



America's Ocean Treasures

Marine Sanctuaries Offer Much Recreation

(NAPSA)—Many Americans may be surprised to learn that just as there are national parks such as Yellowstone and Yosemite, this country also has underwater national parks known as national marine sanctuaries. There are 13 of these sanctuaries around the U.S. and in American Samoa. These sanctuaries are open to the public.

Visitors can dive at Flower Garden Banks Sanctuary off Texas, snorkel in the Florida Keys, kayak in the Channel Islands Sanctuary in the Pacific or whale watch at Stellwagen Bank in the Atlantic. They are places to swim, sail, fish, and learn maritime history.

The National Marine Sanctuary Program is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

There are four sanctuaries along the Gulf of Mexico and the Southeast: Flower Garden Banks off the coast of Texas, the Florida Keys, Gray's Reef near Savannah, and the site of the Civil War ironclad ship the Monitor, off the coast of North Carolina. On the West Coast, there are five sanctu-



Recreational opportunities are nearly unlimited within the National Marine Sanctuaries.

aries: Olympic Coast in Washington and Cordell Bank, Gulf of the Farallones, Monterey Bay, and Channel Islands off the coast of California.

Two sanctuaries are in the Pacific Ocean: Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale around Hawaii and Fagatele Bay in American Samoa. A third Pacific sanctuary has been proposed for the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

There is also a sanctuary at Thunder Bay in the Great Lakes and at Stellwagen Bank off the coast of Massachusetts.

For more information, go to www.sanctuaries.nos.noaa.gov.