

The Nation's First Artificial Giant Kelp Reef Based on Advanced Ocean Research

During the summer of 2008, Southern California Edison environmental scientists and engineers constructed a 171-acre artificial reef on the ocean floor off San Clemente, CA. A large group of California ocean scientists had thoroughly studied the development of giant kelp forests and designed a plan likely to produce the nation's first successful artificial giant kelp reef.

The Wheeler North Giant Kelp Reef begins a half mile out from the San Clemente pier and stretches 2 miles south. It is made up of 67 separate rock clusters placed on the ocean floor in a special design.

120,000 tons of rock from quarries on Catalina Island and Ensenada were placed in a design researchers discovered is best for kelp plant development: a height of no more than 1 or 2 rocks, at an ocean depth of about 40 feet, spread sparsely over an area where the ocean floor is firm sand.

