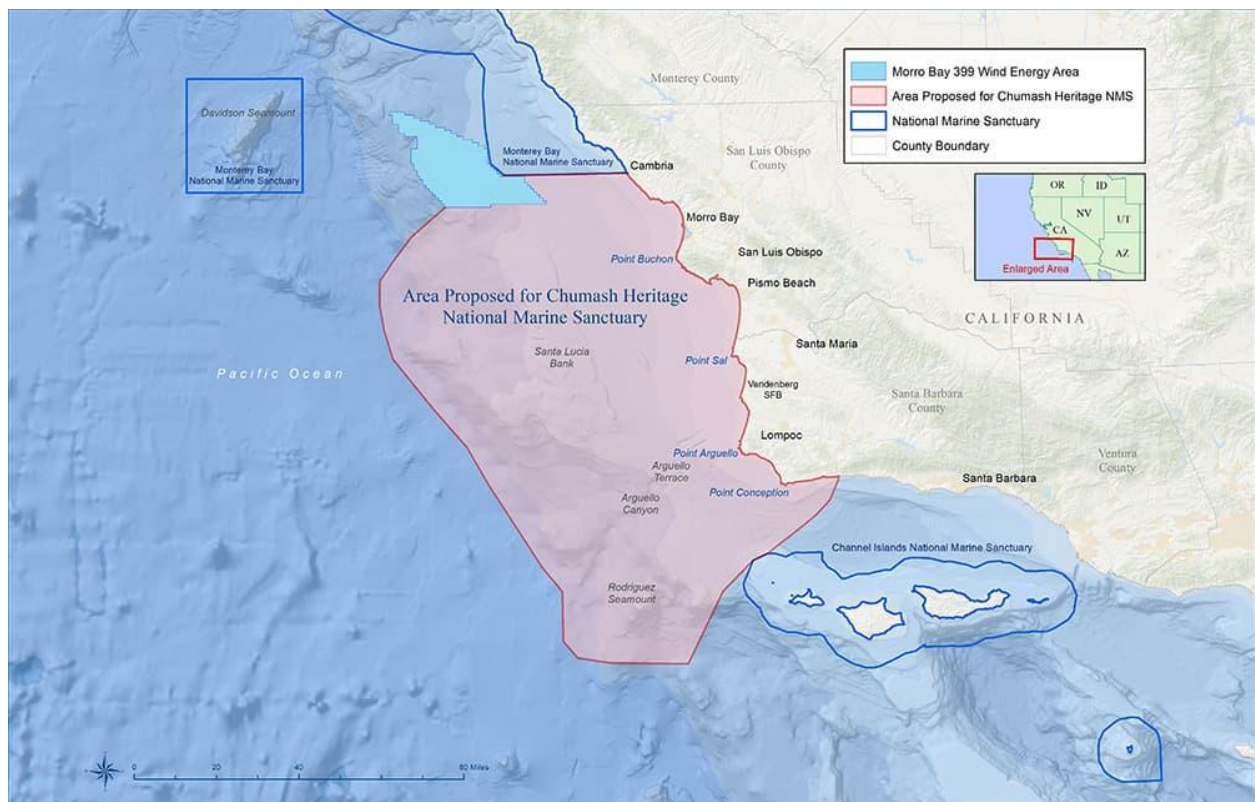


National Marine Sanctuary Countdown



We are entering the final phase of designation for the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is expected to release the environmental review and draft management plan for the sanctuary in the first quarter of 2023, which will begin a 60-day public comment period.

The area proposed for the national marine sanctuary extends from Santa Rosa Creek in Cambria to Gaviota Creek in Santa Barbara, protecting marine habitat along 156 miles of Central California Coastline, safeguarding the Central Coast from offshore oil expansion and other threats to marine wildlife.

For those of you just joining us in the long history of the campaign for the biggest environmental win in the history of the Central Coast, or for anyone in need of a refresher, in October 2015 the nomination for the sanctuary was submitted to NOAA by the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, after forty years of advocacy by local community members, resource agencies and elected

officials for the establishment of a national marine sanctuary. The nomination was accepted and placed on an official inventory list, and finally made it to the designation process in November 2021.

We now have an exceptional opportunity to advance the first Tribal-nominated national marine sanctuary designation in the U.S., setting a precedent for elevating Indigenous perspectives and



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cultural values in ocean conservation. The sanctuary would help to address the global biodiversity crisis and accelerate nature-based solutions through inclusive partnerships and collaboration among federal, state and local governments, and California Native American Tribes.

We will let you know when NOAA initiates the final phase of the designation process and begins taking public comment.

Deepwater bubblegum coral, a host for California king crab, observed during a 2020 E/V *Nautilus* exploration of the Santa Lucia Bank. Corals and sponges that make up the area's seafloor habitats provide food and shelter for recreationally and commercially important fish species.