

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. Special closures such as San Miguel Island Special Closure are specifically designed to minimize human disturbance at significant marine mammal haulout sites and seabird rookeries by restricting boating and access, seasonally or year-round.

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 special closure?

One of the goals for San Miguel Island Special Closure is to protect some of the world's largest breeding colonies of seals and sea lions. Northern fur seals, harbor seals, elephant seals, and California sea lions are commonly spotted here. The special closure's exposure to the wind and open ocean makes it unique and contributes to an array of life not found on the other, less exposed Channel Islands. The isolated shores provide ideal resting, mating, breeding, and pupping areas for marine mammals, while the special closure's rocky reefs shelter a variety of fish and invertebrates.

San Miguel Island Special Closure was established in 2005, and re-established along with the statewide [MPA Network](#) in 2012. The special closure overlaps the nearshore portion of [Judith Rock State Marine Reserve](#), [Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary](#) and [Channel Islands National Park](#). Placing a special closure here provides very high levels of protection for marine mammals and the habitats they use.

Quick Facts: San Miguel Island Special Closure

- **Size:** 0.86 square miles
- **Depth range:** 0 to 55 feet
- **Habitat composition:**
 - Sand/mud: 0.01 square miles
 - Rock: 0.71 square miles



Restrictions on Entry, Anchoring, Non-Consumptive Activities, Fishing, and Collecting
[See Regulations On Back](#)

Further Information:

- MPA Website: www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs
- MPA and Sportfishing Interactive Map: www.wildlife.ca.gov/OceanSportfishMap
- Email: AskMarine@wildlife.ca.gov

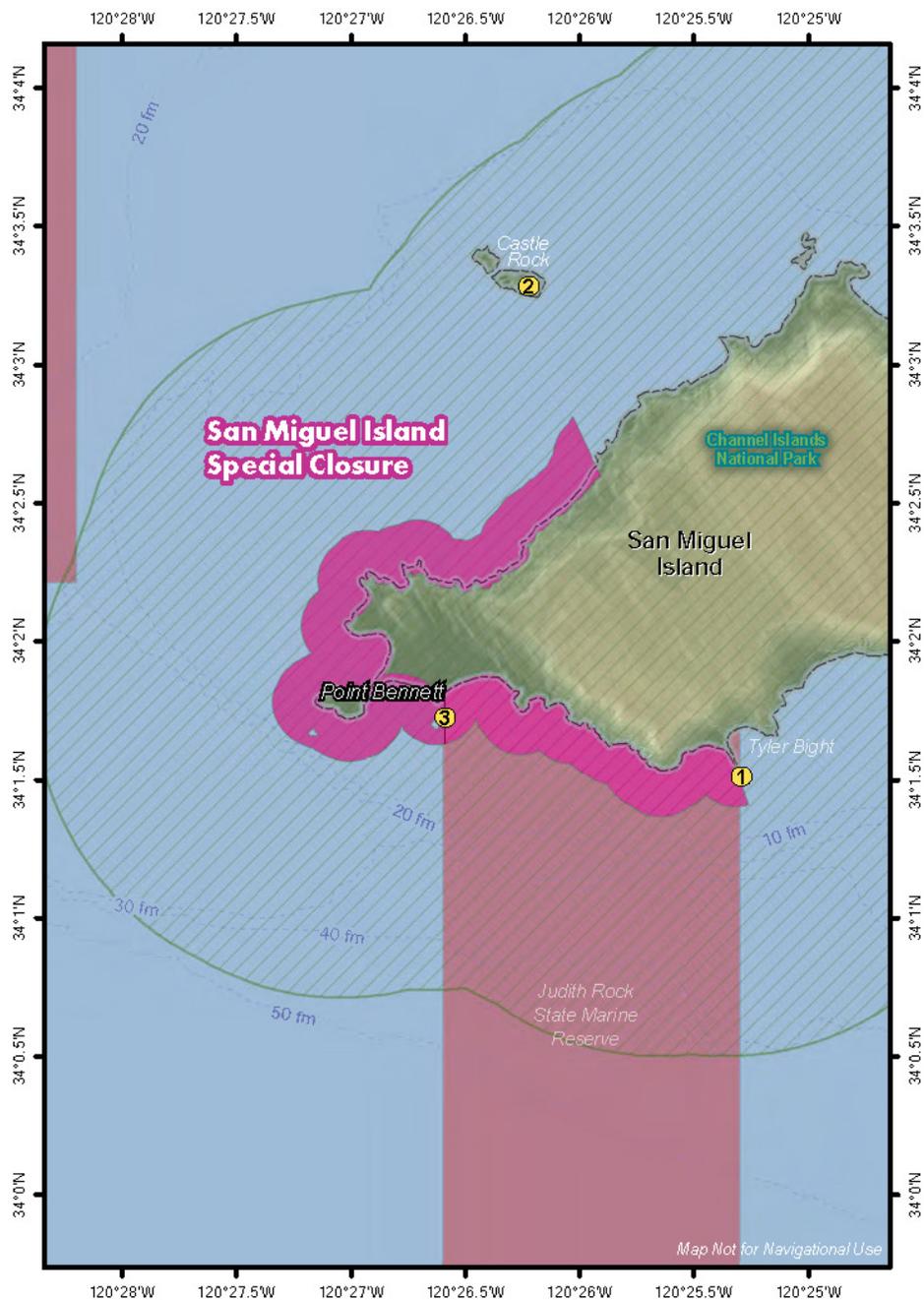


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Photos - Upper: Sea lion rookery at San Miguel Island Special Closure. photo © NOAA Fisheries West CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 Lower right: Monkeyface pricklyback peers from a rocky crevice in the special closure. photo © Tom Turner CC BY-NC 2.0 Lower left: Hilton's aeolid with hydroids, sea urchins, and other invertebrates in the special closure. photo © Tom Turner CC BY-NC 2.0



San Miguel Island Special Closure Boundary and Regulations from California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632

Special restrictions on boating and access apply to San Miguel Island as follows.

Boating is allowed at San Miguel Island except west of a line drawn between Judith Rock (34° 01.500' N. lat. 120° 25.300' W. long. ①) and Castle Rock (34° 03.300' N. lat. 120° 26.300' W. long. ②) where boats are prohibited closer than 300 yards from shore.

1. Notwithstanding the 300-yard boating closure between Judith Rock and Castle Rock, the following shall apply:

- a. Boats may approach San Miguel Island no nearer than 100 yards from shore during the period(s) from March 15 through April 30, and October 1 through December 15; and
- b. Boats operated by commercial sea urchin divers may enter waters of the 300-yard area between the western boundary of the Judith Rock State Marine Reserve at 120° 26.600' W. long. ③ and Castle Rock for the purpose of fishing sea urchins during the period(s) from March 15 through April 30, and October 1 through December 15.

2. The Department may rescind permission for boats to enter waters within 300 yards between Judith Rock and Castle Rock upon finding that impairment to the island marine mammal resource is imminent. Immediately following such closure, the Department will request the commission to hear, at its regularly scheduled meeting, presentation of documentation supporting the need for such closure.

Other Requirements:

- 1. Boats traveling within 300 yards of the shoreline or anchorages shall operate with a minimum amount of noise and shall not exceed speeds of five miles per hour.
- 2. Except as permitted by federal law or emergency caused by hazardous weather, boats may be anchored overnight only at Tyler Bight and Cuyler Harbor.
- 3. Landing is allowed on San Miguel Island only at the designated landing beach in Cuyler Harbor.
- 4. No person shall have access to all other offshore rocks and islands at San Miguel Island.

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.