

Oceans For Life

Presents

Biodiversity

Narrator:

Exploring different areas in the ocean can be challenging to scientists, but it can also provide a wonderful opportunity to discover similarities and differences too.

Consider Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary, which is located along the west coast of the United States and Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary located in the Hawaiian Islands. Both areas are located in the Pacific Ocean, but there they are over twenty-three hundred miles apart. Both have been chosen as National Marine Sanctuaries, America's ocean treasures, because of their special qualities.

Peak beneath their misty waves and you will find an amazing amount of beauty and biological diversity. At Cordell Bank for example, you will see large schools of rockfish, brightly colored pinnacles, huge octopuses, and marvelous array of seabirds flying above the windswept surface. The Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary on the other hand, is home to colorful fish, small coral reefs, and a huge population of humpback whales that visit every winter.

Let's take a dive with a couple of scientists that can tell us more about these interesting places. Dan Howard is the manager of Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary.

Dan Howard:

Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary is a spectacular offshore site. It's an about 20 miles west of Point Reyes. And being away from a lot the influences of the coast, it's pristine offshore habitat.

And it not only provides a home for rockfish, and seastars, but a rich local population. It is also is a feeding destination for a variety of migratory animals like Black-footed Albatross from the Hawaiian Islands, and blue whales from Costa Rica, leatherback sea turtles.

All these animals come to Cordell Bank to feed on the rich bounty that thrives in the area.

Narrator:

Naomi McIntosh is the manager of the Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary.

Naomi:

Well, approximately two-thirds of the humpback whale population in the entire North Pacific is thought to visit the Hawaiian Islands every year. They don't arrive

all at once. We generally tend to see humpback whales come in small numbers at the beginning of the season. And then the season peaks between February and March. And then we start to see the numbers sort of dwindle after that.

Narrator:

There are some obvious differences between Cordell Bank and Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuaries, but there also some amazing similarities.

Both areas are very important to seabirds for example. Albatross give birth to their chicks in the Hawaiian Islands and then travel to Cordell Bank to find food.

Cordell Bank and Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuaries are also very important to humpback whales. Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary provides warm, clear water for mothers to help feed, nurse, and give birth to their young. While Cordell Bank offer lots and lots of food for their humpback whales.

Both marine sanctuaries face similar challenges from society today. Overfishing, discarded nets, shipping activities, runoff from agricultural areas, and introduced animals from other countries or invasive species.

To help keep Cordell Bank and the Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuaries healthy, scientists today, monitor the changes in the diversity and abundance of the animals that live there. Concern citizens, volunteers, and advisory groups work tirelessly to make sure that these sanctuaries are properly managed.

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