

**NOAA Report to the San Francisco Bay Harbor Safety Committee
April 2025**

Electronic Navigational Chart (ENC) Updates

NOAA continues to work with the San Francisco Bar Pilots and Army Corps of Engineers to resolve channel framework discrepancies and update mis-charted piers and berths in the area. I hope to be able to announce updated charts with corrections in the coming months.

Voluntary Speed Reduction Zone

The Voluntary Vessel Speed Reduction Zones (VSR) program to protect endangered whales will go back into effect on May 1, 2025.

The goals of these voluntary VSR zones are to reduce the risk of fatal ship strikes to endangered and threatened blue, fin, and humpback whales, reduce ocean noise, and protect public health along the California coast. NOAA strongly recommends that vessels 300 gross tons or larger transit the zones at 10 knots or less.

The voluntary VSR request will be in effect May 1 to December 31, 2025 in the VSR zones, as shown in the attached chartlet.

END OF REPORT

Submitted by
Jeffrey Ferguson, CA Navigation Manager
NOAA, Office of Coast Survey
jeffrey.ferguson@noaa.gov

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

NOAA strongly recommends vessels 300 gross tons or larger transit the Vessel Speed Reduction Zones (shown in gray in the map) at 10 knots or less and prioritize use of the western traffic lane when traveling in the San Francisco Offshore TSS **from May 1 - December 31, 2025**. These areas contain populations of endangered blue, humpback and fin whales which 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).

Vessels should transit outside of the Area To Be Avoided (ATBA) in the northern Channel Islands region 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 Jessica Morten at jessica.morten@noaa.gov

