Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Accomplishments
Fiscal Year 2021

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary protects 1,470 square miles of ocean waters around five of the Channel Islands: Anacapa, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, San Miguel, and Santa Barbara islands. Designated in 1980, thesanctuary supports remarkable marine biodiversity, productive ecosystems, endangered species, sensitive habitats, historicshipwrecks, and cultural resources and provides protection through research, education, conservation, and stewardship.

Visit **channelislands.noaa.gov** for more information.

CHANNEL ISLANDS
NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

Piloting Technologies to Inform Enforcement and Resource Protection Efforts

The sanctuary supports the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Channel Islands National Park, and U.S. Coast Guard with enhanced enforcement technology and data. The sanctuary maintains a mobile application called eFINS to facilitate documenting, referencing, and sharing fishing compliance check and marine patrol data. In 2021, all California Department of Fish and Wildlife marine region patrol vessels statewide and Channel Islands National Park Marine Rangers used eFINS. The sanctuary also provides access to autonomous, shore-based monitoring systems called M2 that give vessel activity data within targeted areas of interest.

A shore-based radar system at Santa Cruz Island. Photo: NOAA.

Successful Field Season in Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary

This year, over 29 mission-critical operations were supported aboard the sanctuary research vessels *Shearwater* and *Shark Cat.* Missions ranged from the use of autonomous underwater vehicles and remotely operated vehicles to document WWII military training aircraft to servicing deep-sea moorings. The sanctuary also supported monitoring of distribution, density, and size structure of demersal fishes to improve stock assessments, and tracking giant sea bass movements in relation to the ambient noise environment around them.

ROV deployment aboard the R/V *Shearwater* with Discovery's Expedition Unknown. Photo: NOAA

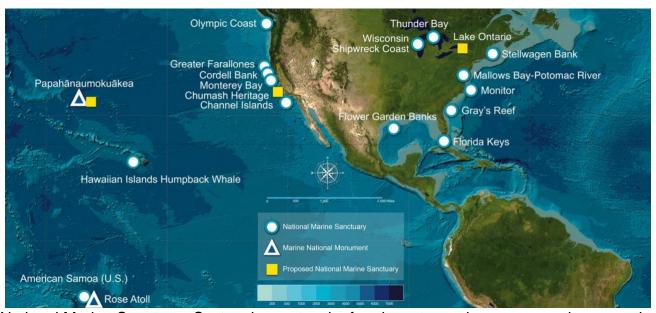## Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Mentors a Diversity of Students

Channel Island National Marine Sanctuary staff mentored over 25 interns, fellows, and students this year. These interns and students addressed resource protection issues such as marine debris, whale ship strikes, noise, and biosecurity threats. Student interns expanded the Sanctuary Integrated Monitoring Network (SiMON) Channel Islands species inventory and assessed the impacts of acoustic devices on cetaceans. A California Sea Grant Fellow helped complete a draft management plan and coordinated sanctuary advisory council meetings, and a COAST intern coordinated public outreach activities such as Get Into Your Sanctuary Day.

A sanctuary intern assists with acoustic monitoring data collection. Photo: NOAA

Looking Ahead

- Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary will finalize a new management plan and environmental assessment in 2022. Priority issues include climate change, marine debris,vessel traffic, introduced species, and zone management. Updated strategies for core program areas and administration are also described.
- In 2022, the sanctuary will receive a new 31' fiberglass monohull research vessel. Built by D.R. Radon, the vessel will be equipped to conduct diving, mooring services, mammal surveys, uncrewed system operations, emergency response, and other operations.
- Sanctuary staff will support the state of California's first Marine Protected Area 10-year management review to help evaluate progress implementing the state's Marine Life Protection Act. Staff will provide input on outreach, monitoring, enforcement, policy, and permitting.

The National Marine Sanctuary System is a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 600,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters. The network includes a system of 15 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments.