

Western Ecological Research Center <http://www.werc.usgs.gov>

Channel Islands Field Station

The Southern California Bight and its offshore islands are a unique natural resource with many sensitive and endemic plants and animals. This area is also an expanding urban center for the nation. The corresponding elimination and degradation of coastal habitats have created a need for scientifically guided management.

The Channel Islands Field Station has cooperative agreements with Channel Islands National Park in Ventura, Calif., and the University of California, Santa Barbara, that facilitate collaboration between field station scientists and university and park biologists. The linkage with the university also provides opportunities to supervise graduate students in marine ecology and work in laboratories with flow-through seawater to allow housing temperate marine species. Channel Islands National Park provides access to the habitats of several rare and endemic plant species suffering from the impacts of exotic weeds and feral animals. The national park also has a wealth of marine resources in need of study and management. Field station biologists analyze data collected from the park and assist with the park's extensive resource monitoring program.

Lead scientists and staff at the Channel Islands Field Station conduct research on the ecology and conservation biology of sensitive plants and animals at the Channel Islands and along California's coast. In doing so, the field station supports information needs of the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other state and federal clients such as the Department of Defense, National Marine Sanctuary, and California Department of Fish and Game.

Some examples of ongoing research in plant ecology include rare plant demography, effects of grazing by feral animals on native plant communities, restoration ecology, and the distribution of invasive exotic weeds. Examples of research in marine ecology are restoration strategies for the nearly extirpated white abalone, patterns of disturbance for threatened western snowy plovers, marine reserve design, and kelp forest community dynamics.



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Lead Scientists

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- Community ecology
- Parasite ecology

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- Rare plant demography
- Plant community ecology
- Weedy species ecology
- Ecosystem monitoring

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