

Marine Protected Areas

[This page is under development**]**

The need to safeguard the long-term health of California's marine life was recognized by the California Legislature in 1999 with the passage of the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA). MLPA aims to protect California's marine natural heritage through a statewide network of marine protected areas (MPAs) designed, created, and managed using sound science and stakeholder input. In 2000, the Marine Managed Areas Improvement Act (MMAIA) identified the classifications to be used in designing the MPA network and specified the agencies with designation or management authority for the different types of MPAs and marine managed areas.

Between 2004 and 2012, using a regional approach, the State of California created an open coast network of MPAs consistent with the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA). When adopting elements of the network, the State incorporated MPAs that had been designed between 1999 and 2004 around the northern Channel Islands through a separate state-federal process.

More information about California's MPA network can be found on the California Department of Fish and Wildlife [Marine Protected Areas webpage \(opens in new tab\)](#).

This page is designed to answer basic questions about California's MPAs network, provide information about the first ever decadal management review and what it says about the network, describe the MPA petition review and evaluation process and its opportunities for public engagement, identify useful resources for learning more, and restore public access to historical MPA planning documents.

On this page

- Overview
- Decadal management review
- Commission action on MPA petitions
- Resources
- Historical MPA planning documents