


## ABOUT SANTA MONICA BAY



**S**anta Monica Bay is one of this country's most valuable natural resources. It gives us beauty, recreation, food and commerce. It is also home to hundreds of species of birds, fish, mammals and other wildlife. Here are some facts:

- The Bay stretches from the Ventura County line to Point Fermin at the southernmost tip of the Palos Verdes Peninsula — approximately 50 miles of coastline.
- It consists of 266 square miles of open ocean and has 22 separate public beaches.
- On a summer day, as many as 2 million people visit the Bay's beaches to swim, surf or relax in the sun.
- Santa Monica Bay is home to the world's largest man-made small-craft marina — Marina del Rey.
- Most of Santa Monica Bay is off-limits to commercial fishing.

Human use has taken its toll on Santa Monica Bay. At one time, the coastal areas were lined with sand dunes and extensive wetlands filled with a rich variety of birds and fish. But this environment has changed considerably over the last century. Today, only three coastal wetlands and a few stretches of sand dunes remain. In an area once sparsely populated by Gabrieleño and Chumash Indians, we now find a sprawling urban landscape, home to nearly 9 million people.

But humans only make up part of the picture. The Bay and its environs provide vital habitats for many species of wildlife, including several that have become endangered, such as the California least tern, the gray whale and the California brown pelican. These creatures, and many others, are exposed to the numerous hazards associated with living in close proximity to a huge city. Restoring the Bay for us also means making it safer for the plants and animals that live there.

Let's take a closer look at Santa Monica Bay and explore the impact that humans have had on this great resource. Let's also examine what the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project is doing to help protect the Bay. Finally, let's see how we all can contribute to Santa Monica Bay's restoration.