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CONTACT

Laura Sanchez
Communications Director
Santa Barbara Channelkeeper
LSanchez@SBCK.org
805.455.2905

**VOLUNTEERS AND GROUPS COLLABORATE TO CLEAR MARINE DEBRIS FROM
CHANNEL ISLANDS**

Santa Barbara, CA - On Tuesday, November 19, 2024, twenty-three volunteers joined representatives from Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, Island Packers, Santa Barbara Adventure Company, and the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation to clear approximately 2,100 pounds of trash and fishing gear from Yellowbanks, a stretch of cobble beach on the south side of Santa Cruz Island, and Driftwood Cove on Anacapa Island.

This is the fifth year of collaborative cleanups at the Channel Islands for the group. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Marine Debris Program provides ongoing support for these efforts.

During the day-long cleanup effort, the group spent the morning removing old fishing gear from Santa Cruz Island before moving on to Anacapa Island, where they collected an assortment of trash items, including drink bottles, tennis balls, and other plastics. They ferried all of the debris from shore using kayaks and a skiff and loaded it onto a boat that brought it back to the mainland for proper disposal.

Researchers have estimated that 4.8 to 12.7 million metric tons of land-based plastic waste enter the world's oceans each year in addition to 1.5 million metric tons of microplastics.

In the Santa Barbara Channel, trash from the mainland is carried out from shore into coastal waters and beyond. Lost fishing gear and trash from marine sources are also transported by

currents. Some of this debris washes up on the remote shores of the Channel Islands, while other persists in the Pacific Ocean.

“We are grateful to work together with our partners to clean up these special places in the Santa Barbara Channel,” said Molly Troup, Channelkeeper’s science and program manager. “This collaboration has allowed us to expand the island cleanups and share the experience with more community members. While many people are familiar with the plastic and trash pollution crisis, it’s a powerful experience for volunteers to pick up to-go coffee cups, snack wrappers, and water bottles on a remote stretch of beach over twenty miles from the mainland. Although marine debris cleanups on their own are not going to solve our plastic pollution issue, it is our hope that including more community members in this effort will help elevate the issue and continue to inspire meaningful change.”

The large amount of fishing gear and trash that had accumulated on Yellowbanks on Santa Cruz Island was surprising to the team, especially considering that this was the fourth time the area had been cleared of trash this year.

“This impressive marine debris removal is the result of expert coordination and teamwork among multiple partner organizations,” said Christy Kehoe, California Regional Coordinator for the NOAA Marine Debris Program. “This project is restoring shorelines and important sanctuary habitats in the Channel Islands while benefiting local communities, and we are proud to support it.”

This Channel Islands debris removal program is supported by the NOAA Marine Debris Program with funding provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law as part of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation’s larger effort to remove marine debris from five different marine sanctuaries across California, Washington, and the Gulf of Mexico.

Michaela Miller, Sr. Conservation Manager for the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, said, “The debris plaguing the remote Channel Island beaches and sensitive marine habitats threatens the biodiversity that makes these waters a national treasure. We are proud to work with our partners on this debris removal project to support a healthy ocean and coastal environment in Channel Islands National Park and National Marine Sanctuary.”