



WEST COAST NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES

*Unique travel experiences brought to you by
America's underwater treasures!*

Five national marine sanctuaries. A wealth of unique travel experiences.

America's protected ocean treasures are must-see additions to any travel itinerary. Easily accessible from Los Angeles, San Francisco or Seattle, the five national marine sanctuaries off the West Coast are vibrant places where ocean wildlife continues to thrive in uninhibited beauty. Discover unforgettable recreational adventures for a personal ocean experience.

Your national marine sanctuaries are open to visitors year-round and are FREE to the public to enjoy.



Photo: NOAA

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM

Olympic Coast

Greater Farallones

Cordell Bank

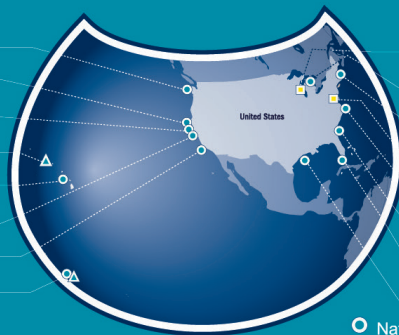
Papahānaumokuākea

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale

Monterey Bay

Channel Islands

American Samoa (U.S.)
(Including Rose Atoll)



Wisconsin - Lake Michigan

Thunder Bay

Stellwagen Bank

Mallows Bay - Potomac River

Monitor

Gray's Reef

Florida Keys

Flower Garden Banks

○ National Marine Sanctuary

△ Marine National Monument

■ Proposed National Marine Sanctuary

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

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries serves as the trustee for a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 600,000 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 13 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments. For more information on the National Marine Sanctuary System, visit: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>

West Coast Sanctuary Locations

1. Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, Washington

Nearest major cities:
Seattle, Port Angeles, Olympia, Aberdeen

2. Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary, California

Nearest major cities:
Santa Rosa, San Francisco, San Jose

3. Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, California

Nearest major cities:
Monterey, San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Rosa

4. Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, California

Nearest major cities:
Monterey, Santa Cruz, San Francisco, San Jose

5. Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, California

Nearest major cities:
Santa Barbara, Ventura, Oxnard, Los Angeles



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The most northwestern tip of the contiguous United States, Cape Flattery is a must-see experience (Photo: NOAA Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary).

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary

Located off the remote coastline of Olympic Peninsula in Washington State, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary protects over 2,400 square nautical miles of marine waters and is home to some of the most iconic marine mammals and seabirds in the Pacific Ocean.

Wildlife viewing on Cape Flattery Trail:

Located on Makah Indian Reservation, the Cape Flattery trail takes you “back in time” through old growth coastal forests leading to an overlook with sweeping views of Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, Tatoosh Island and lighthouse and a bevy of seabirds. Here, you’ll see Oystercatchers, Common Murres and sea lions, while a perfectly timed visit can bring gray whales and Tufted Puffins into view.

Follow the Whale Trail: Following the coast south, “The Whale Trail” signs mark the best wildlife viewing options from shore, including Shi Shi Beach, La Push, Destruction Island viewpoint and Kalaloch Beach.

“Extreme” kayaking: Sanctuary waters challenge expert sea kayakers with extreme conditions leading to a truly exceptional experience. With views of the pristine Olympic coast, much of it so remote it is inaccessible to foot travel, a kayaker is provided unrivaled views of soaring sea stacks, intricate rock formations, and unspoiled pocket beaches that make up this wild and rugged coastline.



The view from Whale Trail locations can provide a glimpse of humpback whales, gray whales, orcas, sea lions, seals and sea otters, as well as Brown Pelicans, Tufted Puffins, Common Murres or Storm Petrels (Photo: NOAA/OCNMS).



From Cape Flattery south to the Copalis River, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary waters offer a myriad of kayaking opportunities to the experienced paddler, providing unmatched wildlife viewing and breathtaking scenery (Photo: NOAA/OCNMS).



Thousands of visitors dig for clams at Pacific Beach, Moclips Beach and Kalaloch Beach (Photo: NOAA/OCNMS).

Digging for tasty treasure: Imagine a weekend adventure, where the hunt for treasure leads to some of the choicest seafood in the Pacific Northwest. Clam digging seasons generally take place from November through May. Basic equipment can help you harvest these meaty mollusks at low tide, where most treasure hunters are richly rewarded. This family activity will please the seafood gatherer and the

beachcomber alike, with the shoreline of this marine protected area as the backdrop to a fruitful and flavorful family weekend.

Ecotourism: *Come for the cleanup, stay for the adventure.* Every April, volunteers take part in the Washington Coastal Cleanup, a true beach steward experience. Since 2000, more than 10,000 volunteers have collected over 320 tons of trash from the beaches. Breathtaking views make service to the environment a soul-feeding experience while maintaining the coastline for future generations. Add days before or after the cleanup to discover and enjoy the area.



Makah petroglyphs etched into Wedding Rocks along the Cape Alava coast provide exquisite photo ops (Photo: NOAA/OCNMS).

Five Must-See Beaches in Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary:

With 135 miles of coastline that includes the longest stretch of wilderness coast in the lower 48 United States, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary beaches are unmatched in pristine nature, timeless landscapes and sublime serenity.

- 1) Shi Shi Beach and Point of Arches: Two-mile hike, Sitka spruce, vast rocky sea stacks.
- 2) Cape Alava: Three-mile hike, western cedar and Sitka spruce, mammal and bird sightings, tide pools, shorebirds.
- 3) Second Beach: Access the trail on the Quileute Indian Reservation. Short hike through the coastal forest and short but steep descent to the beach. Natural arch, bald eagles, seals. Offshore sea stacks with nesting seabird colonies.
- 4) Ruby Beach: Easy access for most. Quarter mile trail at the mouth of cedar creek and the Pacific Ocean, offshore Abbey Island, tide pools.
- 5) Kalaloch Beach: High bluff views, sandy beach access. Pets are allowed (leashed). Fishing and shellfish harvest following state and park regulations are popular activities.

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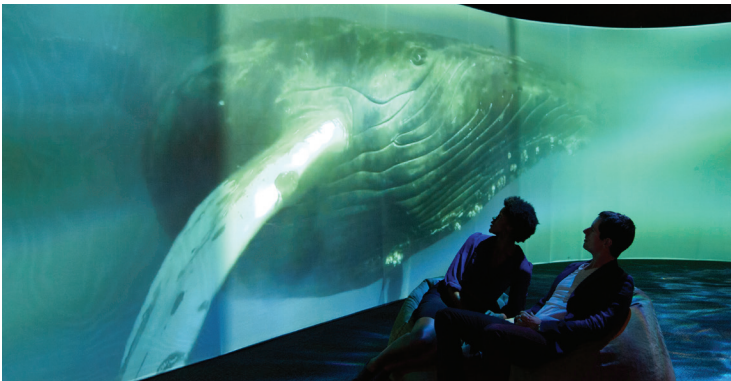
Kalaloch Beach: A favorite for family vacations and weekend warriors (Photo courtesy of Janet Lamont).

Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary

Visit the edge of the continent and step back in time! When you travel through the bucolic hills of West Marin to the Point Reyes Lighthouse, you travel to the edge of the continent where land precipitously drops into the sea. The surrounding waters of Cordell Bank and Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuaries thrive with wildlife. Look for migrating whales, coastal seabirds, seals and sea lions. Smell the salty crisp air and stand amidst the dynamic ocean waters that may be silently still or violently wild on any given day.



The historic Point Reyes Lighthouse stands watch alerting ships to coastal dangers. The Point Reyes National Seashore Lighthouse visitor center greets you and offers exhibits of our rich maritime and natural history. Visit the recent expansion of the visitor center where you can enjoy sweeping views of the ocean, learn about the sanctuary's rich marine life and what we can do to protect it (Photo: Matt McIntosh, NOAA).



Sit back and watch underwater scenes swim by in an immersive theatre. Explore the diversity of ocean life in this amazing but remote oceanic realm (Photo: Terry Lorant, Courtesy of Oakland Museum of California).

Visit the sanctuary without getting wet: Dive into the depths of Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary without getting wet by visiting an expansive permanent exhibit at the vibrant Oakland Museum of California. Treasure its rich history and consider all we have learned about the ocean with the challenges this watery world presents. For information on visiting the exhibit, go to: <http://museumca.org>.

Offshore Wildlife Adventure: Cordell Bank is a seabirder's paradise. Due to the swiftly changing oceanographic conditions at this offshore sanctuary, seabirds from all around the Pacific make their way to Cordell Bank.

Take your chances and see what the ocean has to offer by traveling with sanctuary educators and naturalists to this biological hotspot. Whales, dolphins, seals, sea lions, seabirds and more may be seen on this wet and salty adventure. Join us in August on this once a year field trip. For information on registering, visit: <http://www.ptreyes.org/camps-classes-programs/field-institute>.



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Photo: NOAA/CBNMS

Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary

Out beyond San Francisco's Golden Gate lies an ocean wilderness. In our nation's most urban sanctuary, we humans share the sea and shores with an incredible array of ocean life, ranging from giant blue whales to tiny marine animals that light up the waves with an eerily beautiful light. From majestic to micro, you are bound to encounter something remarkable here.

Photo: Matt McIntosh, NOAA/ONMS

Tidepooling and coastal exploration: Rugged sections of coast create a dynamic interface between land and sea, perfect for creatures that lurk in the rocky intertidal. Pounding surf dissipates into limpid pools where feathery-finned sculpins dart among brilliant corals, spikey urchins, jeweled turban snails and voracious sea stars. Peer into crevices for the rare octopus and skulking crabs. Or search for infinity along miles-long beaches at Point Reyes National Seashore, where the mighty Pacific slams against the continent's edge. Explore the Sonoma/Mendocino coast's wild rocky shores including Bowling Ball Beach's odd, spherical concretions. Arm yourself with a tide book, binoculars and waterproof (or wet-able) jacket and shoes. Savor the salt air, refresh your soul.

Quarter-million seabirds to view: The Farallon Islands, at the heart of the sanctuary, are a B&B to a quarter-million seabirds, including Tufted Puffins and penguin-like murrelets. Join a naturalist-led day cruise there, searching for whales en route. On the mainland, visit Tomales Bay and Bolinas Lagoon, both Wetlands of International Importance, astride the Great Pacific Flyway. The heronry at Audubon Canyon Ranch on the lagoon is world-famous. At Año Nuevo State Park, two hours south of San Francisco, giant elephant seals emerge from sanctuary waters to mate and molt. Docents lead tours during winter breeding season.



Bowling Ball Beach beckons!
(Photo: Matt McIntosh, NOAA/ONMS)



Tufted Puffins breed and feed in Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (Photo: Sophie Webb, ONMS/Point Blue Conservation Science).



Sensational vistas await you along the shorelines of Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (Photo: Matt McIntosh, NOAA/ONMS).

Kayaking, other water sports: Enjoy a seal's-eye view as you paddle the sanctuary's calmer waters of Tomales Bay, Bolinas Lagoon, or the Esteros de San Antonio and Americano. Enjoy gentle encounters with harbor seals and leopard sharks while gliding above swirling eelgrass beds. Observe stately egrets in search of unwary fish and reptiles. Bolinas Beach offers surfing for the beginning and more advanced wave rider.

The Virtual Visitor: The California Academy of Sciences in Golden Gate Park features a three-story aquarium showcasing Farallones marine life and offers docent-led touch tank experiences. The Farallones Presidio Visitor Center features life-sized replicas of white sharks, and at the Aquarium of the Bay's interactive exhibits like open shark and ray pools, you'll appreciate the many forms and strategies that enable these species to survive and thrive!



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Photo: California Academy of Sciences



Photo: NOAA



Photo: Steve Lonhart, NOAA



Photo: NOAA



Photo: Glenn Allen, NOAA

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

Whether it's watching whales, paddling among kelp forests, or exploring tide pools, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary provides a spectacular place to enjoy the ocean and outdoors. Try your luck at reeling in a salmon, go surfing and catch a wave, get face to face with fishes while snorkeling, or just take a relaxing stroll along a beautiful beach and enjoy the breathtaking scenery. You'll discover rugged rocky shores, sandy beaches and seafloor, lush kelp forests, offshore open waters, deep sea canyons and a giant seamount that support a wealth and variety of life found nowhere else. Known as the "Serengeti of the Sea," the sanctuary is an incredible place to view marine life at any time of year. Watching wildlife here is like going on a marine counterpart to an African safari!

Kayak exploration: Paddling in the sanctuary's kelp forests or wetlands of Elkhorn Slough offers an up-close-and-personal way to explore. If you are quiet and look closely, you may see crabs, jellies or other small animals. Seals, sea lions and sea otters often cruise among giant kelp plants or in the slough's channels. Keep an eye out for our "Team OCEAN" volunteers in sanctuary kayaks who will help you learn more about sanctuary wildlife and the best way to watch so you won't disturb the animals' natural behaviors.



When kayaking, look for seabirds such as Brown Pelicans, cormorants and grebes diving for fish, or one of the thousands of migrating shorebirds making a stopover. (Photo: Kate Thompson, NOAA/ONMS)



Sea stars and anemones bring bursts of color to this tidepool (Photo: NOAA)

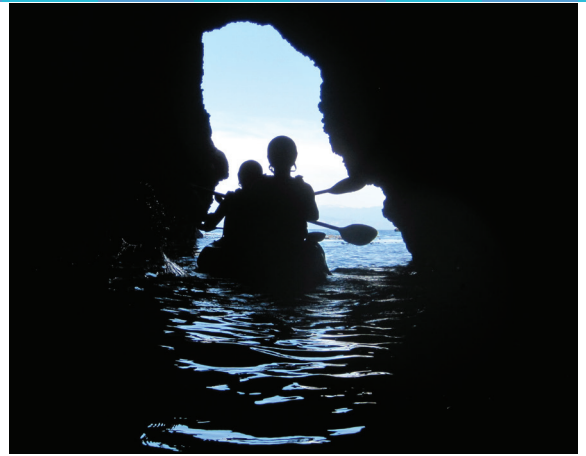
World-class tidepooling: During low tide, the sanctuary's rocky shore is a great place to discover sea life without getting wet! Take a stroll among the tide pools that provide oases for sea life when the tide subsides along the shorelines of San Mateo and San Luis Obispo County. Look for crabs wedged into crevices, snails and limpets hugging the rocks, or worms and sea stars under a cover of seaweed. Watch as sea anemones unfold flowerlike tentacles to snag a meal. Leave everything as you found it, and you'll enjoy the same delights when you return!

Interactive visitor centers: Stop by one of our free interpretive centers to enjoy interactive exhibits and take advantage of our knowledgeable volunteers who are on-hand to answer your questions and enhance your understanding of the sanctuary. We have multiple locations to accommodate visitors, including the Sanctuary Exploration Center in Santa Cruz, located steps away from the famed Beach Boardwalk, and the Coastal Discovery Center, located at William Randolph Hearst Memorial State Beach on beautiful San Simeon Bay.

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Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary

A mere 25 miles off the coast of Santa Barbara, California await the waters that swirl around the five islands within Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. A unique environment exists beneath the waves, created by converging warm and cool currents that provide nutrients to support one of the most biologically diverse concentrations of marine life in the world. Visitors to Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary can enjoy recreational opportunities such as tidepooling, fishing, diving, snorkeling and kayaking.



Kayakers of all skill levels will enjoy paddling along on a guided tour to explore volcanic rocky seashores punctuated with numerous sea caves and arches (Photo: Claire Fackler, NOAA/ONMS).



Whale watchers enjoy a close encounter (Photo: Bob Perry).



A diver explores a plane that went down in the Santa Barbara Channel in 1945 (Photo: Robert Schwemmer, NOAA).

Wildlife viewing gallery: Join the lucky whale watchers and wildlife enthusiasts that have discovered this natural viewing gallery that annually hosts over 27 species of whales and dolphins, including the rare blue, humpback and sei whales. On the islands, seabird colonies and groups of breeding seals and sea lions flourish. Brown Pelicans and Western Gulls glide overhead, among the 60 species of birds that grace the local skies. Take advantage of the friendly and knowledgeable Channel Islands Naturalist Corps volunteers, who lead tours on whale watch vessels and island hikes at Channel Islands National Park throughout the year.

Dive Giant Kelp or historic shipwrecks: On the surface there are hundreds of reasons to explore the Channel Islands - and thousands more beneath it. Strap on your snorkel or SCUBA gear to wander among the forests of giant kelp that provide refuge to numerous fish and invertebrates. Take in scenery that makes the area a favorite among underwater photographers. Explore the depths that have claimed over 150 historic shipwrecks ... and only 25 have been discovered! Fortunately, many of the shipwrecks in Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary are accessible to divers at depths appealing to a variety of skill levels.

Visitor Centers: Visitors can find information about Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary at the following local visitor centers, museums and aquariums:

- [California Welcome Center, Central Coast - Oxnard](#)
- [Channel Islands Boating Center](#)
- [Sea Center Aquarium](#)
- [Santa Barbara Maritime Museum](#)
- [Channel Islands National Park Visitor Center](#)

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Ocean Etiquette

Each time someone visits a marine or coastal environment, they have the wonderful opportunity to encounter wildlife. However, the unfortunate potential to harm marine life and resources exists with every visit. Because we cherish our marine resources and want to encourage their appreciation, the National Marine Sanctuary System sees every visitor as a potential steward of our sanctuary resources. The Ocean Etiquette program calls on each of you to take on that responsibility.



Wildlife photographers keep their distance and use zoom lenses to get a shot of an elephant seal along the coast of Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (Photo: NOAA/MBNMS).



Learn before you go

Read about the wildlife, viewing sites and local regulations to get the most from your wildlife viewing experience. Research on the internet, buy regional viewing guidebooks, talk with local residents and hire local guides to increase your chances of seeing marine wildlife in a responsible and enjoyable way.



Keep your distance

Use binoculars, spotting scopes and cameras with zoom lenses to get a closer look from a safe distance. Marine wildlife may be very sensitive to human disturbance, and if cornered, they can harm the viewer or leave the area. Any avoidance tactics or change in marine animals' behavior is a sign that you are too close! If wildlife approaches you, stay calm and slowly back away or place boat engines in neutral. When closer encounters occur, do not make sudden moves or obstruct the travel path of the animals – let them have the unhindered right of way.



Never chase or harass wildlife

Following a wild animal that is trying to escape is dangerous. Never completely surround the animal, trap an animal between a vessel and shore, block its escape route, or come between mother and young. When viewing from a boat, operate at slow speed, move parallel to the swimming animals, and avoid approaching head-on or from behind. If you are operating a non-motorized vessel, emit periodic noise to make wildlife aware of your presence and avoid surprise.



Stay away from wildlife that appears abandoned or sick

Some marine animals, such as seals, leave the water or are exposed at low tide as part of their natural life cycle — there may be nothing wrong with them. Young animals that appear to be orphaned may actually be under the watchful eye of a nearby parent, and your disturbance might interrupt normal nursing or feeding behavior. An animal that is sick or injured is already vulnerable and may be more likely to bite. If you think an animal is in trouble, contact the local authorities for advice.



Lend a hand with trash removal

Human garbage is one of the greatest threats to marine wildlife. Carry a trash bag with you and pick up litter found along the shore and in the water. Plastic bags, floating debris and monofilament line pose a life-threatening risk to wildlife that can get entangled or mistake these items for food.



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<http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>