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Inventory of Ocean Monitoring in the Southern California Bight

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ABSTRACT

Monitoring of the ocean environment in southern California, USA, has been conducted by a diverse array of public and private organizations with different motivations, working on a variety of spatial and temporal scales. To create a basis from which to integrate information from these diverse programs, we conducted an inventory of ocean monitoring activities in the Southern California Bight to address the following questions: (1) How much money is being expended annually on marine monitoring programs? (2) Which organizations are conducting the most monitoring? (3) How are resources allocated among the different types of monitoring programs? This inventory focused on programs existing, or those expected to be in existence, for at least 10 years and that were active at any time between 1994 and 1997. For each program identified for inclusion in this study, information was collected on the number of sites, sampling intensity, parameters measured, and methods used. Levels of effort were translated into cost estimates based upon a market survey of local consulting firms. One hundred fourteen marine monitoring programs, conducted by 65 organizations and costing US \$31 million annually, were identified. Most of the effort (81 programs, 65% of samples, 70% of costs) was expended by ocean dischargers as part of their compliance with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit requirements. Federal programs (11 programs, 25% of samples, 10% of total expenditures) expended more than state or local government programs. More than one quarter of monitoring expenditures were conducted to measure concentrations and mass of effluent inputs to the ocean. The largest effort expended on receiving water monitoring was for measuring bacteria, followed by sediments, fish/shellfish, water quality, and intertidal habitats. The large level of expenditures by individual agencies has presented opportunities for integrating small, site-specific ocean monitoring programs into regional- and national-scale monitoring and assessment programs.

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