

## WEST COAST REGIONAL PRIORITIES

### Krill Harvest Prohibited along the West Coast

In August 2009, NOAA published a regulation prohibiting the harvesting of krill (small shrimp-like crustaceans key to the marine food web) in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) off the coasts of California, Oregon and Washington. While the three states currently have regulations prohibiting the harvesting of krill within three miles of their coastlines, there was no similar federal restriction within the EEZ, which stretches from three to 200 miles from the coast.

The krill prohibition was adopted as Amendment 12 to the Coastal Pelagic Species Fishery Management Plan, which was developed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The krill harvest prohibition was originally proposed to the PFMC and NOAA Fisheries Service by the West Coast Region of the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. It reflects strong teamwork within NOAA and a commitment to addressing the issues raised by the PFMC and the sanctuary advisory councils for national marine sanctuaries in California. The rule preserves key ecological relationships in the California Current ecosystem, which includes five national marine sanctuaries.

### NOAA Partners Test New Research Vessel *Okeanos Explorer*

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries' West Coast Regional Office has been assisting NOAA's Office of Ocean Exploration and Research in developing exploration targets of mutual interest in sanctuary waters to field test the new NOAA research ship *Okeanos Explorer* as part of general shakedown of the vessel. This effort culminated in July 2009 with a multi-day multibeam sonar mapping field trial off the central and northern California coast, during which researchers mapped approximately 2,200 square miles of the seafloor at high resolutions. Areas mapped included the deep portions of Cordell Bank and sections of Gulf of the Farallones and northern Monterey Bay national marine sanctuaries. In addition, areas adjacent to Cordell Bank and Gulf of the Farallones national marine sanctuaries were mapped. The location of the World War II-era ship *USS Independence* was also confirmed during this mission.

## Channel Islands Sanctuary Advisory Council Members

### Officers

Public At-Large: Eric Kett (Chair)  
Alternate: Dan Powell

Commercial Fishing: Bruce Steele (Vice Chair)  
Alternate: vacant

Public At-Large: Phyllis Grifman (Secretary)  
Alternate: Amy Spandrio

### Other Non-Governmental Members

Business: Capt. Richard McKenna  
Alternate: vacant

Chumash Community: Jacy Ontiveros  
Alternate: vacant

Conservation: Linda Krop  
Alternate: Greg Helms

Education: Maria Petueli  
Alternate: vacant

Non-Consumptive Recreation: Debra Herring  
Alternate: Perry Ferguson

Recreational Fishing: David Bacon  
Alternate: Merit McCrea

Research: Dr. Robert Warner  
Alternate: Dr. Mark Steele

Tourism: Kathleen Fitzgerald  
Alternate: Andrea Mills

### Governmental Members

#### Local Government

Santa Barbara County: Dianne Black  
Alternate: Susan Curtis

Ventura County: Lyn Krieger  
Alternate: Marilyn Miller

#### State Government

California Coastal Commission: Steve Hudson  
Alternate: Barbara Carey

California Dept of Fish & Game: Marija Vojkovich  
Alternate: Kristine Barsky

California Resources Agency: Brian Baird  
Alternate: Amy Vierra

#### Federal Government

Minerals Management Service: Donna Schroeder  
Alternate: Dr. Ann Bull

National Park Service: Russell Galipeau  
Alternate: vacant

NOAA Fisheries: LCDR Peter Fischel  
Alternate: Elizabeth Petras

NOAA Gulf of the Farallones NMS (non-voting):  
Maria Brown  
Alternate: Brian Johnson

NOAA Monterey Bay NMS (non-voting): Paul Michel  
Alternate: Karen Grimmer

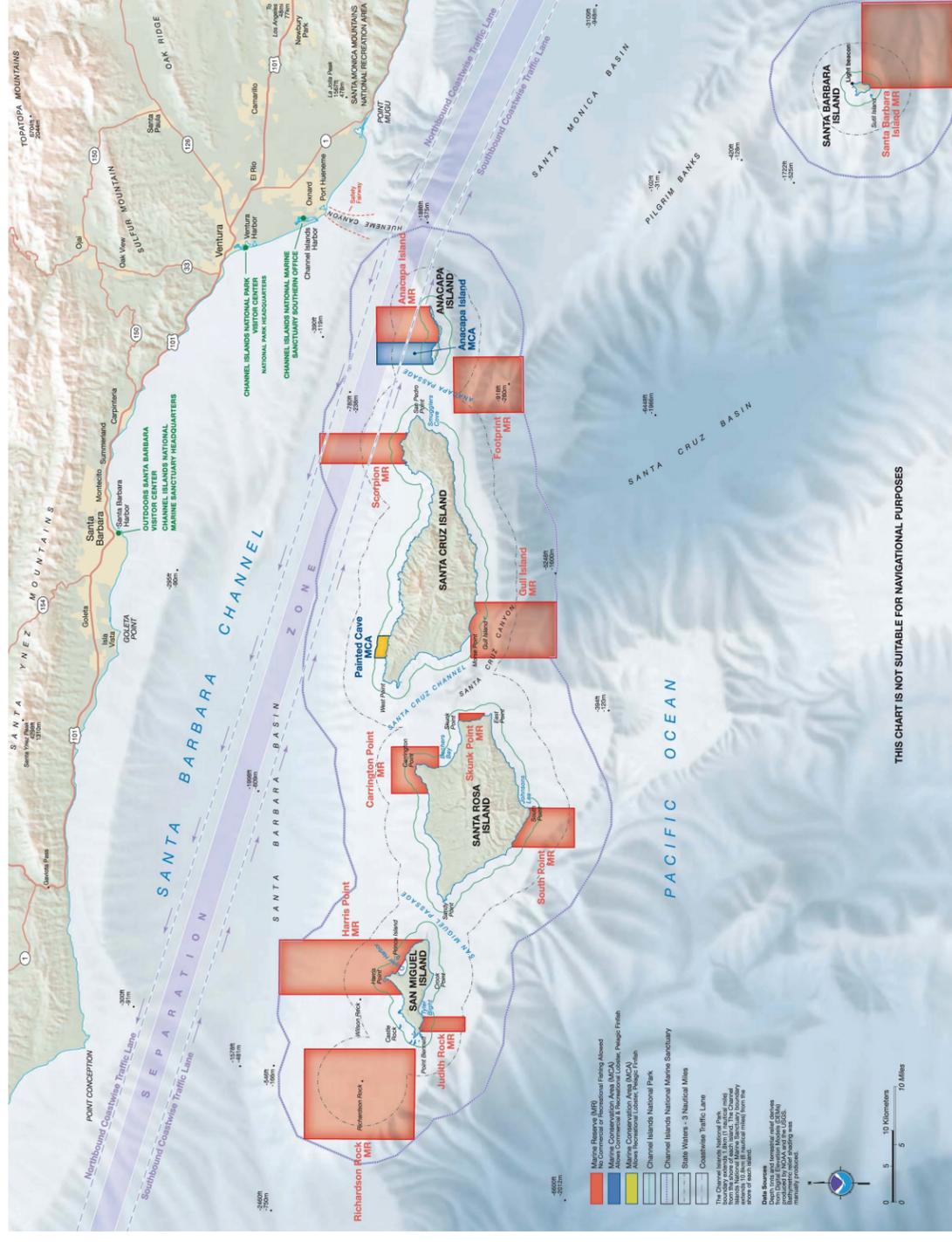
U.S. Coast Guard: CDR Jason Collins  
Alternate: LTJG Brittany Steward

U.S. Department of Defense: John Ugoretz  
Alternate: Walter Schobel

National Marine Sanctuaries  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

## 2009 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



**Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary** encompasses the waters surrounding San Miguel, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, Anacapa and Santa Barbara Islands off the coast of California. The combination of warm and cold water currents around the Channel Islands results in a great variety of plants and animals, including large forests of giant kelp, flourishing populations of fish and invertebrates, and abundant and diverse populations of whales, dolphins, sea lions, harbor seals and seabirds. Established Sept. 22, 1980.

<http://channelislands.noaa.gov>



## New Sanctuary Management Plan and Revised Regulations

The NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries released a new management plan for the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary in January 2009. The new plan provides a framework to expand research, education, outreach and enforcement programs, create and enhance partnerships, enhance wildlife protections, develop a water quality program, and reduce ocean impacts from vessels. Supporting the plan, NOAA finalized revised sanctuary regulations in January 2009. Changes to sanctuary regulations clarify and strengthen protections for marine habitats, sensitive species, water quality and submerged cultural and historical resources. Regulation highlights include: protecting natural ecosystems from the introduction of non-native species; protecting the area's water quality by prohibiting harmful vessel discharges; prohibiting discharges beyond the boundary of the sanctuary that enter and damage the sanctuary's resources; and improving habitat protection by limiting or prohibiting activities that impact the sea floor.

## Multicultural Program Continues to Engage Under-served Youth

During the 2008-2009 school year, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary's Multicultural Education for Resource Issues Threatening Oceans (MERITO) Academy trained and supported 23 minority-serving educators and 700 students from Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. The MERITO Academy is a marine science and conservation education program for under-served students funded by the NOAA Bay Watershed Education and Training Program and the Amgen Foundation. In 2009, educators were trained on use of the MERITO Academy curriculum, and students received class presentations and hands-on field trips. Their field experiences focused on watershed connections to the ocean, coastal habitat monitoring and exploration, and the sanctuary. All 700 students are enrolled in Title 1, Head Start, or Newcomers' schools and 85 percent are minorities. The MERITO program continues to receive high praise. In 2008, the program was recognized by the Department of Commerce with a Silver Medal award. In 2009, the program inspired moving Congressional testimony by teacher Terry Gallegos-Ellingson from Montalvo Elementary School in Ventura, Calif., who has seen firsthand how MERITO has enhanced learning and provided inspiration for her students.



## Report Assesses Conditions, Threats to Sanctuary Ecosystem

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary's condition report was released in September 2009. The report summarizes the pressures the sanctuary is facing, as well as the status and trends of water quality, habitat, living resources and marine archaeological resources. The report finds that water quality is in generally good condition due to the sanctuary's offshore location and distance from major urban population centers. However, habitat quality and living resource conditions have deteriorated somewhat due to a variety of human activities, as well as changing ocean conditions and disease. Many management and regulatory efforts are already in place to help counter these effects, and development of the report has helped to identify areas where more monitoring and research is needed. The report can be found at <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/science/condition>.

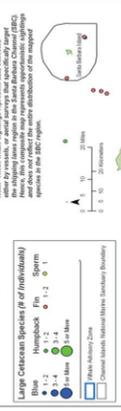
## Ocean Acidification Report Earns Award

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council adopted a comprehensive report in 2008 on ocean acidification, calling out the importance of prioritizing research, monitoring, education and leadership on this issue. Research findings show the basic chemistry of the Earth's ocean is changing because of excess carbon dioxide in the atmosphere from human-related activities. Scientists expect changes in seawater acidity to harm many calcifying organisms such as corals, mussels, algae and plankton that support fisheries and marine biodiversity. The report, which was developed by the advisory council's conservation working group, has proven to be widely influential to other advisory councils throughout the National Marine Sanctuary System, and earned the working group the 2009 Partner of the Year Award from the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries.



## Volunteers Making a Difference in the Naturalist Corps

The Channel Islands Naturalist Corps had another very productive year in 2009, with 135 trained volunteers contributing over 25,000 hours. In addition to the usual interpretive services that Naturalist Corps volunteers provide aboard whale watch vessels and at a variety of public outreach events, enhancements were made last year to the citizen science element of the program. More volunteers were trained and others advanced their skills in documenting marine mammals encountered in the sanctuary and Santa Barbara Channel. Channel Islands Naturalist Corps volunteers collected thousands of digital photos of marine mammals and made several hundred successful photo identifications, primarily of endangered blue and humpback whales. The data is shared with research partners and within NOAA and is housed online at [www.cisanctuary.org/mammals](http://www.cisanctuary.org/mammals). These reported sightings were also essential for the sanctuary staff's creation of whale-ship strike advisory maps. (Photo at left: Volunteer Outreach Coordinator Shauna Bingham (right) presents Staci Kaye-Carr (left) with the "Blue Whale Award" for 2009 to recognize her extraordinary volunteer contributions to the Channel Islands Naturalist Corps)



Sanctuary staff continued work on measures to reduce the risk of ship collisions with whales in and around the sanctuary and Santa Barbara Channel, an issue that has received heightened attention since 2007, when four endangered blue whales were struck. Sanctuary staff, in cooperation with NOAA Fisheries Service, U.S. Coast Guard and Marine Exchange of Southern California, conducted 22 whale observation flights throughout the season and, together with vessel sighting data, produced nine maps of observed whale locations. Sanctuary staff sent the maps to the shipping industry to make them aware of ship strike risks and to transmit a seasonal Coast Guard-issued Notice to Mariners containing a NOAA request that ships travel no faster than 10 knots in the Santa Barbara Channel. Sanctuary staff also partnered with scientists from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography and Cascadia Research to assist in whale tagging work to help detect the behavioral responses of whales to passing ships, and to better understand ship traffic and its acoustic impacts. In September 2009, the sanctuary advisory council unanimously approved a suite of long-term recommendations aimed at reducing the threat of ship strikes. The recommendations include consideration of research and monitoring, education and outreach, ship speed reduction, changes in vessel patterns, and engagement of agency partners and industry. Looking ahead, sanctuary staff will work with NOAA Fisheries Service to consider implementation of the advisory council's recommendations.



## Monitoring Project Observes Healthy Eelgrass Beds

In 2009, divers from the non-profit organization Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary and National Park took part in an ongoing project to monitor sanctuary eelgrass beds and associated invertebrate and fish communities. These partners conducted 95 dives at eight sites from the sanctuary's research vessel *Shearwater*. Eelgrass is an important but relatively rare sanctuary habitat, and is listed by NOAA as Essential Fish Habitat. A restoration site at Anacapa Island now contains a lush and spreading eelgrass bed. Maps were developed by Channelkeeper and partners to help boaters avoid anchoring in the sensitive habitats. These watchful efforts also contributed to the Channel Islands National Park modifying a mooring buoy at Scorpion Anchorage so that it holds anchor chain off the seafloor and significantly reduces damage to eelgrass on the bottom.