

# *CEN CAL ODYSSEY*



APRIL 2022

## **TERRIFIC NEWS AND INFORMATION**

### **GREATER FARALLONES\* AND MARINE MAMMAL CENTER AWARDED FEDERAL GRANTS**

President Joe Biden signed a law for \$1.5 trillion funding package including funding for marine mammals and kelp forest restoration on Northern California coast. The funding sets aside \$500,000 for emergency marine mammal field response research and \$2 million for kelp forest restoration in the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary kelp restoration.

The marine mammal funding will be used to rescue stranded or distressed marine mammals along the coast and provide medical/rehabilitative care to marine mammals impacted by vessel strikes, entanglements, disease, injury and other issues.

The other pot of funding will be used to restore bull kelp forest along the Sonoma/Mendocino coastlines within the Greater Farallones Sanctuary through large scale urchin removal, planting of kelp and community engagement. According to NOAA, over 90% of kelp forests in northern California has disappeared since 2014. Healthy kelp forests benefit marine life and coastal communities who depend on fisheries for tourism which is economic support. Red abalone and red urchin fisheries and many recreational companies depend on the marine habitat.

The project will partner with and compensate local divers to remove urchins from already identified key sites and will collaborate with research and community partners.

[*Independent Coastal Observer* April 8, 2022 Vol 24, No 2, page 2, Gualala CA]

### \* ***Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary***

The Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary protects the wildlife, habitats, and cultural resources of one of the most diverse and bountiful marine environments in the world. The current area is 3,295 square miles off the northern and central coast. Established 1981 and expanded north 2015.

The federal Marine Sanctuary system was created in 1972 in response to the 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill. The first Sanctuary was the **USS Monitor** created 1975.

### **CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT FISH AND WILDLIFE**

The Department, along with key partners from the Ocean Protection Council (OPC), California Sea Grant (CASG), Reef Check California, commercial urchin divers, Watermen's Alliance, Noyo Center for Marine Science, Moss Landing Marine Laboratory, The Nature Conservancy, and the Monterey Bay and Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuaries, implemented several priority actions identified in the 2019 Bull Kelp Recovery Plan and 2021 Interim Kelp Action Plan.

Highlights include the continuation of experimental restoration methods to facilitate kelp recovery (e.g., commercial and recreational urchin removals, urchin trapping, and kelp outplanting), supporting the Kelp Recovery Research Program (**KRMP**) which guides kelp restoration research essential to informing kelp management and recovery and surveying and identifying potential kelp restoration sites along the Sonoma County coast.

### **KELP RECOVERY AND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

DFW working on early stage plans and process to develop a **Kelp Recovery and Management Plan** (KRMP) for giant and bull kelp DFW has developed a proposed approach – in partnership with the California Ocean Protection Council – to create the **KRMP** - using strategies similar to those used for developing fishery management plans

under the *Marine Life Management Act*. The KRMP will provide a framework for ecosystem-based management and a kelp restoration toolkit. DFW needs to hire Project Manager, assemble Management team, assemble a Science Advisory Committee, work with California Native American Tribes and convene 2 working groups : giant kelp and bull kelp and engage the broad suite of stakeholders perspective on each of the three core components of KRMP. Each of these working groups will be inclusive and open to stake holders, Tribes and members of the public interested in engaging throughout the process.