

Answers to questions about...

Ocean Monitoring Program

The Orange County Sanitation District (OC San) is a public agency that provides wastewater collection, treatment, and recycling services for approximately 2.6 million people in central and northwest Orange County. OC San has two plants that treat wastewater from residential, commercial and industrial sources.

How does OC San protect the ocean?

To meet our mission of “protecting public health and the environment,” OC San maintains an ongoing Ocean Monitoring Program, which is overseen by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the California Regional Water Quality Control Board.

OC San regularly monitors the marine life, sediment quality, and water quality in over 185 square miles of ocean off Huntington Beach. In addition, water samples are collected along 19 miles of Orange County coastlines, from Seal Beach to Crystal Cove, to assess potential health risks to beachgoers. The Ocean Monitoring Program documents that the release of OC San’s treated wastewater into the Pacific Ocean is not degrading marine habitats & wildlife and does not pose a risk to human health.

What does the program show?

- Fish and other critters are healthy where the treated water is released. There are no differences between those living around the outfall and those living in similar parts of the ocean.
- The concentration of contaminants in muscle tissue of bottom-dwelling fish do not exceed state and federal human consumption standards. Therefore, it is safe to

eat fish caught offshore.

- The sediment that surrounds the outfall pipeline does have pollutants related to wastewater releases. However, the level of pollutants has decreased dramatically since 1985 because of OC San’s Source Control Program.
- Overall, OC San’s core monitoring area is healthy and similar to reference conditions throughout the Southern California Bight region. OC San regularly collaborates with community partners on regional monitoring programs to ensure the healthy conditions are continuously met.

OC San is proud of the efforts taken every day to protect public health and the environment. Hard work is put into preventing chemicals from entering the sewer system. Great care is taken to use the best wastewater treatment technologies available. OC San’s Ocean Monitoring Program continues to be a model for other programs throughout the United States.

To learn more about OC San’s Ocean Monitoring Program, visit www.ocsan.gov/ocean.



OC San's Ocean Monitoring Vessel Nerissa.

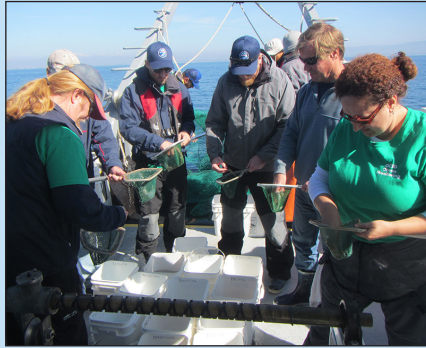


OC San's Ocean Monitoring team — the team of 11 goes out 80-100 days a year to collect samples for compliance monitoring.

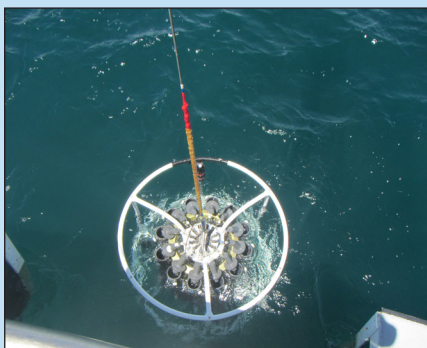
Facts About The Ocean Monitoring Program



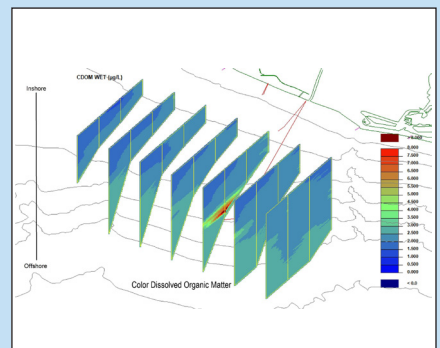
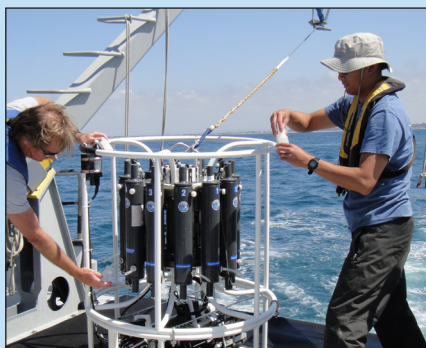
A trawl net is used to collect fish and large invertebrates from the ocean floor to conduct marine population assessments and fish tissue contaminant analysis.



A grab sampler is used to collect sediment and small invertebrates from the ocean floor to conduct sediment contaminant analysis, sediment toxicity testing, and marine population assessments.



A CTD-rosette sampler is used to collect water samples and oceanographic data (e.g. temperature). These data are used to evaluate water quality and track the movement of our discharged effluent (via dissolved organic matter, depicted in red in the plot above).



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