



Photo: © Florian Graner

Twenty-nine species of marine mammals reside in or migrate through the sanctuary.



Photo: © Florian Graner



Photo: Mary Sue Brancato

During annual migrations, more than a million seabirds, waterfowl, and shorebirds travel along the coast.



Photo: Judy Floyd

Sea stars, anemones, and barnacles are abundant along the rocky tidepools of the Olympic Coast.



Photo: NOAA

Human presence on the Olympic Coast predates historical records and attests to Native American cultures' long and intricate relationship with the marine environment.

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary

The sanctuary is home to a rich abundance of marine mammals, seabirds, and fish, diverse populations of kelp and algae, and thriving invertebrate communities. The area occupies a maritime cultural landscape that has supported humans since time immemorial. Stories, songs, place-names, histories, and the remnant traces—ancient villages, shipwrecks, and lighthouses—persist as reminders of the many human connections to this special place.

The vibrant contemporary communities of the Hoh Tribe, Makah Tribe, Quileute Tribe, and the Quinault Indian Nation have forged inseparable ties to the ocean, maintaining traditions of the past while they navigate the challenges of the present.

We aim to protect the Olympic Coast's natural and cultural resources through responsible stewardship, to conduct and apply research to preserve the area's ecological integrity and maritime heritage, and to promote understanding through public outreach and education.

Resource Protection

Resource protection involves managing and fostering the responsible use and protection of sanctuary resources through conservation and sustainable practices to enhance ecosystem resilience and human well-being. This may include activities such as stewardship, regulations, permitting, incident response and contingency planning, damage assessment and restoration, and enforcement.

Research

Science and research is used to study this complex ecosystem to promote healthy and resilient resources in the sanctuary. Scientific research involves a variety of activities, such as seafloor mapping, marine wildlife and habitat surveys, oceanographic monitoring, deep-sea exploration, and understanding human connections and services, and is often done in collaboration with partners.

Education

Enhancing the public's awareness of natural and cultural resources is a cornerstone to the sanctuary's mission. Education and outreach programs include place-based activities, career-building opportunities, and high-quality educational experiences.

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary

Location

From Cape Flattery to the mouth of the Copalis River, on Washington's outer coast

Protected Area

3,188 square miles

Designation

July 1994

Habitats

Beaches
Rocky shores
Kelp forests
Rocky reefs
Sandy seafloor
Open ocean
Deep sea

Key Species

Ochre sea star
Dungeness crab
Northern sea otter
Tufted puffin
Orca whale
Deep-sea coral

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM

Olympic Coast

Greater Farallones
Cordell Bank
Papahānaumokuākea
Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale
Monterey Bay
Chumash Heritage
Channel Islands
American Samoa (U.S.)
(Including Rose Atoll)



Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast
Thunder Bay
Stellwagen Bank
Hudson Canyon
Lake Ontario
Mallows Bay-Potomac River
Monitor
Gray's Reef
Florida Keys
Flower Garden Banks

- National Marine Sanctuary
- Marine National Monument
- Proposed National Marine Sanctuary

Scale varies in this perspective. Adapted from National Geographic Maps.

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Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

Network of marine protected areas
Encompasses more than 620,000 square miles
Established October 1972

On the Web

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Photo: NOAA

Deep seafloor habitats feature a diversity of species such as deep sea corals and sponges.



Photo: NOAA

Using specialized tools, sanctuary scientists collect data to monitor changing ocean conditions.



Photo: NOAA

Sanctuary staff provide place-based opportunities to study marine science.