

TREASURES
OF OUR
LOCAL
OCEAN



The Local Marine Environment

Santa Barbara Channel Treasures

Dear Teacher or Parent:

Welcome to *Current Times: Treasures of our Local Ocean*, a newspaper supplement about the importance of the local ocean waters to our community. Written by kids for kids, the Big Blue Reporters (the youth editorial board) explored and uncovered many treasures provided by the waters of the Santa Barbara Channel region. Now, through this newspaper, your students and children can also learn how people rely on and enjoy the local ocean.

Be it fisheries (commercial and recreational), offshore oil, ocean farming or marine recreation (surfing, boating, diving, whale watching), or the beauty or cultural importance, the local ocean provides much for our community. We hope by increasing the understanding of its value – both economic and cultural – you and your students/children will explore, enjoy and take care of this environment.

Now let's dig in and uncover the treasures of our local ocean!



The Santa Barbara Channel (SBC) region is a special marine environment. There are several characteristics that make the SBC different from other areas. Among them are the coastline, the mixture of species and the presence of four islands. The SBC also has nutrient-rich water, as do other areas of the west coast, which supports a large amount of sea life.

The SBC coastline is pretty interesting. Instead of running north-to-south like much of the California coastline, it runs east-to-west. Check out the map on this page. The northern boundary of the SBC region is Point Conception. Point Mugu is the southern boundary.

The currents are also special along the SBC coastline. This region is known as the "transition zone" of the west coast - the place where different currents come together. Cold waters come down from the north and warm waters come up from the south. This creates a diverse environment, which supports a rich variety of species.

There are four islands in the SBC region. East to west they are Anacapa, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa and San Miguel. This group of islands is also known as the northern Channel Islands. These four islands and Santa Barbara Island to the south are part of the Channel Islands National Park and the water surrounding them encompass the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. The islands provide different underwater habitats for lots of sea life, including rocky reefs, kelp beds and sandy areas. They also provide places for seabirds to nest and for sea lions to breed. The islands also help protect the coastal area from storms.

The SBC region often has nutrient-rich water, which is a result of an event called "upwelling." Upwelling occurs when cold nutrient-rich water comes from the bottom up to the surface. This provides lots of food for fish and other sea life, supporting the food web.

The treasure chest of the local marine environment of the SBC region provides something for everyone. The SBC enables many people in our community to make a living, such as commercial fishermen, mariculturists, oil rig workers and those providing ecotourism. Thousands of people also enjoy the recreational activities possible in the SBC, like sailing, kayaking, snorkeling, fishing and scuba diving. And, if that isn't enough, the SBC provides opportunities for art and culture, as well as environmental awareness.



Point Conception

Santa Barbara

San Miguel Is.

Santa Rosa Is.

Santa Cruz Is.

Ventura

Oxnard

Port Hueneme

Anacapa Is.

Point Mugu

