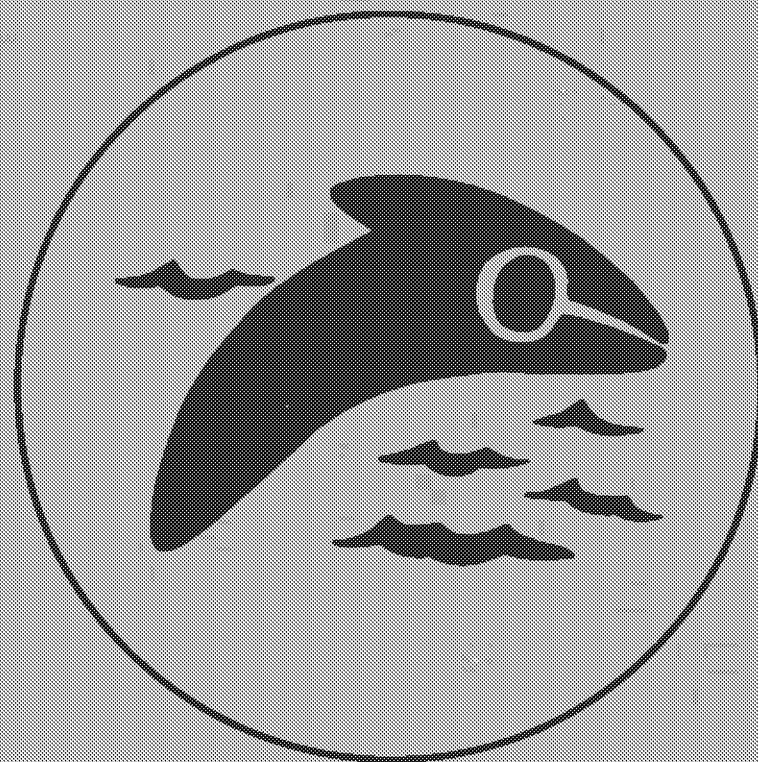


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PACIFIC COAST ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

The *Pacific Coast Archaeological Society Quarterly* is a publication of the Pacific Coast Archaeological Society (PCAS), which was organized in 1961. It is an avocational group formed to study and to preserve the anthropological and archaeological history of the original inhabitants of Orange County, California, and contiguous areas.

The *PCAS Quarterly* invites the submittal of contributions dealing with the history and prehistory of the area as exemplified by observation or investigation. Although PCAS is especially interested in reports which shed further light on the early inhabitants of Orange County, it is also interested in reports on the wider Pacific Coast area.

In addition to the *PCAS Quarterly*, the Pacific Coast Archaeological Society publishes a monthly newsletter. Subscription to the *PCAS Quarterly* costs \$32 for a calendar year and \$6 for the *PCAS Newsletter*. There is an additional postage charge for foreign subscriptions: \$9 for the *PCAS Quarterly* and \$4 for the *PCAS Newsletter*. Back issues of the *PCAS Quarterly* are available for \$10. A complete list of the titles of the papers in these issues is included in the 25-year index, in Vol. 25, No. 4. In addition, two *Occasional Papers*, one on Catalina Island and one on Mexican Majolica, have been published by the PCAS. To order any of these publications, or to receive information about the Pacific Coast Archaeological Society, or to submit to the publications, write to Pacific Coast Archaeological Society, P. O. Box 10926, Costa Mesa, California 92627.

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DEBATING CULTURAL EVOLUTION: REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF FISHING INTENSIFICATION AT EEL POINT, SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND

L. Mark Raab, Judith F. Porcasi, Katherine Bradford and Andrew Yatsko

ABSTRACT

Recent excavations at the Eel Point site provide new insights into one of the longest documented sequences of maritime cultural evolution from a single site on the California coast. A discussion is provided of excavation strategy, new radiocarbon dates and patterns of cultural change across the Holocene.

INTRODUCTION

Until recently, Channel Islands archaeology was virtually synonymous with the larger northern islands. This picture is rapidly changing, however. Southern Channel Islands archaeology made great strides during the last decade (Raab et al. 1994, 1995a, 1995b; Raab and Yatsko 1992; Salls et al. 1993; Schwartz and Martz 1992). In the present discussion, we attempt to demonstrate the potential of this research for archaeological model-building in the Channel Islands region. A recent study of trans-Holocene economic trends at the Eel Point archaeological site, San Clemente Island, offers a useful case study (Raab et al. 1995a).

DEBATING COASTAL PREHISTORY

What models best account for the evolution of prehistoric societies in the region of California's Channel Islands? In recent years, competing models of cultural evolution have come into sharper focus, offering an opportunity to debate theoretical approaches and test explanations of coastal prehistory. Debates of this kind are critical to scientific advance, encouraging researchers to collect new data, re-evaluate existing interpretations and develop more adequate explanatory models.

In a recent textbook on North American prehistory, Fagan (1995:229) summarizes one approach to explaining socioeconomic developments in the prehistoric Santa Barbara Channel area:

As populations grew, the overall energy cost of providing food for everyone would also increase. More effort would have been needed to obtain food, perhaps triggering a shift to new food sources that may have required a greater time and energy investment to catch or process... One could argue in theoretical terms that optimal foraging strategies applied... but the data are still insufficient.