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## Channel Islands Vocabulary

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**Adaptation**-characteristic that allows an organism to live in its environment

**Algae**-aquatic, photosynthetic organisms ranging from single-celled forms to the giant kelp

**Algin**-a gelatinous substance found in kelp and used as a thickener and emulsifier

**Benthic**-of or pertaining to the bottom; another word for bottom-benthos

**Biodiverse**-containing many different types of organisms

**Blade**-the part of a kelp where photosynthesis takes place

**Byssal Threads**-fibrous filaments secreted by some mussels to help them attach to the substrate

**California Current**-southward flowing cool surface water along the West Coast of the United States

**Canopy**-the top layer of the forest; in the ocean refers to the top layer of the kelp forest

**Cetacean**-any of a group of aquatic, chiefly marine mammals that includes the whales, dolphins, and porpoises

**Chitin**-a tough, protective substance found in the shells and exoskeletons of arthropods

**Chlorophyll**-pigment required for photosynthesis found in all algae

**Cirrus**-a slender, flexible appendage such as a tentacle

**Clone**-a population of individuals that are genetically identical

**Colony**-a breeding place for animals

**Community**-a group of plants and animals living and interacting with one another in a specific region

**Consensus**-collective opinion; general agreement

**Conservation**-the protection of natural resources from loss or depletion

**Crustacean**-member of a group of animals, including crabs, lobsters, and shrimp, having segmented bodies and a hard outer covering

**Diatom**-microscopic plant-like organisms having cell walls made of silica

**Echinoderm**-member of a group of spiny, marine invertebrates including sea stars and sea urchins

**Economics**-science that deals with material wealth

**Ecosystem**-a community of living organisms and their nonliving environment

**Escarpment**-a steep slope or long cliff separating two relatively level areas

**Geographic Information System (GIS)**-a computer tool that uses data to create maps

**Grazer**-organism that feeds on grass-like material

**Habitat**-an area or environment in which an organism normally lives or occurs

**Hermaphroditic**-pertaining to organisms having the reproductive organs of both sexes

**Holdfast**-part of the kelp similar to a root; anchors the kelp in place

**Intertidal**-region between the high tide and low tide mark

**Larva**-newly hatched stage of the life cycle of many marine animals

**Littoral**-of or existing on a shore

**Microhabitat**-the specific place where an organism prefers to live

**Niche**-the particular area and function occupied by an organism within a habitat

**Nautical Mile**- a unit of length equal to 1852 meters, or about 6,067 feet

**Nutrient**-required chemical constituent for all algae

**Phytoplankton**-small or microscopic algae that drift in the water

**Photosynthesis**-the chemical process by which plants make their own food; the process uses carbon dioxide, water, nutrients, and sunlight

**Pinniped**-a suborder of carnivorous aquatic mammals that includes the seals, walruses, and similar animals having finlike flippers as organs of locomotion

**Plankton**-organisms which can be animal or plant that drift or swim weakly, carried about in water currents

**Predator**-any animal that catches and eats other animals

**Prey**-any organism that is utilized as food by a predator

**Salinity**-the content of salts in seawater

**Santa Barbara Channel**-water area along the California coast between Santa Barbara and the Channel Islands

**Seaweed**-large marine algae such as kelp

**Sediment**-clay, sand, silt, and debris materials that collect on the sea floor; remains of dead animals are also incorporated into the sediments

**Silica**-elemental compound found in sediment materials

**Southern California Countercurrent**-northward flowing warm surface waters along the West Coast of the United States

**Species**-a group of closely related organisms that can interbreed

**Stakeholder**-one who has a share or interest, as in an enterprise

**Stipe**-part of the kelp similar to the stem of a plant

**Submersible**-a manned or unmanned underwater vehicle used for scientific research and military operations

**Substrate**-surface or medium on which an organism lives or grows

**Sustainable**-referring to use of a biological resource (such as timber or fish) which is managed such that the portion removed by one harvest is replaced by growth or reproduction before another harvest occurs

**Supralittoral**-area above the shoreline

**Tectonic Plate**-major section of the earth's crust

**Trophic Level**-a group of organisms that occupy the same level in a food chain

**Turbidity**-measure of the effects of particles, such as stirred-up sediment, on water clarity

**Understory**-middle layer of the forest; area containing shorter vegetation such as bushes; in marine systems, below the canopy