



**NATIONAL  
CONSERVATION  
LANDS**

**California**  
2022: Annual Manager's Report

# California Coastal

## National Monument



# Map



# Accomplishments

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Interdisciplinary staff from three districts and five field offices along the coast of California worked together with over 60 different California Coastal National Monument (CCNM) collaborative partners, stewards and co-managers in fiscal year 2022. The Arcata, Bakersfield, Central Coast, Palm Springs and Ukiah Field work to accomplish the goals and objectives outlined in the 2005 CCNM Resource Management Plan (RMP). The onshore portions of the monument were originally managed by the corresponding field offices before being added to the CCNM by Presidential Proclamation. Field offices receive no additional funding to support the following accomplishments, but staff and leadership continue to find creative ways to complete this important work.

Staff and partners developed community-based interpretative information, provided K-12 education programs, monitored human disturbance to seabird and marine mammal populations, restored native habitats, reduced fire hazards, provided quality visitor services, and improved connections with visitors from far and near.

Field office staff continued, in 2022, to participate in the multi-agency response to remove a 90-foot fishing vessel grounded along coastal rocks in Marin County that posed a pollution threat to CCNM resources and developed plans to mitigate the impacts to coastal resources. In addition, interdisciplinary staff worked alongside multiple oil spill response agencies and municipalities in response to the Pipeline P00547 offshore oil spill in Orange County. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) staff assisted in assessing potential impacts to coastal resources and developing mitigation options.

Partners and BLM staff implemented priority projects at Cotoni-Coast Dairies related to recreation, livestock grazing, fish and wildlife habitat, and emergency stabilization and rehabilitation of areas impacted by wildfire. Ponds were constructed to enhance breeding habitat for California Red-Legged Frogs. Range improvement projects aimed to restrict cattle from riparian areas were constructed and designed to create off-stream water sources for livestock grazing.

The Garcia River Estuary Enhancement Project, north of Point Arena-Stornetta, was completed in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The project repaired historic damage to the river by strategically placing two acres of refugia consisting of channels, ponds, and large woody debris. The earthwork along the active stream channel will allow juvenile coho salmon to increase their body weight before entering the Pacific Ocean that will increase survival rate and is anticipated to increase the Garcia River's rearing habitat ten-fold.

In collaboration with the Trinidad Rancheria, Cal Poly Humboldt, City of Trinidad and the Trinidad Coastal Land Trust, BLM interdisciplinary staff continued to implement the North Coast Chapter of the Seabird Protection Network. BLM staff and community science volunteers monitored seabird populations, human disturbance to seabirds and implemented education and outreach measures to reduce disturbance.



# Challenges

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The CCNM stretches across five field offices within all three of California's districts. The monument's unusually large geographic scope presents management challenges that include cross-jurisdictional projects such as seabird monitoring and oil spill preparedness and emergency response, federal, state, and non-governmental partnerships that stretch along the entire coastline, and the need for consistent interpretation of the corresponding Proclamations.

In 2022 CCNM was managed by a Board of Directors (BOD), consisting of three District and five Field Office Managers, already tasked with managing hundreds of thousands of acres of public land from the Mojave Desert to the Redwood Coast. Without a dedicated CCNM manager it has become extremely challenging to coordinate and effectively manage this unique resource. In concert with all interdisciplinary staff dedicated to working on CCNM resources, the BOD decided a dedicated manager was needed. The position had been vacant since 2017. The BOD worked with human resources to advertise, interview and select a new CCNM Manager at the end of FY22. This will help mitigate this challenge in the future and provide needed leadership and coordination.

Another challenge facing the CCNM is that there is currently no plan that manages the complete monument including all the onshore units. The CCNM Resource Management Plan (RMP) established guidance, objectives, policies and management actions for the offshore rocks, exposed reefs, islands, and pinnacles along the 1,100-mile coastline of California. Since 2005 there have been 3 Presidential Proclamations adding onshore units to the CCNM. Of course, the original Presidential Proclamation No. 7264 established the California Coastal National Monument (CCNM) on January 11, 2000, under the authority of the Antiquities Act of 1906. In 2014, Presidential Proclamation No. 9089 enlarged the boundary of the CCNM to include 1,132 acre Point Arena-Stornetta Public Lands. Then in 2017, Presidential Proclamation No. 9563 added six additional areas along the California coast totaling 6,230 acres. These public lands were added and contain significant scientific or historic resources: Trinidad Head Lighthouse, Waluplh-Lighthouse Ranch, Lost Coast Headlands, Cotoni-Coast Dairies, Piedras Blancas Light Station and Orange County Rocks and Islands.

Each of these on-land additions include their own objects and values identified in the associated proclamation. Each onshore unit has an associated NEPA planning document tiered to field office RMPs. Current documents do not cover several proposed projects currently being discussed by gateway partners. California State Office resource staff are currently evaluating planning documents to determine the best way forward to address this challenge.

Substantial political and logistical challenges faced the CCNM in FY22. Implementation of decisions in the CCNM Cotoni-Coast Dairies Resource Management Plan Amendment

was stalled in conjunction with ongoing challenges involving funding and field office capacity. Plans to prepare onsite areas for public access and development of collaborative programs with partners were delayed.

In March 2021, a 90-foot fishing vessel grounded on coastal rocks in Marin County and posed a pollution threat to CCNM resources. The BLM continued to participate in the multi-agency response as a Technical Advisor to the Unified Command. Efforts from all entities involved continued attempts to remove the vessel and mitigate the impacts to coastal resources.

On October 2, 2021 an underwater pipeline running from Platform Elly to Long Beach spilled a minimum of approximately 24,696 gallons of crude oil into San Pedro Bay. The (Pipeline P00547) initial release occurred approximately 4.5 miles offshore of Huntington Beach, Orange County, California within the CCNM Corridor. Oil initially floated to the surface forming surface slicks and strands that extended from the source mainly south and southeast along prevailing ocean currents. Southern California beaches from Surfside Beach to the U.S./Mexico Border, including coastal marshes and lagoons, were either freshly oiled or received varying levels of tarballs in the weeks following the spill. The responsible party is Amplify Energy Corporation. In response, the BLM California entered into a Pollution Removal Funding Authorization with the US Coast Guard that authorized reimbursement from the Oil Spill Liability Fund or Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERLA) funds.

The Pipeline P00547 oil spill highlighted the need for a comprehensive inventory of CCNM rocks and islands along the Orange County coastline. When the national monument was established in 2000 the Orange County representatives chose to be excluded. In January 2017 a presidential proclamation was made to incorporate the coastline's rock resources of Orange County into the national monument. The Palm

Springs Field Office looks forward to providing quantitative inventory data as baselines for measuring changes in rock units, their locations and associated wildlife population and biodiversity data. Baseline data collected will be utilized in the event of a subsequent oil spill.



# Visitors

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The over 10,000 rocks, islands, and reefs that make up most of the CCNM are largely inaccessible due to their small individual size, location in the rugged surf zone, and lack of landing areas. Visitation to the offshore rocks is difficult to quantify, but coastal visitation in California is in the millions annually. Uses of the CCNM include day hiking, nature walks, birding, use as an outdoor classroom for local schools, contemplation and relaxation.

On-land portions of the CCNM are popular destinations for both locals and tourists. Access ranges from coastal trails on bluffs open sunrise to sunset to docent guided tours.



# Partnerships

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The CCNM depends heavily on partnerships to help enhance cooperative and collaborative initiatives and management objectives. Each field office partners with a variety of communities, agencies, organizations, academic institutions, the public, and other stakeholders to further the mission and vision of the CCNM. With over 60 partnerships of varying levels of participation, the CCNM has the capacity to integrate existing educational and interpretive programs into CCNM outreach efforts to foster an understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of CCNM and California coastal ecosystems resources.

Some of the partnership highlights of FY22 include:

- Continuing as a member of the State of California's Marine Protected Area (MPA) Statewide Leadership Team. As a collaborating partner, the BLM shares information and expertise for the purpose of ensuring successful implementation of the State's MPA network, including monitoring, enforcement, public information and education.
- Continued participation on the Executive Board of the Central California Coast Joint Venture (C3JV). In 2022 the C3JV completed an Implementation Plan, laying the foundation for a conservation approach working to build inclusive partnerships that steward healthy and resilient habitats for birds, other wildlife and people.
- Membership and participation in the West Coast Ocean Alliance (WCOA); in FY2022, the WCOA was awarded approximately \$3.9M of new funding over the next two years from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to support the interstate and intertribal management of ocean and coastal resources.
- Participation in the Marine Protected Area (MPA) Collaborative Chapters; in FY2022, efforts focused on, among other things, MPA regulation compliance projects and a Decadal Management Review of the success of the California MPA Network.

Current partnerships with memorandums of understanding include but are not limited to; Cabrillo Marine Aquarium, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California State Parks, Caspar Community, City of Fort Bragg, City of Rancho Palos Verdes, City of Trinidad, Coastwalk California, Conservation Lands Foundation, Del Norte County Historical Society, Fort Bragg Mendocino Coast, Historical Society, Cal Poly Humboldt Marine Lab, Laguna Ocean Foundation, Mendocino Area Parks Association, Mendocino Coast Audubon, Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, Mendocino Land Trust, Mendocino Study Club, Moat Creek Managing Agency, Monterey Bay NMS, Native Daughters of the



Golden West, Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History, Pacifica Chamber of Commerce, Point Arena Merchants Association, Point Cabrillo Lightkeepers Association, Point Blue Conservation Science, Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy, Recreational Fishing Alliance, Redwood Coast COC (Chamber), Redwood Region Audubon, Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History, Save the Redwoods League, Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods, The Sea Ranch Association, Trinidad Coastal Land Trust, Trinidad COC (Chamber), Trinidad Museum Society, Trinidad Rancheria, Tsurai Ancestral Society, US Coast Guard, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Navy, USAF (Air Force), Visit Mendocino County Inc, and the Yurok Tribe.



# Science

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The CCNM and field office staff work closely with stakeholders to determine research needs and to ensure the science and research products are valuable and provide needed information to protect the objects and values outlined in the proclamations. Field office staff support a broad range of research efforts to achieve a balance between gathering important scientific data needed to understand CCNM resources and protecting its ecological integrity. There are several completed and ongoing studies that are working towards this goal.

- CCNM continues to be a participating member in the Ashy Storm Petrel Monitoring Management and Implementation Working Group, USFWS Pacific Seabird Program Group, US Navy annual evaluation of the San Clemente Island Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan and the California Black Oystercatcher Monitoring Program.
- Field office staff assisted in academically-driven research in collaboration with the Rocky Shores Experiments and Simulations (ROXSI) with the Monterey Naval Postgraduate School, Scripps Institution of Oceanography and University of Oregon. Research uses both remote sensing and stationary measurements to collect data on 3D currents and temperature data along a 1-km stretch of shoreline, from the high-tide line out to ~40m depth.
- The Stanford University Hopkins Marine Lab supported a National Science Foundation grant to create virtual science field experiences for students who don't have access to marine labs.
- United States Geologic Survey continues to implement a bat monitoring project, collecting data on bat demographics and migration. Authorization was approved for the installation of acoustic bat monitoring equipment at the Trinidad Lighthouse (Trinidad, CA), Cape Mendocino Lighthouse (Shelter Cover, CA), and Reading Rock (offshore rock five miles west of Orick, CA).
- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration continues to monitor California Gray Whales at the Piedras Blancas Light Station.
- In FY22 Cal Poly Humboldt, University of California at Santa Cruz and region-wide seabird experts have determined future research is needed in response to recent observations of dramatic apparent predator and climate-induced declines in Common Murre populations at a pair of large colonies on both Green Rock and False Klamath Rock. The current hypothesis is that the efficacy of positive CCNM management actions undertaken may be partly obscured by the negative effects of increases in Bald Eagle abundance and the impacts of extreme climatic events

that have incurred over the last 7 years. Research proposals addressing this concern will likely be proposed in FY23.

Results from science publications completed in FY22 will continue to inform and guide future management decisions and are vital in understanding coastal resources and sustaining thriving coastal communities and economies. Some of the research highlights include:



- McChesney, G.J, J.L. Yee, M.W. Parker, W.M. Perry, H.R. Carter, R.T. Golightly, and S.W. Kress. 2022. Spatial effects in relation to reproductive performance of Common Murres *Uria aalge* at a re-established colony. *Marine Ornithology* 50: 23–34.
- Final Programmatic Report Narrative for NFWF grant: Regional-scale Passive Acoustic Surveys for Ashy Storm-Petrels in the California Coastal National Monument and Other Major Breeding Colonies During 2017, 2018, and 2021. Kerry Dunleavy, Abram B. Fleishman, and Matthew McKown, Conservation Metrics, 145 McAllister Way, Coastal Science Campus, Santa Cruz, CA 95060; 6/30/2022

# Climate Impacts & Resiliency

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Climate impacts are an important management concern for the resilience, health and ecosystem services of the CCNM and a priority for the current BLM leadership.

Climate change likely will affect the CCNM in the near future in a variety of ways, including changes in ocean conditions (temperature, pH), storm frequency and intensity, and precipitation and fog patterns, with the greatest effects likely from sea level rise on lower lying offshore rocky features and more sensitive species.

Potential impacts identified since the RMP was signed in 2005, include sea-level rise, changes in precipitation and fog, warming oceans, and loss of biological species (birds, fisheries, marine mammals). Continued research is needed and will be an important tool in future CCNM management decisions.



# Social and Environmental Justice

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Educational and experiential opportunities offered by all staff working on the CCNM reach a variety of audiences. Staff work with K-12 schools and make a concerted effort to reach out to lower-income schools to include them in educational outreach programs. The Piedras Blancas Light Station Association, for example, provides funding for transportation to BLM's free school outreach programs to alleviate pressure on schools' field trip budgets. Many of the students are underserved youth and first-generation Americans. Some have never been to the coast despite living only 20 miles away.

In Trinidad, partners and field office staff are developing a plan to enhance an ADA accessible CCNM vista location that will include interpretive signage. The Trinidad Coastal Land Trust worked with local indigenous tribes to develop and install an interpretive sign on the trail that leads to the Trinidad Lighthouse.

The Garcia River Estuary Enhancement project on the Point Arena-Stornetta Unit has the potential to bolster salmonid species an important subsistence food source for the Bokeya Manchester Band of Pomo Indians. By increasing the health of this fishery and salmonid stocks, the local Tribal community will have increased access to this culturally important and nutritious food source.



# Events

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CCNM hosts many events throughout the year. These include an annual “Meet the Scientists” event co-sponsored by the NOAA whale research team, where representatives from most of the research projects hosted at Piedras Blancas have an opportunity to make short presentations to our volunteers, partners, and community members.

Other events include sunset photography events in the fall, when west coast sunsets are typically the most colorful, whale watching tours in March when the peak numbers of gray whales are migrating past, plein air paint outs, fundraising events with partner organizations, hike in/open house days, plus many more across the CA coastline.

CCNM assisted in planning the 6th Annual Coastal Wildlife Disturbance Symposium in 2022. This event brings together coastal leaders to collaborate and discuss the latest efforts to mitigate human-caused disturbance to an array of coastal species. The workshop focuses on real-world issues, and networking with people from agencies and organizations throughout the state and beyond who are working to protect coastal wildlife.

The CCNM Trinidad Gateway hosted the Trinidad Appreciation Day event that included beach clean ups, mini-kayak tours, bi-lingual walks to the Trinidad Lighthouse, fishing off the pier, coastal clean-up, and seabird watching.

Interdisciplinary staff in Arcata hosted a National Public Lands Day event at Lost Coast Headlands focused on removal of trash and invasive plants. The event was attended by 15 volunteers that did transects over 25 acres of CCNM land to remove non-native saplings invading important coastal prairie habitat.



## Words from the staff

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So much of what we do on Coastal California could not be accomplished without our partners. The Monument is fortunate to have so many dedicated advocates working tirelessly to educate, interpret, protect and steward this treasured 1,100 mile coastline. This report could fill over 100 pages of work completed in 2022 in support of this national treasure. Staff offer these highlights of all that is being done and a heartfelt thanks to all those who care deeply for this special landscape.





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### National Monument

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