

**NOAA report to the San Francisco Bay Harbor Safety Committee
April 2021**

NOAA Marine Debris Program - Webinar to discuss Abandoned and Derelict Vessels

NOAA's Marine Debris Program continues to host a monthly webinar series called, *Salvaging Solutions to Abandoned and Derelict Vessels*. The series will continue every fourth Wednesday of the month, and will feature experts on a topic related to abandoned and derelict vessels (ADVs).

The next session is April 28, 2021, at noon Pacific Time. One of the presenters will be Curtis Havel, Harbormaster - Richardson Bay Regional Agency.

More information available at:

<https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/outreach/salvaging-solutions-abandoned-and-derelict-vessels-webinar-series>

Monthly webinars are planned through October, sign up for the marine debris newsletter to get future updates:

https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USNOAANOS/subscriber/new?topic_id=USNOAANOS_194

Voluntary Vessel Speed Reduction (VSR) Zones in California

In 2020, NOAA and the USCG issued voluntary VSR requests in California for all vessels 300 gross registered tons (GRT) or larger to reduce speeds to 10-knots when transiting within the designated VSR zones. These VSR requests were broadcast in the USCG Local Notice to Mariners on a weekly basis, over NOAA Weather Radio and through shipping industry email lists.

NOAA's analysis of 2020 AIS data for all vessels 300 gross registered tons or more showed a 64% level of cooperation with the 10-knot speed request in the San Francisco Bay Region VSR zone and 54% in the southern California VSR zone. Over the last ten years there have been 43 confirmed vessel strikes on endangered blue, fin, humpback and sei whales recorded off California, and research estimates that confirmed ship strikes represent a small fraction of actual ship strikes. Total fleet cooperation with these VSR requests will further reduce the risk of fatal ship strikes on endangered whales.

Below is a copy of the letter signed by USCG and NOAA describing this year's VSR that will run from May 15 through November 15.

National Weather Service

Seasonal “normal” weather conditions. As we look ahead into next week, ridging becomes more amplified over the Eastern Pacific which could nudge daytime highs up a few degrees by next Tuesday. Otherwise, we are not expecting significant changes and this also means that the forecast will remain dry into early next week.

Offshore marine forecast shows a moderate northwest wave train generated off the Pacific Northwest will move across the coastal waters through the weekend. Very steep fresh northwest seas are expected this weekend which are hazardous to small craft vessels.

END OF REPORT

Submitted by
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March 31, 2021

To: All Mariners

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) with support from the United States Coast Guard (USCG) annually issues voluntary vessel speed reduction (VSR) requests that go into effect May 1 off of San Francisco and May 15 off of southern California; please see the attached charts. The goal of these seasonal voluntary VSR zones is to reduce the risk of fatal ship strikes to endangered blue, fin, and humpback whales within and near Greater Farallones, Cordell Bank, Monterey Bay, and Channel Islands national marine sanctuaries. These species are protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1538 et seq.), the Marine Mammal Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.), and the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (16 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.). Any unauthorized take of whales, even if unintentional, by vessels transiting in U.S. waters violates federal statutes.

NOAA and the USCG request that all vessels 300 gross registered tons (GRT) or larger reduce speeds to 10-knots when transiting within the designated VSR zones. We request your cooperation with the voluntary VSR to protect whales that annually migrate to their summer and fall feeding areas. All transits by vessels 300 GRT or larger are analyzed by NOAA via Automated Information System (AIS) data provided by the USCG to assess the industry's cooperation.

NOAA and the USCG are committed to the long-term protection of nationally significant marine resources by enhancing marine safety and environmental awareness in the maritime community. We encourage vessel crews to report whale sightings through the Whale Alert App (<http://www.whalealert.org>). If you have questions please contact Sean Hastings, (805) 893-6424, sean.hastings@noaa.gov. NOAA and the USCG commends your commitment to protecting endangered and threatened whales by cooperating with the 10-knot VSR requests as we strive for a goal of 100% cooperation in 2021 off of San Francisco and southern California.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "William J. Douros".

William J. Douros, Regional Director
NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
West Coast Region

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Barry A. Thom".

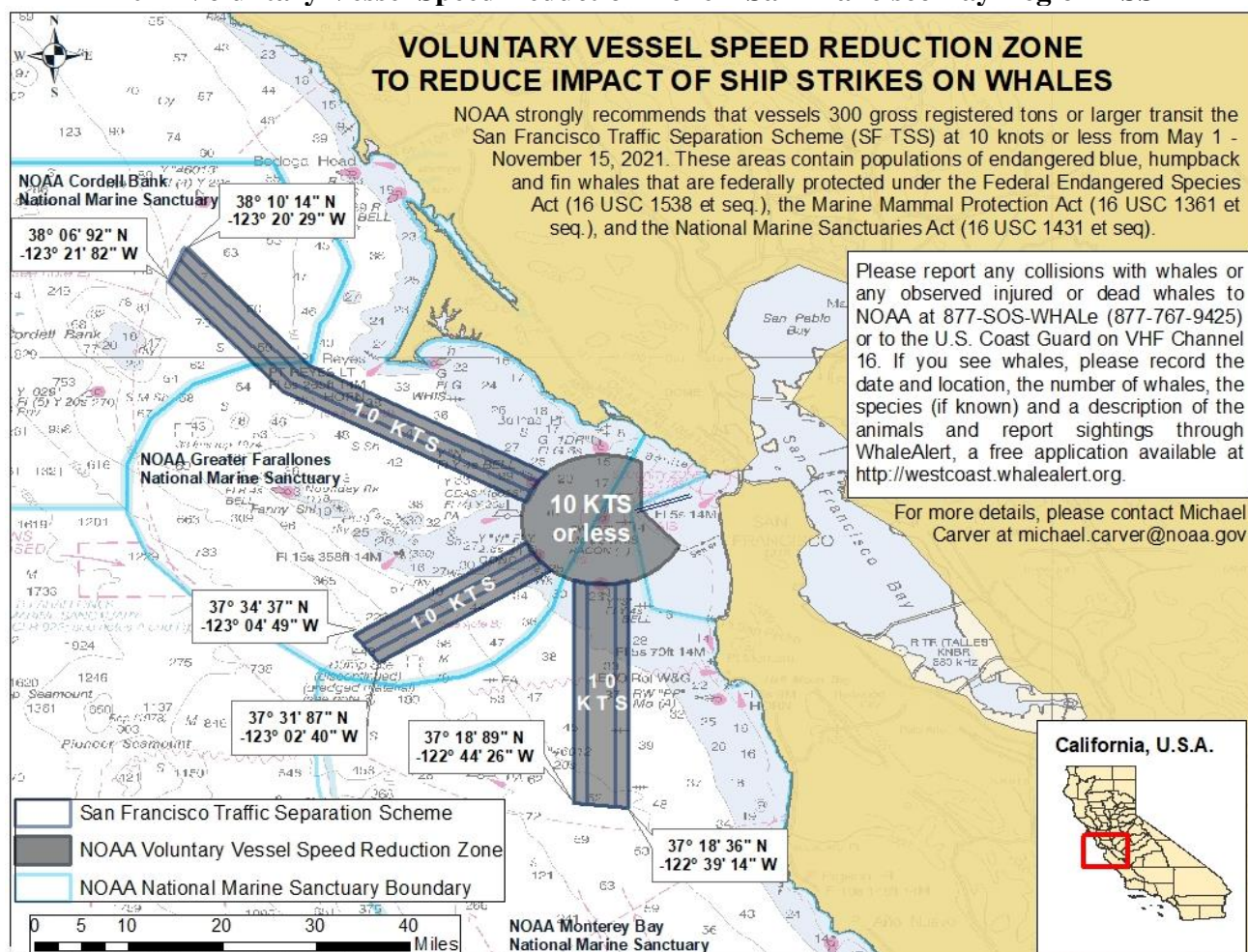
Barry A. Thom, Regional Administrator
NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service
West Coast Region

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Brian K. Penoyer".

Brian K. Penoyer, Rear Admiral
U.S. Coast Guard
District Eleven



2021 Voluntary Vessel Speed Reduction Zone – San Francisco Bay Region TSS





2021 Voluntary Vessel Speed Reduction Zone – Southern California

VOLUNTARY VESSEL SPEED REDUCTION ZONE TO REDUCE IMPACT OF SHIP STRIKES ON WHALES

NOAA strongly recommends that vessels 300 gross registered tons or larger transit the Vessel Speed Reduction Zone at 10 knots or less from **May 15 – November 15, 2021**. These areas contain populations of endangered blue, humpback and fin whales that are federally protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act (16 USC 1538 et seq.), the Marine Mammal Protection Act (16 USC 1361 et seq.), and the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (16 USC 1431 et seq.).

The southern California Voluntary Vessel Speed Reduction Zone extends from approximately Dana Point to Pt. Arguello as depicted below and vessels are requested to transit at 10 knots or less anywhere in this zone. Vessels already transiting south of the northern Channel Islands are also encouraged to transit outside of the Voluntary Extended Area To Be Avoided * to reduce the overlap of ships and endangered whales. Every effort should be made to comply with any instruction received from the Navy when transiting south of the Channel Islands.

Please report any collisions with whales or any observed injured or dead whales to NOAA at 877-SOS-WHALE (877-767-9425) or to the U.S. Coast Guard on VHF Channel 16. If you see whales, please record the date and location, the number of whales, the species (if known) and a description of the animals and report sightings through WhaleAlert, a free application available at <http://westcoast.whalealert.org>.

For more details, please contact Sean Hastings at sean.hastings@noaa.gov or (805) 893-6424.

