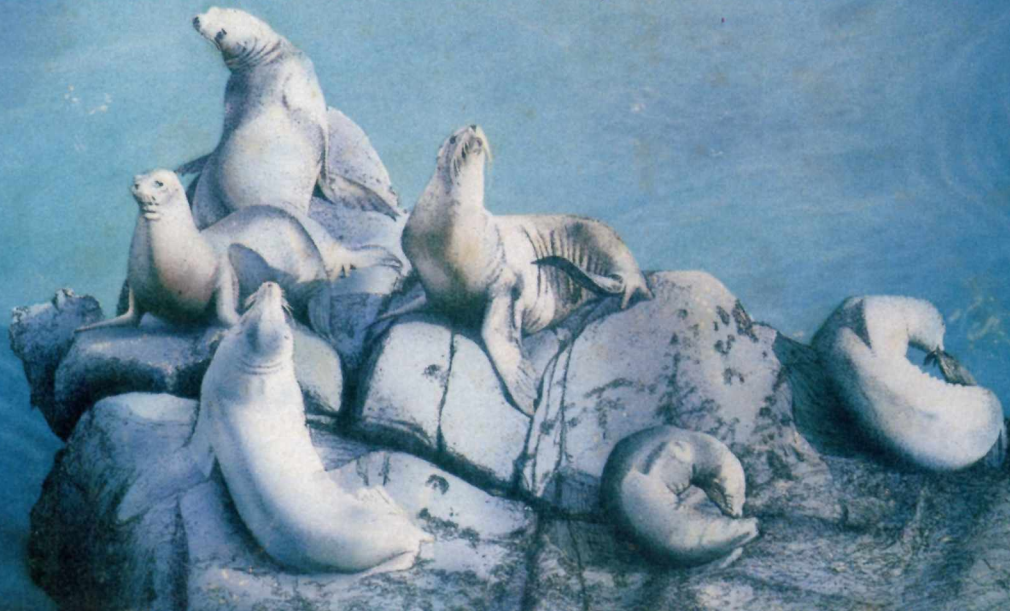


CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY





The waters of Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary support a great variety of marine life from microscopic plankton to huge blue whales and basking sharks. The colorful tidepools, sandy beaches, wave-beaten rocky cliffs and lush kelp forests of the Sanctuary surround the Channel Islands, which are actually the visible peaks of an extensive underwater ridge. A relatively shallow shelf with an average depth of 300 feet extends three to six miles around each of the islands. This highly variable sub-marine topography, in combination with the confluence of cold currents from the north and warm currents from the south, creates one of the richest marine environments in the United States.

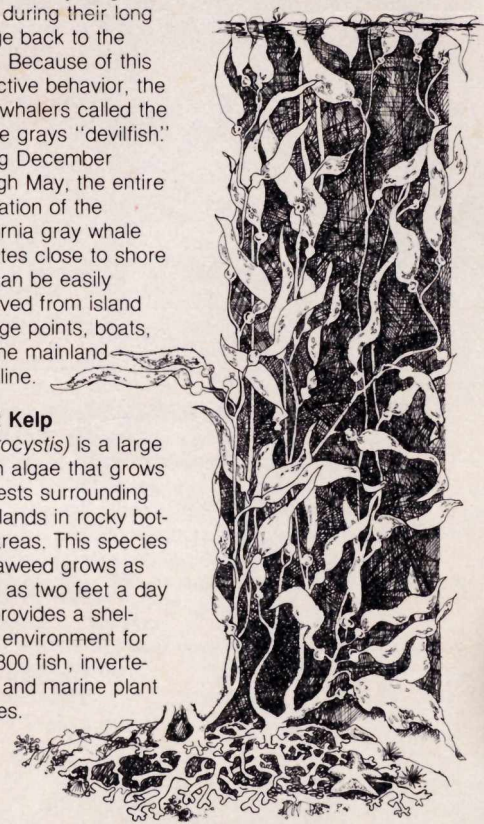
The kelp forests surrounding the islands are named for the large brown seaweed, *Macrocystis pyrifera*, which grows in dense stands. Anchored to the rocky bottom by root-like holdfasts, the kelp plants extend as much as 200 feet to the water's surface. Sheltered by the heavy canopy formed at the surface, hundreds of animals and other

species of seaweed flourish. On the rocky reefs where the kelp is attached, urchins, crabs and abalone graze among encrusting sponges and plumed worms. Small colonial filter-feeding organisms and multicolored snails are found on the leafy blades of the kelp. Many fish, like the rubber-lipped surf perch pictured, and the large, colorful sheephead swim through the dense foliage. Fish and invertebrates also use the kelp and other marine algae for shelter, food, and a place to lay their eggs.

Rising above the kelp forests, steep island cliffs and offshore rocks are crowded with thousands of nesting birds. The relatively shallow nearshore waters of the Sanctuary supply the 11 species of breeding seabirds with an abundant food source of fish and invertebrates. The largest Xantus' murrelet colony in the United States is found on Santa Barbara Island, as is the only U.S. colony of black storm petrels. These secretive seabirds spend most of their lives on or above the open ocean, coming ashore only once a year to breed and nest.

Gray Whale calves are born in the lagoons of Baja California at the end of their mother's southward migration from the Arctic. The female vigorously defends her young from harm during their long voyage back to the north. Because of this protective behavior, the early whalers called the female grays "devilfish." During December through May, the entire population of the California gray whale migrates close to shore and can be easily observed from island vantage points, boats, and the mainland shoreline.

Giant Kelp (*Macrocystis*) is a large brown algae that grows in forests surrounding the islands in rocky bottom areas. This species of seaweed grows as much as two feet a day and provides a sheltered environment for over 800 fish, invertebrate and marine plant species.





The California brown pelican colony on Anacapa Island, at one time nearly decimated from the effects of pollution has rebounded strongly, but the population is still endangered. Pelicans can often be seen gliding low over

the water's surface and suddenly diving to catch an unwary fish in their large bills. Numerous other shorebirds and migratory waterfowl such as loons, grebes, herons, plovers, ducks and geese join in using the Sanctuary waters for resting and feeding.

In the deeper waters of the Sanctuary, dolphins, porpoises, and whales can often be seen traversing the open waters in search of prey, while other predators such as sharks and seals hunt the schools of fish found there. Of

the more than 25 species of marine mammals known to inhabit the Sanctuary, the seals and sea lions, known as pinnipeds, are among the most visible. At one time pinnipeds roamed extensively along the southern California coast and "hauled out" on mainland beaches to breed. Hunting and development on the mainland has reduced their numbers and today the offshore islands and surrounding waters are among their last refuges. Together, the combination of isolation and a productive food source in the Sanctuary provides a favorable condition for breeding colonies, where five species of pinnipeds gather to breed, pup and nurse their young. The huge number of seals and sea lions around San Miguel Island are one of the world's outstanding wildlife displays.

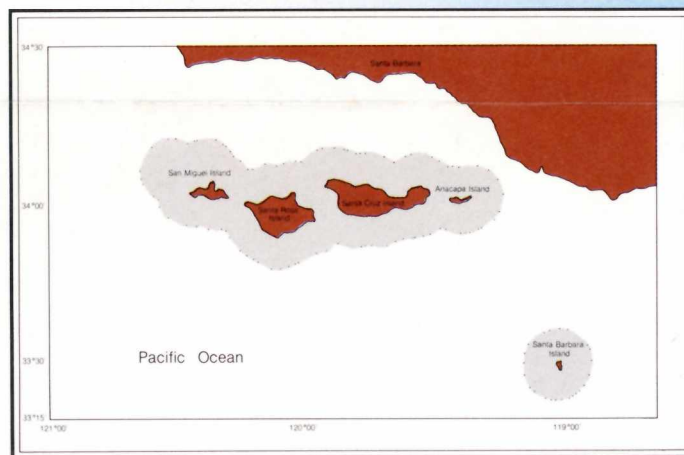
Whales, dolphins and porpoises, known collectively as cetaceans, are the other group of marine mammals inhabit-

ing Sanctuary waters. The gray whale is a well-known seasonal migrant and during certain times of year, visitors may be fortunate enough to see herds of as many as a thousand common dolphins leaping clear of the water in unison. Pilot whales are frequently sighted in the Sanctuary as are bottlenose and Pacific white-sided dolphins which often delight sailors by "riding the bow" of their boats.

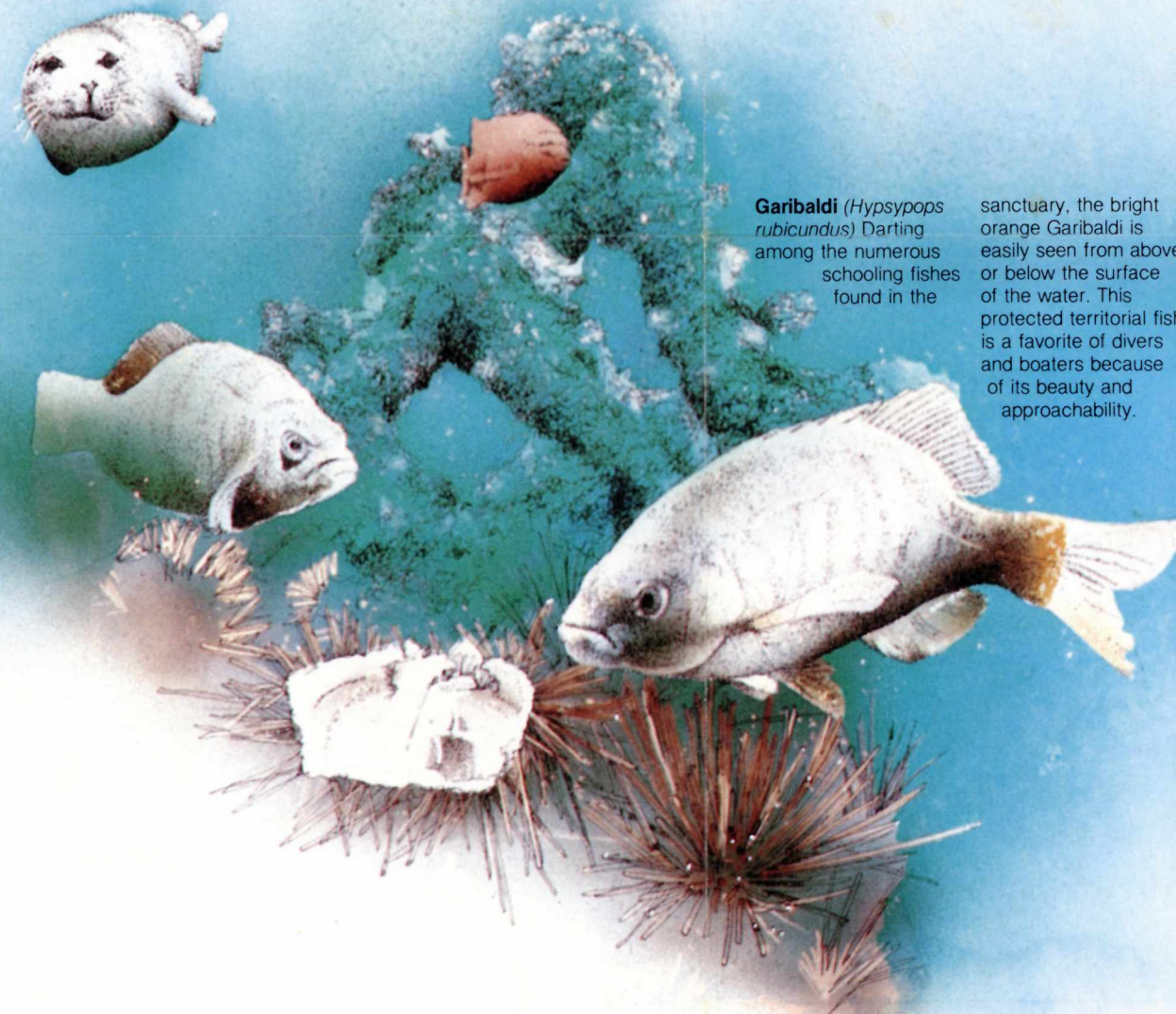
The Sanctuary's distance from the mainland limits many visitors from viewing the remarkable assembly of marine life found there. Yet by understanding the ecological value of this area one can still feel the sense of awe and admiration that these wonders and their rich diversity can inspire. The Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary was designated to protect important marine resources of national and worldwide significance, safeguarding not only individual species but also their habitats.

The Sanctuary, with the adjoining Channel Islands National Park, is a crucial part of our ecological heritage. Both serve as examples of man's continuing concern and appreciation for the marine environment. The Sanctuary Programs Division of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration manages the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary in cooperation with the National Park Service. The National Marine Sanctuary Program emphasizes the protection of special marine areas for the long-term benefit and enjoyment of the public. Sanctuary management includes research and educational programs to improve our understanding of the site's resources and promote their wise use.

Pinnipeds. The harbor seal (*Phoca vitulina*) while shy and easily subject to disturbance on land, is extremely inquisitive underwater. Stellar sea lions, California sea lions, Northern fur seals, and Elephant seals can also be seen breeding on San Miguel and feeding in the rich waters throughout the Sanctuary.



The Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary indicated by the shaded area, extends six nautical miles around the five northernmost Channel Islands (Anacapa, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, San Miguel, and Santa Barbara) and their offshore rocks and islets. The shoreward boundary extends from the mean high tideline seaward, encompassing 1252.5 square nautical miles. The Sanctuary includes the entire three miles of California State waters plus an equal distance of Federal waters. The Marine Sanctuary boundary coincides roughly with the island shelf and slope contours.



Garibaldi (*Hypsypops rubicundus*) Darting among the numerous schooling fishes found in the

sanctuary, the bright orange Garibaldi is easily seen from above or below the surface of the water. This protected territorial fish is a favorite of divers and boaters because of its beauty and approachability.

Tidepools. A great variety of ocean creatures may be found in the numerous rocky intertidal areas of the Sanctuary. A colorful community of plants and animals live in tidepools—pockets of water trapped between

the cracks and hollows of rocks when the tide recedes.



Recreational Opportunities abound for boaters, photographers, sport fishermen and divers in the clear waters of the Sanctuary. There are good anchorages available around the islands for private boats. Several commercial tour and sport fishing companies on the mainland also offer sightseeing, fishing and SCUBA trips year round.

Seabirds. The Channel Islands and their surrounding waters provide one of the nation's most important breeding areas for seabirds. Species such as the brown pelican and Xantus' murrelet depend on the highly productive waters of the Sanctuary to feed and raise their young.





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