**Channel Islands Vocabulary**

**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