

Public Scoping Meeting for Management Plan Review

Chris Mobley, Superintendent
NOAA Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary

- Thank you for helping to kick off a management plan review process at Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary.
- Engaging with the community is at the core of how we operate.
- We genuinely appreciate the time, energy, and passion that you're bringing to brainstorm about the future of your Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary.
- The process to revise our sanctuary management plan is likely to take 2 to 3 years, with multiple points for public input.

Agenda

- Overview (30 min.)
 - About the sanctuary
 - Management Plan 101
 - New Condition Report
 - Management Plan review process + opportunities for public input
- Breakout groups to receive public scoping comments (80 min.)
 - Process and ground rules
 - Topics for Consideration

What is Public Scoping?

- Happening Oct. 1 through Nov. 15 (ends 11:59 PM EST)
- Gathering initial ideas on range of issues to be considered
- No decisions
- Not a popular vote
- First of multiple public comment opportunities



- We're currently in a public scoping comment period to seek ideas related to updating the sanctuary's management plan
- During this phase, we're looking for your ideas to help us define the scope of issues that our next sanctuary management plan should address.
- I want to emphasize that we're not making decisions during this scoping phase— we are here to listen to you.
- After the public scoping period, sanctuary staff will review the comments from all of you and use them to prioritize issues to be addressed in the next management plan.
- We will also talk it over with our sanctuary advisory council to get their thoughts, and reach out to subject matter experts as well.
- This will help us develop management plan actions.
- Once we develop a draft management plan, as well as an environmental review document that considers alternatives, we will release it for public review and comment.



Overview of Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary

Public Scoping for Management Plan Review

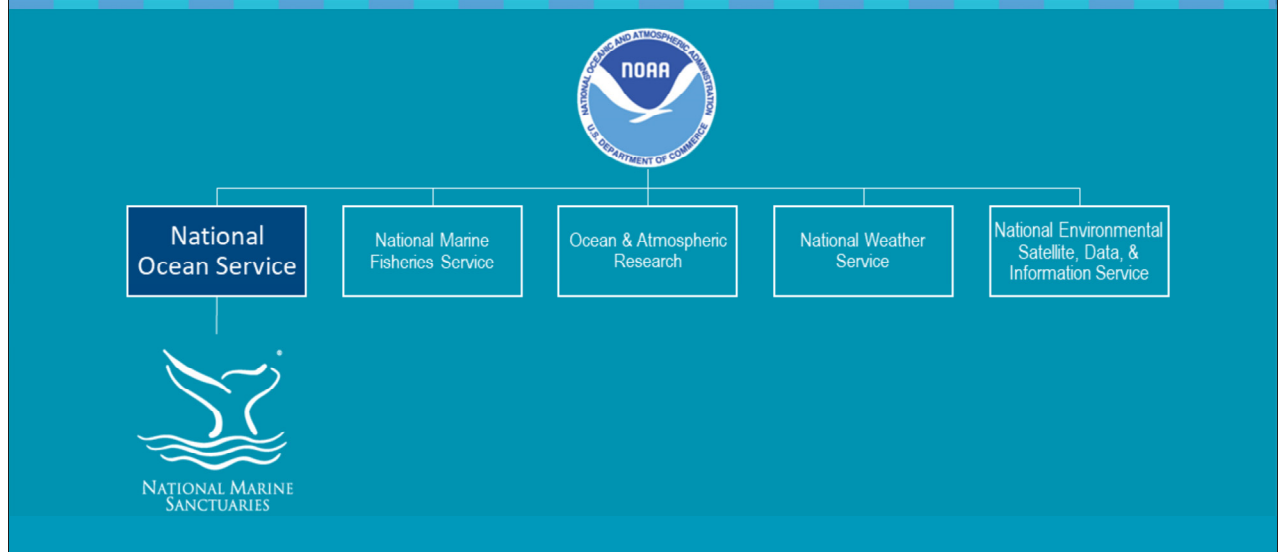
The National Marine Sanctuary System



The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries serves as the trustee for a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 620,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington state to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. The network includes a system of 14 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments. For more information on the National Marine Sanctuary System, visit: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>

- Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary is part a national network of special places in the ocean and Great Lakes -- the National Marine Sanctuary System.
- There are currently 14 National Marine Sanctuaries in the system, plus Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in Hawaii.
- They range in size from the one square mile Monitor NMS, to the 13,581 square mile National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa.
- We just added our newest site last month at Mallows Bay on the Potomac River, just outside Washington, D.C.
- The sanctuaries system is diverse, representing coral reefs, whale migration corridors, deep sea canyons, shipwreck sites rich with history, and more.
- The majority of the areas in the Sanctuary System allow for multiple uses such as recreation, fishing, and shipping. This is also the case in the Channel Islands NMS.
- Where there are regulations on certain activities in some sanctuary areas, they protect unique marine resources for public use and enjoyment, as well as for future generations.
- Sanctuaries also serve as natural classrooms and laboratories for schoolchildren and researchers alike to promote understanding and stewardship of our oceans.

Office of National Marine Sanctuaries



- Overseeing the sanctuary system is the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, a program office within the National Ocean Service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or NOAA.
- NOAA's mission of science, service and stewardship spans from the surface of the sun to the depths of the ocean.
- NOAA itself is a bureau in the U.S. Department of Commerce.

By the Numbers - Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary

1,470

mi² of waters

1st

network of marine reserves on West Coast

Surrounds

FIVE

Islands

+

2

Offshore Rocks

Established

1980

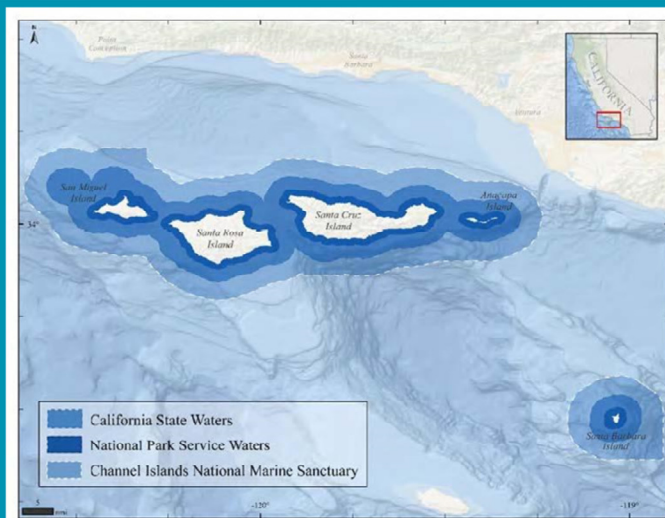
Extends

SIX

nautical miles offshore

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary

- Surrounds and overlaps with marine portions of Channel Islands National Park
- Includes California State waters



- Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary encompasses waters surrounding the four northern Channel Islands and Santa Barbara Island further to the south.
- The sanctuary wraps around the Channel Islands National Park, and also overlaps the park's marine portion (extending one NM off the islands' shores).
- The sanctuary also overlaps waters of the state of California, which extend out 3 miles from the island shores.
- The Channel Islands sits at the confluence of two major ocean currents where nutrient rich waters from the north meet warm currents from the south.

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary



- The unique coastal geography and bathymetry supports remarkable biodiversity and ecological productivity, with sea life ranging from microscopic plankton to blue whales.

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary



- In addition to its thriving marine ecosystem, the sanctuary is a special place for its cultural significance.
- The indigenous Chumash people inhabited the four northern Channel Islands and the California coast well before their first contact with European explorers.
- Today, they maintain their maritime traditions and connection to the islands and surrounding waters.

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary



- Other subsequent settlers and users of the waters surrounding the Channel Islands have also left their mark— historical records indicate that there are more than 150 significant wrecks of ships and aircraft within the sanctuary, 25 of which have been discovered.

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary



- The sanctuary hosts many economically and recreationally important activities:
 - highly productive commercial fishing grounds
 - excellent recreational fishing
 - world class whale watching and wildlife viewing
 - SCUBA diving
 - kayaking
 - sailing and boating
 - surfing
 - access to enjoyment of Channel Islands National Park
- Busy maritime shipping traffic passes through a portion of the sanctuary
- Navy training and testing activities are common nearby, but mostly beyond, sanctuary waters
- Oil and gas platforms lie just beyond the sanctuary's boundary



What is a Sanctuary Management Plan?

Public Scoping for Management Plan Review

Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

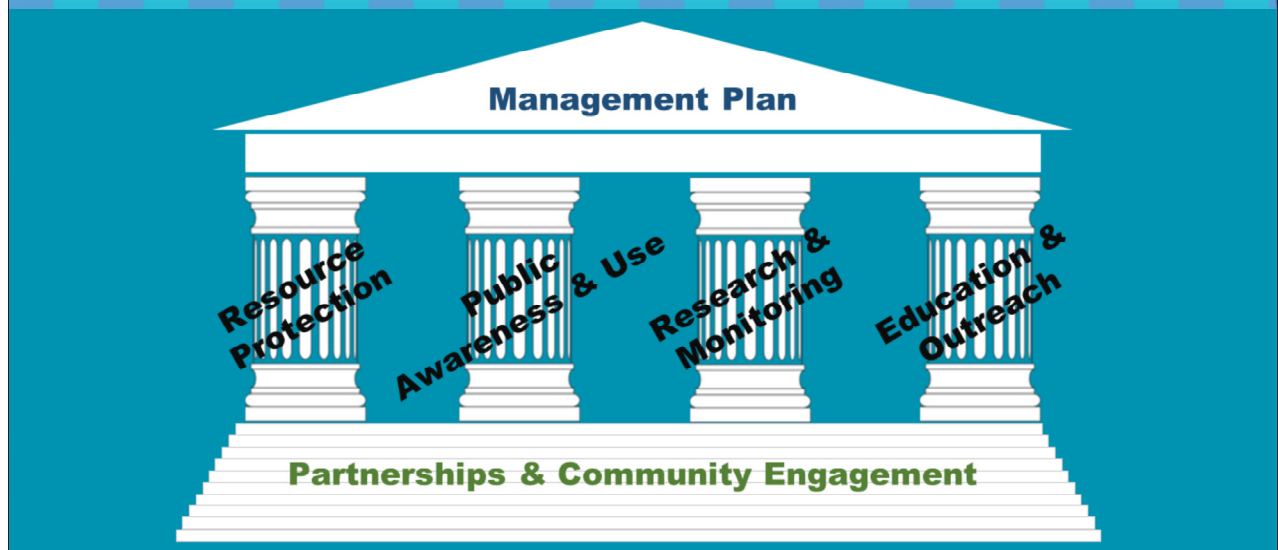


MISSION We protect treasured places in the Ocean and Great Lakes

VISION A thriving sanctuary system that protects our Nation's underwater treasures and inspires momentum for a healthy ocean.

- What we do at the Channel Islands NMS flows from the larger purpose of NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
- National marine sanctuaries are authorized by the **National Marine Sanctuaries Act**.
- The **strategic plan for NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries** lays out the **mission and vision** for the National Marine Sanctuary System, of which we are a part. That plan also sets **high-level goals targeted at assuring sanctuaries remain healthy, that we effectively engage communities, that we continue to advance science to support good sanctuary management, and more.**
- For the Channel Islands NMS specifically, our vision is a sanctuary that stays **healthy, productive, and accessible, that inspires cutting edge marine science, and that fosters awareness, understanding, and stewardship.**
- The way that we pursue that vision is laying it out strategically a sanctuary **management plan** that can guide our efforts for the next 5 to 10 years.

What is the Management Plan



- **The management plan** encompasses all of the programming and activities NOAA does in the sanctuary and in the surrounding communities—research, education, outreach, volunteers, conservation, and enforcement.
- I'll touch on each of **our pillars** and mention a few highlights for each
- **PARTNERSHIPS are KEY:** Underlying all we do is a foundation of partnerships. These include:
 - many programs from across NOAA
 - Other federal agencies including the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, the National Park Service, the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Department of Defense
 - Several state agencies (California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Coastal Commission, California State Parks)
 - Universities (University of California Santa Barbara, California State University Channel Islands)
 - Local agencies (counties, local harbors, Air Pollution Control Districts)
 - Many other non-governmental organizations.

Resource Protection



- Our first mission under the **National Marine Sanctuaries Act** is protecting the marine resources of the sanctuary.
- NOAA can't do this alone. We have **partnerships with other Federal and State law enforcement agencies**, such as the National Park Service, U.S. Coast Guard and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, to help patrol sanctuary waters and enforce regulations.
- We also help provide tools to make those patrol efforts more effective and efficient, including **shore-based radar systems** and **mobile apps to aid officers** in the field.
- Another major **partnership-based effort** is the work we've been doing to **help lower the risk of fatal ship strikes on endangered whales**.
- Based on an understanding of where whales migrate and feed (thanks to our volunteers, and whale researchers), we worked with the Coast Guard and the International Maritime Organization to **reposition the southbound shipping lane in the Santa Barbara Channel**.
- We also helped develop **Blue Whales & Blue Skies**, a voluntary program (now in its 5th year) that **encourages shippers to reduce their speed** in our area as well as near the entrance to SF Bay. This gives whales a chance to get out of the path of a ship and also substantially reduces air pollution.
- To help us better understand where whales are, we have also participated in the development of two smartphone apps, **Spotter Pro and Whale Alert**. These apps crowdsource and disseminate whale sightings data, have been used extensively by our trained volunteers, and can be used by others as well.

Resource Protection: Sanctuary Regulations

To protect sanctuary resources, regulations prohibit:

- New oil & gas development
- Seafloor mining
- Discharge (several boating exceptions)
- Seabed disturbance (except anchoring, lawful fishing)
- Large vessels/ships (>300 gross registered tons) or motorized personal watercraft within 1 nm of islands
- Motorized aircraft <1000 feet within 1 nm of islands
- Removing or damaging any historical or cultural resources
- Fishing or extraction in marine reserves, and limited fishing in conservation areas (22% of sanctuary waters)



In addition to site-wide regulations, marine reserves and conservation areas are established with a combination of State regulations (within 3 miles of shore) and NOAA regulations (beyond 3 miles).

Public Awareness & Use



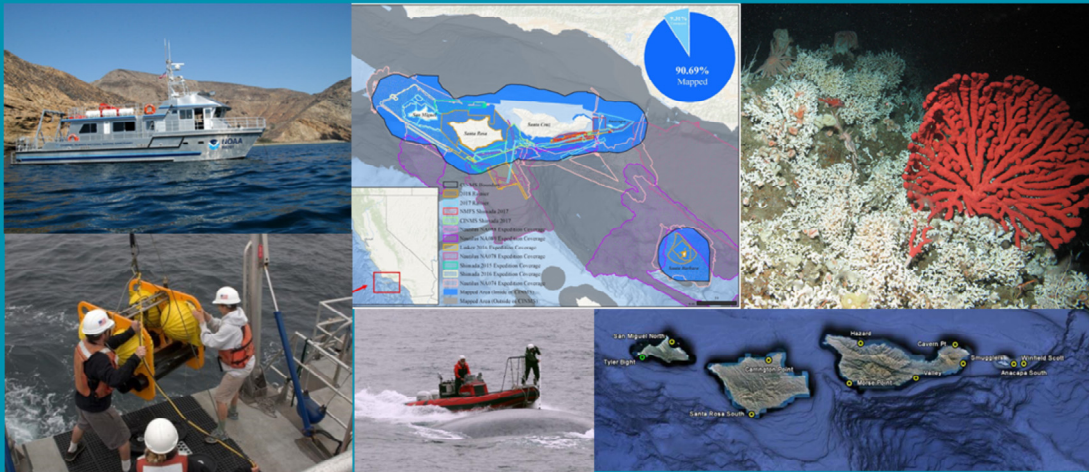
THE SANCTUARY IS OPEN

- Our activities in this category includes **the things we do to encourage the public to enjoy the sanctuary in a sustainable manner.**

BRINGING THE SANCTUARY TO THE COAST

- For example, in partnership with the County of Ventura, we developed exhibits at the **Channel Islands Boating Center** that are used to help boaters and other visitors discover the sanctuary and enjoy a safe and environmentally friendly visit.
- We also engage in various efforts to bring the sanctuary to communities that may not have easy access to it.
- This includes our partnership with **Nautilus Live**— through this program, students, teachers and other members of the public participate in deep sea exploration missions through real-time live-streaming video and interaction with the research crew their remotely operated vehicle (ROV).

Research & Monitoring



IMPORTANCE OF MARINE SCIENCE to CINMS, and OUR ROLE

- The sanctuary is a place of cutting edge marine science
- We strive to play a role in attracting, coordinating, and conducting the types of research and monitoring activities that tell us how sanctuary resources are doing and what they need to stay healthy.

A few initiatives to highlight:

SOUNDSCAPE MONITORING

- One of newer major efforts right now is understanding how undersea sounds, both natural and manmade, affect wildlife behavior in the sanctuary. A wide range of marine life rely on sound to help them find food, navigate, and communicate with each other. This is a major effort that began last year and will extend for at least five years.

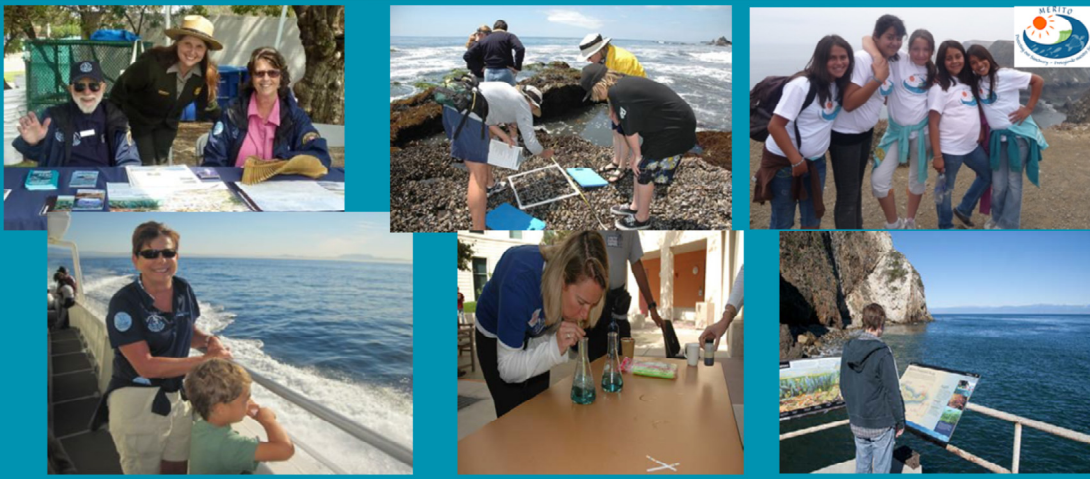
SEAFLOOR MAPPING

- With the involvement of a lot of partners, we have also been very actively pursuing high definition seafloor mapping so that we can better understand the important benthic habitats of the sanctuary. Just a few years ago we had mapped only about 50% of the seafloor, but now we are up to 90%.

DEEP SEA CORALS and CLIMATE DRIVEN EFFECTS

- The exploration and study of deep sea environments within the sanctuary is another focal area for us, as we team up with various scientists to understand deep sea coral communities and how they are faring in the face of climate driven changes.

Education & Outreach



- At the sanctuary we believe that marine conservation is everyone’s responsibility, and that **the sanctuary is a living classroom**.
- We help people understand the significance of this special marine ecosystem, and **inspire people to be good stewards**.
- We have a sanctuary education and outreach team that excels at **reaching audiences, from students of all ages, to visitors, to stakeholders**.

A few initiatives to highlight:

NATURALIST CORPS

- One of our big outreach successes is the Channel Islands Naturalist Corps, a volunteer group that we manage jointly with Channel Islands National Park.
- Since 2009, we’ve grown the Naturalist Corps from 135 to 160 volunteers.
- They are an inspiring group that helps visitors learn about the natural wonders of the sanctuary and park.
- You can find them on many of the local commercial tour vessels, or leading hikes at Channel Islands National Park, or at many community events throughout the year.

MERITO FOUNDATION

- We’re also proud of the MERITO Foundation, an educational program that brings education, conservation, and scientific research opportunities to multicultural youth and their communities. While the program began at the sanctuary office, it now continues its great work as an independent nonprofit that we continue to partner with.

OCEAN ACIDIFICATION

- We’ve also been on the leading edge of advancing understanding of ocean acidification, providing teaching resources to schools and educators locally and beyond.

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary: Our Team and Resources

22 staff, contractors, and fellows

**Sanctuary Advisory Council and
working groups**

Channel Islands Naturalist Corps

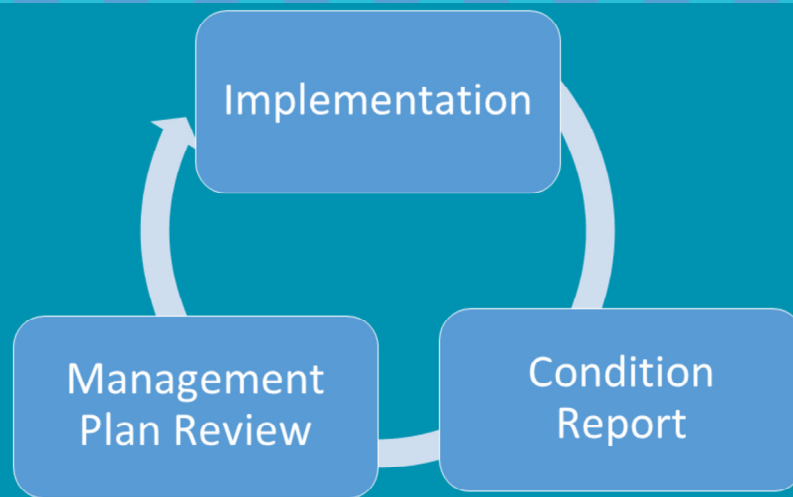
Two research vessels

Budget (annual)

- Congressional appropriation: \$2.3 mil.
- Additional resources through partnerships: \$2.7 mil.



How are we doing?



- We want our activities to be informed by sound science, so we periodically convene an expert panel to assess how sanctuary resources are doing.
- This can help us understand if we are headed in the right direction with a healthy and productive sanctuary, or if there's something else we should be looking at.

2016 Condition Report

- Assesses current site condition and identifies research/knowledge gaps
- Identifies issues and topics for management plan review
- Helps assess the effectiveness of management actions



- Just this summer, in preparation for this management plan review process, we issued a new Condition Report, the second such report since the sanctuary was designated.
- The report describes status and trends in water quality, habitats, marine life, shipwrecks, and more.

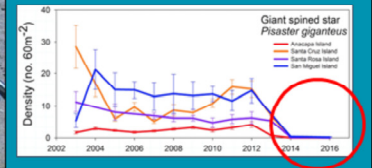
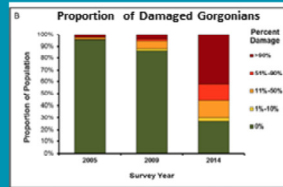
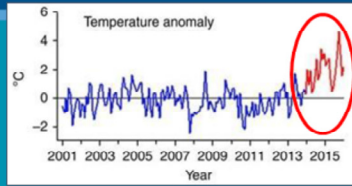
Condition Report: The Good

- Relatively good water quality/little nutrient pollution
- Safe water for swimming and recreation
- Shoreline and seafloor habitat
- Many kelp forest and demersal fish species
- Overall native sanctuary biodiversity
- Maritime archaeological resources



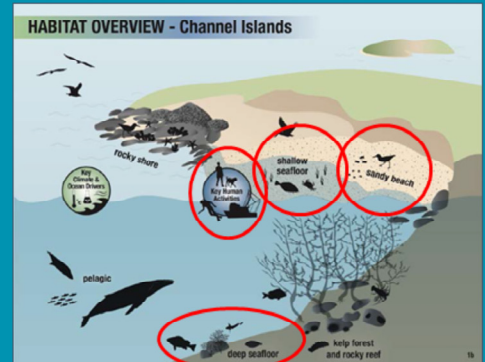
Condition Report: The Concerning

- Marine Heatwaves/Global Climate Change
- Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)
- Decline in some habitat-forming species
- Disease in sea stars
- Invasive/nonnative species
- Marine debris
- Some contaminants in sediments
- Vessel pollution, noise, groundings, whale strikes



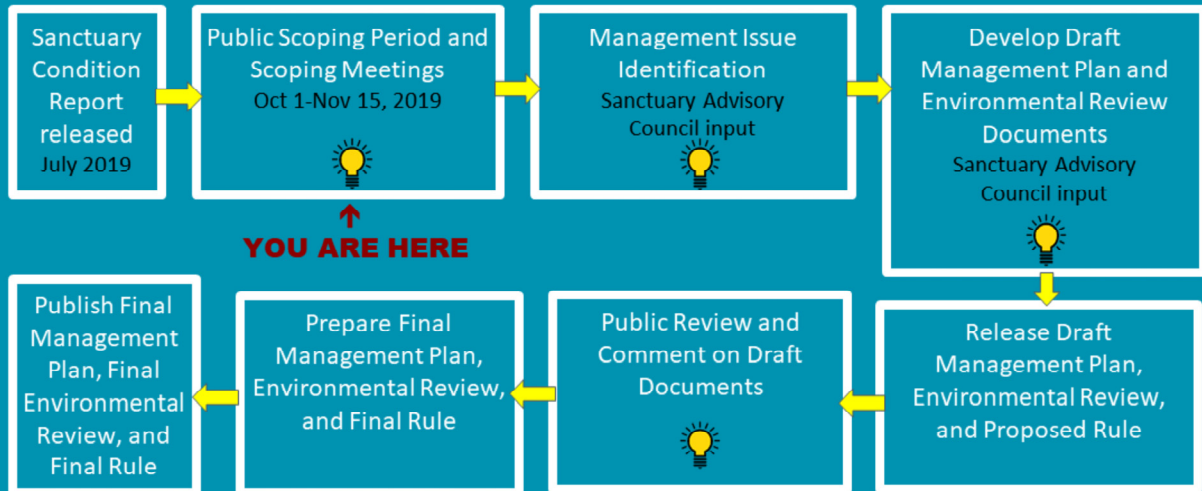
Condition Report: Data Gaps

- Status of beaches and soft-bottom habitats
- Characterization and monitoring of deeper habitat
- Human activities: How much and what are impacts?
- Biodiversity: What are the best metrics to track?
- Climate Change: Current & likely future impacts?
- Marine Debris: Where, how much, and impacts?
- Noise: Sources, levels and potential impacts?
- Contaminants and non-point source pollutants
- Data-poor indicator species



Management Plan Revision Process

💡 = public and advisory council input



- The entire management plan review process could take **2-3 years**, beginning with the start of public scoping.
- The actual timeline will depend upon the scope and complexity of the issues that are raised in the MPR process.
- A **Draft Management Plan** will be released for public review, along with either an **Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement**, with final documents to follow.

What is Public Scoping?

- Happening Oct. 1 through Nov. 15 (ends 11:59 PM EST)
- Gathering initial ideas on range of issues to be considered
- No decisions
- Not a popular vote
- First of multiple public comment opportunities

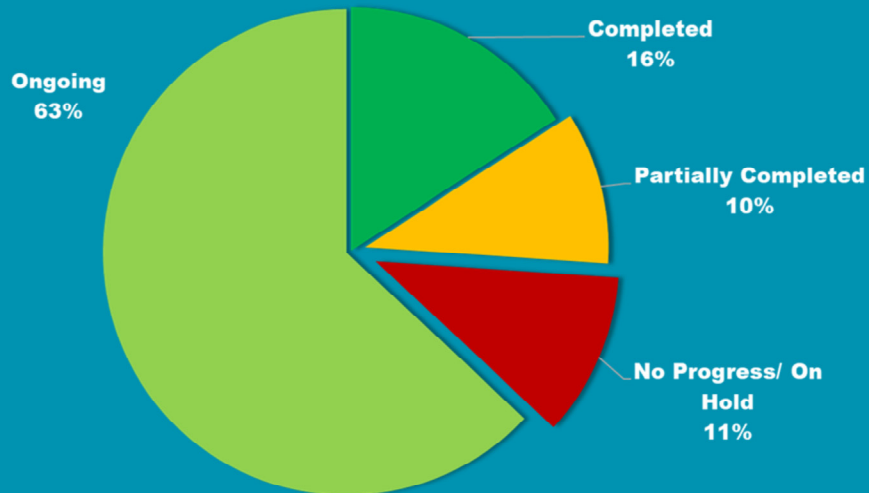


Scope of Public Scoping?

- What should we do more of?
- What should we do less of?
- What should we do differently?
- How can we take on new activities with existing resources?
- How can we be responsive to emerging conditions, issues, and trends?



Progress with 2009 Plan



- We've assessed our progress implementing our current sanctuary management plan.
- We found that 16% of our planned activities were fully complete
- However, the nature of many of our activities is that they are part of ongoing programs that we still have operating (63%).
- There are also some areas where we were not able to get started on some activities (11%), or we made only partial progress (10%).
- Some things we're doing now aren't quite captured in this pie because they emerged as big issues after we published the 2009 management plan— whale strikes, ocean noise, and climate change effects.

Topics for Consideration

- How can CINMS strengthen **partnerships** to improve management of sanctuary resources?
- How should CINMS help better understand **climate change** effects and look for management adaptations in the next 5-10 years?
- What are the **research and monitoring** priorities in the sanctuary that CINMS and partners should address in the next 5-10 years?
- What tools and partnerships should CINMS explore or expand to more effectively **protect sanctuary resources** for future generations?
- What **education, outreach, and citizen science** programs should CINMS explore or expand to improve understanding of sanctuary and ocean resources?
- What **other ideas** do you think CINMS should consider in the new management plan?

The staff of CINMS are out in the sanctuary or out in the community every day. While you are free to bring up any topic you wish, here are some questions that are on our minds going into this scoping process.

Ways to Comment (through Nov 15)



- <https://regulations.gov>
Docket Number: "NOAA-NOS-2019-0110"



- NOAA CINMS
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