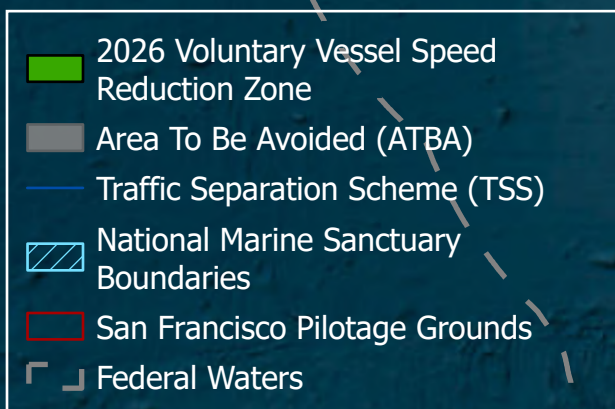




2026 Protecting Blue Whales and Blue Skies Program Voluntary Vessel Speed Reduction Zone



**Blue Whales
Blue Skies**

41°58.02'
-125°27.36'

40°20.16'
-125°10.8'

Greater Farallones
National Marine Sanctuary

Cordell Bank
National Marine Sanctuary
37°41.22'
-124°6.72'

Monterey Bay
National Marine Sanctuary

35°30'
-123°0'

Chumash Heritage
National Marine Sanctuary

33°18.06'
-121°12.7234'

Channel Islands
National Marine Sanctuary

32°32.82'
-117°7.5'

For the 2026 season, the VSR request will go into effect April 22 through December 31 off the coast of California. Oceangoing vessels 300 gross tons or larger are asked to travel at 10 knots or less in the VSR zone (shown in green) during the Program Dates to reduce the risk of fatal ship strikes to whales, reduce ocean noise, and protect public health along the California coast.

We request oceangoing vessels transit in designated Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) and recommended routes, as well as outside Areas to be Avoided (ATBA) to reduce overlap with important endangered whale habitat. Whenever possible, please prioritize use of the western traffic lane of the San Francisco Offshore TSS, and comply with any instruction received by the Navy when traveling in weapons training areas, e.g. south of the Channel Islands. Vessels may deviate from the voluntary speed and routing recommendations whenever necessary to maintain safe maneuvering.

Please note that vessels transiting any coastal or internal waters which require a vessel to utilize a state-licensed pilot or federally-endorsed pilot and under the navigational control of a licensed or endorsed pilot are not subject to the voluntary VSR. Pursuant to state and federal law, the licensed pilot retains sole navigational authority regarding the speed and routing of such vessels. Vessel speeds higher than 10 knots on the pilotage grounds will be removed from your fleet's end-of-season calculations. For approaches to the San Francisco Bay, the pilotage grounds are defined under California Harbors & Navigation Code Section 1114.5.

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