

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary

Things To Do!

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary
113 Harbor Way/Santa Barbara, CA 93109
(805) 966-7107



The Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary is a protected marine area, declared a sanctuary because of its distinctive resources and the fragile ecosystems which they support. The public is encouraged to use and enjoy this area while complying with the regulations established to ensure its conservation.

The Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary encompasses 1252 square nautical miles surrounding the five northern Channel Islands. Its boundaries stretch for six miles around Anacapa, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, San Miguel, and Santa Barbara Islands. Designated in 1980, the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary provides for management of this special region and sponsors a range of programs designed to promote public awareness of marine issues. Among these is the Sea Center, a marine museum that the Sanctuary sponsors in partnership with the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.

Four of the islands within the Sanctuary boundaries are part of the Channel Islands National Park and are managed by the National Park Service. The fifth, Santa Cruz Island, lies within the park boundaries but is privately owned; ninety percent of it belongs to the nonprofit Nature Conservancy.

The Sanctuary program was mandated by the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972. The program is administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, a division of the Department of Commerce.

Channel Islands National Park
1901 Spinnaker Dr.
Ventura, CA 93001
(805) 658-5700

The Nature Conservancy
213 Stearns Wharf
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 962-9111

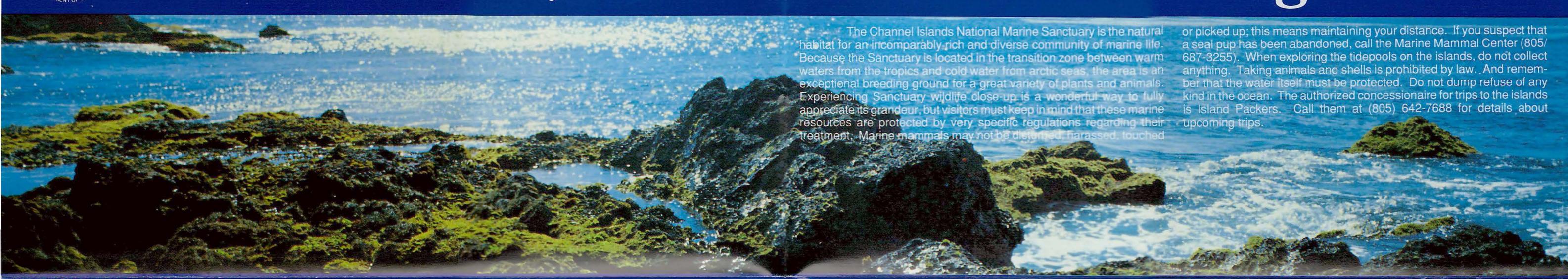
The Sea Center
211 Stearns Wharf
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 963-1067

<p>DIVING Photos by Ralph Clevenger unless otherwise indicated</p>	<p>BIRD WATCHING Photo by Jeff Foott</p>	<p>WHALE WATCHING Photo by Peter Howorth</p>	<p>SAILING Photo by Glenn Allen</p>
<p>FISHING Photo by Glenn Allen</p>	<p>SEAL WATCHING</p>	<p>TIDEPOOLING</p>	<p>THE SEA CENTER</p>



Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary

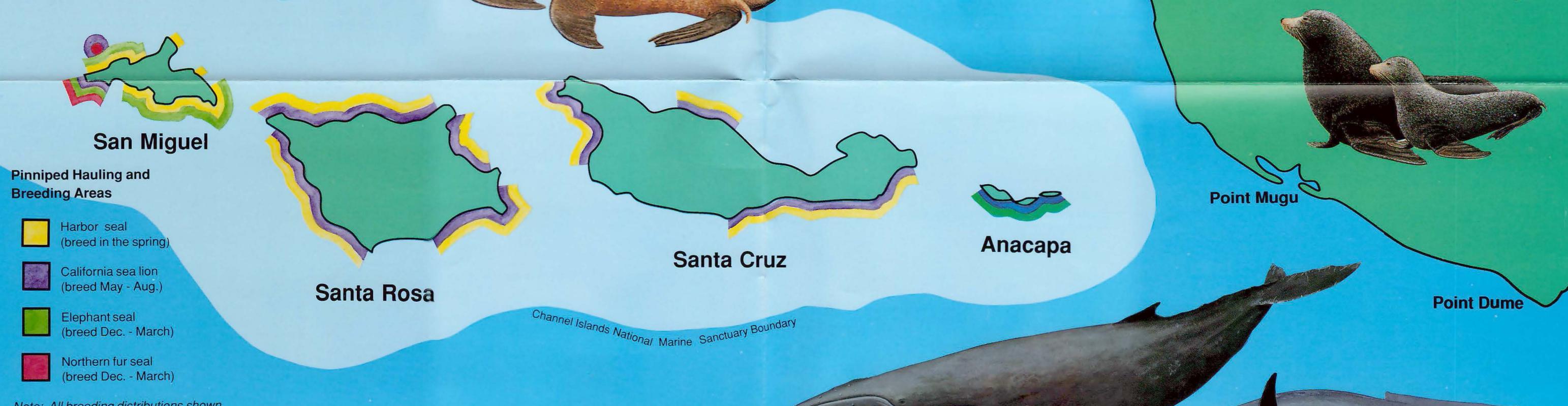
Things To See!



PINNIPEDS

Five species of pinnipeds - seals and sea lions - breed and live on the Channel Islands, and forage and play within the Sanctuary waters. Two families are represented in the region, the eared seals (*Otaridae*) and the true seals (*Phocidae*). Eared seals include the California sea lion (*Zalophus californianus*, bottom right), the northern fur seal (*Callorhinus ursinus*, second from left) and the Steller sea lion (*Eumetopias jubatus*, far left). The latter species has not bred on the Channel Islands recently, and worldwide its numbers are declining for undetermined reasons. The true seals that live here are the harbor seal (*Phoca vitulina*, top right) and the elephant seal (*Mirounga angustirostris*, third from left).

Nearly all species of pinnipeds have been hunted at one time or another, some nearly to extinction, for their meat, oil, ivory or fur. In 1972, the United States passed the Marine Mammal Protection Act, making it illegal to kill, harm or capture any kind of marine mammal without a permit.



WHALES

Sanctuary waters are frequented by more kinds of marine mammals than any body of water of comparable size. This includes more than 27 species of cetaceans (whales and porpoises), which occur in the Sanctuary at one time of the year or another. Scientists classify cetaceans into two main groups, baleen whales and toothed whales. Of the baleen whales, migrating gray whales (*Eschrichtius robustus*, top left) are the most frequently sighted. They may be seen during the months of December through April. The fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*, center at left) is also seen in the Sanctuary. In recent years, sightings of blue whales (*Balaenoptera musculus*, bottom left), minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*, third from top at right) and humpback whales (*Megaptera novaengliae*, top) have become more numerous.

Among the toothed whales that are found in the Sanctuary are the killer whale (*Orcinus orca*, second from top at right) and the pilot whale (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*, bottom).



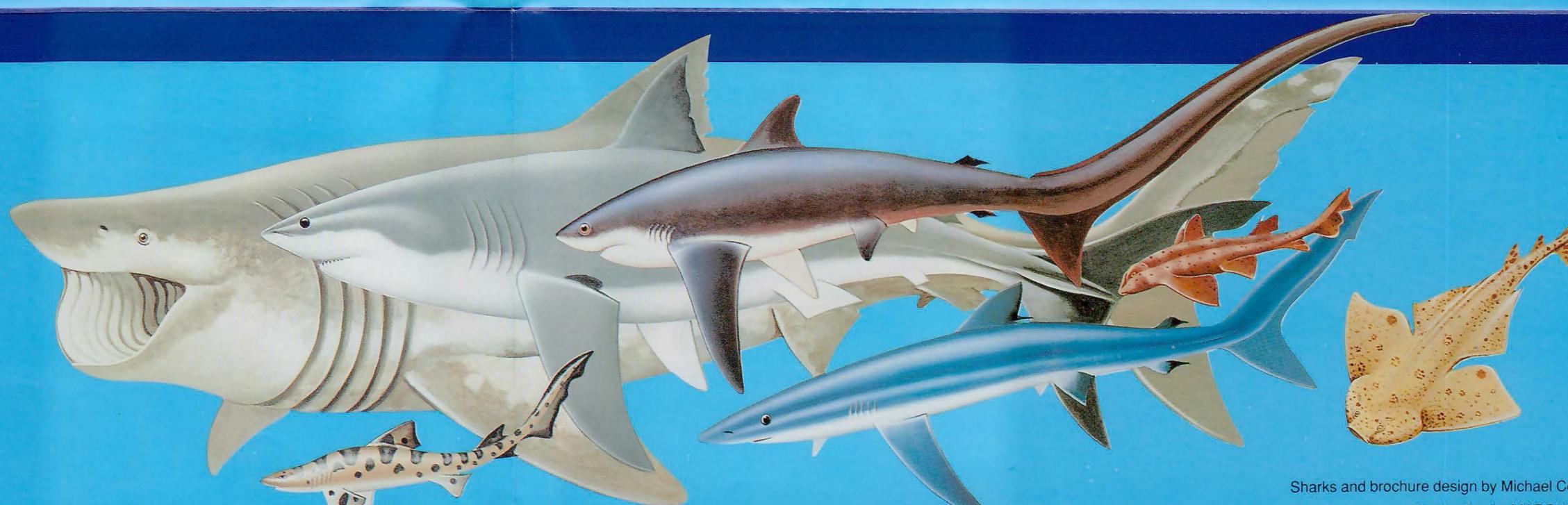
DOLPHINS

For those who cross the Channel to visit the Sanctuary and the Islands, often the most memorable part of the trip is an encounter with the common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*, bottom right). Because they travel in large groups, frolicking and leaping in the wake of the boat's passage, these charismatic mammals are the most easily observed of the Sanctuary cetaceans. Sometimes visitors to the Sanctuary are teased by a fleeting glimpse of Dall's porpoise (*Phocoenoides dalli*, top center) or the white scarred backs of Risso's dolphin (*Grampus griseus*, bottom left). Other Sanctuary residents in the dolphin family are the northern right-whale dolphin (*Lissodelphis borealis*, bottom center), the Pacific white-sided dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus obliquidens*, top right), and the bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*, top left).



SHARKS

More than twenty-five species of sharks live in the Sanctuary, some of them only occasional residents. Seen here are six Channel dwellers. The largest is the basking shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*), which grows to 45 feet. They often appear at the ocean's surface, their tall dorsal fins cutting through the rolling swell. The leopard shark (*Triakis semifasciata*) frequents shallow sandy areas. Adults reach a typical size of 5 feet. The most feared of the sharks are the great whites (*Carcharodon carcharias*), which reach 30 feet in length. They migrate along the coast, stopping where pinnipeds come ashore and breed. Thresher sharks (*Alopias vulpinus*), which grow to 18 feet, use their long caudal fins to herd or stun their prey. The blue shark (*Prionace glauca*) is an offshore resident, typically 6 feet long, that sometimes travels inshore at night to feed. The smaller (2 to 3 feet long) horn shark (*Heterodontus francisci*) is usually found in rocky reefs, especially around the islands. The Pacific angel shark (*Squatina californica*) is a bottom-dwelling species, relying on camouflage to ambush fish and other prey. (Left to right: basking shark, leopard shark, great white shark, thresher shark, blue shark, horn shark, Pacific angel shark)



The Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary is the natural habitat for an incomparably rich and diverse community of marine life. Because the Sanctuary is located in the transition zone between warm waters from the tropics and cold water from arctic seas, the area is an exceptional breeding ground for a great variety of plants and animals. Experiencing Sanctuary wildlife close up is a wonderful way to fully appreciate its grandeur, but visitors must keep in mind that these marine resources are protected by very specific regulations regarding their treatment. Marine mammals may not be disturbed, harassed, touched or picked up; this means maintaining your distance. If you suspect that a seal pup has been abandoned, call the Marine Mammal Center (805/687-3255). When exploring the tidepools on the islands, do not collect anything. Taking animals and shells is prohibited by law. And remember that the water itself must be protected. Do not dump refuse of any kind in the ocean. The authorized concessionaire for trips to the islands is Island Packers. Call them at (805) 642-7688 for details about upcoming trips.

Marine mammals by Pieter Folkens