



Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council **Diver** Newsletter Sea Otter Protection

Hello Larry Ankuda,

Due to a high number of sea otters that have recently entered the bay we are asking recreational boaters, kayakers, and divers to take special care around these otters. These otters are not as comfortable around people as our usual sea otters and will duck dive out of sight when approaching at shorter distances.

Karen Grimmer from Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Monterey Bay Kayaks and Adventures by the Sea created a two page notice for ocean guests to read and and share.

[Sea Otter Protection pdf](#)

Drop us an email at:

Brian Nelson - cdbriannelson@gmail.com

Keith Rootsart - keith.rootsart@g2kr.com

Safe Diving,
Brian and Keith



Photo: Gena Bentall



Sea Otter Viewing Etiquette and Protection

Large Sea Otter Rafts in Monterey, California



Photo: Gena Bental

Sea otters in kelp in Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.



Photo: Gena Bental

Sea otters rafting up in large groups.

Background

Since January 2023, particularly large rafts of sea otters have been resting together in the kelp between Monterey Harbor and Point Cabrillo.

A “raft” is a group of sea otters resting together, and they often occur in kelp, but not always.

Although raft sizes can vary throughout the day, some estimates have had more than 200 otters in the largest aggregations.

Sea otters generally have relatively small home ranges of a few miles, with no large seasonal migrations.

Sea otters may move in response to weather, age, and sex, and often gather in more protected areas during

prolonged storms. The exact reason for recent unusually large rafts is unknown. Other factors beyond weather could also be contributing.

Please Give Sea Otters Space

It is important to give these animals space to rest and save energy, especially during the winter season. Disturbance can be harmful!

The rafting otters are especially sensitive to approaches from boaters, divers, and kayakers.

If you are on the water, please keep your distance and follow all federal laws so as not to harass or disturb the otters whether in a raft or not.

Please visit www.seaottersavvy.org for more tips on viewing guidelines. To report disturbances, call MBNMS at (831) 236-6797.

Tips for Kayakers, Divers, and Boaters to avoid disturbances

- Divers should *avoid surfacing under or near a sea otter raft* from below.
- Kayakers and boaters should remain a *minimum of 10 boat lengths* (scaled up by craft size) away from rafting sea otters.
- *Passing by parallel* is less threatening to sea otters and other wildlife.
- If, *at any distance*, a sea otter has raised its head and is looking at you, you are too close and should move further away to avoid disturbance.
- Be aware of the location of sea otters before you dive, boat or kayak into an area.





Large sea otter raft in front of Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Photo: Dan Schwartz



MONTEREY BAY
NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY



Monterey Bay Aquarium

<https://montereybay.noaa.gov>

Do you know how to find out the local beach water quality reports?
Monterey County Health Department Beach Report

Know before you go...Diving
BEACH WATER QUALITY REPORT

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[Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary](#)

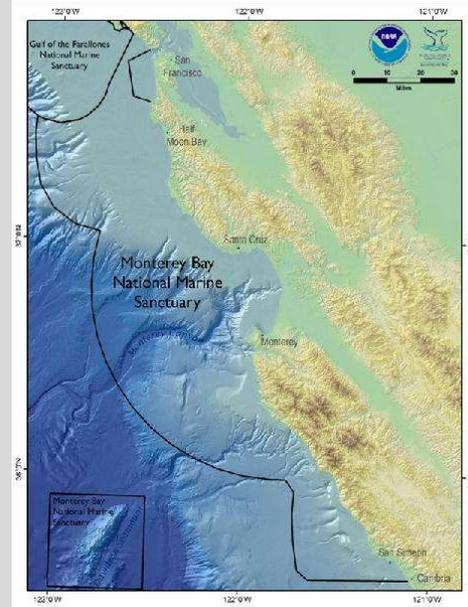
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Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) is a federally protected marine area offshore of California's central coast. Stretching from Marin to Cambria, MBNMS encompasses a shoreline length of 276 miles and 6,094 square miles of ocean.

It is home to one of the world's most diverse marine ecosystems, including numerous mammals, seabirds, fishes, invertebrates and plants in a remarkably productive coastal environment.

MBNMS was designated in 1992 for the purpose of resource protection, research, education, and public use of this national treasure. MBNMS is part of a system of 14 National Marine Sanctuaries and two marine national monuments, administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[Official Website](#)