



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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Channel Islands National Park News Release

May 5, 2015

For Immediate Release

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Seal and Sea Lion Population Trends at the Channel Islands

Ventura, CA —Population changes of seal and sea lion species at the Channel Islands, including the recent high abandonment rate of California sea lion pups, will be discussed by marine biologist Dr. Brent Stewart during the May From Shore to Sea lecture.

Since the near extinction of California sea lions and northern elephant seals due to hunting in the late 1800's, populations have increased steadily and at relatively high rates. The primary colonies for these species are found at the Channel Islands.

Stewart will explain how oceanographic fluctuations have affected each species, both positively and negatively, during the past several decades. For California sea lions he will explain apparent collapses of the food chain in the Southern California Bight over the last two years which have resulted in the early weaning and high abandonment of substantial numbers of pups. He will explore the impacts of this on the long term outlook for seal and sea lion populations in local waters.

Stewart is a Senior Research Scientist at Hubbs-Sea World Research Institute. He has studied the population biology, foraging and physical ecology, and behavior of marine mammals, seabirds, sea turtles and whale sharks for over 35 years. He holds a Master of Science degree in Ecology from San Diego State University, and a Ph.D. in Biology from the University of California, Los Angeles.

The talk will be held on Thursday, May 14, 2015. The From Shore to Sea lecture series is sponsored by Channel Islands National Park to further the understanding of current research on the Channel Islands and surrounding marine waters. The lectures occur at 7:00 pm on the second Thursday of March, April, May, September, October, and November at the Channel Islands National Park Robert J. Lagomarsino Visitor Center, 1901 Spinnaker Drive in Ventura Harbor. The programs are free and open to the public.

This lecture can also be viewed live online at:

<http://www.nps.gov/chis/planyourvisit/live-programs.htm>.

Lectures are recorded and posted at:

<http://www.nps.gov/chis/learn/photosmultimedia/from-shore-to-sea-lecture-videos.htm>

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