

## What is a California marine protected area (or “MPA”)?

An MPA is a type of managed area whose main purpose is to protect or conserve marine life and habitats in ocean or estuarine waters. California's MPA Network consists of 124 areas with varying levels of protection and 14 special closures, all designed to help safeguard the state's marine ecosystems. Most marine conservation areas such as San Dieguito Lagoon State Marine Conservation Area provide some opportunity for commercial and/or recreational take (species and gear exceptions vary by location - see reverse).

One goal for California's MPAs was to strategically place them near each other to form an interconnected network that would help to preserve the flow of life between marine ecosystems. Within that network each MPA has unique goals and regulations, and non-consumptive activities, permitted scientific research, monitoring, and educational pursuits may be allowed.

## Why was this location chosen for a state marine conservation area?

One of the goals for San Dieguito Lagoon State Marine Conservation Area is to continue the protection that the estuary enjoyed before becoming an MPA in 2012. The shallow, brackish estuary and marshy habitat serve as nursery areas and/or hunting grounds for marine fish such as California halibut, shovelnose guitarfish, and spotted sand bass. The wetlands also provide critical habitat for migrating waterfowl, and nesting sites for sensitive bird species such as the Belding's savannah sparrow and the California least tern. The conservation area's island nesting site for California least terns is closed to all visitors.

San Dieguito Lagoon State Marine Conservation Area overlaps the slightly larger [San Dieguito Lagoon Ecological Reserve](#). Placing a state marine conservation area here provides moderately high levels of protection for marine life and the habitats they use.



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## Quick Facts: San Dieguito Lagoon State Marine Conservation Area

- **MPA size:** 0.11 square miles
- **Habitat composition:**
  - Estuary: 0.10 square miles
  - Coastal marsh: 0.55 square miles



Fishing, Entry, and Hiking Restrictions  
*See Regulations On Back*

No Boating, Diving,  
Swimming or  
Wading

No Collecting

## Further Information:

- MPA Website: [www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs)
- MPA and Sportfishing Interactive Map: [www.wildlife.ca.gov/OceanSportfishMap](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/OceanSportfishMap)
- Email: [AskMarine@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:AskMarine@wildlife.ca.gov)

**Photos - Upper:** San Dieguito Lagoon State Marine Conservation Area, photo by J. Kashiwada, all rights reserved **Lower right:** Shovelnose guitarfish at San Dieguito Lagoon State Marine Conservation Area, photo © Stephanie, CC BY-NC 2.0 **Lower left:** California native oysters in San Dieguito Lagoon State Marine Conservation Area, photo © BJ Stacey, CC BY-NC 2.0



**San Dieguito Lagoon State Marine Conservation Area Boundary and Regulations from California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632**

*This area overlaps a portion of San Dieguito Lagoon Ecological Reserve. Ecological reserve rules are in effect as defined in CCR Title 14, Section 630 or as posted.*

**Boundary:**

This area consists of waters below the mean high tide line within the San Dieguito Lagoon Ecological Reserve southeastward of a straight line between the following two points:

- 32° 58.066' N. lat. 117° 15.579' W. long. ①; and
- 32° 58.072' N. lat. 117° 15.548' W. long. ②

**Permitted/Prohibited Uses:**

1. It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource for commercial and/or recreational purposes, with the following specified exceptions:
  - a. The recreational take of finfish\* by hook-and-line from shore is allowed.
2. Boating, swimming, wading, and diving are prohibited within the conservation area.
3. No person, except state and local law enforcement officers, fire suppression agencies and employees of the Department in the performance of their official duties or persons possessing written permission from the Department, shall be permitted on the California least tern nesting island.
4. No person, except state and local law enforcement officers, fire suppression agencies and employees of the Department in the performance of their official duties or persons possessing written permission from the Department, shall enter this conservation area between 8:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m.
5. The County of San Diego, after consultation with the Department, may carry out management activities for fish and wildlife, flood control and vector control. Authorized operation and maintenance activities shall include, but shall not be limited to, use of chemicals, vegetation control, water control and use of associated equipment.
6. Collections of fish, wildlife, water and soil may be made by the Department for the purposes of fish and wildlife management or by San Diego County for the purposes of water quality testing and vector control.

\*Finfish are defined here as any species of bony fish or cartilaginous fish (sharks, skates and rays).

Take may be authorized for research, restoration, and monitoring purposes under a scientific collecting permit. See California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632(a).

The information in this document does not replace the official regulatory language found in the California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632. View these regulations online at [www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Network](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Network).