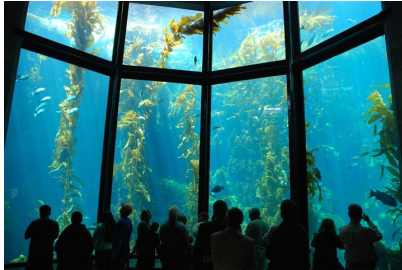


Dive Deeper in the Kelp Forest of Monterey Bay

Monterey Bay is absolutely one of the best places in California not just for giant redwood trees but also for its extraordinary underwater kelp forest. There are actually two species of giant kelp which can be found in the Monterey. They are the bull kelp or *neriocystis* and giant kelp or the *macroystis pyifere*. The lifespan of the bull kelp can actually last for just a year while the giant kelp can live for several years.



Divers would easily know if the site in the forest has calm waters if there is the presence of giant kelps. Bull kelps however are more adapted to rough waters. These species of sea kelps are known to only exist in cold coastal regions of the world such as that in Monterey Bay.

Aside from its enormous number of huge sea kelps, the Monterey Bay Kelp Forest is also unique for its rich marine biodiversity. There had been a large number of animals recorded to naturally grow, live and reproduce and that huge number continues to grow as researchers unearth more and more species of marine life. There had also already been more than 400 species of marine plants including the sea kelps. Specifically, it was estimated that there are approximately over 500,000 marine creatures inhabiting the giant sea kelps.

Sea kelps are vital in the entire marine ecosystem of Monterey Bay. They absorb the impact brought about by the sea current therefore stabilizing wave forces. They also serve as filters for planktons and some other tiny organisms that also serve as food for most animals under the sea. For that, the kelp forest provides a suitable habitat for hundred thousand marine creatures providing them with shelter and food.



As one of the most beautiful diving sites all around the world, the kelp forest of Monterey Bay is one of the most visited sites among the diving enthusiasts who want to experience remarkable adventure. The kelp forest is just so unique that most divers say that it was entirely a different world down under the cold waters. The scenery while wandering around the gigantic sea kelps is certainly a breath-taking view.

Seeing fishes of different colors and sizes which some of them come in schools is also one of the best parts when diving the Bay. Some of the most common groups of fish that can be seen in the kelp forest are the schools of rockfish such as the cabezon, kelpfish and the yellow rockfish. Unlike any other species, these kinds of fishes are very approachable and they do not really mind whether they can sense or not any human presence.



Aside from the numerous fishes, there are also huge assortments of invertebrates. Both the giant kelps and coralline algae provide home and food for many tiny crawling creatures. There can be found nudibanchs that comes in many different colors and shapes. There are also California dorids, Spanish shawls and hemmisendas. There are also a wide variety of species of crabs and shrimps. The best sites where you can find all these spectacles are the Metridium Fields, Ball Busters, Hopkin's Deep, Mono Lobo Wall, McAbee Beach and Pinnacle, Chase Reef, Monterey Aquarium Reef, Eric's Pinnacle and Cypress Point.

Monterey Bay was declared a protected area in 1931 allowing marine biodiversity to flourish at its best. Because of the absence of human predation, fishes are allowed to freely live and reproduce making the place to appear lively. This can also be the reason why most fishes are already easily accustomed to humans.

For those divers and researchers who would like to do fish photography or to conduct a study about the living creatures there, or to just merely get mesmerized by the beauty of the kelp forest, it is highly advisable to get an efficient guide who knows very well which parts of the site are most likely to have clear visibility. Underwater visibility will of course vary depending on how disturbing or calming the water current is.

Indeed, Monterey Bay deserves the title as one of the most thrilling underwater sites. All throughout the protected area, Monterey Bay has become the leading fish exhibit that is certainly incomparable to any other diving site all around the planet.

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