



Coastal resources & the marine environment

Offshore oil and gas activities since 1969 have had little measurable effect on the healthy marine environment off the California coast. A major

■ *Acoustical pulses, or sound waves, are used in seismic surveys during exploration for oil offshore. These activities have not been*

- *The oil and gas industry, through the Minerals Management Service, spends about \$4 million annually in the Pacific Region to fund research in physical oceanography, biology, ecology and socioeconomics related to offshore oil development.*
- *The California sea otter population was listed as threatened in 1977, primarily as a result of industrial activity in Northern California. The otter's range in central California now stretches from about Point Ano Nuevo south to the Santa Maria River and the population currently numbers more than 2,000.*

- *Gray whales migrate closest to shore and generally pass through the Santa Barbara Channel during their migration. While oil and natural gas activities have been raised as a concern both in terms of potential noise and oil impacts, studies to date indicate that oil activities do not appear to adversely affect the whale populations or their migration.*
- *The gray whale recently was removed from the endangered species list. A field study of the reactions of migrating gray whales to naturally occurring oil slicks from seeps in the Santa Barbara Channel recorded mainly subtle and short-term responses like changes in migration direction.*