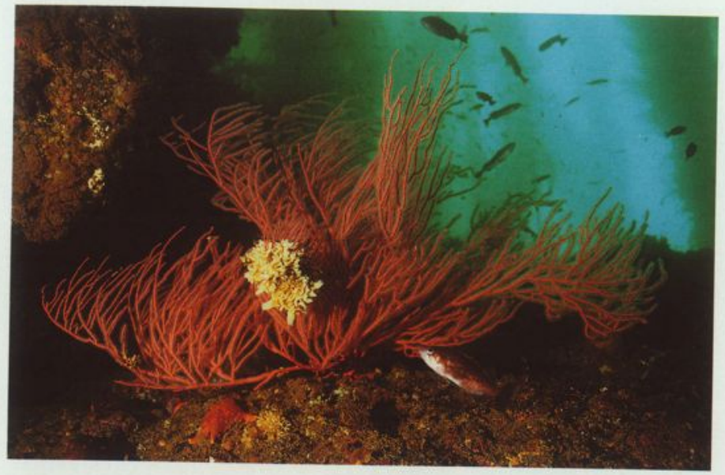
California's Channel Islands

Story by Hillary Hauser • Photos by Bob Evans

Anacapa is composed of three islands, east, middle and west. The photo on the ***preceding page*** *was taken from the top of east island.*

Giant coreopsis, a species of sunflower, coat the hills on Santa Barbara Island with bright yellow blossoms in early spring ***(far right)****.*

A colorful red gorgonian ***(right)*** *found in 60 feet of water at Gull Island (off Santa Cruz Island) is a match for even the most striking topside display.*



Santa Cruz Island, the largest of the California Channel Islands, is for me an underwater birthplace. Whenever I'm out there, I always feel a little bit like a salmon that has returned to the river of its origins, to the place where life began in earnest. I think all divers feel that way about the first place they've ever dived.

My first view of Santa Cruz was from the wheelhouse roof of the old diving charterboat *Emerald* (which is now on the bottom at 600 feet somewhere off the island). It was Fall, the sea was very still and the gulls were screeching loudly as they dipped and soared. From my perch on the roof I watched the island and, on the deck below, a dozen or so divers suiting up for a morning plunge. I was in awe of the whole thing — of my surroundings and of what these black-suited people were doing. At this point, I'd never been diving in my life.

I had just graduated from college, and like a lot of mortar-boarders, had no idea of what I was going to do next. However, the day before this trip to Santa Cruz, I'd bumped into Glenn Miller on the beach. He told me he had a boat (the *Emerald*), and that he took divers out to the Channel Islands. Did I want to come?

Did I want to come! I was just as eager as Glenn's springer spaniel, Mac, who jumped overboard at the slightest hint of a seal or sea lion.

Glenn piloted the *Emerald* to Santa Cruz Island, which is 19 miles from the Santa Barbara Harbor. He anchored off the northwest end of the island, near Profile Point.

When the divers got into the water, I watched them disappear down, down, down, their bubbles expanding on their way up to the surface. I felt left out and paced the deck.

The end result was that Glenn loaned me some diving gear - his tank, regulator, masks, fins, and a wet suit that had been custom made for an old girlfriend. (Glenn's old girlfriend was 5′4″ and I am 5′11″ — but when I squeezed into her wet suit I was pleased as anything: I really and truly thought discomfort was part of the price of exploring a new frontier, and I was so convinced of this that I wore the suit for a year.)

Glenn than gave me the shortest diving course anyone ever had - eight words in all: "Don't hold your breath, dammit, or you're dead."

Another diving passenger, Bobby Birdsall, was assigned to be my underwater bodyguard. As we went over the side, Bobby watched me like a hawk while I looked around at everything completely pie-eyed. As we dived down, down, down, I was in absolute awe that I could breathe like a fish. I was in awe of the *color*. The reef where we swam was carpeted with white-tipped club anemones in bright pink, orange and white, and there were giant green anemones, brilliant red strawberry anemones and purple-yellow nudibranchs. In towering groves of brown kelp, schools of silvery fish milled around *en masse*.

At this very moment, my life changed. I was reborn. This thing of diving, I thought, was what I wanted to do forever. Somehow, some day, I would make a living doing it.

So, during the next several years I went to the Channel Islands every chance I could with Glenn, and eventually became what has since been jokingly called an "underwater journalist."

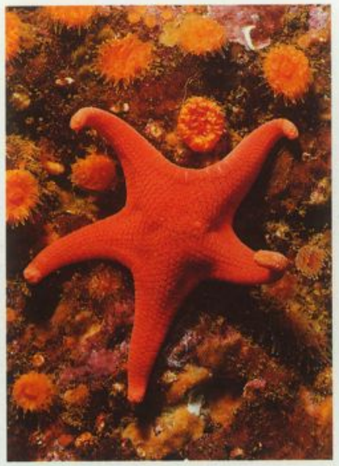
It has now been 22 years since that first dive at Profile Point on Santa Cruz Island. I feel fortunate to have travelled all over the place to dive on exotic reefs and in faraway oceans, to write about what I see. But my diving heart has always remained in the Channel Islands, where I was introduced, finally, to the world of adventure.

San Miguel, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, Anacapa and Santa Barbara — less than 30 miles from the coast, these rocky outposts in the sea are rugged, primitive and wild, still relatively untouched by the hand of man despite the fact they are so very close to people-clogged civilization. To be at any of these islands in the Fall, when the sun hangs low over a glassy mauve ocean, or Spring, when the hills are green and the sea birds soar over their cliff-side nests — this is, I think, heaven on earth.

*A baby female elephant seal (**far left**) feeds on red pelagic crabs in shallow water.*

*Elephant seal bulls fight a bloody battle for territorial domination (**center**).*

*Tidepools at Pt. Bennett on San Miguel Island (**top**) and Orizaba Reef on Santa Cruz Island (**left**) are home to a fascinating array of invertebrates, crustaceans and small fish.*



Brilliant orange starfish such as the one above are common in waters of the Channel Islands; this one was found off the west end of Santa Cruz Island.

SAN MIGUEL

During one of my early trips aboard the *Emerald*, a new deckhand came aboard. He was Bob Evans, 19 years old and ready for anything. He had gotten a job on Glenn's boat to earn money for film, to dive and take pictures. I liked his spirit, and we began to work together.

During the following years, Bob and I explored the islands upside down and backward — from the lighthouse at Anacapa Island to the moon-shaped beach of Cuyler Harbor on San Miguel.

Out of our explorations have come magazine stories, a newspaper series, and our book, *The Living World of the Reef*. But the main thing Bob and I have gained from all this is a friendship that can only spring from mutual adventure and a common love for the sea.

To give the exact location of the Channel Islands, picture an outline of California. The coast runs along a general north-south axis, but at Point Conception it cuts sharply to the east for about 50 miles. Paralleling this stretch of land lie four islands — San Miguel, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz and Anacapa. Since they form the Santa Barbara Channel, they are collectively called the Channel Islands.

Not in this group but further south lie the islands of Catalina, San Nicolas, San Clemente and Santa Barbara. Santa Barbara Island, while far removed from the Channel Islands, is usually included with them because it is part of the Channel Islands National Park.

The islands were inhabited for thousands of years by the peaceful Chumash Indians, who lived off the sea and were master canoe builders. They were discovered in 1542 by the Portuguese explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, whose monument today overlooks Cuyler Harbor on San Miguel. In 1848 the islands were ceded to the United States by Mexico; the Indians on the islands were wiped out in the 1880's during a frenzied hunt for seal fur.

Over the years some of the islands were bought and leased by various sheep and cattle ranchers, who added their own, unique brands of history to these rocky outposts in the sea.

At Point Bennett on San Miguel Island, the elephant seals were whooping it up on the beach while I sat behind a blind up on the cliff, watching them tossing sand over themselves and their snoring neighbors. Nearby, a herd of sea lions lazed in the sun near the surf. Big male elephant seals with elongated, bulbous snouts emitted "bloops" that could be heard a mile away.

As I watched all this mammal-action, I couldn't help but think of Bob doing this same thing — except he was completely by himself and for two weeks without transportation off the island. For him, it was winter, while I got to watch the rookery with the benefit of sunshine. Bob had spent a lot of time in his camp, a tin shed overlooking the rookery, because of the rain. I remembered the self-shot photograph of Bob inside the tin shed, dressed in a heavy jacket and wearing a wool cap, looking very rustic, and his diary, which noted that a mouse was gradually nibbling off the rubber tip of his toothbrush.

But out of Bob's expedition came rare photographs of baby seals playing in the tidepools, enormous bull elephant seals fighting bloody battles, and herds of sea lions sunning themselves on the Point Bennett beach.

On the day I was there, it was blowing almost 40 mph — a mere breeze by San Miguel standards. I had flown to the island with a National Park Service ranger for a day of exploration, and after touching down at the Lester Ranch, now a deserted pile of rubble, we landed again at the Dry Lakebed landing for a short hike to Point Bennett.

On the northern side of the Point Bennett, Castle Rock protruded from the windswept sea. Thick kelp beds tangled along the shoreline, stretching across the surface to create calmer spots amid the whitecaps. The loose dry sand stung my face.

Point Bennett is one of the most important seal and sea lion rookeries in the world. Thousands of these animals come ashore to breed at San Miguel, and because of this, scientists look to the island to measure the comeback of the threatened species, counting heads during breeding seasons to estimate total populations.

On the way out of the small canyon that leads up from Point Bennett to the trail across the island, I stopped to look at a small caliche, a representative of the large caliches that have formed a "ghost forest" in the middle of the island.

Caliches (pronounced ka-LEECH-ees) are petrified plaster castings of plant roots, and some of the caliches on San Miguel are thousands of years old and up to 15 feet in height. They were created when the decaying material of a plant reacted with calcium carbonate sand to form permanent castings.

Sand and wind are synonymous with San Miguel. The island, eight miles long, four miles wide, lies in the direct path of the winds that veer off Point Conception on the mainland, 23 miles away. The ranch animals that were imported to the island over the years nibbled away much of the protective covering of the island, and the exposed areas were blown to sand. As I hiked around the island with the Park Service ranger, he happily showed me areas where native vegetation is returning. With the imported animals taken off the island, the plants are getting a chance to grow back.

There is a wild desolation about San Miguel that exists on none of the other islands, and as I hiked along I thought about Herbert and Elizabeth Lester, who lived on the island from 1930 to 1942.

When I met Elizabeth Lester in Santa Barbara in 1977, I asked her how she and her husband managed in all that wind.

"Easy," she said. "We just aimed ourselves directly into it."

When Herbert Lester got a job as ranch caretaker on San Miguel, his brand-new bride was an East coast girl from a noted family whose ancestors included Roger Sherman, signer of the Declaration of Independence. Elizabeth threw all that high society behind when she established a home with her husband in a ranch house overlooking Cuyler Harbor.

The house had been built in the shape of a "V" — with the point aimed toward the wind (which is probably what she meant by her remark to me). They became known as the "King and Queen of San Miguel," and Elizabeth apparently took this seriously, for she sewed epaulets on her husband's sweatshirts.

They had two daughters, who romped freely on deserted beaches and were taught by Mrs. Lester in a miniature schoolhouse given to them by Santa Rosa rancher Ed Vail.

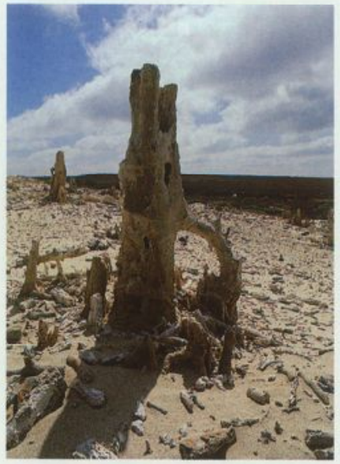
The "kingdom" came to an end as World War II approached. Lester was informed that he and his family would have to vacate, because the island was to be used as a bombing range. Lester was also losing his sight. One day, he wrote his wife a love note and hiked to Harris Point, where he shot himself. He is buried there, overlooking Cuyler Harbor, and when Mrs. Lester died in Santa Barbara in 1981, she was buried next to him.

The Lester Ranch is no longer there, burned by fire and the rest vandalized, but one of my favorite pictures in Bob's collection is one of Mrs. Lester's flowers that still bloom amid rusting bedsprings. As I walked around the property with the National Park Service ranger, I could also see some rusting pieces of iron, a few bricks from a fireplace, and a porcelain sink. Below the ranch site, Cuyler Harbor was calm. In the distance, Prince Island shone in the sunlight.

Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo had wintered in Cuyler Harbor during his explorations of California, and during a return trip to San Miguel in 1543 suffered an accident and died. Although the whereabouts of his grave are not known to this day, Lester always thought it was on Prince Island. Over the years, there have been attempts to find his grave, mostly on San Miguel, but once on Santa Rosa.

What Bob and I love about the underwater life of San Miguel is its wildness. We've had some exciting times at Wilson Rock, a rugged, deep-water pinnacle beyond Harris Point (Bob chided me for swimming off by myself here one time, because, he said, it is white shark territory). Richardson Rock, which lies just past Castle Rock on the northwest end, is another spot surrounded by kelp, canyons and big sea life.

San Miguel is a popular working place for commercial abalone and sea urchin divers, although some of them have reported white sharks near Point Bennett.



*Caliches (**above**) are petrified plaster sand castings of ancient plants and trees. Some on San Miguel are thousands of years old and reach up to 15 feet in height.*

Rockfish and red gorgonian at 40 feet, Frys Harbor, Santa Cruz Island.

SANTA ROSA

Three miles to the east of San Miguel is Santa Rosa, the second largest of the Channel Islands. One of my wildest impressions of this island, I think, came with a trip I made to Talcott Shoal with my friend, Win Swint, who is a commercial abalone diver. Win had planned to dive abalone the day we went out, but when we got to Talcott Shoal the waves were so big he decided to go body surfing instead. While his tender piloted his boat over roaring, white-water surf (with me on deck praying for our lives), Win rode wave, after wave like the happiest sea lion alive.

In 1986, I went to Santa Rosa aboard the *Vaquero II* with one of the island's owners, Al Vail. The *Vaquero II* is the last of a breed of sea vessel, a shallow-drafted floating cattle pen. Al and Russ Vail use the boat to haul cattle to and from the island. They're brought in during Fall and Winter as young calves weighing 400 pounds each, and they're shipped out 18 months later weighing 1,000 pounds. The roundup is legendary, done by island vaqueros on horseback, and the cattle are herded back aboard the boat and offloaded in Port Hueneme.

As the *Vaquero II* reached Bechers Bay, the main anchorage on the island, Al was greeted by vaqueros on the dock and the two of us got into his truck. Then, we rambled all over the island, on country roads build by Standard Oil in 1930 or 1931. (Standard Oil drilled for oil on the island in 1932, but found none.)

It was Spring, and everywhere I looked were cows, milling along the ridges, lying in the shade of oak trees, standing by the road, staring at our truck, ambling wherever they pleased. With few fences and dramatic views of the sea, it is cow heaven on this island.

Vail showed me his family ranchhouse, built above Bechers Bay by his "granddaddy" Walter L. Vail, who bought the island in 1902 with J.V. Vickers. Until 1902, the island had been densely populated with sheep, but Vail and Vickers dispensed with the sheep and brought in the cows. Al and his twin brother Russ, are the last of California's island ranchers, and the vaqueros who work on the ranch are considered a "live history exhibit" by the National Park Service, which bought the island in 1987.

Today, the Park Service allows visitors to come ashore at Bechers Bay and walk the trail to the stand of Torrey pines, one mile west of the pier. (This is the only place in the world where Torrey pines grow naturally, other than La Jolla.) Visitors will also be able to come ashore at Johnsons Lee, an abandoned military barracks on the backside of the island near Ford Point. Along this section of island coast is the mammoth rusting hulk of the *Chickasaw*, a freighter that went aground on Santa Rosa in 1962.

There are other wrecks off Santa Rosa, which divers can explore (but not touch! The National Park Service is cracking down). I remember well the days Glenn and I explored the wreck of the *Aggi*, a Norwegian squarerigger that sank off Santa Rosa in 1915; there is also the *Golden Horn*, which sank off the island in 1892, and the *Crown of England*, which went down in 1894.

However, the real underwater adventure of Santa Rosa is in the kelp beds that grow deep and thick around the island. This is the kind of undersea scenery that spoils California divers for any place else — the underwater forest primeval, the subsea grove of towering "trees." Here, a diver can swim through what writers often describe as "cathedral beams of light" that shine through the thick canopy, and as corny as it sounds, it is true. The sun shines through kelp as light beams through a thick wood, and to swim through kelp on a clear day is like soaring in air.

SANTA CRUZ

How wonderful it is to be anchored in Potato Harbor, quietly listening to the wonderful sounds of the water lapping on the beach and gulls screeching overhead! How awesome to creep by boat into the enormous iron-stained Painted Cave, looking down into the clear blue water at the sea anemones on the rocks below while sea lions splash noisily into the water from every side.

Santa Cruz, the island where I took my first dive, got its name from the iron cross that was left behind by Spanish explorers (but which was returned to them by the friendly Chumash). It is the most idyllic island of them all, the only one in the group that has a green interior valley hidden from the sea. There are also the rolling hills, azure coves, ocean caves, protected anchorages and Devil's Peak towering over all.

Santa Cruz is probably the most often-dived of the Channel Islands, because it is easy to get to and provides the largest number of protected anchorages.

One sunny day in Spring, I hiked from Scorpion Anchorage to Smugglers Cove with Pete and John Gherini, whose family still owns the east end of the island. They recalled their boyhood summers there, which were filled with a lot of hard, sweaty work packing wool. Their great-great grandfather, Justinian Caire, had bought the 60,645-acre island in 1869 for a sheep business, and that business had been passed down to them.

The first thing Justinian Caire had done on the 24-mile-long island was build ranch facilities to launch his sheep-ranching enterprise. In an interior valley accessible only from Prisoners Harbor, he built an elegant ranch house, bunkhouses, stables, a winery (Santa Cruz Island vinters produced some prize-winners in their day), a bakery and a chapel. All of the structures, some with ornate iron balustrades and French ornamentations, reflected Caire's Mediterranean background.

Outer sheep stations were built at Scorpion Anchorage and Smugglers Cove.

In 1937, Caire's descendants — which now included the Gherini family — sold the major part of the island, 54,381 acres, to Edwin L. Stanton of Laguna Beach for $750,000. (Carey Stanton eventually inherited his father's land and moved onto the island in 1957 to run sheep and cattle.)

Ambrose and Maria Gherini, however, kept 6,264 acres at the east end of the island. At the time I was hiking with their grandsons, Pete and John, negotiations were underway with the National Park Service, which will eventually own the Gherini property.

At the time, Stanton had already deeded his 54,381 acres to the Nature Conservancy.

Looking inside the ornate, two-story, Mediterranean style sheep stations at Scorpion Anchorage and Smugglers Cove, I had a slight pang of sadness that they will now be used as overnight camps for visitors. There is something in all of us, I suppose, that resists change — especially if that change means the public gains access to formerly private places of such interesting history and lore.

In fact, the whole concept of the National Park Service taking over the management of much of the Channel Islands has stirred up images of thousands of people trampling over a countryside in the manner of Yosemite or Yellowstone.

Fisheye view of kelpfish, Anacapa Island.

However, Bill Ehorn, superintendent of the Channel Islands National Park, said the legislation establishing the park dictates that scientific preservation of its resources be its top priority. Under the legislation, the Park Service is to do an inventory of all terrestrial and marine resources in the park boundaries, out to one mile at sea, and report back to Congress until 1990 as to proper management of those resources.

"We're watching tidepools, sea birds, the kelp forest, and we're doing underwater transsects (monitoring) out to 60 feet, around all five islands," Ehorn said. "We have teams of researchers looking at indicator animals such as fishes, abalone, algaes, sponges, vertebrates and invertebrates. We collect data. We strive to understand why things have happened so that we can suggest changes."

The ecological monitoring in the islands, Ehorn said, is "something that hasn't been done in any other park."

ANACAPA

At present, the public gateway to the Channel Islands is at the east end of Anacapa. The island, referred to in early times as a "mass of inaccessible volcanic rock," stands watch over the eastern entrance to the Santa Barbara Channel. It is actually composed of three rocks connected by shallow reefs, very much like a submerged mountain top. The whole chain is about five miles long and averages only a half mile wide.

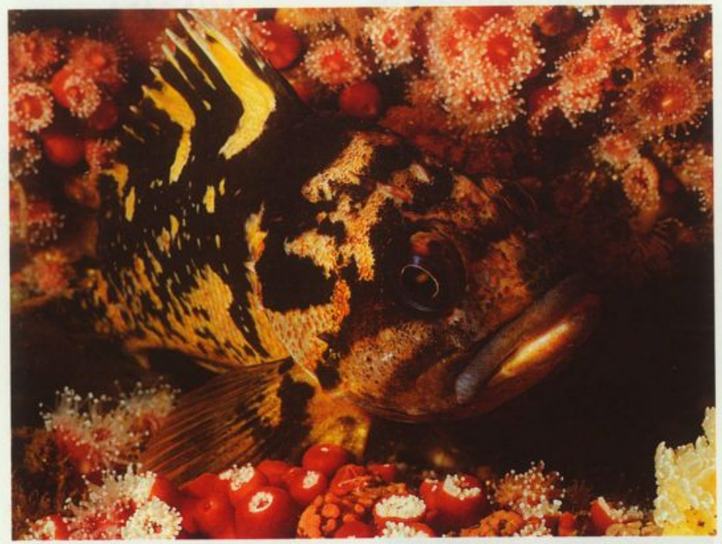
The name "Anacapa" comes from the Indian word "Eneeyapah," which means "ever-changing." The title refers to the mirage phenomenon that makes Anacapa appear at one time steep and precipitous, while at other times, low and flat.

Of all the islands, it is the closest to the California coast, and approximately 100 people per day go ashore at east Anacapa to take the self-guided hike around the island. At the top of the 153 steps from the landing, you can get a perspective of Anacapa's rugged cliffs and treacherous lava walls. Ocean waves have battered and carved out networks of caves at the base of these rocky abutments, which are echo chambers to sea lions and surf.

Arch Rock, at the easternmost tip of the island, is a familiar landmark, continually beaten by the sea and often photographed. Over all stands the lighthouse, which keeps watch over ships coming into this end of the channel.

My introduction to Anacapa was a rollicking trip aboard the *Emerald* to dive the wreck of the *Winfield Scott*, a 225-foot steam paddlewheeler that had wrecked on the middle island on December 2, 1853. The big ship was on its way from San Francisco to New York via Panama when it hit a blanket of deadly fog in the Santa Barbara Channel. The 450 passengers, many of whom had struck it rich in the California gold fields, spent a miserable night on the island before they were rescued by another steamer.

When I first saw the *Winfield Scott*, the algae-covered paddlewheel was distinct — you knew it was a paddlewheel. You could also see copper nails and sheeting strewn all over the bottom, and



*Black and yellow rockfish (**left**), west end, Santa Cruz Island.*

*Underwater kelp forest (**center**) is a haven for fish life.*

*Nudibranch (Hermissenda) (**above**) on soft coral, Santa Cruz Island, west end, 50 feet.*

you could help yourself. Several divers I know found gold coins, including some beautiful octagonal dollars that were minted before coins became standard. We had a blast digging our way through all this stuff, and we loved to take underwater pictures of each other posing in front of the paddlewheel.

Today, the paddlewheel is hardly recognizable, since it has been pulverized into the bottom by repeated beatings from the sea. Also gone are the days of picking through the rubble on the bottom, for the laws governing the *Winfield Scott* and other shipwrecks in the Channel Islands are very strict. A number of California divers, in fact, are at this very moment facing extremely stiff fines and unhappy court sessions for bringing up even the slightest artifact from the *Winfield Scott* and other wrecks in the sanctuary.

Anacapa Island probably made its most significant contribution to the news in 1985, when the California brown pelican made a dramatic comeback on the western island. Anacapa is a major nesting ground for the pelican, which suffered a fearful decline because of DDT. In 1972, only one pelican chick hatched on the island.

In 1985, more than 7,000 chicks were born. When I walked around the east end of the island in 1986, I was thrilled to see many mother pelicans circling over their nests.

SANTA BARBARA ISLAND

Santa Barbara Island is the tiniest of them all — 652 acres total. It lies 46 miles offshore from Ventura, and is closer to Catalina Island than it is the other Channel Islands. I hiked around the entire island one afternoon with a plant ecologist and a soil expert, both of whom were working for the National Park Service on a study that will hopefully solve the severe erosion of the island.

As we walked across an area of the island called the "Badlands," the plant ecologist said the erosion had been caused by rabbits, which came to the island as stowaways on ships, then roamed and multiplied on the island. The rabbits nibbled the native plants to the ground — including the succulent *Dudleya* and the giant coreopsis that occur throughout the islands.

*Jellyfish 15 feet below the surface, west end, Santa Cruz (**top**).*

*On the surface of Santa Barbara Channel near Santa Cruz, jellyfish float like parachutes in the plankton current (**right**).*

Without these protective coverings, a cycle of erosion began on Santa Barbara Island that has not completely stopped to this day.

However, the coreopsis are coming back. These are the giant tree-sized sunflowers that coat the hills with bright yellow blossoms in early spring. The seeds of the plants have been blowing, literally, in the winds, and in some of the canyons on Santa Barbara Island, they reach eight feet in height.

Santa Barbara is a tiny island, but pictures of it make it seem huge because of its high, steep cliffs. From the trail near Signal Peak, I stopped to look out to Sutil Island, a small satelite rock dwarfed by the precipitous chunk of land I was standing on.

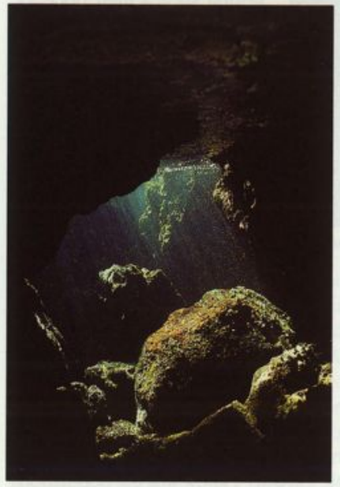
Today, the Channel Islands are facing a time of change. When I first went out there, they seemed like the Wild West. We dug around on the beaches, took what we could find off the wrecks underwater, and generally did what we liked. Now, the islands are managed to within an inch of a coreopsis plant, and none of us dare dig on a beach or touch a wreck. These changes are good, because the fragile nature of the islands could not withstand a growing population of visitors who also want to take home an artifact or two. The scientific approach to the islands will also preserve these unique oceanic outposts for the future.

These days, I like to go out there with my husband, Jim, who is a commercial abalone/urchin diver, and watch him work the kelp beds of Tyler Bight on San Miguel, or Talcott Shoal on Santa Rosa.

I've been back to that first dive spot near Profile Point on Santa Cruz Island, too, but I didn't see it the same way I saw it 22 years ago. The color wasn't what I remember, and the water seemed a little green and drab. I was about to convince myself that I had become spoiled by the tropics, when I ran into Bobby Birdsall in the grocery store. I asked him if he remembered that dive, and if he remembered the colors as being as vivid as I have described.

Bobby said yes — it was that way then and still is now. We just happened to be out there when Everything was Right.

Santa Barbara Island, looking at Sutil Rock (a satellite rock of the island). (top)



*Shallow underwater cave illuminated by rays of the early morning sun. (**left**)*

TO GET TO THE CHANNEL ISLANDS:

Dive trips to the Channel Islands can be arranged through Truth Aquatics, which operates the dive boats *Truth, Vision* and *Conception* out of the Santa Barbara Harbor all year around. Contact Truth Aquatics, Sea Landing, Breakwater, Santa Barbara, Calif. 93109 (805) 962-1127.

To arrange day hikes or overnight visits to Anacapa, the east end of Santa Cruz Island, San Miguel or Santa Barbara Island, contact Island Packers in Ventura, 1867 Spinnaker Dr., Ventura, Calif. 93001 (805) 642-1393.

To visit the western section of Santa Cruz Island, contact the Nature Conservancy (Santa Cruz Island Project), 213 Stearns Wharf, Santa Barbara, Calif. 93101 (805) 962-9111.

The Museum of Natural History in Santa Barbara also offers hiking trips to San Miguel and Santa Cruz Island; contact the museum at 2559 Puesta del Sol Road, Santa Barbara, Calif. 93105 (805) 682-4711.

For information about Santa Rosa Island, contact the National Park Service, 1901 Spinnaker Dr., Ventura, Calif. 93001 (805) 644-8262.

Public access (without permits) to the islands: on Anacapa, boaters without permits can go ashore at the east Anacapa landing and at Frenchys Cove. On San Miguel, boaters without permits may land on Cuyler Beach, but may not hike beyond beach boundaries without permission from the National Park Service. On Santa Barbara Island, boaters without permits may go ashore at Landing Cove.

For Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz islands, permits must be obtained from the National Park Service, or arrangements made through Island Packers in Ventura.

Island Packers, which is the National Park Service concessionaire, also operates the dive boat *Peace* out of the Ventura Harbor. For open boat information, call (805) 658-8286.