



PPIC
STATEWIDE
SURVEY

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*Special Survey on Californians
and the Environment*

in collaboration with

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

The James Irvine Foundation

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation

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Policy
Institute of
California***

The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) is a private operating foundation established in 1994 with an endowment from William R. Hewlett. The Institute is dedicated to improving public policy in California through independent, objective, nonpartisan research.

PPIC's research agenda focuses on three program areas: population, economy, and governance and public finance. Studies within these programs are examining the underlying forces shaping California's future, cutting across a wide range of public policy concerns, including education, health care, immigration, income distribution, welfare, urban growth, and state and local finance.

PPIC was created because three concerned citizens – William R. Hewlett, Roger W. Heyns, and Arjay Miller – recognized the need for linking objective research to the realities of California public policy. Their goal was to help the state's leaders better understand the intricacies and implications of contemporary issues and make informed public policy decisions when confronted with challenges in the future. PPIC does not take or support positions on any ballot measure or on any local, state, or federal legislation, nor does it endorse, support, or oppose any political parties or candidates for public office.

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Preface

The PPIC Statewide Survey series provides policymakers, the media, and the general public with objective, advocacy-free information on the perceptions, opinions, and policy preferences of California residents. Inaugurated in April 1998, the survey series has generated a database that includes the responses of more than 80,000 Californians.

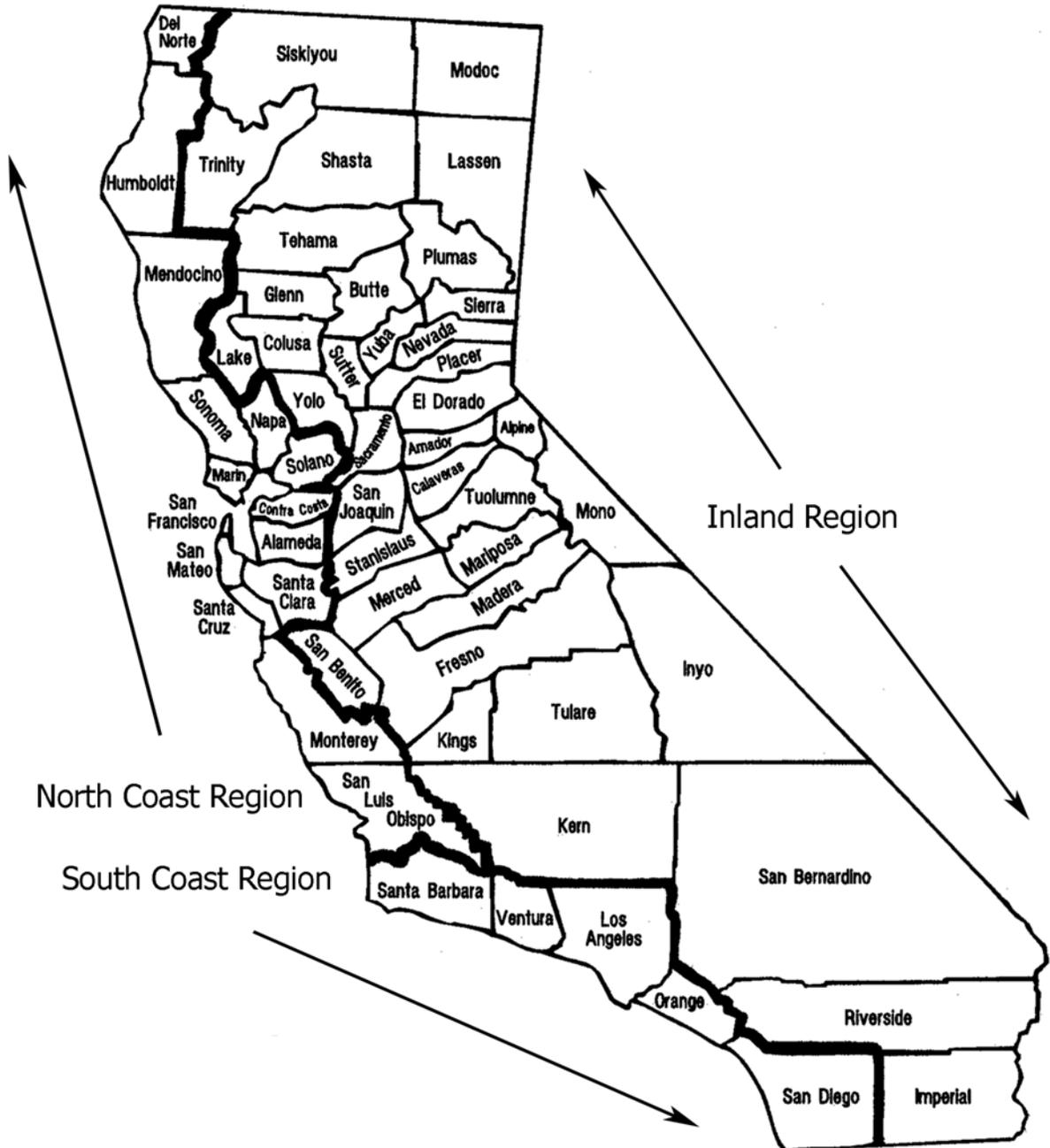
This survey on Californians and the environment—a collaborative effort of the Public Policy Institute of California and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, and The David and Lucile Packard Foundation—is a special edition of the PPIC Statewide Survey. This is the sixth in a series of eight surveys—two per year for four years—launched in May 2001. The intent of the surveys is to inform policymakers, encourage discussion, and raise public awareness about a variety of growth and environmental issues facing the state. Previous statewide surveys have focused on land use and air quality issues. The current survey provides the first comprehensive analysis in our survey series of the public’s perspectives on the wide range of marine and coastal issues confronting California today. The importance of coastal and marine issues for an environment survey series is derived from California’s 1,100-mile shoreline, the state’s history of controversy over coastal development and conflict over oil drilling off the coast, and the publication of recent reports by the Pew Oceans Commission and other national and international study groups on issues such as marine pollution and the depletion of coral reefs, fish, and marine mammals.

This special edition presents the responses of 2,004 adult residents throughout the state. It examines in detail the public’s views on ocean and coastal conditions in California, their public policy preferences and lifestyle choices related to the ocean and coastal areas, and the state and national government’s efforts in the environmental arena. Some of the questions are repeated from PPIC Statewide Surveys on Californians and the environment conducted since June 2000. More specifically, we examine the following issues:

- The public’s perceptions of ocean and marine conditions, including their relative rankings of ocean and beach pollution compared to other environmental problems, rankings of ocean quality today, trends in ocean quality over time, the importance of ocean and beach conditions for California, and the specific problems affecting the marine and coastal environment.
- Public policy choices, including the public’s support for policies aimed at the protection of the marine and coastal environment, ratings of the state government’s efforts toward marine and coastal protection, the perceived importance of environmental policies for the new governor, ratings of the president on environmental policies, perceived importance of the candidates’ positions on environmental issues in the 2004 presidential election, and the political party (i.e., Democrat, Republican) that is viewed as most trusted to handle environmental issues in the United States.
- California lifestyle issues related to the marine and coastal environments, including the use of beaches, the frequency of sports activities in the ocean and bays, the extent to which seafood is a part of the personal diet, health and environmental concerns related to seafood as part of the diet, and the extent to which Californians visit aquariums and have aquariums in their homes.
- Variations in marine and coastal perceptions, public policy choices, lifestyles, and political perspectives between residents living in coastal counties and inland counties, between Latinos and non-Hispanic whites, and across age, socioeconomic, and political spectrums.

Copies of this report may be ordered by e-mail (order@ppic.org) or phone (415-291-4400). Copies of this and earlier reports are posted on the publications page of the PPIC web site (www.ppic.org). For questions about the survey, please contact survey@ppic.org.

Subregions Used in This Report



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Press Release

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<http://www.ppic.org/main/pressreleaseindex.asp>

SPECIAL SURVEY ON CALIFORNIANS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

IT'S A BEACH STATE ... OF MIND: DESPITE TUMULTUOUS TIMES, CALIFORNIA'S GOLDEN COAST STILL CAPTURES HEARTS

Most Residents Willing To Pay To Safeguard Ocean, Beaches; High Environmental Expectations for Schwarzenegger

SAN FRANCISCO, California, November 13, 2003 — Whether coastal or inland dwellers, Californians love the Pacific. In a time of budget woes, political turmoil, and catastrophic natural disaster, large majorities of residents still place an extraordinary value on the state's beaches and ocean, according to a survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) and the Hewlett, Irvine, and Packard Foundations. Across geography and political ideology, Californians display a profound desire to protect the coast despite potential economic costs.

Affection for the shoreline is clear: A vast majority (88%) of Californians say the condition of the ocean and beaches is personally important to them, with 60 percent saying it is *very* important. In fact, Californians (72%) are far more likely than Americans as a whole (40%) to visit an ocean beach at least several times per year. Strong majorities of Californians also believe the coastline's condition is very important to the state's quality of life (69%) and economy (61%).

Wariness About Coast's Health Translates into Strong Public Policy Preferences

Consistent with the premium they place on the coastline, Californians express high levels of concern over coastal conditions and strong support for policies that protect the ocean and beaches. Over half (52%) believe the quality of the ocean along the state's shoreline has deteriorated in the past two decades, and 45 percent say ocean conditions are likely to worsen over the next twenty years.

Concerns about the coast top the list of environmental worries, with 53 percent of residents saying ocean and beach pollution is a big problem in California today. Specifically, 52 percent describe pollution from streets and storm drains and contamination of fish and seafood as *big* problems, while strong majorities say declining numbers of marine mammals (74%), commercial overfishing (71%), coastal development (71%), and limited public access to the beaches (58%) are at least *somewhat* of a problem.

But are Californians willing to turn their concern into action? Despite partisan divisions on many issues, state residents are surprisingly in step on their willingness to ante up for coastal protection. Two-thirds of Californians – including majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and independents – favor limiting the sale of fish and seafood to environmentally safe products, even if this results in higher consumer prices (67%), and support restricting private development along the coast, even if it results in less available housing (69%). Three in four residents support protecting wetlands and beach/bay habitats even if it means less commercial activity near the coast (77%), and favor creating more marine reserves, even if it limits commercial and recreational fishing (75%). “Californians see the coastline as a precious resource and an important part of their own lives,” says survey director Mark Baldassare. “But the degree to which people are willing to protect the beaches and ocean, even at the expense of economic growth, is striking.”

While half of Californians (50%) favor prohibiting new off-shore oil drilling along California's coast, even if it means higher gasoline prices, there is a notable partisan split on this issue: Democrats favor a ban on new drilling by almost two-to-one (60% to 35%), while independents are narrowly divided (49% to 46%) and Republicans are strongly opposed (39% to 55%).

Walk on Water? High Environmental Expectations of Schwarzenegger Administration

Nearly uniformly, residents agree that environmental protection should be a priority for Governor-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger. Almost one-third (32%) of Californians think it should be a top priority, while a large majority (57%) say it should be an important priority. Nearly half (49%) of all California residents say environmental protection should be a priority for state government even if it curbs economic growth, while fewer residents (42%) think economic growth should be the top priority even if the environment suffers. And despite the state's enormous budget deficit, 48 percent of Californians support funding environmental programs at current levels, even at the expense of other state programs, while only 35 percent support reducing environmental funding.

However, the state's likely voters are narrowly divided on the balance the new administration should strike between environmental and economic priorities: Forty-six percent favor protecting the environment even if it curbs economic growth, and 45 percent favor economic growth even if the environment suffers. There is a partisan divide on this issue, with Democrats (54%) and independents (50%) favoring environmental protection, and Republicans (61%) preferring economic growth.

According to Baldassare, balancing economic and environmental concerns will be a tall order for the new governor, but thus far, Schwarzenegger is in good standing with the public. "Although it's early in the game, Californians are generally supportive of Schwarzenegger's plans and policies for the state's future." Indeed, by nearly a two-to-one margin (47% to 25%), residents back the governor-elect, with Republicans (69%) and independents (53%) expressing greater support than Democrats (32%).

President George W. Bush's overall approval rating stands at 48 percent in California. Residents are critical of his performance on the environment, with nearly half of Californians (49%) and a majority of likely voters (53%) saying they disapprove of his handling of national environmental issues. A majority of residents (54%) also say the federal government is not doing enough to protect the country's coastal and marine environment, with Democrats and Republicans deeply split on the issue (70% to 33%).

Residents Trust State to Govern Coast, But Some Believe California Coastal Commission Too Lax

A smaller, but still significant, number of Californians (44%) also say the state is not doing enough to protect California's coastal environment. Despite their concern, more residents trust the state (42%) rather than local (30%) or federal (14%) governments to manage marine and coastal issues. However, they want to see more action: One-third (38%) of state residents say the California Coastal Commission is not strict enough in its regulation of development along California's coast, while only 11 percent say the commission's controls are too strict.

Levels of Coastal Concern Differ By Region, Ethnicity

Despite shared concern for their 1,100 mile-long coastline, there are regional and racial/ethnic differences in Californians' attitudes about coastal issues. In particular, residents of the South Coast region (Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego Counties) place greater importance on the shoreline, are more concerned about worsening coastal conditions, and are more personally connected to the ocean and beaches than those who live in the North Coast or Inland regions (see page ii for a map of the regions). More South Coast residents (74%) than residents of the North Coast and Inland regions (67% and 62%, respectively) believe the condition of the coastline is very important to California's quality of life. South Coast residents (66%) are also more likely than those in the North Coast (56%) or Inland (57%) regions to say the ocean and beaches are very important to the economy.

Consequently, South Coast residents are also more anxious about shoreline conditions: Fifty-seven percent think the condition of the ocean has grown worse in the past twenty years, while 44 percent of North Coast and 50 percent of Inland residents share this perception. Far more residents of the South Coast (62%) than of the North Coast (45%) or Inland (46%) regions think ocean and beach pollution in California is a big problem. “Recent beach contamination warnings as well as a prevailing beach ethos in southern coastal California heighten the concern of local residents,” says Baldassare. Indeed, nearly half (46%) of South Coast residents say they visit a California beach at least once a month, significantly more than residents of the North Coast (39%), and far more than those Inland (16%).

Interestingly, Latinos are more concerned than non-Hispanic whites about many of the environmental problems affecting the coastline. For example, they are more likely to view as big problems ocean and beach pollution (66% to 49%), the contamination of seafood (64% to 46%), declining numbers of sea mammals (54% to 40%), overfishing (46% to 32%), and public access to the coast (27% to 17%).

More Key Findings

- **Safe Seafood?** (page 17)

Although 54 percent of Californians eat fish or seafood often, half of adults (50%) and most Latinos (62%) are very concerned that what they are consuming could be harmful due to contamination.

- **Finding Nemo** (page 18)

Almost one-third (30%) of households with children in California keep pet fish. Seventy-three percent of all Californians say they have visited an aquarium or other public place with live fish in the past year.

- **Surf’s Up!** (page 14)

Ten percent of Californians and 13 percent of South Coasters have surfed in the state’s ocean or bays in the past year, but far more residents have gone ocean or bay swimming (43%). Fewer older residents (55 and older) than younger ones (18-34) participated in an ocean or bay activity in the past year (20% to 31%).

About the Survey

The Californians and the Environment survey is a special edition of the PPIC Statewide Survey. It is the sixth in a four-year, multisurvey series on growth, land use, and the environment, produced in collaboration with The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, and The David and Lucile Packard Foundation. Findings of the current survey are based on a telephone survey of 2,004 California adult residents interviewed from October 24 to November 2, 2003. Interviews were conducted in English or Spanish. The sampling error for the total sample is +/- 2%. The sampling error for subgroups is larger. For more information on survey methodology, see page 19.

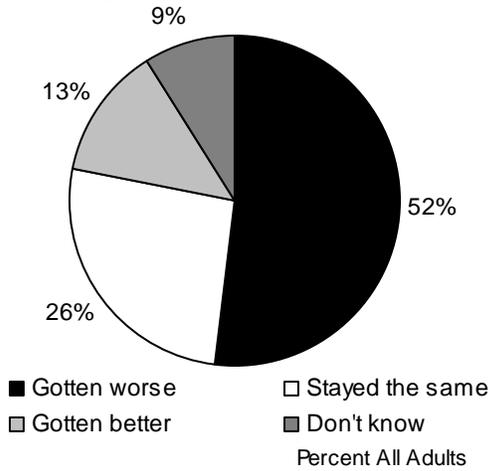
Mark Baldassare is research director at PPIC, where he holds the Arjay and Frances Fearing Miller Chair in Public Policy. He is founder of the PPIC Statewide Survey, which he has directed since 1998. His most recent book, *A California State of Mind: The Conflicted Voter in a Changing World*, is available at www.ppic.org.

PPIC is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving public policy through objective, nonpartisan research on the economic, social, and political issues that affect Californians. The institute was established in 1994 with an endowment from William R. Hewlett. PPIC does not take or support positions on any ballot measure or on any local, state, or federal legislation, nor does it endorse, support, or oppose any political parties or candidates for public office.

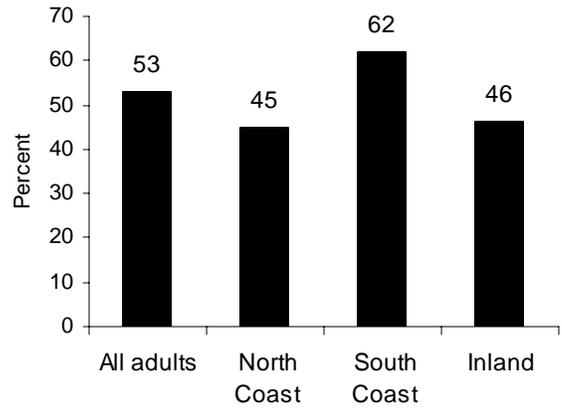
This report will appear on PPIC’s website (www.ppic.org) on November 13.

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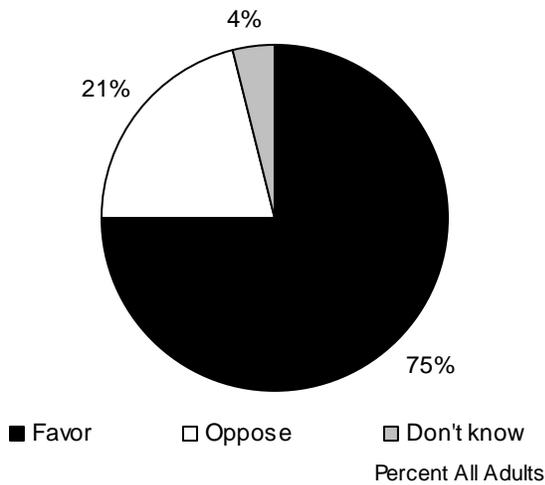
Over the past 20 years, do you think the condition of the ocean along the CA coast has...?



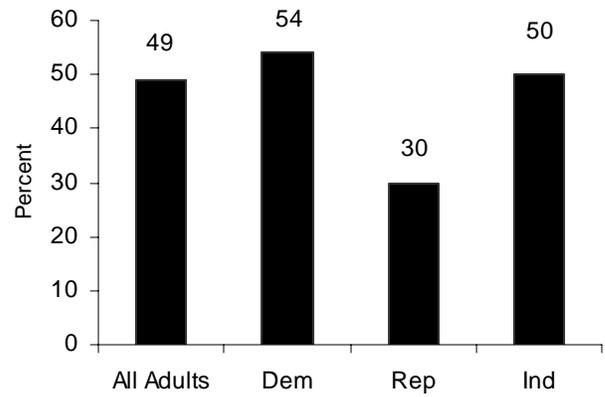
Percent who say ocean and beach pollution is a big problem



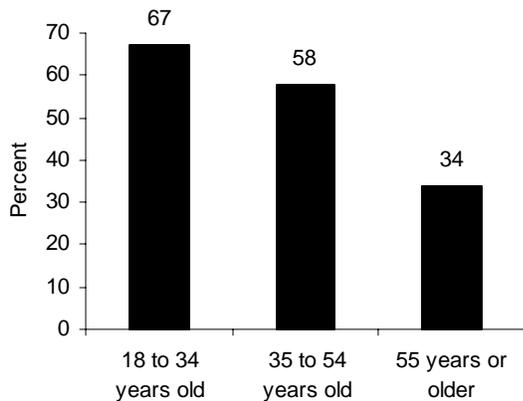
Creating more marine reserves off the CA coast



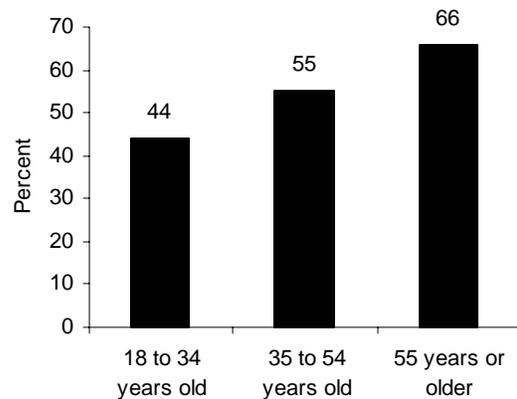
Percent who say environmental protection should be a priority for the Schwarzenegger Administration



Percent of those who do one water activity or more in the ocean or bays of CA



Percent who say they eat fish or seafood often



Perceived Conditions and Concerns

Ocean's Importance for California

Oceans and beaches have a special place in the hearts and minds of many Californians. Sixty-nine percent of them believe that the state's marine and coastal conditions are "very important" to California's quality of life. For another 26 percent, that condition is at least "somewhat important," and only 5 percent dismiss it as "not too" or "not at all" important.

The perceived importance of oceans and beaches for quality of life varies regionally and among population groups. Three in four South Coast residents¹ say they are very important, compared to two in three residents in other regions. Latinos (77%) are more likely than whites (67%) to see oceans and beaches as very important, and perception of their importance declines slightly with age but not with education nor income. Among political groups, Democrats (72%) and liberals (78%) are more likely than Republicans (58%) and conservatives (62%) to believe that ocean and beach conditions are very important for quality of life. However, a substantial majority of residents across the political spectrum think this is a very important factor.

"How important is the condition of the ocean and beaches to the quality of life in California?"

	All Adults	Region			Latinos
		North Coast	South Coast	Inland	
Very important	69%	67%	74%	62%	77%
Somewhat important	26	28	21	33	20
Not too important	4	5	3	4	2
Not important at all	1	0	2	1	1

The vast majority of Californians also believe that the condition of the ocean and beaches is very important (61%) or somewhat important (30%) to the state's economy. Across regions, 66 percent of South Coast, 57 percent of Inland, and 56 percent of North Coast residents believe it is very important. Latinos (70%) are more likely than whites (58%), and Democrats and liberals are more likely than Republicans and conservatives, to see coastal conditions as very important to the economy.

"How important is the condition of the ocean and beaches to the economy in California?"

	All Adults	Region			Latinos
		North Coast	South Coast	Inland	
Very important	61%	56%	66%	57%	70%
Somewhat important	30	34	25	34	23
Not too important	6	8	5	5	3
Not important at all	1	1	2	1	1
Don't know	2	1	2	3	3

¹ See the Methodology section (p. 19) for a description of the regional definitions used in this survey.

Trends in Ocean Quality

Looking at these resources they believe are so important for quality of life and the economy, 52 percent of Californians believe that the condition of the ocean along the state’s coast has gotten worse in the past two decades. Twenty-six percent believe the condition is about the same, and only 13 percent believe it has gotten better. Regional perceptions differ: South Coast residents (57%) are more likely than Inland (50%) and North Coast (44%) residents to think that conditions have deteriorated. The perception of deteriorating conditions rises with age and education. It is also higher among women than among men and among whites than among Latinos. While Democrats and liberals are more likely than Republicans and conservatives to see a negative trend, the predominant perception across partisan and ideological lines is that ocean conditions have worsened.

“Over the past 20 years, do you think the condition of the ocean (along the California coast) has gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse?”

	All Adults	Region			Latinos
		North Coast	South Coast	Inland	
Gotten worse	52%	44%	57%	50%	48%
Stayed about the same	26	28	23	29	28
Gotten better	13	17	12	11	14
Don't know	9	11	8	10	10

What about the overall health and quality of the ocean off California today? Twenty-eight percent of residents say it is excellent or good, 46 percent say it is fair, and 23 percent describe it as poor. Those living in the South Coast (30%) are more likely than those living in the North Coast (15%) or Inland areas (20%) to say that ocean conditions are poor. There are no major differences in current perceptions across age, education, income, gender, or racial/ethnic groups. However, Republicans (40%) and conservatives (35%) are more likely than Democrats (20%) and liberals (20%) to rate ocean conditions as excellent or good.

What do residents think the future holds? Almost half (45%) believe conditions along the coast will get worse over the next 20 years, 26 percent think they will stay the same, and 23 percent expect them to get better. Younger residents are the most likely to believe that ocean conditions will be worse, and Democrats and liberals are more pessimistic than Republicans and conservatives about the ocean's future. There are no major differences by region, education, income, or gender.

“Twenty years from now, do you think the condition of the ocean (along the California coast) will have gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse than it is today?”

	All Adults	Region			Latinos
		North Coast	South Coast	Inland	
Gotten worse	45%	43%	46%	45%	49%
Stayed about the same	26	30	23	28	19
Gotten better	23	19	25	21	27
Don't know	6	8	6	6	5

Rating of Environmental Problems

Consistent with the value they place on the ocean and beaches and the conditions they perceive, half of California residents (53%) say that ocean and beach pollution along the coast is a big problem in the state today. Other environmental issues ranked about the same as a big problem are toxic substances contaminating soil and groundwater (53%), urban growth and air pollution damaging forests in the Sierra mountains (52%), and pollution from runoff affecting the water quality of rivers, streams, and lakes (51%). Fewer Californians expressed high levels of concern about the effects of development on endangered species and wildlife habitats (40%) and the logging of old-growth redwoods (38%).

Concern about ocean and beach pollution is about the same today as it was in the June 2000 PPIC Statewide Survey. There is slightly more concern today than three years ago about the effects of air pollution and urban growth on the forests, of toxic substances on soil and groundwater contamination, and of pollution runoff on rivers, lakes, and streams and about the logging of old-growth redwoods.

Problem rankings differ across regions: South Coast residents (62%) are the most likely to rate ocean and beach pollution as a big problem in the state. North Coast residents are more concerned than people in other regions about logging of old-growth redwoods. Latinos are more concerned than whites about all six of these environmental problems: Nearly seven in 10 Latinos rate ocean and beach pollution; pollution from runoff in rivers, lakes, and streams; and toxic contamination to groundwater and soil as big problems in the state today.

“Do you think _____ is a big problem in California today?”

<i>Percentage seeing the issue as a big problem</i>	All Adults	Region			Latinos
		North Coast	South Coast	Inland	
<i>Ocean and beach pollution along the California coast</i>	53%	45%	62%	46%	66%
<i>Toxic substances contaminating soil and groundwater</i>	53	54	54	51	68
<i>Urban growth and air pollution damaging the forests in the Sierra mountains</i>	52	49	54	50	63
<i>Urban and agricultural runoff polluting lakes, rivers, and streams</i>	51	48	54	50	68
<i>Urban development harming wildlife habitats and endangered species</i>	40	39	43	38	54
<i>The logging of old-growth redwoods in Northern California</i>	38	44	37	34	43

Focusing on residents' concern with ocean and beach pollution, we find considerable differences across groups. There are large variations in the perception of “big problems” between younger and older residents, the non-college educated and college graduates, Latinos and whites, Democrats and Republicans, and liberals and conservatives. There are also modest differences between women and men, renters and homeowners, lower-income and upper-income residents, the native born and immigrants, those with and those without children at home, and those with shorter and longer stays at their residence.

Perceived Conditions and Concerns

“How about ocean and beach pollution along the California coast? Do you think this is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem in California today?”

		Big problem	Somewhat of a problem	Not a problem	Don't know
All Adults		53%	34%	9%	4%
Age	18-34 years old	63	28	7	2
	35-54 years old	52	35	10	3
	55 years or older	43	40	12	5
Sex	Male	49	34	14	3
	Female	58	34	5	3
Education	High school only	58	29	9	4
	Some college	56	33	8	3
	College graduate	48	40	9	3
Income	Under \$40,000	55	33	7	5
	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	53	34	10	3
	\$80,000 or more	51	36	10	3
Race/ ethnicity	White	49	38	9	4
	Latino	66	25	7	2
Nativity	Native	52	36	9	3
	Immigrant	58	29	10	3
Homeownership	Own	50	37	10	3
	Rent	58	30	9	3
Children at home	Children under 18	56	34	9	1
	No children under 18	52	34	9	5
Years at current residence	Fewer than five years	57	32	8	3
	Five or more years	50	36	10	4
Party registration	Democrat	60	30	6	4
	Republican	39	43	14	4
	Independent	52	38	7	3
Political ideology	Liberal	65	26	6	3
	Moderate	52	38	7	3
	Conservative	44	39	13	4

Regional Coastal Concerns

When asked about coastal issues in the part of the California coast nearest to them, residents were most concerned about ocean and beach pollution from streets and storm drains: 52 percent say that this is a big problem in their part of the coast. However, it was more likely to be rated as a big problem by residents of the South Coast (63%) than by those who live Inland (48%) or on the North Coast (37%).

Perceptions of this problem vary widely across groups: Whites (47%) are much less likely than Latinos (66%) to see urban runoff as a big coastal problem; and concern about runoff tends to decline with education, income, and homeownership. While substantial proportions of residents across the political spectrum express some concern, Democrats (59%) and liberals (58%) are more likely than Republicans (40%) and conservatives (45%) to rate ocean and beach pollution from runoff as a big problem in their part of the California coast.

Fewer residents rate coastal development (36%) and limited public access to the coastline (20%) as big problems, compared to coastal pollution. Nevertheless, substantial majorities say these two issues are at least somewhat of a problem in their parts of California. Coastal development and public access concerns are similar across most regions. However, there is less concern in the North Coast than elsewhere about public access to the coastline. Latinos (27%) are much more likely than whites (17%) to rank limited public access as a big problem in their part of the state. Democrats and liberals are more likely than Republicans and conservatives to see both development and public access as major problems along their part of the coast.

“Do you think _____ is a big problem, somewhat of a problem or not a problem in the part of the California coast closest to you?”

		All Adults	Region			Latinos
			North Coast	South Coast	Inland	
<i>Ocean and beach pollution from streets and storm drains</i>	Big problem	52%	37%	63%	48%	66%
	Somewhat of a problem	34	44	30	33	29
	Not a problem	9	14	5	13	4
	Don't know	5	5	2	6	1
<i>Too much growth and development on the coast</i>	Big problem	36%	34%	38%	36%	33%
	Somewhat of a problem	35	35	36	34	38
	Not a problem	24	27	22	25	22
	Don't know	5	4	4	5	7
<i>Limited public access to the coast and beaches</i>	Big problem	20%	15%	22%	22%	27%
	Somewhat of a problem	38	37	39	38	42
	Not a problem	37	43	35	35	26
	Don't know	5	5	4	5	5

Marine Concerns

When asked about three marine issues—that is, issues involving the California coastal waters nearest them—residents voiced the most concern about contamination of seafood: 84 percent see it as a big problem (52%) or somewhat of a problem (32%) in their coastal region. Perception of this as a big problem is high across all regions but higher in the South Coast (56%) than in the North Coast (51%) and Inland (47%). Whites (46%) are less likely than Latinos (64%) to rate this marine issue as a big problem in their region, and concerns tend to decline significantly with education and income but not with age. Democrats (59%) and liberals (61%) are much more likely than Republicans (37%) and conservatives (46%) to think seafood contamination is a big problem.

Although a decline in marine mammals does not concern residents quite as much, 74 percent see it as a big problem (44%) or somewhat of a problem (30%). There are no significant differences between South Coast, North Coast, or Inland residents on perceptions of this issue. Whites (40%) are less likely than Latinos (54%) to believe depletion of marine mammals is a big problem. The concern also declines with age, education, and income. There are also large differences in perceptions between Democrats (47%) and Republicans (30%) and liberals (54%) and conservatives (34%) in the extent to which this particular issue is a big problem in California’s coastal waters.

Overfishing generates about the same level of concern as depletion of marine mammals: 71 percent of residents believe it is a big problem (36%) or somewhat of a problem (35%) in the ocean waters nearest them. There are more concerns about this issue on the coast than inland and in the North Coast than in the South Coast. Latinos (46%) are more likely than whites (32%) to say that overfishing on the coast near them is a big problem.

“Do you think _____ is a big problem, somewhat of a problem or not a problem in the part of the California coast closest to you?”

		All Adults	Region			Latinos
			North Coast	South Coast	Inland	
<i>The contamination of fish and seafood</i>	Big problem	52%	51%	56%	47%	64%
	Somewhat of a problem	32	34	31	32	25
	Not a problem	12	12	10	15	8
	Don't know	4	3	3	6	3
<i>Declining numbers of marine mammals such as whales and sea otters</i>	Big problem	44%	43%	45%	43%	54%
	Somewhat of a problem	30	31	30	28	27
	Not a problem	19	19	17	21	13
	Don't know	7	7	8	8	6
<i>Overfishing (depleting the fishing stock) by commercial fishing boats</i>	Big problem	36%	39%	36%	31%	46%
	Somewhat of a problem	35	33	34	38	35
	Not a problem	20	20	20	21	13
	Don't know	9	8	10	10	6

Public Policies

The Schwarzenegger Administration and Environmental Protection

Overall, from what they know so far, Californians approve of Governor-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger's plans and policies for the state's future by about a two-to-one margin. Nearly half of state residents (47%) approve of his plans and policies, 25 percent disapprove, and almost three in 10 say they just don't know yet. A majority of Republicans (69%) and independents (53%) approve of the governor-elect's plans and policies, while Democrats are equally likely to disapprove (33%) as to approve (32%) of his ideas.

“From what you know so far, overall do you approve or disapprove of Governor-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger's plans and policies for California's future?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Approve	47%	32%	69%	53%	47%
Disapprove	25	33	7	19	21
Don't know	28	35	24	28	32

In terms of priorities for the Schwarzenegger administration, Californians nearly uniformly agree that environmental protection should be a priority. Thirty-two percent of Californians think that protecting the environment should be a *top* priority, and another 57 percent believe that it should be an important although not a top priority. Only one in 10 Californians thinks that environmental protection is not too important (8%) or should not be undertaken (2%). Thirty-seven percent of Democrats, 29 percent of independents, and 17 percent of Republicans think that protecting the environment should be a top priority for the new administration. Latinos are more likely than whites to consider environmental protection a top priority (41% to 29%).

Even relative to the state's economy, Californians think that the incoming administration should focus on environmental protection. Forty-nine percent of Californians think that protecting the environment should be a priority, even at the risk of curbing economic growth. Forty-two percent think that economic growth should be a priority, even if the environment suffers a bit. The state's likely voters are more narrowly divided on these priorities (46% favor the environment; 45% favor economic growth). While a majority of Democrats (54%) and half of independents (50%) think that environmental protection should be a priority even if it results in economic consequences, a majority of Republicans (61%) think that economic growth should be given priority, even at some expense to the environment.

“When it comes to the state policies that you would prefer from the Schwarzenegger administration, which comes closer to your views ...”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Protection of the environment should be a priority, even at the risk of curbing economic growth	49%	54%	30%	50%	46%
Economic growth should be a priority, even if the environment suffers to some extent	42	37	61	41	45
Don't know	9	9	9	9	9

Governing California's Coast

Asked which branch of government they trust to do a better job in handling the state's marine and coastal issues, 42 percent of Californians say they trust the state government, 30 percent say local government, 14 percent say the federal government, and 2 percent volunteer that they do not trust any of these governments to handle these issues. Among the state's likely voters, 47 percent trust state government the most in marine and coastal matters. Among Democrats and Republicans, the state is clearly the most trusted government with respect to California's marine and coastal issues; but among independents, preference for the state and local governments is nearly even (41% to 37%). Coastal and inland residents do not differ in their assessments.

“Which branch of government ... do you trust to do a better job in handling marine and coastal issues in California?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
State government	42%	46%	46%	41%	47%
Local government	30	28	32	37	32
Federal government	14	13	13	12	11
None of them (<i>volunteered</i>)	2	3	2	2	3
Other / Don't know	12	10	7	8	7

Asked whether the state is currently doing more than enough, just enough, or not enough to protect the coastal and marine environment in California, 44 percent of Californians say that the state is not doing enough, 40 percent say just enough, and only 7 percent say more than enough. Democrats (54%) and independents (47%) are much more likely than Republicans (32%) to say that the state is *not* doing enough to protect the coastal and marine environment. There is almost no variation in attitude toward the state's current efforts to protect these environments between frequent and infrequent visitors to the California coast. However, those who believe that ocean and beach pollution along the coast is a big problem are much more likely than those who do not think it is a problem to say that the state is not doing enough (55% to 20%). Similarly, 65 percent of Californians who think that the health and quality of the ocean today is poor say that the state is not doing enough to protect these environments, compared to only 26 percent of those residents who rate the ocean's health and quality as excellent or good.

“Overall, do you think that the state government is currently doing more than enough, just enough, or not enough to protect the coastal and marine environment in California?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Not enough	44%	54%	32%	47%	46%
Just enough	40	35	45	39	37
More than enough	7	3	13	6	8
Don't know	9	8	10	8	9

Although recent estimates suggest that the state will again face a large budget deficit in the upcoming fiscal year, and that program cuts will be needed to balance the budget, 48 percent of all Californians and 48 percent of the state's likely voters want to continue to fund environmental programs at current levels, even if it means less funds for other state programs. Thirty-five percent of Californians would prefer to reduce funding for environmental programs, so that more funds would be available for other state programs. By wide margins, Democrats (56% to 28%) and independents (50% to 34%) favor continuing funding for environmental programs before other programs, while Republicans favor reducing current environmental funding (45% to 37%).

“The state government faces a large budget deficit, and program cuts are needed to balance the budget. Should the state ...”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Continue to fund environmental programs at the current level, even if it means less funds for other programs	48%	56%	37%	50%	48%
Reduce funding for environmental programs, so that more funds are available for other programs	35	28	45	34	34
Other answer	5	6	6	5	7
Don't know	12	10	12	11	11

When it comes to the California Coastal Commission, four in 10 Californians (38%) say that the commission is not strict enough in its regulation of development along the California coast. One in three Californians (31%) believes the commission's restrictions are about right, 11 percent view them as too restrictive, and one in five either doesn't know or hasn't heard of the Coastal Commission. Thirty-eight percent of independents and 45 percent of Democrats—but only 28 percent of Republicans—say that the commission's control of development is not strict enough. Twenty-one percent of Republicans, 11 percent of independents, and 6 percent of Democrats think that the controls are too restrictive.

About four in 10 South Coast and Inland residents (42% and 37%, respectively) and 31 percent of North Coast residents say that the Coastal Commission is not strict enough in controlling development. Assessments of the commission's controls vary only slightly by race/ethnicity, education, or homeownership.

“Overall, what do you think of the California Coastal Commission when it comes to controls on development—are they too strict, about right, or not strict enough?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Not strict enough	38%	45%	28%	38%	38%
About right	31	30	30	30	29
Too strict	11	6	21	11	13
Don't know about California Coastal Commission / Don't know	20	19	21	21	20

Marine Policy Issues

In general, Californians respond positively to policies that have been proposed to help protect the ocean and marine life along the California shoreline, even when it comes to the most controversial issues. For example, with regard to the hotly contested environmental and energy issue of oil drilling off the California coast, majorities of Californians consistently oppose new drilling off the coast, even if it might reduce dependence on foreign oil (July 2003) or lead to lower gasoline prices for California drivers (June 2000 and June 2002). Fifty percent of Californians today say they favor prohibiting additional drilling off the coast, even if it means higher fuel prices for California drivers. Among California’s likely voters, 53 percent would ban new drilling, even if it resulted in higher gas prices.

Public attitude toward increased drilling off the coast varies by partisanship, with Democrats favoring a ban almost two-to-one (60% to 35%), a majority of Republicans opposing a ban (55% to 39%), and independents nearly evenly divided (49% favor; 46% oppose). Support for the prohibition is strongest along the North Coast (58% favor; 36% oppose), while those along the South Coast (48% to 46%) and Inland (45% to 50%) are closely split on the question of allowing more oil drilling.

“How about prohibiting more oil drilling off the California coast, even if this means higher gasoline prices for California drivers?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	50%	60%	39%	49%	53%
Oppose	45	35	55	46	42
Don't know	5	5	6	5	5

Three in four Californians (75%)—including large majorities of Democrats (80%), Republicans (66%), and independents (77%)—favor creating more marine reserves off the California coast, even if it means that some ocean areas will be off-limits to commercial and recreational fishing; twenty-one percent of California residents oppose new reserves.

Two-thirds of state residents also favor limiting the sale of fish and seafood to those products that have been caught or farmed in an environmentally safe manner, even if this means paying higher prices in California stores and restaurants. Seven in 10 Democrats (71%) and independents (67%) favor this restriction, as do 53 percent of Republicans. Support for selling only fish and seafood caught or farmed in an environmentally safe manner is unrelated to how often respondents eat fish or to annual household income.

“How about only selling fish or seafood that was caught or farmed in an environmentally safe manner, even if this means paying higher prices in California stores and restaurants?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	67%	71%	53%	67%	64%
Oppose	28	25	42	28	31
Don't know	5	4	5	5	5

Coastal Policy Issues

Most Californians also favor a free and open coastline. For example, seven in 10 support restricting private development along the coast, even if it means less available housing in the coastal area. Majorities of Democrats (77%), Republicans (62%), and independents (71%) agree upon this matter. Similarly, majorities of North Coast (71%), South Coast (70%), and even Inland (66%) residents favor restricting private development along the coastline. Renters (68%) are nearly as likely as homeowners (71%) to support this restriction.

“How about restricting the private development of land along the California coast, even if this means that there will be less housing available near the ocean and beaches?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	69%	77%	62%	71%	72%
Oppose	27	21	33	27	24
Don't know	4	2	5	2	4

Three-quarters of Californians (77%) also favor protecting wetlands and habitats near the bays and beaches, even if it means less commercial activity near the coast. While majorities of Californians across political parties favor protecting coastal wetlands and habitats, support is significantly higher among Democrats (83%) than Republicans (68%); about eight in 10 independents (79%) favor these environmental protections. Seventy-eight percent of North Coast, 79 percent of South Coast, and 72 percent of Inland residents favor protecting coastal wetlands and habitats, even if it means less commercial activity near the coast.

“How about protecting the wetlands and habitats near the bays and beaches, even if this means there will be less commercial activity near the California coast?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	77%	83%	68%	79%	78%
Oppose	18	12	26	19	18
Don't know	5	5	6	2	4

In a similar vein, 72 percent of Californians favor improving the quality of the water feeding into the ocean from storm drains and sewage treatment plants, even if it means higher utility bills. Support for such improvement is strong across the coastal and inland regions and across partisan and age groups. Californians from households with incomes of \$80,000 or more are somewhat more likely than those from households with incomes under \$40,000 to favor improving the water quality from storm drains and sewage plants (77% to 71%), as are those with a college degree compared to those with a high school diploma or less (78% to 65%). Democrats (76%) and independents (75%) favor this effort more than Republicans (66%).

President Bush and National Politics

Forty-eight percent of Californians approve of the job that George W. Bush is doing as president of the United States, and 46 percent disapprove of his job performance. Among likely voters, 47 percent approve and 49 percent disapprove. Overall, Californians are more critical of the president's handling of environmental issues: Almost half of all Californians, and 53 percent of the state's likely voters disapprove of the way he is handling the country's environmental issues.

Bush's overall ratings and his environmental policy approval ratings are both strongly related to party affiliation. Eighty-three percent of Republicans approve of Bush's overall job performance, compared to 45 percent of independents and only one-quarter of Democrats. Similarly, 60 percent of Republicans, but only 31 percent of independents and 16 percent of Democrats, approve of the way he is handling the country's environmental issues. Latinos and whites are equally likely to approve of Bush's overall performance (51% to 50%), but Latinos are somewhat more likely than whites to approve of his handling of environmental issues (42% to 34%).

		All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that George W. Bush is handling his job as president of the United States?	Approve	48%	25%	83%	45%	47%
	Disapprove	46	70	14	49	49
	Don't know	6	5	3	6	4
And do you approve or disapprove of the way that President Bush is handling environmental issues in the United States?	Approve	35%	16%	60%	31%	34%
	Disapprove	49	70	23	54	53
	Don't know	16	14	17	15	13

Fifty-four percent of Californians say that the federal government is not doing enough to protect the coastal and marine environment of the United States. Seventy percent of Democrats and 64 percent of independents—but only 33 percent of Republicans—think that the federal government is not doing enough to protect these environments. Sixty percent of Californians who live along the North Coast think that the federal government is not doing enough to protect the coastal and marine environment in California, compared to 56 percent of those living along the South Coast and 47 percent of those in Inland areas.

“Overall, do you think that the federal government is doing more than enough, just enough, or not enough to protect the coastal and marine environment in the United States?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Not enough	54%	70%	33%	64%	57%
Just enough	32	22	46	26	30
More than enough	6	2	11	4	6
Don't know	8	6	10	6	7

Looking ahead to the 2004 presidential election, 42 percent of Californians and 38 percent of likely voters say that the candidates' positions on environmental issues will be very important in determining how they will vote. Only one in 10 of all Californians and of likely voters say that the candidates' positions on environmental issues will not be important to them in deciding how to vote in 2004.

California Lifestyle

Life Is a Beach

Californians believe that the condition of the oceans and beaches of the state is almost as important to them personally as it is to the state's quality of life and economy. Eighty-eight percent say that condition is very (60%) or somewhat (28%) important to them personally, while only 11 percent say it is not too important (7%) or not important at all (4%). More than 8 in 10 residents across every region of the state say it is at least somewhat important. However, those who live in the North Coast (61%) and South Coast (66%) are more likely than residents of the Inland region (50%) to say it is very important to them. It is more often rated as very important by Democrats (65%) than by Republicans (50%) or independents (57%) and by women (63%) than by men (57%). Whites and Latinos are about equally likely to rank it as at least somewhat important (88% to 90%).

“How important is the condition of the ocean and beaches in California to you personally?”

	All Adults	Region			Latinos
		North Coast	South Coast	Inland	
Very important	60%	61%	66%	50%	65%
Somewhat important	28	28	25	32	25
Not too important	7	7	5	10	5
Not important at all	4	3	3	7	3
Don't know	1	1	1	1	2

There is more truth than poetry in the myth of Californians' love affair with the beach. They are much more likely than Americans as a whole to visit an ocean beach at least several times a year (72% compared to 40%).¹ However, the frequency varies greatly across regions: 46 percent of South Coast residents go to the beach at least once a month, compared to 39 percent in the North Coast and 16 percent in the Inland region. Higher-income residents are more likely than those with lower incomes, and whites are more likely than Latinos, to visit the beach more frequently. Not surprisingly, Californians who frequent the beach several times a month are more likely than others to say that the ocean is very important to them personally.

“How often would you say you visit a beach on the coast of California for any purpose?”

	All Adults	Region			Latinos
		North Coast	South Coast	Inland	
Once a week	16%	15%	23%	5%	12%
Once a month	20	24	23	11	21
Several times a year	36	38	33	39	36
Once a year	15	12	11	23	20
Less than once a year	9	7	5	15	6
Never	4	4	5	7	5

¹ Statistic for Americans as a whole is derived from a 1999 national survey commissioned by Sea Web.

Water Sports

Among the six recreational uses of the ocean and bays that we asked about, swimming is by far the most common activity. Four in ten Californians say they have gone swimming in the ocean or bays in the past year.

Ocean and bay swimming varies across regions and demographic groups. It is higher for South Coast (49%) than for Inland (39%) and North Coast (35%) residents, for men (47%) than for women (38%), and for Latinos (48%) than for whites (42%). Younger residents are much more likely than older residents, and people with higher incomes are somewhat more likely than those with lower incomes, to say they swam in the ocean or bays in the past 12 months.

When it comes to recreational or sport fishing, only 17 percent of Californians say they have fished in the ocean or bays in the past year. While there are no differences across the state’s three regions, men are more than twice as likely as women to have partaken in this activity (23% to 11%). Asked about sailing or kayaking in the ocean or bays in the last 12 months, 14 percent of state residents say they have done so. Coastal residents are twice as likely as those who live inland to say they have sailed or kayaked (16% to 8%). Those with a college degree are more likely than those with a high school diploma or less (20% to 6%), and those with an income of \$80,000 or more are more likely than lower-income residents (24% to 10%), to say they have sailed or kayaked in the last year.

“In the past 12 months have you gone _____ in the ocean or the bays of the California coast?”

<i>Percentage saying they have done the following activities in 12 months</i>	All Adults	Region			Latinos
		North Coast	South Coast	Inland	
Swimming	43%	35%	49%	39%	48%
Recreational or sport fishing	17	16	16	18	18
Sailing or kayaking	14	15	16	8	9
Motorboating or jet skiing	13	10	13	14	15
Surfing	10	6	13	9	8
Snorkeling or scuba diving	8	7	9	8	5

An even smaller percentage of state residents say they have been motorboating or jet skiing (13%), surfing (10%), or snorkeling (8%). These activities vary by region. Motorboating or jet skiing is slightly more popular in the Inland region (14%) and the South Coast (13%) than in the North Coast (10%). The South Coast region has a much higher percentage of residents (13%) than the North Coast (6%) or Inland region (9%) who say they have been surfing in the past year. Residents with an income of \$80,000 or more are more than twice as likely as lower-income residents (14% to 6%) to say they have gone snorkeling or scuba diving. More men than women say they have been motorboating (17% to 9%), surfing (15% to 6%), and snorkeling or scuba diving (12% to 5%) in the ocean or bays of the California coast in the past 12 months.

Nearly half of state residents (45%) have not used the ocean or bays of the California coast for any of these six activities in the past 12 months. Twenty-seven percent have engaged in one water activity and 28 percent have engaged in two or more. Residents of the North Coast and the Inland regions (both 49%) are more likely than residents of the South Coast (40%) to say they have not used the ocean or bays for water activities in the past year. One in three of the South Coast’s residents say they have engaged in at least two or more water activities along the coast in the past year.

The percentage of Californians who say they have engaged in a water activity declines with age and increases with household income and the presence of children. Latinos are somewhat more likely than whites, and men are much more likely than women, to say they have been involved in one or more water activities in the past year. Of the six in 10 Californians who say that the condition of oceans and beaches is personally very important to them, two in three have participated in water activities on the coast during the past twelve months. In contrast, the majority of residents who attach less importance to the state's beach and ocean conditions have not been involved in any of the six water activities along the California coast in the past year.

		Ocean/ Bay Activities ²		
		Two or more	One	None
All Adults		28%	27%	45%
Region	South Coast	32	28	40
	North Coast	23	28	49
	Inland	25	26	49
Sex	Male	37	26	37
	Female	19	28	53
Age	18 to 34	36	31	33
	35 to 54	30	28	42
	55 or older	14	20	66
Race/ ethnicity	White	29	25	46
	Latino	27	33	40
Education	High school only	25	28	47
	Some college	29	27	44
	College graduate	30	26	44
Income	\$40,000 or less	25	27	48
	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	27	29	44
	\$80,000 or more	36	26	38
Children at home	Children under 18	31	33	36
	No children under 18	26	23	51
How important is the condition of the ocean and beaches in California to you personally?	Very important	33	30	37
	Somewhat important	23	26	51
	Not too important	18	13	69
	Not important at all	13	10	77

² Activities include swimming, recreational or sport fishing, sailing or kayaking, motor boating or jet skiing, surfing, and snorkeling or scuba diving.

Seafood Diet

The consumption of fish and seafood is also part of the California lifestyle but not out of line with national consumption: 54 percent of adult Californians say they eat fish or seafood often (i.e., once a week or more) at home or in a restaurant, 24 percent say they eat fish or seafood sometimes, 16 percent say rarely, and 6 percent say they never do. These results are similar to those in a 1996 national survey conducted for Sea Web. However, consumption varies regionally and across population groups. South Coast residents (58%) often eat fish or seafood somewhat more than North Coast (55%) and Inland (47%) residents. More men than women (57% to 51%), and more people without children than with children in their households (57% to 50%), say they eat fish often at home or in restaurants. Eating fish or seafood tends to increase with income and education. Residents age 55 and older are much more likely than residents between the ages of 18 and 34 to say they often eat fish or seafood.

“How often would you say you eat fish or seafood at home or in a restaurant—often, sometimes, rarely, or never?”

	All Adults	Region			Age		
		North Coast	South Coast	Inland	18-34 years old	35-54 years old	55 years or older
Often	54%	55%	58%	47%	44%	55%	66%
Sometimes	24	25	23	24	29	25	15
Rarely	16	15	13	20	19	13	14
Never	6	5	6	9	8	7	5

Eighty-two percent of Californians believe eating fish or seafood is very (47%) or somewhat (35%) important for a healthy diet, while 17 percent say it is not too important or not at all important. Belief that the health benefits of eating fish are very important is higher among South Coast residents (51%) than North Coast (45%) and Inland (42%) residents. Although men are more likely than women to say they consume fish often, women are more likely than men to say it is very important for their having a healthy diet (50% to 43%). The belief that eating fish and seafood is very important for health reasons increases with age (38% for ages 18-34; 49% for ages 35-54; 56% for age 55 and older). Although consumption of fish or seafood increases with education and income, belief in its dietary importance is similar across education levels but not across income levels: People in households with incomes of \$40,000 or less are the most likely to say the health benefits are very important. Overall, two in three of those who often eat fish say that seafood it is very important for having a healthy diet.

“How important would you say that eating fish or seafood is to your having a healthy diet—very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?”

	All Adults	Frequency of eating fish or seafood				Latinos
		Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	
Very important	47%	64%	30%	24%	20%	53%
Somewhat important	35	31	48	40	15	31
Not too important	11	4	18	24	7	9
Not at all important	6	1	2	11	52	5
Don't know	1	0	2	1	6	2

Seafood Safety

Many Californians worry that the fish or seafood they are eating might be harmful to their health: 83 percent say they are very (50%) or somewhat (33%) concerned that the fish or seafood for sale is contaminated by ocean pollution. People who frequently eat fish or seafood are more likely than those who rarely or never do to say they are very or somewhat concerned about contamination. Women are more likely than men (55% to 46%) and Latinos are more likely than whites (62% to 44%) to say they are very concerned about this contamination. Concern about contamination tends to decline with higher income and higher education.

“How concerned are you that the fish or seafood for sale are contaminated by ocean pollution?”

	All Adults	Frequency of eating fish or seafood				Latinos
		Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	
Very concerned	50%	53%	49%	48%	36%	62%
Somewhat concerned	33	31	36	33	37	29
Not too concerned	11	10	11	12	11	5
Not at all concerned	5	5	4	7	12	3
Don't know	1	1	0	0	4	1

Most Californians are more worried about contamination than about the possibility that the fish or seafood available for purchase is being commercially overfished. Yet, eight in ten state residents say they are at least somewhat concerned and nearly four in 10 residents are very concerned about this issue. Concern varies regionally and with consumption of fish: North Coast (42%) and South Coast (41%) residents are more likely than Inland residents (30%) to say they are very concerned about this issue. People who eat fish more frequently are slightly more likely than others to worry about overfishing.

“How concerned are you that the fish or seafood for sale are commercially overfished?”

	All Adults	Frequency of eating fish or seafood				Latinos
		Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	
Very concerned	38%	40%	38%	35%	32%	41%
Somewhat concerned	42	42	44	43	33	45
Not too concerned	11	10	12	14	15	7
Not at all concerned	5	5	3	6	13	4
Don't know	4	3	3	2	7	3

Fish Friendly

How much are pet fish part of the California lifestyle? Twenty-one percent of adult residents say they have an aquarium or other place where they keep pet fish at home. People who live inland (25%) are more likely than residents of the North (18%) or South Coast (21%) regions to have pet fish. Pet fish are twice as prevalent in households with children as in childless homes (30% to 14%). People ages 18 to 54 are more likely than those age 55 or older (26% to 12%) and Latinos are more likely than whites (25% to 19%) to be keeping pet fish.

“Do you currently have an aquarium or some other place at home where you keep pet fish?”

	All Adults	Region			Children at home		Latinos
		North Coast	South Coast	Inland	Yes	No	
Yes	21%	18%	21%	25%	30%	14%	25%
No	79	82	79	75	70	86	75

For most Californians, observing live fish in action is also an aspect of their leisure and educational activities. National surveys indicate a similar trend for all Americans. When asked whether they had visited an aquarium or other public place having live fish, nearly three-quarters of all Californians said they had. Majorities across all regional, demographic, and racial and ethnic groups say they have had this experience in recent years; but there are variations. For example, coastal residents from both the North (81%) and South (72%) are more likely than Inland residents (68%) to say they have visited an aquarium. Whites are more likely than Latinos to have visited such a place (77% to 61%). Similar numbers of residents across all age groups say they have visited an aquarium. However, visits to aquariums increase with education and income and the presence of children: People with children in their household are somewhat more likely than those who don't to say they have made these visits (76% to 71%).

“In the past few years, have you visited an aquarium or other public places with live fish?”

	All Adults	Region			Children at home		Latinos
		North Coast	South Coast	Inland	Yes	No	
Yes	73%	81%	72%	68%	76%	71%	61%
No	27	19	28	32	24	29	39

Survey Methodology

The PPIC Statewide Survey is directed by Mark Baldassare, research director at the Public Policy Institute of California, with assistance in research and writing from Jon Cohen, survey research manager, and Eliana Kaimowitz and Renatta DeFever, survey research associates. The survey was conducted in collaboration with The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, and The David and Lucile Packard Foundation and benefited from discussions with staff at the foundations and their grantees and colleagues at other institutions; however, the survey methods, questions, and content of the report were solely determined by Mark Baldassare.

The findings of this survey are based on a telephone survey of 2,004 California adult residents interviewed between October 24 and November 2, 2003. Interviewing took place on weekday nights and weekend days, using a computer-generated random sample of telephone numbers that ensured that both listed and unlisted telephone numbers were called. All telephone exchanges in California were eligible for calling. Telephone numbers in the survey sample were called up to six times to increase the likelihood of reaching eligible households. Once a household was reached, an adult respondent (age 18 or older) was randomly chosen for interviewing by using the “last birthday method” to avoid biases in age and gender. Each interview took an average of 18 minutes to complete. Interviewing was conducted in English or Spanish. Casa Hispana translated the survey into Spanish; and Schulman, Ronca & Bucuvalas, Inc. conducted the telephone interviewing.

We used recent U.S. Census and state figures to compare the demographic characteristics of the survey sample with characteristics of California’s adult population. The survey sample was closely comparable to the census and state figures. The survey data in this report were statistically weighted to account for any demographic differences.

The sampling error for the total sample of 2,004 adults is +/- 2 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 2 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for subgroups is larger. Sampling error is only one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing.

In this report, we divide the state into three geographic regions. The “North Coast” region (25% of the state’s population) refers to the counties along the California coast from Del Norte through San Luis Obispo. This region also includes the San Francisco Bay Area counties of Napa, Solano, Contra Costa, Alameda, and Santa Clara. The “South Coast” region (47% of the state’s population) includes Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego counties. All other counties are included in the “Inland” region (28% of the state’s population).

We present specific results for Latinos because they account for about 28 percent of the state’s adult population and constitute one of the fastest growing voter groups. The sample sizes for the African American and Asian subgroups are not large enough for separate statistical analysis. We do compare the opinions of registered Democrats, Republicans, and independents. The “independents” category includes only those who are registered to vote as “decline to state.”

In some cases, we compare PPIC Statewide Survey responses to responses recorded in national surveys conducted by Mellman Group for Sea Web in 1996, 1997, 1999, and 2001; by Beldon Russonello & Stewart and American Viewpoint for the Ocean Project in 1999; and by a California voters’ survey conducted by Edge Research for Sea Web in 2002. We used earlier PPIC Statewide Surveys to analyze trends over time in California.

PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: SPECIAL SURVEY ON THE ENVIRONMENT
OCTOBER 24—NOVEMBER 2, 2003
2,004 CALIFORNIA ADULT RESIDENTS; ENGLISH AND SPANISH
MARGIN OF ERROR +/- 2% AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE

1. Do you think things in California are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?

32% right direction
 52 wrong direction
 16 don't know

2. Do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?

39% good times
 47 bad times
 14 don't know

Next, I am going to read to you a list of environmental issues in the state. Please tell me if you think each of the following is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem in California today. *[rotate question 3 to 8]*

3. How about ocean and beach pollution along the California coast?

53% big problem
 34 somewhat of a problem
 9 not a problem
 4 don't know

4. How about urban and agricultural runoff polluting lakes, rivers, and streams?

51% big problem
 34 somewhat of a problem
 10 not a problem
 5 don't know

5. How about toxic substances contaminating soil and groundwater?

53% big problem
 34 somewhat of a problem
 8 not a problem
 5 don't know

6. How about urban growth and air pollution damaging the forests in the Sierra mountains?

52% big problem
 31 somewhat of a problem
 11 not a problem
 6 don't know

7. How about the logging of old-growth redwoods in Northern California?

38% big problem
 29 somewhat of a problem
 20 not a problem
 13 don't know

8. How about urban development harming wildlife habitats and endangered species?

40% big problem
 36 somewhat of a problem
 20 not a problem
 4 don't know

Next, I am interested in your views about ocean and marine life along the California coast.

9. Over the past 20 years, do you think the condition of the ocean (along the California coast) has gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse?

52% gotten worse
 26 stayed about the same
 13 gotten better
 9 don't know

10. Thinking about the overall health and quality of the ocean (along the California coast) today—would you rate them as excellent, good, fair, or poor?

3% excellent
 25 good
 46 fair
 23 poor
 3 don't know

11. Twenty years from now, do you think the condition of the ocean (along the California coast) will have gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse than it is today?

45% gotten worse
 26 stayed about the same
 23 gotten better
 6 don't know

[rotate questions 12 and 13]

12. How important is the condition of the ocean and beaches to the quality of life in California—very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all?

69% very important
26 somewhat important
4 not too important
1 not important at all

13. How important is the condition of the ocean and beaches to the economy in California— very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all?

61% very important
30 somewhat important
6 not too important
1 not important at all
2 don't know

14. How important is the condition of the ocean and beaches in California to you personally—is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all?

60% very important
28 somewhat important
7 not too important
4 not important at all
1 don't know

Next, I am going to list some specific problems that some people say affect our ocean and marine life in California today. After each, please tell me whether you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem in the part of California coast that is closest to you.

[rotate question 15 to 20]

15. How about ocean and beach pollution from streets and storm drains?

52% big problem
34 somewhat of a problem
9 not a problem
5 don't know

16. How about too much growth and development on the coast?

36% big problem
35 somewhat of a problem
24 not a problem
5 don't know

17. How about limited public access to the coast and beaches?

20% big problem
38 somewhat of a problem
37 not a problem
5 don't know

18. How about overfishing (depleting the fishing stock) by commercial fishing boats?

36% big problem
35 somewhat of a problem
20 not a problem
9 don't know

19. How about the contamination of fish and seafood?

52% big problem
32 somewhat of a problem
12 not a problem
4 don't know

20. How about declining numbers of marine mammals such as whales and sea otters?

44% big problem
30 somewhat of a problem
19 not a problem
7 don't know

Next, I am going to list some policies that people have proposed to help protect the ocean and marine life on the California coast. For each that I mention, please tell me if you would favor or oppose taking such an action.

[rotate question 21 to 26]

21. How about prohibiting more oil drilling off the California coast, even if this means higher gasoline prices for California drivers?

50% favor
45 oppose
5 don't know

22. How about creating more marine reserves off the California coast, even if this means that some ocean areas will be off-limits to commercial and recreational fishing?

75% favor
21 oppose
4 don't know

23. How about only selling fish or seafood that was caught or farmed in an environmentally safe manner, even if this means paying higher prices in California stores and restaurants?

67% favor
28 oppose
5 don't know

24. How about restricting the private development of land along the California coast, even if this means that there will be less housing available near the ocean and beaches?
- 69% favor
 - 27 oppose
 - 4 don't know
25. How about improving the water quality from storm drainage and sewer treatment plants that feed into the oceans, even if this means that Californians will be paying higher utility bills?
- 72% favor
 - 24 oppose
 - 4 don't know
26. How about protecting the wetlands and habitats near the bays and beaches, even if this means there will be less commercial and recreational activity near the California coast?
- 77% favor
 - 18 oppose
 - 5 don't know
27. Changing topics, overall do you approve or disapprove of the way that George W. Bush is handling his job as president of the United States?
- 48% approve
 - 46 disapprove
 - 6 don't know
28. And do you approve or disapprove of the way that President Bush is handling environmental issues in the United States?
- 35% approve
 - 49 disapprove
 - 16 don't know
29. Overall, do you think that the federal government is doing more than enough, just enough, or not enough to protect the coastal and marine environment in the United States?
- 54% not enough
 - 32 just enough
 - 6 more than enough
 - 8 don't know
30. Next, in thinking about the presidential election in 2004, how important are the candidates' positions on environmental issues in determining your vote—very important, somewhat important, or not important?
- 42% very important
 - 45 somewhat important
 - 11 not important
 - 2 don't know
31. Which political party —[rotate] the Republican Party or the Democratic Party—do you trust to do a better job in handling environmental issues in the United States?
- 47% Democratic Party
 - 26 Republican Party
 - 2 other answer (*specify*)
 - 3 both equally (*volunteered*)
 - 11 neither (*volunteered*)
 - 11 don't know
32. Turning to the state, from what you know so far, overall do you approve or disapprove of Governor-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger's plans and policies for California's future?
- 47% approve
 - 25 disapprove
 - 28 don't know
33. In terms of priorities for Governor-elect Schwarzenegger, should protecting the environment in California be a top priority, important but lower priority, not too important, or should it not be done?
- 32% top priority
 - 57 important but lower priority
 - 8 not too important
 - 2 should not be done
 - 1 don't know
34. When it comes to the state policies that you would prefer from the Schwarzenegger administration, which comes closer to your views? [rotate] protection of the environment should be given a priority, even at the risk of curbing economic growth; or economic growth should be given a priority, even if the environment suffers to some extent.
- 49% protection of the environment should be a priority
 - 42 economic growth should be a priority
 - 9 don't know
35. Overall, do you think that the state government is currently doing more than enough, just enough, or not enough to protect the coastal and marine environment in California?
- 44% not enough
 - 40 just enough
 - 7 more than enough
 - 9 don't know

36. The state government faces a large budget deficit, and program cuts are needed to balance the budget. Should the state *[rotate]* continue to fund environmental programs at the current level even if it means less funds for other programs; or reduce funding for environmental programs, so that more funds are available for other programs?

- 48% continue to fund at current level
- 35 reduce funding
- 5 other answer (*specify*)
- 12 don't know

36b. Which branch of government —*[rotate]* the federal, state, or local government—do you trust to do a better job in handling marine and coastal issues in California?

- 42% state government
- 30 local government
- 14 federal government
- 2 other answer (*specify*)
- 2 none (*volunteered*)
- 10 don't know

37. Overall, what do you think of the California Coastal Commission when it comes to controls on development—are they too strict, about right, or not strict enough?

- 38% not strict enough
- 31 about right
- 11 too strict
- 3 never heard of the Commission (*volunteered*)
- 17 don't know

38. Next, how often would you say you eat fish or seafood at home or in a restaurant—several times a week, about once a week, sometimes, rarely, or never?

- 21% several times a week
- 33 about once a week
- 24 sometimes
- 16 rarely
- 6 never

39. How important would you say that eating fish or seafood is to your having a healthy diet—very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

- 47% very important
- 35 somewhat important
- 11 not too important
- 6 not at all important
- 1 don't know

40. How concerned are you that the fish or seafood for sale are contaminated by ocean pollution—very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?

- 50% very concerned
- 33 somewhat concerned
- 11 not too concerned
- 5 not at all concerned
- 1 don't know

41. How concerned are you that the fish or seafood for sale are commercially overfished—very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?

- 38% very concerned
- 42 somewhat concerned
- 11 not too concerned
- 5 not at all concerned
- 4 don't know

42. Next, how often would you say you visit a beach on the coast of California for any purpose—once a week, once a month, several times a year, once a year, less than once a year, or never?

- 16% once a week
- 20 once a month
- 36 several times a year
- 15 once a year
- 9 less than once a year
- 4 never

On another topic, please tell me if, in the past 12 months, you have done the following in or on the ocean or bays of the California coast.

[rotate question 43 to 48]

43. In the past 12 months, have you gone swimming in the ocean or bays of the California coast?

- 43% yes
- 57 no

44. In the past 12 months, have you gone recreational or sport fishing on the ocean or bays of the California coast?

- 17% yes
- 83 no

45. In the past 12 months, have you gone sailing or kayaking on the ocean or bays of the California coast?

- 14% yes
- 86 no

46. In the past 12 months, have you gone surfing on the ocean or bays of the California coast?

10% yes
90 no

47. In the past 12 months, have you gone snorkeling or scuba diving in the ocean or bays of the California coast?

8% yes
92 no

48. In the past 12 months, have you gone motorboating or jet skiing on the ocean or bays of the California coast?

13% yes
87 no

49. In the past few years, have you visited an aquarium or other public places with live fish?

73% yes
27 no

50. Do you currently have an aquarium or some other place at home where you keep pet fish?

21% yes
79 no

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