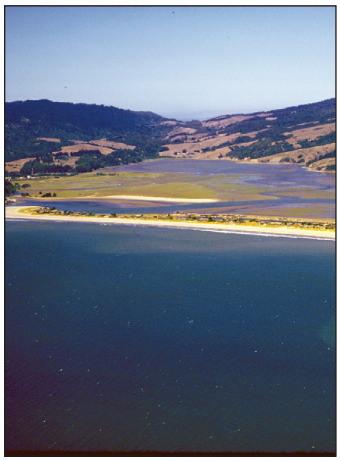
Gulf of the Farallones
National Marine Sanctuary

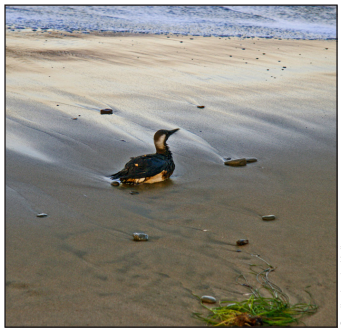
2008 Accomplishments



Credit: Dan Howard/NOAA

Sanctuary Staff, Volunteers Respond to *Cosco Busan* Oil Spill

On Nov. 7, 2007, the container ship *Cosco Busan* rammed the San Francisco Bay Bridge and spilled over 53,000 gallons of oil into San Francisco Bay, impacting Gulf of the Farallones and Monterey Bay national marine sanctuaries. The Farallones sanctuary immediately deployed staff and trained volunteers from its Beach Watch program to assist with the spill response and damage assessment, surveying beaches for oiling and wildlife mortality starting first thing the following morning. Monterey Bay and Cordell Bank sanctuary personnel also dedicated numerous hours of staff time to the response efforts, assisting in the incident command center and providing support for damage assessment and other field activities by Farallones sanctuary staff. During a Nov. 19 congressional subcommittee hearing regarding the oil spill, the Farallones Beach Watch program was twice singled out for praise for its role in the response efforts. Today, the Office of Marine Sanctuaries continues to be involved in natural resources damage assessment and restoration planning in the affected area. For more information, visit http://www.farallones.org/take_action.



Credit: Jamie Hall

Farallones Sanctuary Takes First Steps to Address Ocean Climate Change

In April 2008, Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary held the inaugural Biennial Ocean Climate Summit for the Bay Area's coast and ocean. The summit brought together science and policy experts and community stakeholders to address climate change impacts and explore partnerships to enhance management, research and public outreach efforts. Over 100 participants representing federal, state and local agencies, non-profit organizations, foundations, and academic institutions throughout the region attended the summit, along with numerous staff from across the National Marine Sanctuary System. In addition to the summit, the sanctuary is working to develop an Ocean Climate Initiative Action Plan for the Bay Area marine environment. For the summit proceedings and more information, visit http://farallones.noaa.gov/ecosystemprotection/website/schedule.html

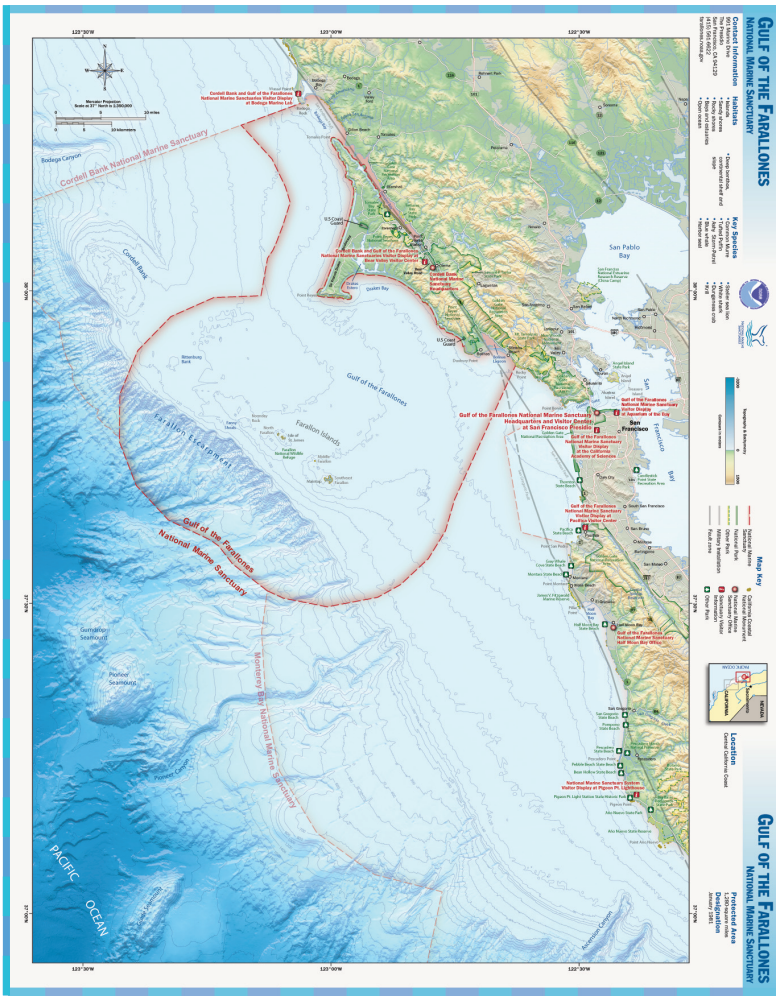
Credit: Dan Howard/NOAA

Marine Sanctuaries, Academy of Sciences Debut Major Farallones Marine Life Exhibit

At the California Academy of Sciences' grand reopening in September 2008, the Academy unveiled a new three-story, 100,000-gallon "California Coast" tank highlighting the habitats of Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary. Constructed in partnership with the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, the exhibit showcases the marine animals and plants of the California Current ecosystem, focusing on the Farallones sanctuary's rich and diverse rocky intertidal zone. An estimated 1.2 million people are expected to visit the Academy every year and learn how the sanctuary system protects wildlife and habitats through research, education and stewardship programs. In addition to the exhibit, the Farallones sanctuary and the Academy are training over 500 docents to be interpreters on the sanctuary reefs as well as at the exhibit, inspiring people to care for the ocean without harming marine life. For more information, visit http://www.calacademy.org.

Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Releases Plan to Restore Bolinas Lagoon

Following a year of formal meetings and workshops, in July 2008 the Farallones sanctuary released the widely anticipated Bolinas Lagoon Restoration Plan, which outlines a strategy to restore the health of this 1,100-acre tidal estuary. The lagoon, which is a Ramsar-recognized wetland site of international importance, provides critical habitat for several endangered species. After over a decade of controversy and debate, residents, scientists, federal and state officials and environmental groups adopted the science-based plan to restore it from past human impacts. Actions recommended by the plan include removing silt that is encroaching into the lagoon, removing non-native plants that hinder the natural movement of sediments and water flow, and redesigning roads that choke or block the flow of streams. For more information, visit http://farallones.noaa.gov/ecosystemprotection/bolinas.html.



Sanctuary maps available at sanctuaries.noaa.gov

Award-Winning "Beach Watch" Helps In Oil Spill, Celebrates 15 Years of Monitoring

In 2008, Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary celebrated 15 years of citizen-based ocean protection through its Beach Watch shoreline monitoring program. Launched by the sanctuary in 1993, Beach Watch was the flagship volunteer program of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. This long-term study uses trained "citizen scientists" to conduct regular shoreline surveys spanning 150 miles of coast from Point Año Nuevo south of San Francisco north to Bodega Head. Volunteers have also conducted surveys during oil spills such as the *Cosco Busan* spill in November 2007. Beach Watch data has helped secure several multi-million dollar settlements from responsible parties to restore affected wildlife and habitats. It has been nationally and internationally recognized, and used as a model for oil spill response and damage assessment around the world. For more information, visit http://www.farallones.org/take_action.

Redesigned Visitor Center Sets "Green" Standard for Exhibits

The Farallones sanctuary concluded the first phase of its facilities "greening" initiative with the completion of its redesigned and re-crafted visitor center at Crissy Field in San Francisco's Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The newly remodeled center incorporates recycled redwood fencing in its cabinetry, its "peeler core" posts were taken from another dismantled exhibit, wood structural pieces came from deconstructed houses, and even the manila fiber ropes used as nautical-theme trim formerly hoisted theater backdrops. The project was designed and fabricated by a green-award winning company specializing in ecologically compatible exhibits, and sets an example and standard for interpretive facilities around the country. For more information, visit http://farallones.noaa.gov/education.

Sanctuary Scientists Discover New Seabird Breeding Site

During an ocean monitoring cruise in 2008, Farallones sanctuary scientists discovered that Common Murres, penguin-like seabirds, have established their first new colony in northern central California in at least several decades. They noted murres building nests on Bird Island off Rodeo Beach in the marine sanctuary just outside the Golden Gate. An estimated 500 birds were sighted there. Brandt's Cormorants are also breeding on Bird Island for the first time in over 10 years. Common Murre populations have been reduced by oil spills and gill net entanglement over the decades. The sanctuary is working with the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to monitor the site and track the success of the breeding seabirds. For information on our ocean monitoring, see http://farallones.noaa.gov/research.

To learn more about these and other accomplishments, visit sanctuaries.noaa.gov