

CHANNEL ISLANDS

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY





Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, located off the coast of Santa Barbara and Ventura counties in California, encompasses 1,470 square miles of water offshore of San Miguel, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, Anacapa, and Santa Barbara islands. It is a special place for endangered species, sensitive habitats, historic shipwrecks and cultural resources. Many valuable commercial and recreational activities, such as fishing, shipping, and tourism occur here. For the Indigenous Chumash people, waters of the sanctuary and the northern Channel Islands hold a value that is beyond measure. The sanctuary provides protection through research, education, conservation, and stewardship.

LOCATION



QUICK FACTS

LOCATION

In California, about 23 miles offshore from Santa Barbara and 13 miles from Ventura

PROTECTED AREA

1,470 square miles

DESIGNATION

September 1980

HABITATS

- Kelp forests
- Open ocean
- Rocky reefs
- Deep sea corals & sponge communities
- Seagrass meadows
- Shallow sand bottoms

KEY SPECIES

- Ashy storm-petrel
- Blue whale
- California brown pelican
- California spiny lobster
- Giant sea bass
- Humpback whale
- Northern elephant seal
- Pink-footed shearwater
- Red abalone
- Scripps's murrelet

ABOUT THE ARTWORK (front side)

A crew of modern-day Chumash, who are Indigenous to the area, paddle a Tomol (plank canoe) under the milky way and past Anacapa Island's lighthouse and famous arch rock. Below the waves reveal a Channel Islands kelp forest, renowned for an abundance of color, beauty and life, where California sea lions swim among a garibaldi, leopard shark, white abalone, California spiny lobster, California sheephead, giant sea bass, sea stars, and red and purple urchins.



◀ GARIBALDI (*Hypsypops rubicundus*)

The garibaldi, easily identified by its bright orange color, is the California state marine fish. Being fiercely territorial, it's known to chase away divers from its nesting area.

▶ GIANT SEA BASS (*Stereolepis gigas*)

Near the top of the kelp forest ecosystem food web, this fish can grow 7 feet long and weigh 700 pounds!



◀ CALIFORNIA SEA LION (*Zalophus californianus*)

The Channel Islands offer important feeding areas, haul-outs, and sheltered beaches for these playful, intelligent, and very vocal (sound like barking dogs) mammals.

▶ CALIFORNIA BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*)

Only known to breed on Anacapa and Santa Barbara Islands in the U.S., this bird can make impressive dives from ten to thirty feet above the surface to feed.



◀ RED ABALONE (*Haliotis rufescens*)

Red abalone, the largest species of abalone in the world, are identified by red-rimmed shells and black bodies. They live in kelp forest ecosystems and rely on drift kelp for food.

▶ SUNFLOWER STAR (*Pycnopodia helianthoides*)

Sunflower stars are the largest in the sea star family. Many arms give it predatory advantages over other sea stars. Populations have been devastated recently by disease.



BELOW

Every Fall, Chumash crews paddle a Tomol, a traditional plank canoe, 23 miles across the Santa Barbara channel to Santa Cruz Island (Limuw) where they are welcomed home by the Chumash community encamped at Scorpion Ranch. As the first stewards of this marine environment, Chumash people are participating in the global revival of Indigenous maritime cultures and the continuation of their own unique maritime traditions.

AMERICA'S UNDERWATER TREASURES

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries serves as the trustee for a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 620,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington state to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. The network includes a system of 15 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments. For more information on the National Marine Sanctuary System, visit: sanctuaries.noaa.gov



- National Marine Sanctuary
- ▲ Marine National Monument
- Proposed National Marine Sanctuary

Scale varies in this perspective. Adapted from National Geographic Maps.



Photos: Matt McIntosh/NOAA (lighthouse); Claire Fackler/NOAA (Garibaldi); Robert Schwemmer/NOAA (sea bass); Curtis Wee/Get Into Your Sanctuary photo contestant (sea lion); Matt McIntosh/NOAA (pelican); Robert Schwemmer/NOAA (abalone); Chad King/NOAA (sunflower); Robert Schwemmer/NOAA (Tomol crew). Poster Art: Matt McIntosh