

Eastern Pacific Blue Whales - Overview for new members of the Whale Entanglement Working Group (Santa Rosa, Sept 3, 2019)



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Blue whale population trends, 1990-2010

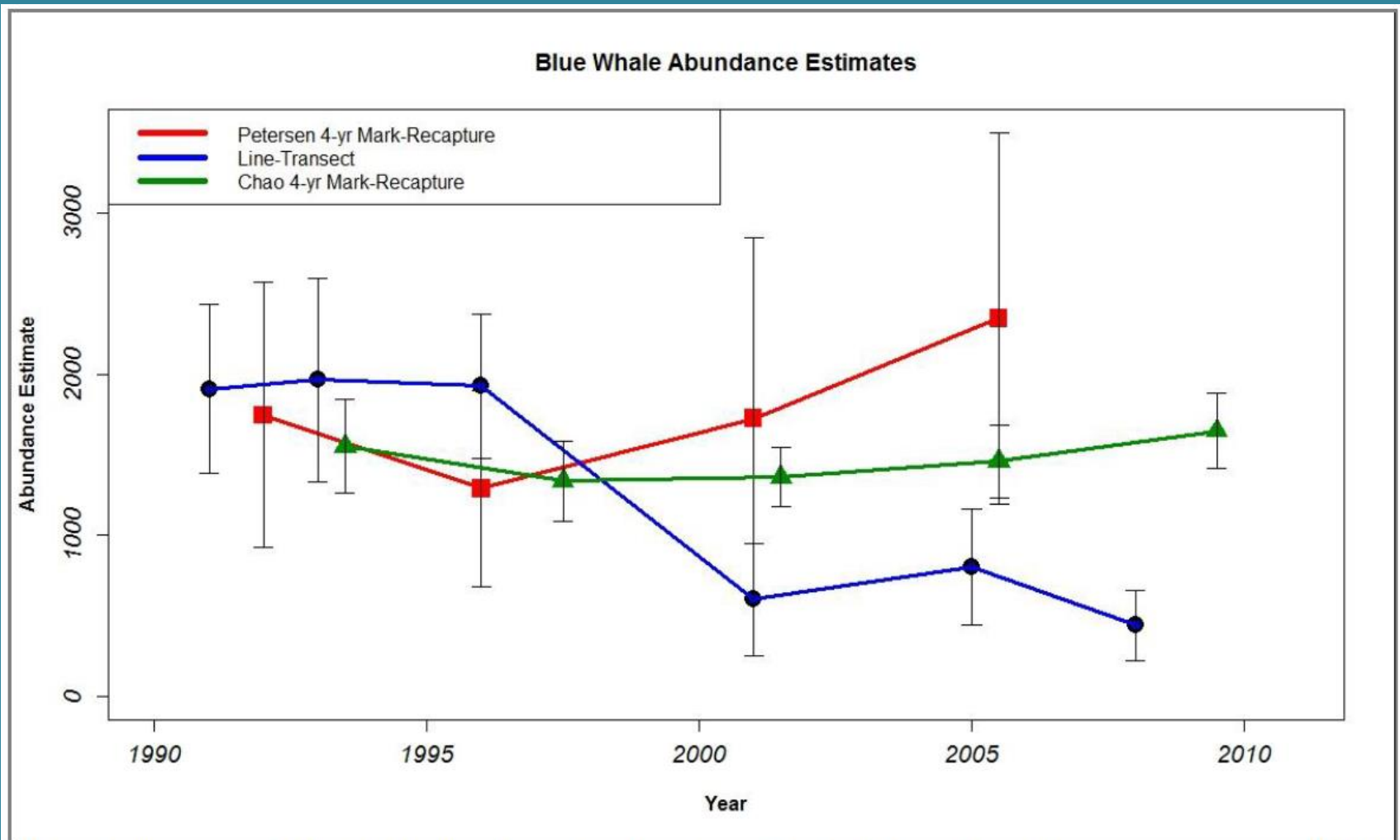
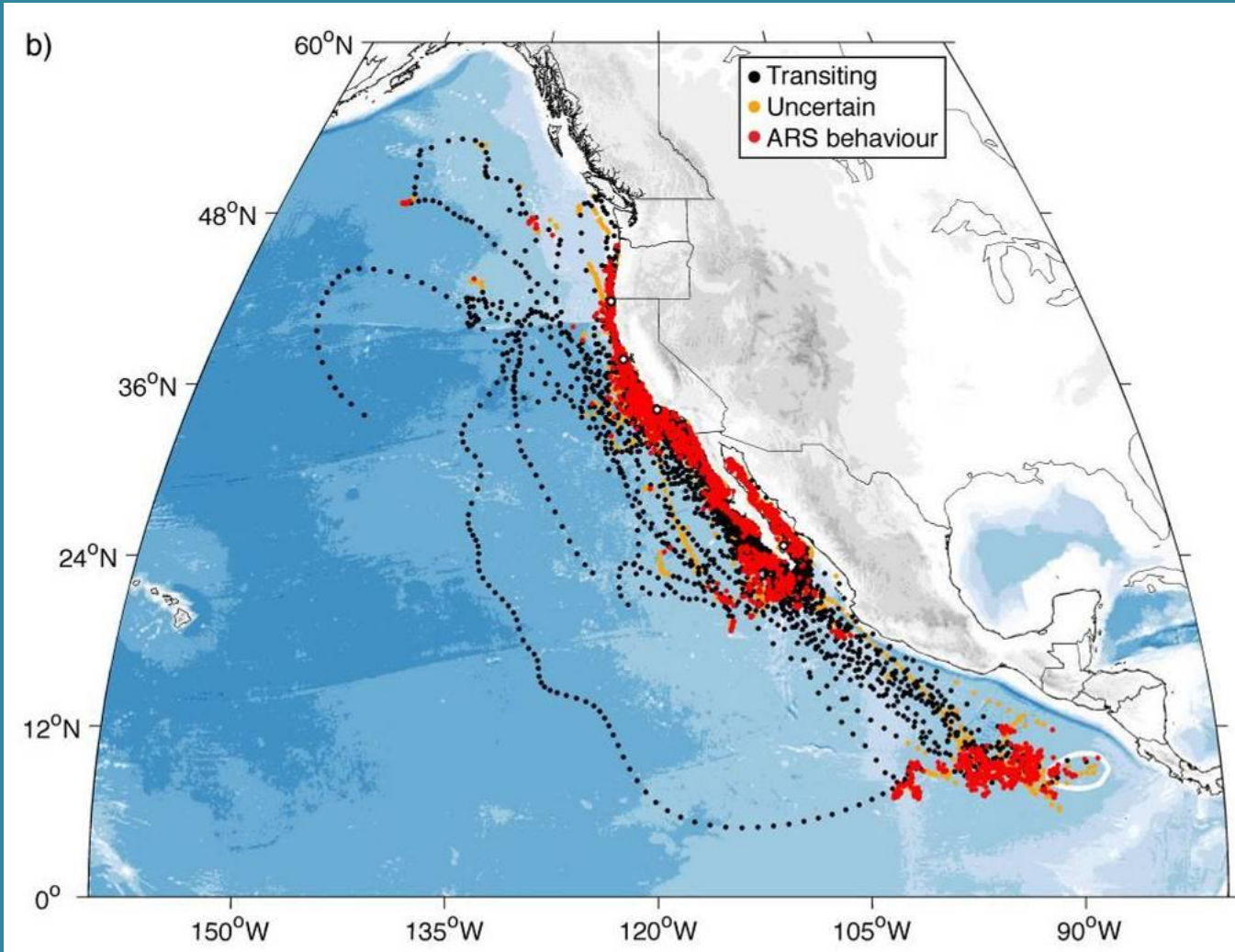


Figure 2. Estimates of blue whale abundance from line-transect and photographic mark-recapture surveys, 1991 to 2011 (Barlow and Forney 2007, Barlow 2010, Calambokidis and Barlow 2013). Vertical bars indicate ± 2 standard errors of each abundance estimate.

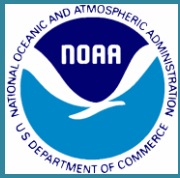
Blue whale behavior in the NE Pacific: Tracks of satellite-tagged blue whales



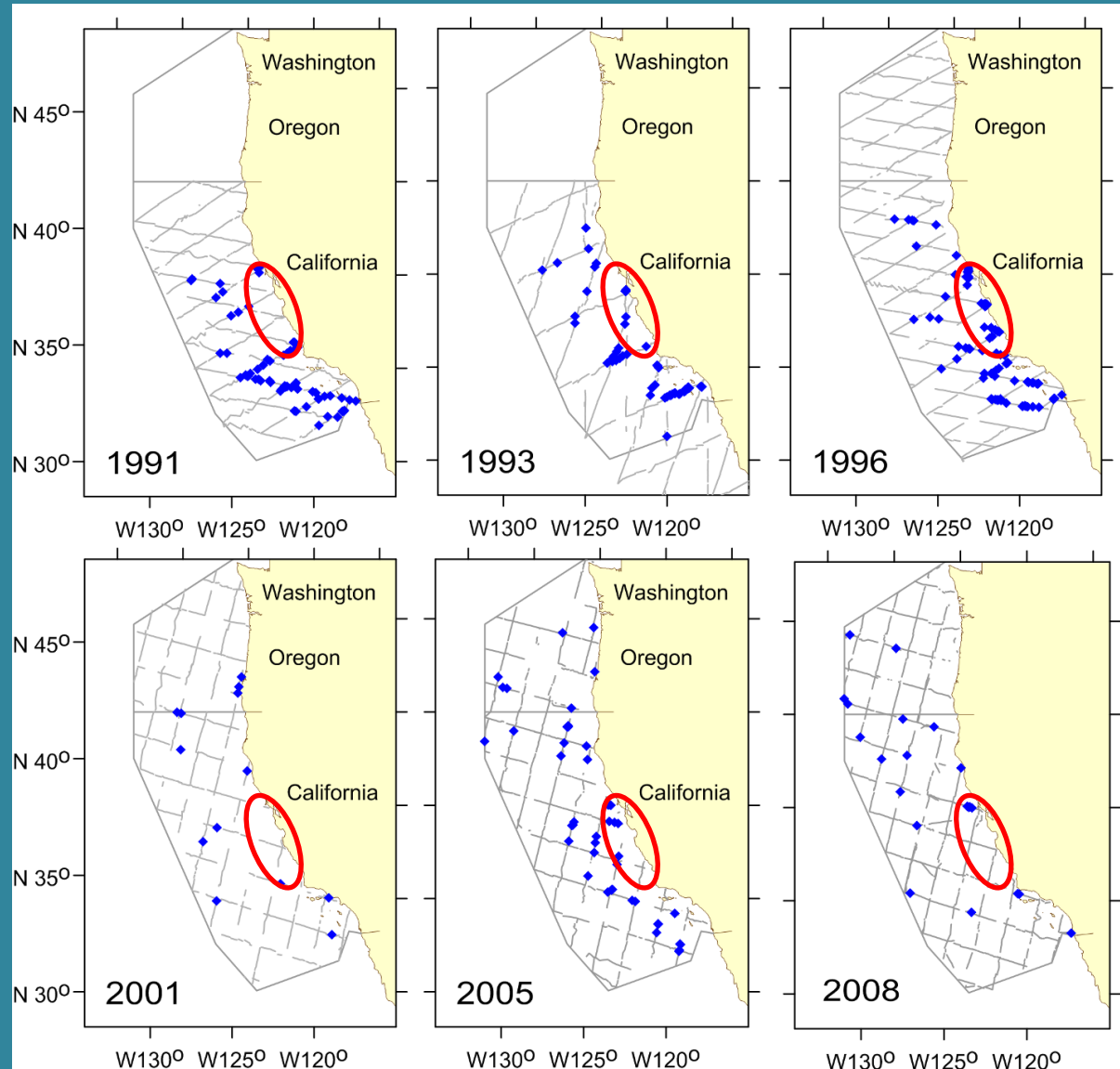
Blue whales feed on **krill** off U.S. West Coast from about May - Nov

Migrate to tropical waters off Mexico and to Costa Rica Dome during winter

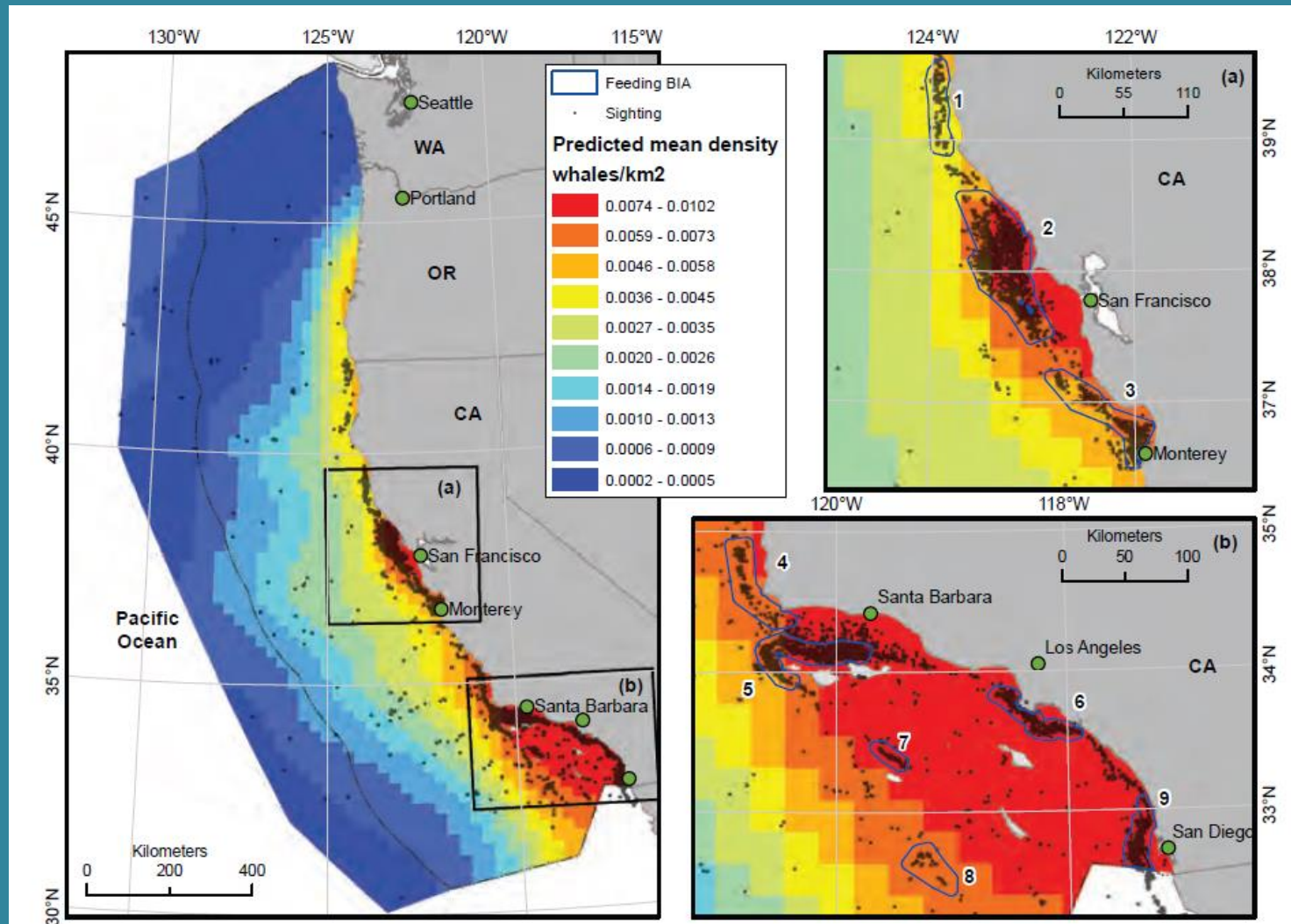
Citation: Bailey et al. 2009 *Endangered Species Research*



Blue whale distributions are dynamic

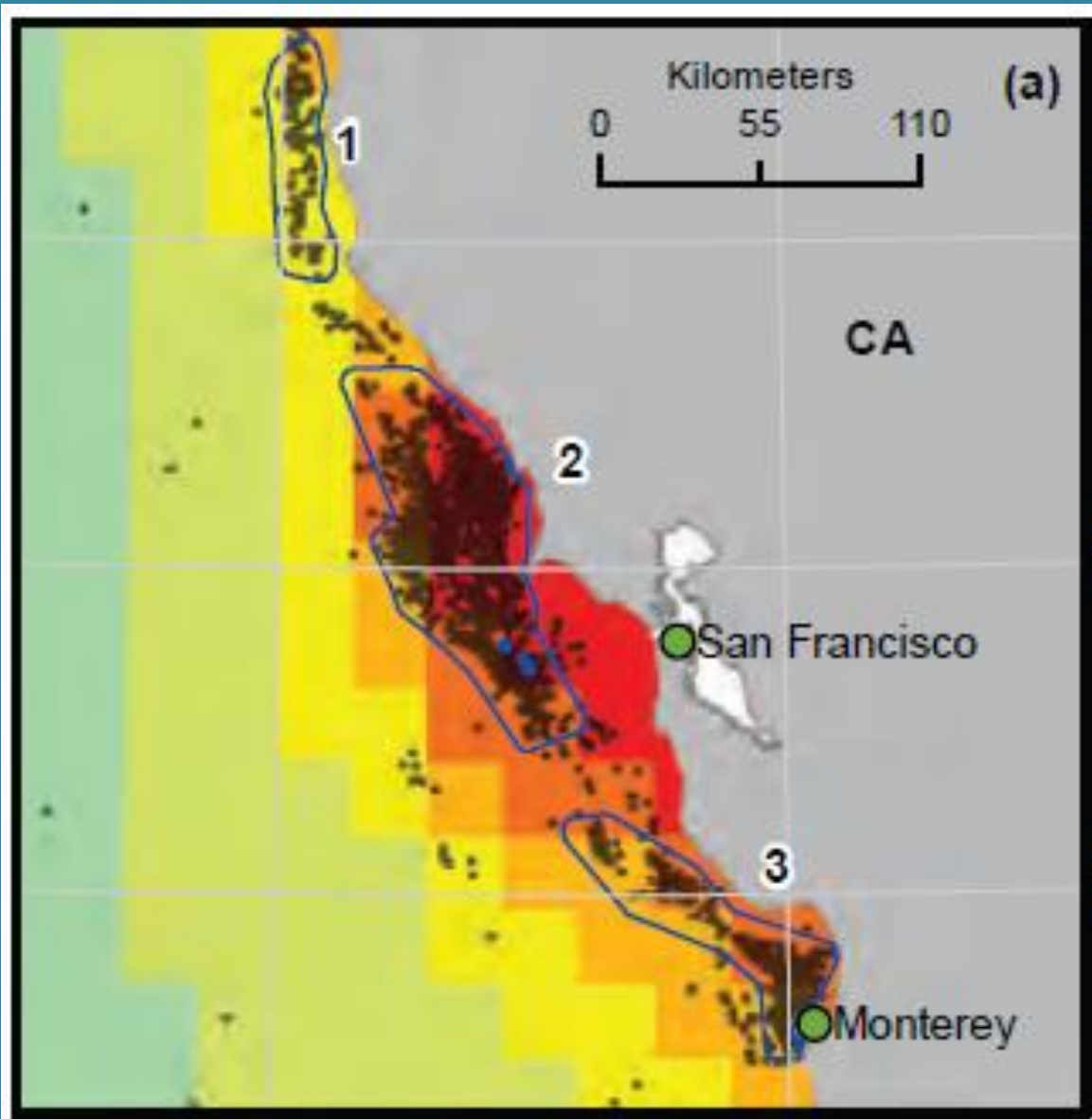


Blue whale hotspots off the U.S. West Coast



Citations: Calambokidis et al. 2015, *Aquatic Mammals*
Becker et al. 2016, *Remote Sensing*
Irvine et al. 2014. *PLoS ONE*

Blue whale hotspots (zoomed in, Central CA)



Along shelf-edge;
Cordell Bank;
Monterey Canyon

Take Home Points

- Blue whales feed exclusively on krill (unlike humpback whales that may feed on krill or schooling fish)
- Distribution hotspots include canyon edges, Cordell Bank, Santa Barbara Channel, in waters > 300 ft deep
- Population size ~ 1650 whales, has appeared stable since regular monitoring began in 1990s.
- Ship strikes and fishing gear entanglements are a concern for this population.