

Ecosystem-Based Management Initiative

Issue

As demands and impacts on the marine ecosystem rise, concerns about the health of Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) are being raised. By working collaboratively with partner agencies and stakeholders, information will be gathered and evaluated to identify and implement actions to improve ecosystem-based management and marine spatial planning in the Sanctuary.

Goal

Enhance ecosystem-based management and marine spatial planning in the MBNMS by applying best available science and integrating and coordinating with partner agencies.

Objectives

The MBNMS has embarked on a new Initiative to:

- Maintain/restore marine ecosystem health and function;
- Ensure protection of unique and rare features of the ecosystem;
- Facilitate research to differentiate between natural variation and human impacts;
- Facilitate ecologically and economically sustainable uses, including fisheries.

storms and flooding. Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) is an innovative management approach to address these challenges. It considers the whole ecosystem, including humans and the environment, rather than managing one issue or resource in isolation. EBM relies on:

- Best available information and science;
- Coordination across partner agencies;
- Integration of ecological, social, and economic factors;
- Stakeholder involvement in planning processes.

Background

Human activities on land and in the ocean are changing coastal and marine ecosystems and threatening their ability to provide important benefits to society, such as abundant seafood, clean beaches, abundance and diversity of healthy marine life, and protection from

Ecosystem-based management will help to improve long-term protection of marine resources, while allowing multiple uses that are compatible with resource protection.

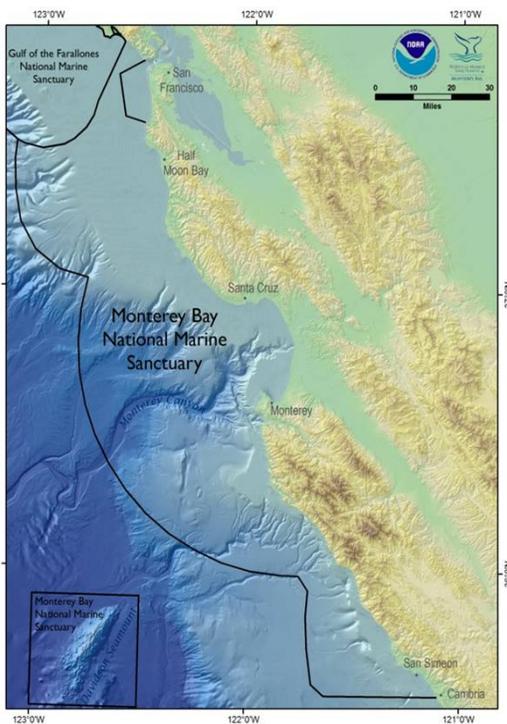


Photo Credit: Chad King/MBNMS

Sometimes referred to as "the Serengeti of the Sea," the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary is known both nationally and internationally as a "hot spot" for viewing marine wildlife.

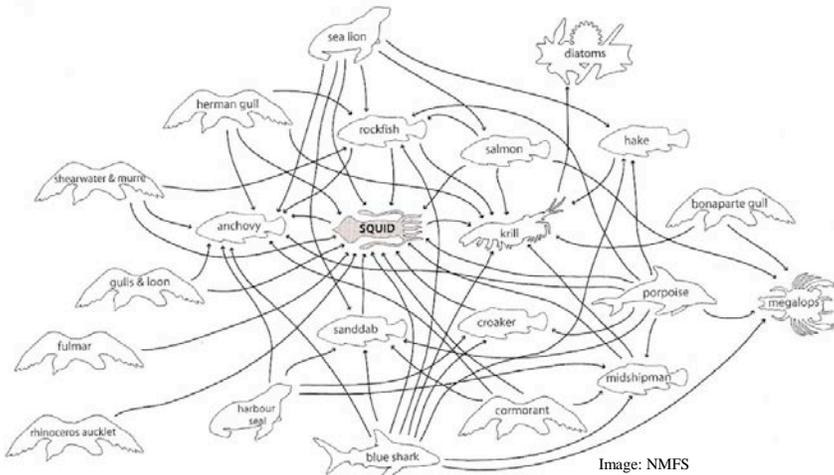


Image: NMFS

Connected by a diversity of marine life, marine food webs in the California Current are complex, every-changing and key to the immense productivity of the Central Coast.



Thriving working waterfronts are vital to the economic well-being of the Central California Coast.

Sanctuary Strategy

The MBNMS will use a transparent, collaborative approach that draws on the principles of ecosystem-based management and marine spatial planning to improve ocean health. Our strategy will include these important steps:

- 1) Information Gathering and Analyses through scientific assessments and workshops;
- 2) Evaluating, proposing, and implementing strategies, policies, and actions with partners;
- 3) Monitoring, assessing, and adapting management actions.

Stakeholders will be asked to provide input and to generate creative ideas and actions for consideration by the Sanctuary. The MBNMS will also work closely with partner agencies to integrate with and inform various planning processes and management decisions influencing or affecting the Sanctuary.

A key informational piece for the EBM Initiative is an ***Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA)***, which is being conducted by NOAA Fisheries and focusing specifically on MBNMS. IEAs provide critical science support to synthesize and analyze information across a wide range of ecological, environmental and human factors. This IEA will provide status reports on ecosystem health and evaluate current management strategies. The IEA will also help inform potential decisions by considering the trade-offs between different management strategies.

Linking to National Ocean Policy & Marine Spatial Planning

In July 2010, President Obama signed an Executive Order implementing the recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force, which established a national framework for effective coastal and marine spatial planning.

The MBNMS, as the nation's largest marine sanctuary and recognized leader in marine research, education and resource protection, is uniquely poised to serve as a national model for EBM, marine spatial planning, and effective implementation of the new ocean policy. The Initiative will focus on partnering with local, state and federal agencies to help support and complement California's ocean agenda, the West Coast Governor's Agreement, and the Regional Planning Bodies for National marine spatial planning.

Get Involved!

Public workshops to gather information on the EBM Initiative objectives will begin in October, 2010 and continue through 2012. There will be many opportunities to participate and provide input and feedback. This Initiative seeks local, state, federal, and NGO partners. Please visit the website below for more information.