

OCEAN ETIQUETTE



NATIONAL MARINE
SANCTUARIES

Viewing California's Marine Wildlife





Introduction

The mission of NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program is to serve as the trustee for the nation's system of marine protected areas, to conserve, protect, and enhance their biodiversity, ecological integrity and cultural legacy.

The importance of maintaining this system of marine areas is evident. Today our oceans and coasts are subject to great environmental pressures. Over half of the U.S. population resides within 50 miles of our nation's coastlines while nature and adventure travel represent the fastest growing segments of the tourism industry. To compound this, there are over 89 million marine recreationists in U.S. alone. These statistics overwhelmingly highlight the increased pressure on our marine environment and with that comes the inevitable loss of marine habitats and stresses on our oceans and wildlife.

The National Marine Sanctuary Program brings an ecosystem approach to environmental protection and asks us to adopt a new ethic of marine stewardship. It challenges us all to work together to find creative solutions to the complex problems facing our ecosystems. Through linking communities on all our coasts, the sanctuaries foster and encourage public involvement in protecting our marine resources.

One way the National Marine Sanctuary Program is addressing these complex resource protection concerns is through a new program initiative with NOAA Fisheries called Ocean Etiquette. Ocean Etiquette evolved out of a need for sanctuaries and their communities to work together on policies and outreach mechanisms relevant to wildlife disturbance. The goals of the National Marine Sanctuary **Ocean Etiquette** Program are to:

- Promote responsible interaction with marine wildlife and their habitats
- Develop policies and programs regarding responsible interaction with marine wildlife
- Provide consistent sanctuary-wide messages regarding responsible interaction with marine wildlife
- Provide the ocean user community with the tools necessary to make responsible decisions in the marine environment
- Instill a stewardship ethic by providing sanctuary visitors with guidance on their role in protecting marine wildlife and habitats

Photo Cover: Brad Damitz
Photo Back Cover: Jan Rolletto
Photo Introduction: Joe Heath



Ocean Etiquette Background

A resounding resource protection theme throughout the National Marine Sanctuary Program is marine wildlife protection. The Ocean Etiquette Program grew out of a need for the National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP) and NOAA Fisheries to coordinate to address marine life disturbance in our oceans and along our coasts. With the increase of human impact on the marine environment, resource managers and community members alike are taking note of human effects on marine life. As a result, several sanctuaries have started working with their local communities to develop strategies for addressing wildlife disturbance.

In 2002, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary received a number of requests from the community for outreach materials relevant to responsibly viewing marine life in the sanctuary. Inspired by Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary's 2002 publication *Hawai'i's Marine Protected Species: A Handbook for Ocean Users*, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary became the impetus for a statewide handbook supported by the Ocean Etiquette Program titled *Responsibly Viewing California's Marine Wildlife: A Handbook for Ocean Users*. The handbook was released in 2003 in conjunction with a statewide workshop that focused on resource management concerns addressed in the publication.

The Workshops

As a response to the previous year's publication release and workshop around *Responsibly Viewing California's Marine Wildlife: A Handbook for Ocean Users*, the four California national marine sanctuaries held a series of marine wildlife viewing workshops in February of 2004. The workshops brought together marine wildlife viewing communities, recreation professionals, and marine enthusiasts to help determine the future for outreach relevant to marine wildlife disturbance in the state. The workshop goals were to:

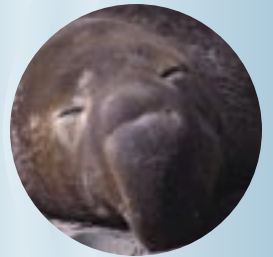
- Follow up and get feedback on last year's workshop, and release of *Responsibly Viewing California's Marine Wildlife: A Handbook for Ocean Users*
- Gather feedback and ideas from user groups on the most effective and needed outreach mechanisms for getting information out to the public regarding responsible wildlife viewing
- Come away with quantifiable questionnaire results to be used in the planning and development of future products and programs
- Provide user groups with the most current information pertaining to viewing marine wildlife in the California sanctuaries
- Bring the local communities and sanctuaries together in moving forward on outreach projects that will benefit everyone



Blue Whale watching in
Channel Islands National
Marine Sanctuary
Photo: Channel Islands NMS



Immature California
Brown Pelican
Photo: Shane Anderson



Male Elephant Seal
Photo: Kip Evans



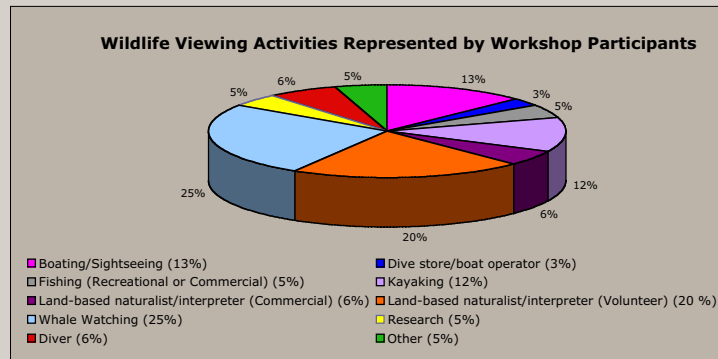
Recognizing that marine recreation providers maintain busy schedules, the workshops were designed to efficiently gather information from these important community members in a single meeting. The workshops entailed brief background presentations by sanctuary representatives and an ecotourism consultant as well as facilitated roundtable discussions. The discussion groups were used to collect direct information from the experts on issues associated with marine wildlife viewing. Additionally, a questionnaire was developed to gather responses that could later be quantified and provide useful feedback for planning and developing future products. The complete quantitative results of the questionnaire can be found in Appendices 1 and 2.

Workshop Evaluation Summary

The workshop goals were overwhelmingly met. The sanctuary staff received quantifiable information on the communities' perceptions of wildlife disturbance and their need for outreach materials. The ideas and feedback on outreach products and *Responsibly Viewing California's Marine Wildlife: A Handbook for Ocean Users* proved to be vital for future development of outreach tools. Additionally, user groups and recreation providers were able to learn about current sanctuary and ecotourism trends that relate to wildlife disturbance.

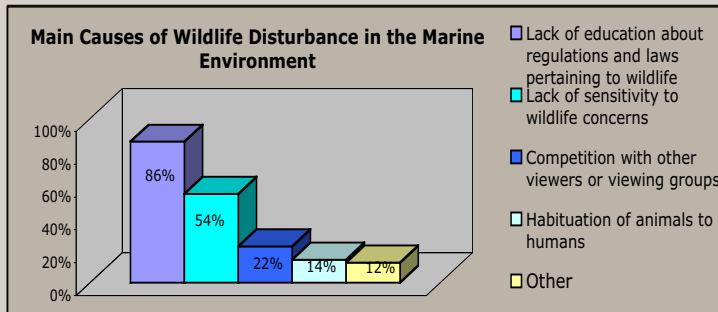
The following responses represent a sample of results from the questionnaire. The percentages are based on actual responses. For a more comprehensive look at the results, see Appendices 1 and 2.

The total number of workshop participants between all four workshops was 109 (15 CBNMS, 8 GFNMS, 39 MBNMS, 47 CINMS) with a range of wildlife viewing expertise represented. The distinct categories of participants are listed in the pie chart below.

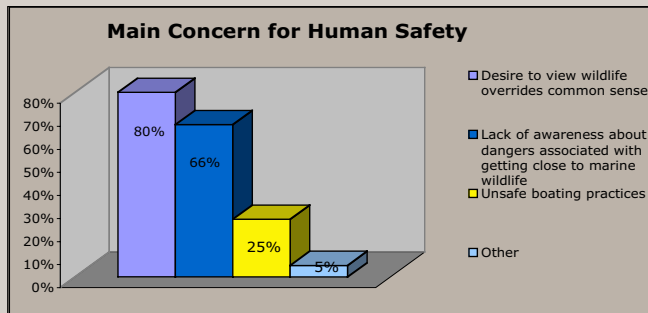


In a ranking answer system of one through four, 64% of the respondents answered that they gather most of their information about wildlife regulations from workshops, and 41% gather most of their information from Government publications.





Eighty-six percent of respondents consider the main cause of wildlife disturbance in the marine environment to be lack of education about regulations and laws pertaining to wildlife and 54% consider it to be lack of sensitivity to wildlife concerns.



Eighty percent of respondents listed desire to view wildlife overrides common sense and 66% listed lack of awareness about dangers associated with getting close to marine wildlife as the main concerns for human safety associated with marine wildlife viewing.

Eighty-six percent of respondents thought *Responsibly Viewing California's Marine Wildlife: Draft Handbook for Ocean Users* will be a useful tool for workshop participants and their customers

Ninety-eight percent of respondents would be willing to help review, test and give feedback on outreach and education materials in the future.

As one step in a process of addressing wildlife disturbance, the workshops proved to be a useful tool for sharing information and ideas with the very people that are the catalysts through which wildlife viewers and marine recreationists learn about the sanctuaries and ocean etiquette. The results from the questionnaire and roundtable discussions will be invaluable in working together to develop products that will be useful to professional marine recreation providers, marine visitors, and resource managers. The workshops were an effective way for local communities and sanctuaries to collaborate in moving forward on outreach products that will benefit sanctuaries, their wildlife, and marine enthusiasts for future generations.



Scuba diving in Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary
Photo: Karina Racz



Leopard Shark and Kelp
Photo: Kip Evans



California ocean and coast
Photo: Kip Evans



Conclusion

The California workshops marked an unprecedented undertaking on behalf of the National Marine Sanctuary Program of multiple sanctuaries coordinating on one regional marine wildlife viewing outreach effort. Like all of our sanctuaries, those in California are addressing marine wildlife disturbance concerns in conjunction with their local communities. This is needed now more than ever. By 2010, California's population is estimated to reach 50 million with a coastal density of 1,050 for each square mile. There is no doubt that working with communities to develop Ocean Etiquette outreach products is necessary given the reality of increasing population and interest in marine recreation in our nation.

The challenges facing resource managers and marine recreation providers are diverse and constantly evolving. The tremendous support and interest in wildlife disturbance issues expressed by each sanctuary community were a strong indication that outreach should not stop at one product alone. By working together through workshops, product and policy development, and public outreach, the California sanctuaries can streamline outreach and lead the way in developing a National Marine Sanctuary Program identity and communication effort on responsibly interacting with the wildlife that inhabit and travel through our sanctuaries.

Recommended Next Steps

1. Organize a statewide working group to develop future projects and products associated with marine wildlife viewing in California.
2. Assess current sanctuary outreach materials and determine needs for outreach based on feedback from the workshops and existing sanctuary products.
3. Hold workshops inclusive of a regional focus and involve partner agencies and stakeholders to help review, test and give feedback on marine wildlife viewing products.
4. Initiate future projects as deemed necessary.



Appendix 1

RESULTS

The results are represented below through summary responses from the questionnaires and roundtable discussions. A portion of the questionnaire that asked for a ranking of topics proved to be rather confusing for some of the respondents and difficult to quantify. Although a different presentation of the ranking method would be recommended for future questionnaires, many of the responses came through clearly. Similarly, in questions where respondents were given options, they were not asked to choose one. For a data table of questionnaire responses according to sanctuaries see Appendix 2.

Question 1: Wildlife Viewing Activity Represented:

There were 109 participants, however, one participant represented more than one activity. Where this occurred, both activities were included.

Boating/sightseeing: 14 (13%)

Dive Store/Boat Operator: 3 (3%)

Fishing: 5 (5%)

Kayaking: 13 (12%)

Land Based naturalist/interpreter (commercial): 6 (6%)

Land Based naturalist/interpreter (volunteer): 23 (20%)

Whale Watching: 28 (25%)

Research 5 (5%)

Diver 7 (6%)

Other: 5 (5%)

Aircraft Operator

Conservation Group

Rescue/Stranding

Interpretive Enforcement

Underwater Videographer

Question #2: Who are your primary associates or clients, by age group, interests, and primary language?

64% of respondents listed the primary client age group as adults

54% listed primary client interest as general wildlife viewing

54% listed primary client language as English

The other responses received much lower percentages



Surfing in Monterey Bay
National Marine
Sanctuary
Photo: Kip Evans



Cormorants at sunset
Photo: Kip Evans



Southern Sea Otter
Photo: Kip Evans



Question #3: How do you currently gather information about wildlife regulations?

Participants were not limited to one response.

64% of respondents listed workshops

41% of respondents listed government publications

Question #4: How do you currently educate clients on responsible wildlife viewing?

89% of respondents listed verbal communication

33% listed paper handouts

Question #5: What types of wildlife disturbance have you observed?

The top three wildlife disturbance topics that arose in the qualitative questionnaire responses and the round table discussions were:

1. Inappropriate boater behavior, including getting too close to animals, approaching too fast, too many boats, and exhibiting aggressive behavior (including jet skis)
2. Inappropriate sea kayak operations, including getting too close and too many boats
3. Feeding birds, marine mammals, and sharks

Question #6: In your opinion, what do you consider the main cause(s) of wildlife disturbance in the marine environment?

86% of respondents listed lack of education about regulations pertaining to wildlife

54% listed lack of sensitivity to wildlife concerns

Question #7: What do you consider to be the main concern for human safety associated with marine wildlife viewing?

80% of respondents listed desire to view wildlife overrides common sense

66% listed lack of awareness about dangers associated with getting too close to marine wildlife

Question #8: Do you think Responsibly Watching California's Marine Wildlife: Draft Handbook For Ocean Users will be a useful tool for you and/or your customers?

87% of respondents said "yes" – that the handbook is a useful tool

Question #9: How could it be improved to better meet your needs?

There were two main topics that came out of written and roundtable comments about the handbook. The first overarching topic was that the handbook was a useful tool. The top three comments relating to this were:

1. Great teaching document for classes & training workshops
2. A good reference for business owners and employees
3. Great to have regulations and wildlife information in one publication



The second topic that came out of handbook comments was that the handbook needed be refined. The top comments relating to this were:

1. Be sure to include why guidelines are necessary, keep language simple & target specific audience
2. Could be more useful if smaller as a handout
3. Needs to be more user-friendly, smaller sections, or individual handouts for specific topics

Question #10: Indicate which type of outreach materials would be most valuable to your organization to help educate your clients on responsible wildlife viewing.

86% of respondents listed handouts with activity specific guidelines

77% listed a pocket-sized card on responsible wildlife viewing practices

58% listed both handouts with animal group guidelines and handouts with regulations and laws about protecting marine wildlife

Question 11: How would you use education/outreach materials?

52% listed before a field trip

29% listed during a field trip

Question 12: Would you be willing to help review, test and give feedback to us on outreach and education materials as we develop them for your industry?

98% indicated they would be willing to provide feedback on materials as they are developed

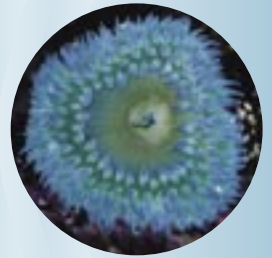
Question 13: Workshop Evaluation:

Due to the extensive ranking system, this question was difficult to quantify. However, for those that were too difficult to quantify, the themes were clear and positive in responses.

87% of respondents indicated that the information presented in the workshops was useful

92% of respondents indicated that the break-out discussion sections were useful

94% of respondents indicated that the materials provided during the workshop were helpful



Green Anemone
Photo: Karina Racz



Kayaking in Gulf of the
Farallones National Marine
Sanctuary
Photo: Maria Brown



Bird watching in Gulf of the
Farallones National Marine
Sanctuary
Photo: Gulf of the Farallones NMS

Appendix 2

Response Data from California Marine Wildlife Viewing Workshop Questionnaires

1 Check which wildlife viewing activity that you most closely represent:																	
	CINMS				MBNMS				GF/CBNMS				TOTAL				
Aircraft Operator	0				1				0				1				
Boating/Sightseeing	9				5				0				14				
Dive store/boat operator	0				1				2				3				
Fishing (Recreational or Commercial)	1				1				3				5				
Kayaking	6				4				3				13				
Land-based naturalist/interpreter (Commercial)	2				2				2				6				
Land-based naturalist/interpreter (Volunteer)	12				7				4				23				
Whale Watching	15				9				4				28				
Research/biologist	2				2				0				5				
Research Vessel Operator	0				1				0				1				
Diver	7				0				0				7				
Rescue/Stranding	0				0				1				1				
Interpretive Enforcement	0				0				1				1				
Conservation Group	0				1				0				1				
Underwater Videographer	1				0				0				1				
2 Who are your primary associates or clients?																	
Total Respondents	29				34				13				76				
Age Group	CINMS				MBNMS				GF/CBNMS				TOTAL				
Rank 1-4	1 most	2 -	3 -	4 least	1 most	2 -	3 -	4 least	1 most	2 -	3 -	4 least	1 most	2 -	3 -	4 least	
Seniors	3	0	5	8	1	2	4	6	2	0	3	4	6	2	12	19	
Adults (20-60)	18	4	2	0	22	5	0	0	6	6	0	0	46	15	2	0	
Teens	4	5	1	5	2	0	5	5	2	3	3	3	8	8	9	13	
Families	8	5	4	0	6	6	4	0	2	6	1	0	16	17	9	0	
Interests	CINMS				MBNMS				GF/CBNMS				TOTAL				
General Wildlife Viewing	21	1	2	0	23	1	1	0	7	1	0	1	41	2	3	0	
Wildlife naturalist	4	5	2	5	8	4	1	2	2	0	3	4	14	9	6	11	
Photographer	5	5	6	2	5	1	2	2	0	2	3	2	10	8	11	6	
Repeat Customer	1	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	0	4	4	5	5	9	8	
Other	3				5				3				11				



Appendix 2

Response Data from California Marine Wildlife Viewing Workshop Questionnaires

2 Who are your primary associates or clients? (continued)																	
Primary Language		CINMS				MBNMS				GF/CBNMS				TOTAL			
Rank 1-4		1 most	2 -	3 -	4 least	1 most	2 -	3 -	4 least	1 most	2 -	3 -	4 least	1 most	2 -	3 -	4 least
English		30	0	0	0	31	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	41	2	3	0
Hispanic		0	3	0	0	0	2	1	0	2	0	3	4	2	5	4	4
Asian					3	1	0	1	1	0	2	3	2	10	8	11	6
European						2	1	1	0	1	0	4	4	5	5	9	8
Middle Eastern		1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	4	4	2	1	4	4
Other		3				5				3				11			
3 How do you currently gather information about wildlife regulations?																	
Total Respondents		29				31				12				72			
		CINMS				MBNMS				GF/CBNMS				TOTAL			
Rank 1-4		1 most	2 -	3 -	4 least	1 most	2 -	3 -	4 least	1 most	2 -	3 -	4 least	1 most	2 -	3 -	4 least
Newspapers		5	2	2	6	5	4	5	4	1	3	1	1	11	9	8	11
Workshops		10	3	1	3	7	4	4	3	5	3	2	0	46	15	2	0
Government Publications		12	6	5	1	12	4	4	1	6	1	1	2	30	11	10	4
Word of mouth from other captains or boaters		5	3	6	3	8	3	2	0	1	2	2	2	14	8	10	5
Other		5				10				4				19			
4 How do you currently educate clients on responsible wildlife viewing?																	
Total Respondents		26				27				13				66			
		CINMS				MBNMS				GF/CBNMS				TOTAL			
Paper Handouts		9				9				4				22			
Verbal Communication		20				27				12				59			
Other										1				1			
6 In your opinion, what do you consider the main cause(s) of wildlife disturbance in the marine environment?																	
Total Respondents		30				23				12				65			
		CINMS				MBNMS				GF/CBNMS				TOTAL			
Lack of education about regulations and laws pertaining to wildlife		26				23				7				56			
Lack of sensitivity to wildlife concerns		14				19				2				35			
Competition with other viewers or viewing groups		7				5				2				14			
Habituation of animals to humans		4				5				0				9			
Other		3				4				1				8			

Appendix 2

Response Data from California Marine Wildlife Viewing Workshop Questionnaires



7 What do you consider to be the main concern for human safety associated with marine wildlife viewing?				
Total Respondents	30	22	7	59
	CINMS	MBNMS	GF/CBNMS	TOTAL
Lack of awareness about dangers associated with getting close to marine wildlife	17	19	3	39
Unsafe boating practices	6	8	1	15
Desire to view wildlife overrides common sense	21	22	4	47
Other	0	3	0	3
8 Do you think <i>Responsibly Viewing California's Marine Wildlife: Draft Handbook for Ocean Users</i> , will be a useful tool for you and your customers?				
Total Respondents	31	25	11	67
	CINMS	MBNMS	GF/CBNMS	TOTAL
Yes	29	20	9	58
No	2	5	2	9
10 Please indicate which type of outreach materials would be most valuable to your organization to help educate your clients on responsible wildlife viewing.				
Total Respondents	26	21	10	57
	CINMS	MBNMS	GF/CBNMS	TOTAL
Handouts with activity specific guidelines	22	19	8	49
Handouts with animal group guidelines	13	16	4	33
Handouts with life history facts and information about local species	5	9	6	20
Handouts with regulations and laws protecting marine wildlife	12	18	3	33
Contact information about local agencies and organizations involved with wildlife viewing and protection	9	17	5	31
Maps showing coastal protected areas	12	11	3	26
Pocket-size card: responsible viewing practices	17	18	9	44
Web site with downloadable written materials	9	12	5	26
CD with free products to print as needed	4	5	1	10
Wall poster; responsible wildlife viewing practices	1	13	1	15
Pre-trip video	10	11	4	25
Other	5	5	2	12



Appendix 2

Response Data from California Marine Wildlife Viewing Workshop Questionnaires

11 How would you use education materials?																	
Total Respondents		28				26				11				65			
		CINMS				MBNMS				GF/CBNMS				TOTAL			
Rank 1-4		1 most	2 -	3 -	4 least	1 most	2 -	3 -	4 least	1 most	2 -	3 -	4 least	1 most	2 -	3 -	4 least
Before a field trip		10	1	0	0	18	4	2	1	6	2	1	0	34	7	3	1
During a field trip		5	6	2	0	10	11	5	0	4	2	0	0	19	19	7	0
Office/retail setting		0	2	3	4	6	2	3	6	0	1	1	2	6	5	7	12
Available to clients upon request		0	2	7	4	4	3	5	2	0	1	1	2	4	6	11	8
Would not use it at all		0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Other		5				6				4				19			

12 Would you be willing to help review, test and give feedback to us on outreach and education materials as we develop them for you industry?				
	CINMS	MBNMS	GF/CBNMS	TOTAL
Yes	23	19	11	53
No	1	0	0	1

13 Please Rank the workshop. 1=Agree 8=Disagree									
Total Respondents		25		21		10		56	
		CINMS		MBNMS		GF/CBNMS		TOTAL	
Topics clear		1=15		1= 12		1=5		1=32	
		2= 9		2= 14		2=1		2=24	
		3= 1		3= 4		4=1		3=4, 4=1	
				6=1		7=1		5=1	
								6=1, 7=1	
Information was useful		1=15		1= 14		1=5		1=34	
		2= 8		2= 9		2=1		2=18	
		3= 1		3= 6		3=1		3=8	
				5=5		5=1		5=6	
		6=1		6=1		8=1		6=2, 8=1	
Objectives were clear		1=12		1= 9		1=4		1=25	
		2= 4		2= 14		2=1		2=19	
		3= 6		3= 3		3=2		3=11	
		4= 3		4= 4		4=1		4=8	
		6=1		6=1		7=1		6=2, 7=1	
Small group session was useful		1=10		1=17		1=5		1=35	
		2= 8		2= 7		2=2		2=17	
		3= 1		3= 4		7=1		3=6	
		4= 2		4= 1				4=3	
				5= 1				5=1	
Presenters were clear		1=17		1=13		1=5		1=35	
		2= 6		2= 13		2=2		2=21	
				3= 3		3=1		3=4	
		5=1		5=2		8=1		5=3, 8=1	
Materials were helpful		1= 17		1= 13		1=4		1=34	
		2= 4		2= 9		2=1		2=14	
		3=2		3=7		3=2		3=11	
				5=2				5=2	
		6=1				8=1		6=1, 8=1	



National Marine Sanctuary System

Our national marine sanctuaries embrace part of our collective riches as a nation. Within their protected waters, giant humpback whales breed and calve their young, coral colonies flourish and shipwrecks tell stories of our maritime history. Sanctuary habitats include beautiful rocky reefs, lush kelp forests, whale migration corridors, spectacular deep-sea canyons and underwater archaeological sites. Our nation's sanctuaries can provide a safe habitat for species close to extinction or protect historically significant shipwrecks. Ranging in size from less than one square mile to more than 5,300 square miles, each sanctuary is a unique place needing special protections. Natural classrooms, cherished recreational spots and valuable commercial industries marine sanctuaries represent many things to many people.



The National Marine Sanctuary Program serves as the trustee for a system of 13 sanctuaries, encompassing more than 18,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington State to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. In addition, the sanctuary program is conducting a process to designate the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve as the nation's 14th marine sanctuary. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) manages national marine sanctuaries under the authority of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. Since 1972, the National Marine Sanctuary program has worked cooperatively with its partners and the public to promote conservation while allowing compatible commercial and recreational activities. Increasing public awareness of our maritime heritage, scientific research, monitoring, exploration, educational programs and outreach are just a few of the ways the National Marine Sanctuary Program fulfills its mission to the people.

