

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary is the largest national marine sanctuary and one of the largest marine protected areas in the United States. Within the boundaries of the sanctuary is a rich array of habitats, from rugged rocky shores and lush kelp forests to one of the largest underwater canyons in North America. These habitats abound with life, from tiny microscopic plants to enormous blue whales. The sanctuary is home to a diversity of species including marine mammals, seabirds and shorebirds, sea turtles, fishes, invertebrates, and marine algae

Congressionally designated in 1992 as a National Marine Sanctuary for the purpose of resource protection, research, education, and public use.

- Includes bays, estuaries, coastal and oceanic waters
- High diversity of flora and fauna including 33 species of marine mammals, 94 species of seabird, 345 species of fishes, and numerous species of invertebrates and plants
- Contains the Monterey Canyon, a submarine canyon that rivals the Grand Canyon in size

- Contains an estimated 225 documented shipwrecks or lost aircraft and 718 historic sites

A new management plan for Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary was released in November 2008, and it contains a number of management actions that will address current issues and concerns. The plan stresses an ecosystem-based approach to management, which requires consideration of ecological interrelationships not only within the sanctuary, but within the larger context of the California Current ecosystem. It also makes essential an increased level of cooperation with other management agencies in the region. The management plan includes twenty-nine action plans that will guide the sanctuary for the next five to ten years.



Fig – 5.3

Courtesy: www.coastal-watershed.org/

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary contains spectacularly rich and diverse marine life. With a variety of habitats including kelp forests, sandy bottom, and open ocean, it is home to

diverse fish and invertebrate communities, serves as part of the migratory route of whales, and as feeding and breeding grounds for seabirds and marine mammals. Located offshore of Southern California, the sanctuary is adjacent to the growing counties of Ventura and Santa Barbara, and not far from the heavily populated Los Angeles metropolitan area, bringing to it a variety of recreational and commercial human activities, including diving, kayaking, fishing, boating, wildlife viewing, and shipping.



Fig – 5.4

- The Chumash were the first people to inhabit the Channel Islands.
- The islands were first visited by Europeans in 1542.
- In the 1800s the islands served as a location for sea otter, seal, and sea lion hunting. Subsequently, the land was cultivated for ranching and farming purposes.
- The sanctuary was designated on Sept. 22, 1980, and encompasses 1,470 square statute miles (1,110 square nautical miles).
- In 2003, 12 marine protected areas were designated by the California Department of Fish and Game Commission.
- In 2007 several of the marine protected areas were extended to the federal boundary and one new area was created.
- Numerous shipwrecks are located in waters surrounding the islands.

The sanctuary is an important area for recreational and commercial use, including diving, kayaking, fishing, boating, wildlife viewing, shipping transit, and research.

The sanctuary contains a network of marine zones established in state waters in 2003 and extended to the federal boundary in 2007 that will help protect these valuable resources. These marine zones now include 11 no-take zones (also called marine reserves) and two marine conservation areas where some fishing is allowed. In addition, a new management plan for the Channel Islands sanctuary was released in 2009; it recommends a number of management actions that will address concerns of resource protection and management. The plan stresses an ecosystem-based approach to management that requires consideration of ecological interrelationships not only within the sanctuary, but within the larger context of the Santa

Barbara Channel. Specific management recommendations include an improved water quality monitoring program, actions to reduce vessel discharges, and directed research on emerging issues.

Overfishing can be viewed as a case of the tragedy of the commons; in that sense, solutions would promote property rights, such as privatization and fish farming.

According to recent research on the British Columbia halibut fishery, where the commons has been at least partly privatized, substantial ecological and economic benefits have resulted. There is less damage to fish stocks, the fishing is safer, and fewer resources are needed to achieve a given harvest.

Another possible solution, at least for some areas, is fishing quotas, so fishermen can only legally take a certain amount of fish. A more radical possibility is declaring certain areas of the sea “no-go zones” and make fishing there strictly illegal, so the fish in that area have time to recover and repopulate.

Controlling consumer behaviour and demand is a key in mitigation action. Worldwide a number of initiatives emerged to provide consumers with information regarding the conservation status of the seafood available to them. The Guide to Good Fish Guides lists a number of these.