



Cordell Bank



Habitats

- Rocky reef
- Pelagic, open ocean
- Soft sediment continental shelf and slope

Key Species

- Krill
- Pacific salmon
- Rockfish
- Humpback whale
- Blue whale
- Dall's porpoise
- Albatross
- Shearwater

Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary contains a very productive offshore rocky bank off California's coast where the combination of ocean conditions and undersea topography creates a highly diverse marine community. Cordell Bank rises to within 115 feet of the sea surface with water depths of 6,000 feet only a few miles away. The prevailing California Current flows southward along the coast, and the upwelling of nutrient-rich, deep ocean waters stimulates the growth of organisms at all levels of the marine food web. The sanctuary is a destination feeding ground for many marine mammals and seabirds.

Research Activities

Scientists affiliated with Cordell Bank Sanctuary carry out research projects investigating this unique marine ecosystem. An ongoing integrated study examines the relationship between oceanographic conditions and the distribution and abundance of marine organisms from phytoplankton to marine birds to the great whales. Special studies focus on daily migrations and distribution of krill, the primary food for many predators. Other studies include pelagic surveys and phytoplankton sampling for the state biotoxin monitoring program. Scientists use remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) and submersibles to examine the bank's diverse marine life and habitats.

Education Activities

Educational efforts include teaching materials on deep ocean ecology and pelagic ecosystems and teacher workshops to advance the understanding of our marine environment. Interpretive displays at several visitor areas along the coast, education centers, fields excursions, and community presentations inform the public about the sanctuary's role in preserving the marine environment.



Location
60 miles northwest of San Francisco

Protected Area
526-square miles

Designation
May 1989

Address
P.O. Box 159
Olema, CA
94950

Communication
Tel: (415) 663-0314
Fax: (415) 663-0315

E-mail:
cordellbank@noaa.gov

Web Page:
cordellbank.noaa.gov

Above: Strawberry anemone; left to right: rosy rockfish; black-footed albatross; humpback whale

