

**Santa Rosa Island Research Station** 

California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) manages the Santa Rosa Island Research Station (SRIRS) in the Channel Islands National Park. On the island, hundreds of students and faculty visiting the research station perform long-term ecological monitoring and interdisciplinary research, contributing to students' experiential and hands-on learning.

The marine debris research project is a cornerstone program of the research station, which monitors waste on seven beaches of the Northern Channel Islands. Since 2016, the SRIRS has removed and cataloged over 21,000 pounds of marine debris from Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Island. To imagine this quantity of waste, you can picture roughly seventeen roll-off dumpsters full of marine debris being transported off the islands. This work involves hiking waste off remote beaches in the backcountry, driving across the island, craning waste onto national park boats, and sorting debris on the CSUCI campus to be recycled or repurposed into undergraduate art projects.

In addition to handling the waste, researchers in the field collect essential data that helps understand the types of waste that wash ashore and their potential sources. This research involves a group of SRIRS staff and volunteers who perform seasonal surveys in 100-meter transects of each of the seven beaches. This transect survey protocol, adopted from the NOAA Marine Debris Monitoring and Assessment Project database, informs national trends in marine debris accumulation across the United States in marine environments. Data from the debris collected on the Northern Channel Islands shows that the most common waste is single-use plastics, and the greatest mass in waste is debris from local and international commercial fishing gear.

Throughout the exhibition, you can find artifacts of marine debris that include lobster buoys, mylar balloons, spectroscopy graphs, and transect maps that creatively represent the collaborative work of the marine debris project funded by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (NMSF) and the NOAA Marine Debris Program. The multimedia artworks on display communicate the importance of keeping the beaches of the Northern Channel Islands free of debris to restore the critical intertidal and near shore ecosystems of the islands that include nesting grounds for snowy plovers, richly diverse tidepools, kelp forests, and sea lion rookeries. The marine debris project has an immediate positive impact on the beaches that are cleaned while simultaneously collecting data that helps to inspire policy to support sustained restoration of the marine environments of our beloved Channel Islands.

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National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (NMSF) | The National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

Channel Islands National Park | The Nature Conservancy



National Marine Sanctuary Foundation



