

County: **San Francisco County**

Thomas Guide Location

Latitude N

Longitude W

USGS Quad: **7.5" Quad: Farallon Islands, CA**

3 7 42

133 00

NOAA Chart: **Gulf of the Farallones, 18645**

Last Page Update : 1/1/1996

SITE DESCRIPTION:

Rocky islands 28 miles west of San Francisco including North, Middle, and Southeast Farallon Islands. The islands and surrounding waters are located within the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary and are part of both State and Federal Wildlife Refuges. North Farallon and Southeast Farallon Isles are both State Marine Reserves and have special closures. Rocky islands, exposed to heavy surf from all directions. The largest island, Southeast Farallon Island, has rocky marine terraces and cliffs around much of the island. Middle and the North Farallon Island group are small rock island pinnacles (< 1/4 mile diameter).

SEASONAL and SPECIAL RESOURCE CONCERN

"A" priority all year for this group of islands and surrounding waters. They provide critical habitat for several species of seabirds and pinnipeds all year long. The Farallon Islands are the hallmark of the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary.

RESOURCES OF PRIMARY CONCERN

Seabird and pinniped habitat at risk all year. Seabirds most vulnerable to oil during breeding season (March - September). Pinniped habitat sensitivity periods are noted below.

The largest seabird colony in California (>155,000 birds in 1989). Habitat for 12 species of seabirds: ashly storm-petrel, Leach's storm petrel, Brant's, double-crested and pelagic cormorants, black oystercatcher, western gull, common murre, pigeon guillemot, Cassin's auklet, rhinoceros auklet, and the tufted puffin. Seabirds are most vulnerable to oil during the breeding season, March - September.

Southeast Farallon Island provides breeding and foraging habitat for five species of pinnipeds. The northern elephant seal (breeding Dec-Mar) (molting May - August); California sea lion (Aug-June); Stellar sea lion (threatened; May-July); and harbor seal haul-out (year-round) on the island. The northern fur seals also haul out on the island occasionally (Oct - Mar). Greater than 10,000 pinnipeds use the islands year-round. A variety of whales, dolphins and porpoises are commonly found in the waters surrounding the islands.

A wide variety of seaweeds, fish, crabs, snails and other sealife are present on and around the island and washrocks. Great white sharks are common around the islands.

Intertidal plants and animals are diverse and abundant on the central California coast. Many seaweeds, mussel beds, barnacles, fish, endangered black abalone, and other invertebrates can be found here.

Surface-canopy forming bull kelp beds and subtidal-canopy forming kelps are common.

CULTURAL, HISTORIC, and ARCHEOLOGICAL SENSITIVITIES

For specific information on any historic or cultural resources, contact the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, and contact the California Dept of Parks and Recreation - Office of Historic Preservation (Eric Allison -(916) 653-9125), and the Northwest Information Center, (Bryan Much, Sonoma State College ((707) 332-1117)) for specific information on historic or cultural resources in this area.

KEY CONTACTS: Trustee (T); Entry/Owner/Access (E); Cultural (C); or Other Assistance (O)

Type	Name / Title	Organization	Phone
E/T	24hr Sanctuary Personnel	Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary	(650) 479-5311
T	Marine Mammals NMFS	NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service	(562) 980-3230
E/T	Becky Ota Marine Conservation MGR	CDFW Marine Protected Areas Program	(650) 631-6789
E/T	Steve Wertz Senior Env.Scientist	CDFW Marine Protected Areas Program	(562) 342-7184

ADDITIONAL SITE SUMMARY COMMENTS:

2-240 -A Site Strategy - Farallon Islands

County and Thomas Guide Location

San Francisco County

NOAA CHART

Gulf of the Farallones, 18645

2-240 -A

Latitude N

Longitude W

3 7 42

133 00

CONCERNS and ADVICE to RESPONDERS:

Last Page Update :

Principal concerns are oil contamination and response activity impacts to seabirds, marine mammals, and other vulnerable intertidal plants and wildlife which are present throughout the year. The primary objective is to minimize exposure of oil to the natural resources present at the site. Other concerns are the impacts resulting from response activities. Avoid low flying aircraft/helicopters (<1000 ft) over the seabird colonies and marine mammal haulout areas. Avoid noisy boat traffic near the site.

HAZARDS and RESTRICTIONS:

Heavy surf and swell, washrocks, great white sharks.

SITE STRATEGIES

Strategy 2-240.1 Objective: Prevent oil from stranding on rocky shoreline and contaminating seabird and marine mammal use areas.

This site is difficult if not impossible to protect as is most of the outer coast. Mechanical shoreline protection techniques are not likely to be effective because of high wave energy and rocky conditions at this site.

- a) Recommended response strategy is on-water containment and recovery.
- b) Recommend alternative response technologies (e.g. dispersants and in-situ burning) to reduce the volume of oil reaching the site.

Table of Response Resources

strategy number	harbor boom	swamp boom	Other boom type	sorb boom	Anchoring no	type and gear	Boom boat	Skiffs punts	Skimmers No	Type	Special Equipment or comment No and kinds	staff deploy	Staff tend
2-240.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	On-water Recovery / ART		

LOGISTICS

DIRECTIONS: to site (by land and/or by water, to nearest launch ramp and are access permits required.)

No road access. Accessible only by boat. Rocky islands 28 miles west of San Francisco including North, Middle, and Southeast Farallon Islands. The islands and surrounding waters are located within the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary and are part of both State and Federal Wildlife Refuges. North Farallon and Southeast Farallon Isles are both State Marine Reserves and have special closures.

LAND ACCESS: No land access

WATER LOGISTICS: Washrocks

Limitations: depth, obstruction

Launching, Loading, Docking and Services Available: Either transport by Coast Guard Cutter to Farallon Islands or charter vehicles for access. Coast Guard Station Golden Gate is the nearest SAR Station

FACILITIES, STAGING AREAS, POSSIBLE FIELD POSTS AND EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE:

No facilities, possible staging on the island.

COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEMS:

ADDITIONAL OPERATIONAL COMMENTS:

