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### National Marine Sanctuaries



## **Diverse Ecosystems and Marine Grandeur on Display** *Forever Stamps Highlight the National Marine Sanctuaries System*

SANTA CRUZ, CA — The U.S. Postal Service dedicated 16 new Forever stamps today celebrating the nation’s underwater treasures that showcase the abundant wildlife and diverse ecosystems found throughout the National Marine Sanctuary System. The ceremony took place at the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Exploration Center.

For 50 years, U.S. national marine sanctuaries and marine national monuments have protected areas with special ecological, cultural and historical significance.

“Protecting our environment is one of the most important things we can do now and for future generations,” said William D. Zollars, a member of the U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors, who served as the dedicating official. “The habitats protected by these marine sanctuaries and monuments help ensure the survival of threatened and endangered species. The National Marine Sanctuaries Forever stamps celebrate these habitats. Customers can share the beauty of these protected areas when they send mail to family and friends.”

Zollars was joined by Paul Scholz, deputy assistant administrator at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s National Ocean Service, and Leon Panetta, former secretary of defense and co-chair of the Monterey Bay Chapter of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation.

“The National Marine Sanctuary stamp series is a colorful celebration of the beauty, abundance, and diversity of our nation’s most iconic underwater places,” said Paul M. Scholz, deputy assistant administrator for the National Ocean Service. “As these stamps circulate across the nation, we hope they’ll generate excitement about these incredible places, and what people can do to help protect them. We especially hope they inspire people to visit a national marine sanctuary. Perhaps, the stamps will

even inspire a child who one day grows up to become a marine biologist, environmental educator, science communicator, or a passionate protector of our blue planet."

The Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act, which established a framework for designating national marine sanctuaries, was signed into law on Oct. 23, 1972. Today, the National Marine Sanctuary System is managed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Encompassing more than 620,000 square miles, the sanctuary system currently comprises 15 national marine sanctuaries and two marine national monuments, stretching from the North Atlantic to the South Pacific, and from the Florida Keys to the Pacific Northwest.

Protecting some of the most biodiverse ecosystems in the world, the National Marine Sanctuary System preserves habitats that are especially vital for the survival of threatened and endangered species, including threatened green sea turtles, endangered Hawaiian monk seals and critically endangered Southern Resident killer whales. The system also safeguards important feeding and breeding grounds for humpback whales, seabirds such as albatross and shearwaters and a variety of other species.

The sanctuary system balances the protection of the nation's maritime ecosystems and maritime history by allowing visitors to enjoy the sanctuaries responsibly. The majority of U.S. national marine sanctuaries and marine national monuments are open for sustainable recreation, including diving and snorkeling, kayaking and canoeing, sailing and sport fishing. Their educational centers attract thousands of visitors each year. They also help preserve and celebrate the ancient sites, cultural artifacts and living traditions of the Indigenous peoples who have inhabited these regions for millennia.

The pane of 16 stamps includes photographs taken by Daryl Duda, Michael Durham, Mark Sullivan, Peter Turcik and Norbert Wu, and by NOAA employees Wendy Cover, Jeff Harris, Elliott Hazen, Joseph Hoyt, Ed Lyman, Greg McFall, Matt McIntosh, G. P. Schmahl and Kate Thompson.

"National Marine Sanctuaries" appears in blue type at the top of the pane. The words "USA" and "Forever" are at the bottom left of each stamp. A map of the National Marine Sanctuary System, illustrated by Todd M. Detwiler, is printed on the back of the pane. Art director Greg Breeding designed the pane using existing photographs.

News of the stamps are being shared with the hashtag **#MarineSanctuariesStamps**.

### **Postal Products**

Customers may purchase stamps and other philatelic products through the [Postal Store](#) at [usps.com/shopstamps](https://usps.com/shopstamps), by calling 844-737-7826, by mail through [USA Philatelic](#) or at Post Office locations nationwide.

Forever stamps will always be equal in value to the current First-Class Mail 1-ounce price. Information for ordering first-day-of-issue postmarks and covers is at [usps.com/shop](https://usps.com/shop).

The Postal Service generally receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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