

Carmel Bay

AREA OF SPECIAL BIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

HIGH LEVEL OF HIGH THREAT DISCHARGE

Area of Special Biological Significance = Zero Pollution Discharge

In the 1970s, to preserve biologically unique and sensitive marine ecosystems for future generations, California designated 34 regions along the coast as Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS). These areas support an unusual variety of aquatic life, and are important building blocks for a sustainable, resilient coastal environment and economy. Although the State Water Board's Ocean Plan prohibits all waste discharges into these areas, pollution continues to damage these important habitats.

With YOUR help, California Coastkeeper Alliance is working to ensure important marine ecosystems are protected from pollution.



Carmel Bay is home to extensive kelp forests and a diverse community of unusual invertebrates like this kelp snail.

Carmel Bay ASBS borders close to seven miles of coastline and includes approximately 1,600 ocean acres near the City of Carmel in Monterey County. Here, marine life of every kind thrives thanks to a deep undersea canyon that generates incredibly productive ocean upwelling events that provide food and other nourishment. Plankton and other microscopic marine organisms flourish in the base of the food chain. Furry crabs, brightly colored anemones, vibrant sea stars and endangered abalone blanket the ocean floor. Monkey-faced eels dart around rocks near cobalt blue and orange puffball sponges. Black perch, striped seaperch and several types of rockfish also enjoy this generous upwelling produced by deep ocean mechanics.



A deep undersea canyon provides a large ocean upwelling of plankton and other basics in the ocean food chain here, which draws an unusually diverse variety of marine life.

Pollution

The State Water Board has determined that despite protection under California law, the Carmel Bay ASBS is contaminated with indicator bacteria and pathogens from golf course runoff, a sewage treatment plant, highway runoff, residential runoff and local recreational facilities. These contaminants threaten water quality and can harm fish and wildlife.

One Threat and Solution: Golf Course Runoff

One pollution source that particularly threatens the Carmel Bay ASBS is polluted water that runs off local golf course greens. Golf courses use large amounts of chemicals as pesticides and fertilizers to maintain impeccable greens. Grass requires ongoing irrigation that washes excess pesticides and fertilizers into local waterways. Rainwater also washes over golf course surfaces, picking up chemicals that eventually flow into natural waterways. This potentially poisons aquatic plants and animals, particularly in sensitive marine ecosystems like ASBSs.

To reduce the currently heavy loads of pesticides and fertilizers running off golf greens, applications should be distanced from streams, rivers and the ocean. Vegetated buffer strips should be planted along waterways to capture and filter polluted runoff that does occur. Golf courses also should reduce chemical use by planting pest-resistant grasses and using slow-release fertilizers that require fewer applications.

Learn More

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/ocean/asbs_map.shtml

<http://www.cacoastkeeper.org/programs/clean-abundant/stormwater-runoff>

Pollution Threats At A Glance

- Number of High Threat Discharges: 348
- State Board Identified Contaminants: Indicator Bacteria and Pathogens
- Pollution Sources: Golf course runoff, a sewage treatment plant, highway runoff, residential runoff and local recreational facilities