values and interests to sustain a healthy, resilient, and productive California Current ecosystem:

- Review of offshore industrial development - new offshore wind farms and decommissioning of oil and gas facilities
- Research, monitoring, and conservation of deep-sea habitats, particularly corals
- Climate change science, communications, and processes
- Response and recovery of endangered species - whale disentanglements, black abalone
- Connecting conservation in the Big Watershed - National Forests and Sanctuaries
- Education and outreach to boaters, fishermen, and general public



<https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/>



NATIONAL MARINE
SANCTUARIES