

Applied California Current Ecosystem Studies

Supporting resilient marine ecosystems in northern and central California

Project Description

Who We Are

ACCESS (Applied California Current Ecosystem Studies) is a public–private partnership led by Point Blue Conservation Science in collaboration with Greater Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries. The program supports wildlife conservation and resilient ecosystems in California.

What We Do

ACCESS conducts integrated, collaborative, and multidisciplinary research to monitor the distribution and abundance of marine wildlife. This work is carried out in the context of physical oceanographic processes, allowing us to understand how species respond to changing ocean conditions and human pressures, and to provide science that informs management decisions.

Where We Work

ACCESS operates across federal and state waters within Greater Farallones, Cordell Bank, and northern Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries. These sanctuaries serve as sentinel sites—ideal locations for long-term, repeated studies that track ecosystem change and inform adaptive management.

Tracking Ocean Climate

ACCESS produces the annual *Ocean Climate Indicators Report*, which synthesizes key physical and biological indicators of climate variability and change in the region. These indicators were developed through a multi-year collaborative process led by the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council, with input from more than 50 regional scientists and resource managers.

Solving Ocean Problems

ACCESS provides science-based solutions to critical ocean management challenges, including:

- **Reducing ship strikes** by identifying whale hotspots and informing vessel speed reduction strategies
- **Minimizing entanglement risk** by mapping high-risk areas and supporting adaptive crab fishery management
- **Protecting wildlife hotspots** by identifying areas of ecological importance and reducing conflicts with emerging ocean uses
- **Developing ecosystem indicators** to track ecosystem responses to climate variability and guide conservation actions
- **Monitoring ocean acidification** to document changes in seawater chemistry and assess impacts on marine life

Training Ocean Stewards

ACCESS helps train the next generation of ocean scientists and stewards by hosting a NOAA Teacher-at-Sea each year, providing internships for recent graduates, and supporting graduate student research in physical and biological oceanography and marine ecology.

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