

NOAA report finds threats to California's Cordell Bank Marine Sanctuary

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A new NOAA report on the health of Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary indicates that the overall condition of the sanctuary's marine life and habitats is fair to good, but identifies several emerging threats to sanctuary resources.

"Global issues of concern such as marine debris, ocean acidification and invasive species have the potential to degrade fragile sanctuary resources and habitats," said Dan Howard, sanctuary superintendent. "This report provides a baseline for monitoring changes to sanctuary resources and will help us to better understand and respond to these emerging threats."

Prepared by the [NOAA](#) Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, the peer-reviewed Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary Condition Report indicates that water quality in the sanctuary is generally good due to the sanctuary's offshore location and distance from major urban population centers. Seafloor habitat quality was rated lower, primarily due to prior impacts from fishing gear that came into contact with the sanctuary's rocky reef and soft sediment habitats.

The report notes that populations of rockfish, salmon, some seabird species, and leatherback sea turtles that use the sanctuary are depleted, but that fishery closures are helping to rebuild depleted [fish stocks](#).

The report indicates that additional research is needed about contaminants and invasive species. While no maritime archaeological resources have been identified in the sanctuary, only 18 percent of the

sanctuary seafloor has been mapped with high resolution tools that could be used to find sunken vessels.

The full sanctuary condition report is now available online:

<http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/science/condition/cbnms/welcome.html>.

Similar reports are being developed for the other sites in the National Marine Sanctuary System.

Located 42 miles north of San Francisco, Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary is one of 14 marine protected areas managed by NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. Designated by Congress in 1989, the sanctuary's productive waters are a destination feeding area for local and migratory marine life. Its unique rocky undersea thrives with invertebrates and fishes and is surrounded by the softer sediments of the continental shelf.

Source: NOAA Headquarters ([news](#) : [web](#))

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