It is appropriate to mention, at the outset of this symposium, something about the widespread interests of scientists in the Southern California Islands. These interests cover a number of fields, including archaeology, geology, oceanology, as well as botany and zoology.

Although the ocean has interposed a formidable geographic barrier preventing easy access to these islands, there are many published records about them by explorers and scientists. According to one compilation of references up to November 1942, approximately 500 publications had appeared. That was almost a quarter century ago. More recently there appeared an excellent annotated bibliography containing approximately 1,000 references on the oceanographic literature of the Santa Barbara Channel area¹. These were selected from approximately 4,000 references, and the list does not include the vast literature on terrestrial biology that has also accumulated.

Another approximation of current scientific interest in the Southern California Islands may be obtained by noting a list of institutions at which staff scientists are pursuing research relating to these islands.

Superimposed on the map of the southern California coastal area, shown in fig. 1, are the names of many, but not all, of the southern California educational and research institutions, both public and private, which have interests directly or indirectly related to scientific problems of the Southern California Islands. These institutions may be grouped in several categories, as follows. (1) Botanic Gardens and Museums. Among these are the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, the Los Angeles County Museum, the San Diego

A number of marine laboratories or stations have served the California Island area for many years, and these represent important centers of research activity. In many cases the stations have maintained research vessels. For example, scientists using research vessels of Scripps Institution of Oceanography, have conducted scientific expeditions in this area for years. The Allan Hancock Foundation played an early role in exploration of the waters around the islands, and its research ship, Velero III, was used by the Los Angeles County Museum in the 1939 expeditions to the islands. Although there was a small field station and aquarium at Avalon in use about 1915, the first major station with modern laboratory facilities on the islands will be the one now under construction by the University of Southern California at the isthmus on Santa Catalina. Plans have been made for extensive inter-university cooperative educational and research programs.

The Kerckhoff Marine Laboratory at Corona Del Mar has been in operation since 1930 and has accommodated not only Caltech scientists and their students but others, especially from Pomona College. An extensive rehabilitation and modernization of the facility is underway.

The University of California, Santa Barbara, is one of a select few institutions to have an excellent marine biological laboratory on its campus. The cooperative working arrangement established several years ago with the General Motors Defense Research Laboratory for use of the R/V Swan has already proven to be mutually beneficial to both institutions. This campus of the University of California is ideally situated for ready access to the northern islands. It is encouraging to note that a good working arrangement with the owners of Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa islands has been in effect for a number of years and that a permanent field station is being constructed on Santa Cruz.

A number of government agencies have also been interested in the scientific potential of this area and in one way or another have indicated their interest. Two of the islands, Anacapa and Santa Barbara, constitute a national monument. Scientific research is encouraged on these islands; the Chief Scientist of the National Park Service reiterated this policy in a recent statement.

Other federal agencies such as the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health, through their facilities grants, have also contributed materially to the furtherance of scientific interests in this geographic area.

The U. S. Navy has recently constructed a new marine biological facility at Point Mugu, where scientists of the Naval Missile Center and the Naval Ordnance Test Station are collaborating on marine mammal studies. There are also other research programs encompassing invertebrate marine biology, and many of them are being conducted in collaboration with university scientists.

The Office of Naval Research, through its contract research program, has supported financially the research of many scientists concerned with problems in this geographic area. This is only one way in which the Office of Naval Research has tried to encourage and coordinate governmental and civilian scientific efforts in exploring the scientific potential of the Southern California Islands.

Another effort to do this, something of an innovation, was carried out by the Office of Naval Research within the last two years. We called it project ILEX for Island Expeditions. Project ILEX consisted, in part, of a series of helicopter expeditions in which marine corps or naval pilots carried scientists on flying platforms to and from and around the Southern California Islands at seasonal intervals. We took along botanists, zoologists, archaeologists, geologists, photographers, and others who were interested in specific research objectives. While botanists and geologists collected specimens, others observed and photographed the sea lions and elephant seals. We also photographed aquatic habitat groups along the shores of Santa Catalina Island and the sites where the new University of Southern California station is being built. Through the use of these flying platforms, we overcome the sea barrier to these islands and the participating scientists of project ILEX accomplished in hours and days what otherwise would have taken weeks, perhaps months. Several scientific communications have already been prepared for publication, and other findings will be discussed during this symposium.

We extended the ILEX flights to Los Coronados when the California grey whales were migrating, and anticipate extending this type of expedition southward and northward. The enthusiastic response received from scientists participating in this cooperative effort is indicative of the widespread scientific interest in the California Islands.