

## Staff Summary for May 19, 2026

**6A. General Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda****Today's Item**Information Action 

Receive public comment regarding topics within the Commission's authority that are not included on the agenda.

**Background**

This item is to provide members of the public an opportunity to address the Commission on topics not on the agenda. Staff may include written materials and comments received prior to the meeting as exhibits in the meeting binder (if received by the written comment deadline), or as supplemental materials and comments at the meeting (if received by the supplemental comment deadline).

General public comments are categorized as either: (1) requests for non-regulatory action or (2) informational-only. Under the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act, the Commission cannot discuss or take action on any matter not included on the agenda, other than to schedule issues raised by the public for consideration at future meetings. Thus, non-regulatory requests (any request of the Commission that does not require a regulation change) generally follow a two-meeting cycle (receipt and direction).

Any non-regulatory request submitted during today's meeting, and unrelated to marine protected areas, will be received by the Commission at its next regularly scheduled meeting (currently June 17-18, 2026) under "Non-regulatory requests from previous meetings."

**Significant Public Comments**

A total of 113 comments were received from a wide range of stakeholders, organizations, and elected officials addressing various MPA petitions. A summary table of significant public comments, with links to individual submissions, is provided as Exhibit 1.

**Recommendation**

**Commission staff:** Consider whether to add any future agenda items to address issues that are raised during public comment.

**Exhibits**

1. [Summary table of significant public comments](#), received April 17 through May 11, 2026

**Motion (N/A)**

**California Fish and Game Commission  
May 19, 2026 Commission Meeting**

**Item 6A. General Public Comments for Items Not on the Agenda  
Exhibit 1. Significant Public Comments**

*Unless otherwise noted, "Department" refers to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.*

MPA = marine protected area, SMCA = state marine conservation area, SMR = state marine reserve

Subject	MPA	Date Received	Entity/Individual	Description	Number Rec'd
Petition 2023-21MPA	Pyramid Point SMCA	5/1/2026	<a href="#">Sue Lee Mossman</a>	Supports Pyramid Point SMCA as no take with a tribal exemption: A member of the public shares that protecting marine areas is essential amid increasing ocean threats and expresses support for MPA initiatives, urging continued commitment to ocean conservation and adaptive management.	1
Petition 2023-27MPA	Anacapa Island SMCA	5/11/2026	<a href="#">Charlie Graham, F/V March Gale</a>	A commercial lobster fisherman is concerned about increased gear conflicts with shrinking fishing grounds resulting from past MPA designations, and supports the Department's recommendation to deny the petition.	1
Petition 2023-28MPA	New SMR at Point Sal	5/2/2026	<a href="#">Alyssa Gomez, Conservation Affairs Committee Chair, California Central Coast Chapter of the Wildlife Society</a>	A conservation organization expresses support for establishing a new SMR at Point Sal, noting the area's importance for biodiversity, cultural stewardship, recreation, and the regional economy, and urges approval of the proposal as a key conservation measure.	1
Petition 2023-28MPA	New SMR at Point Sal	5/1/2026, 5/5/2026	<a href="#">Gianna Patchen, Santa Lucia Chapter Coordinator of the Sierra Club</a> and <a href="#">Melanie Blacker and Cynthia Houben</a>	Commenters support establishing a new SMA at Point Sal. They describe Point Sal as ecologically rich, culturally significant, and vital for local recreation, emphasizing that its protection would preserve biodiversity, benefit future generations, and potentially support local economies through increased tourism. Patchen also shares youth-created postcards that highlight children's love of marine animals and their desire to keep the ocean clean.	3
Petition 2023-28MPA	New SMR at Point Sal	5/7/2026	<a href="#">Wayne Blich, commercial passenger fishing vessel (CPFV) Flying Fish</a>	The owner and operator of a CPFV indicates that closing the Point Sal area would significantly harm a long-established Port San Luis fishing business and further reduce already limited fishing grounds, and suggests allowing recreational boat-based fishing in the proposed MPA.	1
Petition 2023-29MPA	New "Mishopshno SMCA"	5/8/2026	<a href="#">Blake Kopcho</a>	A Santa Barbara resident, who attended the May 5-6 MPA petitions meeting to support the petition but was unable to speak due to the number of speakers, shares their support of the Mishopshno SMCA as an important measure to protect diverse marine habitats and safeguard local ecosystems amid increasing climate related threats.	1
Petition 2023-29MPA	New "Mishopshno SMCA"	5/3/2026	<a href="#">Luke Rice</a>	A Laguna Blanca High School student offers an <i>alternative proposal</i> that shifts the proposed MPA boundaries to keep portions of important fishing and diving areas open that hold personal and cultural value, but in exchange include more coastline and increased habitat diversity in a larger protected area.	1

Subject	MPA	Date Received	Entity/Individual	Description	Number Rec'd
Petition 2023- <b>29</b> MPA	New "Mishopshno SMCA"	4/30/2026, 5/5/2026	<a href="#">Das Williams and David DaSilva</a>	A representative sample of letters from a variety of Carpinteria residents including a former state legislator and Santa Barbara county supervisor, commercial fishermen, and community members and visitors. They oppose the proposed MPA near Carpinteria, stating that it lacks scientific justification, threatens local cultural and economic traditions, and would disproportionately harm disadvantaged community members who rely on coastal access and subsistence fishing. They state that existing protections in the Santa Barbara Channel are already extensive, and that they believe adding new restrictions would create unnecessary burdens without clear ecological benefit. Received between April 30, 2026, and May 8, 2026.	6
Petition 2023- <b>29</b> MPA	New "Mishopshno SMCA"	5/5/2026	<a href="#">Andy Sheaffer, President, Board of Education, Carpinteria Unified School District</a>	A school board member voices concerns that the proposed MPA expansions would negatively impact the district by threatening the livelihoods of local commercial fishing families, limiting student career pathways, and disrupting school programs that rely on locally sourced seafood; they ask the Commission not to jeopardize students' heritage or future.	1
Petition 2023- <b>29</b> MPA	New "Mishopshno SMCA"	5/6/2026	<a href="#">Matt Oliver</a>	A Carpinteria parent supports honoring Chumash cultural stewardship in shaping ocean management. They also express concern that broader MPA expansion proposals could limit families' access to the ocean, reducing opportunities for children to learn hands on ocean stewardship. They share that fostering future ocean protectors requires accessible, experiential connection to local waters.	1
Petition 2023- <b>29</b> MPA	New "Mishopshno SMCA"	5/10/2026	<a href="#">Ava Schulenberg, Executive Director, and Cameron Cribben, President, California Lobster &amp; Trap Fishermen's Association (CLTFA)</a>	CLTFA disputes the assertion that spillover effects in the lobster fishery from MPAs should serve as grounds for supporting the petition. They share that while spillover may be documented at other MPAs, CLTFA is opposed to this petition as they rely on the area and have a fleet commitment to supporting all local commercial fisheries, regardless of the targeted species, as almost every fisher in the lobster fleet participates in other fisheries to diversify their efforts and earn a living. In light of this, they emphasize that a closure intended to benefit the lobster fishery but that prohibits other fisheries would be self-defeating.	1
Petition 2023- <b>32</b> MPA	Duxbury Reef SMCA	5/5/2026	<a href="#">Caren Quay</a>	A Bolinas resident opposes the petition, noting stable reef conditions, lack of violations, concerns about fairness and community engagement, and broad local support for keeping the Duxbury Reef SMCA boundaries unchanged, and urges the Commission not to modify the existing boundaries.	1
Petition 2023- <b>33</b> MPA	Gull Island SMR	5/6/2026	<a href="#">Matt Lum</a>	A participant in the original Channel Islands Marine Reserves Working Group (MRWG) process that led to Gull Island SMR being established, shares opposition to the petition's proposals to alter Gull Island SMR. The commenter details the tradeoffs that were made in finalizing the boundaries of the SMR, and raises an issue with the proposal to encompass the Poza Anchorage area that was intentionally kept open through earlier stakeholder agreements. They express concern that changing boundaries would undermine the collaborative process, violate good faith commitments made 25 years ago, and erode trust in community based marine conservation.	1
Petition 2023- <b>33</b> MPA	South Point SMR (at Santa Rosa Island)	5/7/2026	<a href="#">Natasha Liso</a>	The spouse of a commercial fisherman opposes the proposed Santa Rosa Island MPA expansion, arguing that it would create severe economic impacts on fishermen and the broader community, and urges the Commission to fully examine long-term economic responsibilities before moving forward.	1
Petition 2023- <b>33</b> MPA	Natural Bridges SMR and new "Pleasure Point SMCA"	4/21/2026	<a href="#">Renee Golder, City of Santa Cruz, Councilmember District 6</a>	The Santa Cruz City Council supports the Department's recommendation to deny Action 6 of the petition (expand Natural Bridges SMR) and Action 7 (create a new 3.2 square mile SMCA near Pleasure Point). They share that restricting coastal access without clear environmental benefit could harm community health by reducing recreation, subsistence fishing, cultural connection, and local economic stability. They note that Santa Cruz's fishing and ocean access sectors are already sustainably managed and assert that unnecessary restrictions may undermine both ecological and public health outcomes.	1

Subject	MPA	Date Received	Entity/Individual	Description	Number Rec'd
Comments at the May 5-6, 2026 Commission meeting and outreach efforts	Petition 2023-33MPA	5/10/2026	<a href="#">Ava Schulenberg, Executive Director, and Cameron Cribben, President, CLTFA</a>	They clarify and apologize for remarks made during discussion of the petition at the May 5-6, 2026 Commission meeting, acknowledging they may have sounded insensitive to others and emphasizing that any offense was unintended. Regarding CLTFA engagement and outreach with petitioners and students, they dispute claims that CLTFA was unwilling to engage, stating they attempted to contact the petitioner and received no reply. They also note they are actively engaging with student groups, including scheduled time with CalPIRG students at UCSB.	1
May 5-6, 2026 Petitions (San Luis Obispo through Santa Barbara counties)	various	5/6/2026	<a href="#">Sara Wood</a>	A representative sample from three members of the public opposing any petitions that would "weaken" MPA protections and urging the Commission to instead "strengthen and expand" MPAs—particularly through tribally led efforts. They cite scientific evidence and global examples to support the position that protecting kelp forests and critical habitats is essential for ecological resilience, cultural stewardship, and long term environmental and economic sustainability.	3
May 5-6, 2026 Petitions (San Luis Obispo through Santa Barbara counties)	various	4/30/2026	<a href="#">Alan Alward, Co-Chair, The Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries (ACSF)</a>	ACSF urges the Commission to reject new or more restrictive MPA petitions, stating that additional closures threaten the socioeconomic viability of fishing communities and bypass meaningful community engagement and analysis. They support tribal co-management limited to ceremonial and subsistence use within existing MPAs and emphasize that current, science-based, fishery regulations are sufficient without expanding closures.	1
May 5-6, 2026 Petitions (San Luis Obispo through Santa Barbara counties)	new "Mishopshno SMCA"; various	5/6/2026	<a href="#">Matt Carr</a>	A representative sample from two fishermen (one commercial, one recreational) opposes creating any new MPAs or expanding existing ones, arguing that current fishing conditions are strong and that existing fishery management tools, along with better enforcement, are more effective responses to marine heat waves and sustainable fisheries management needs than additional closures. The recreational fisherman closes with a suggestion that if an MPA were established at Carpinteria (Petition 2023-29MPA), Naples SMCA should be re-opened for fishing.	2
May 19, 2026 Petitions	various	5/4/2026	<a href="#">Karen Callejas</a>	A representative sample of a form letter campaign from 8th grade students at Hesperia Junior High School that support expanding marine protected areas in Los Angeles, in San Diego, and at Catalina Island, noting that they believe trawler nets damage marine habitats and that establishing protected "safe zones" would help safeguard ocean ecosystems.	34
General MPA Petition Comments	various	5/5/2026, 5/11/2026	<a href="#">Deane Plaister and Norma Jellison</a>	Two California residents urge the Commission to prioritize ocean health when evaluating MPA proposals, emphasizing that existing MPAs have successfully increased biodiversity and should not be weakened. They also advocate for science based decision making, expanded Tribal involvement in management, and the establishment of additional MPAs to support climate and conservation goals.	2
General MPA Petition Comments	various	5/5/2026 through 5/11/2026	<a href="#">Jack Mueller, Dylan Legere, and Vitaly Svidirov</a>	Three commenters oppose creating new or expanding existing MPAs, stating that existing closures are sufficient and that additional restrictions would further limit fishing access, worsen crowding and conflict on remaining fishing grounds, and harm the livelihoods of commercial and recreational fishermen. Additionally, one letter suggests that some areas that were previously closed should be reopened or that changes to trap limits should be considered before more areas become MPAs.	3
General MPA Petition Comments	various	4/17/2026, 4/30/2026	<a href="#">Frank Ursitti, Owner, H&amp;M Landing, San Diego, and James Klein, Captain, Santa Barbara Sea Charters Inc.</a>	A boat captain and the owner of H&M Landing in San Diego support the Department's recommendations and the current MPA network design. They share that any modifications to the network should be responsive to science-based needs.	2

Subject	MPA	Date Received	Entity/Individual	Description	Number Rec'd
General MPA Petition Comments	various	5/5/2026, 5/6/2026	<a href="#">Stephanie Mutz, Remington Hotchkins, and Brad Matthews</a>	A representative sample of emails and letters from fishermen, chefs, restaurant owners, and seafood consumers expressing opposition to the current MPA proposals under consideration. They assert that the proposals are not well supported by science and do not address the primary threat of climate change. They emphasize that well-managed fisheries can be as effective as MPAs and note that fishermen already participate in stewardship efforts. They warn the proposals could harm coastal communities and urge the Commission to include working fishermen in shaping balanced, sustainable policies.	42
General MPA Petition Comments	various	5/11/2026	<a href="#">Keith Rootsart, Founder, Giant Kelp Restoration</a>	An urchin diver discusses stressors that have contributed to kelp loss, highlighting a lack of adaptive management in MPAs as a major, preventable factor. They state that reduced predator presence and concentrated fishing pressure enabled urchin expansion, harming kelp forests. They emphasize that protecting kelp nurseries through reserves and active pest removal is essential, and assert that fishing inside kelp forests undermines both kelp health and long-term fish populations.	1
Comments at April 14, 2026 Tribal Committee meeting	various	5/4/2026	<a href="#">Coastal Conservation Association California (CCA California)</a>	CCA California condemns offensive comments made at the April TC meeting by an individual claiming affiliation with the organization, and apologizes to affected tribal members. CCA California states the remarks conflict with CCA's core values of respect, inclusion, and constructive engagement. The organization is reviewing the individual's membership and reaffirms its commitment to accountability, respectful dialogue, and partnership with all communities involved in coastal resource management.	1



Outlook

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**Petition No. 2023-21 Pyramid Point SMCA to no take with tribal exemption**

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**From** Sue Y. Lee [REDACTED]

**Date** Fri 05/01/2026 12:39 AM

**To** FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Dear Commissioners,

Protecting strategically selected areas of the ocean is essential for now and the future. Vast as they are, the earth's oceans are facing ecosystem threats that are unprecedented as the water warms and acidifies. Their fate is bound up tightly with that of earth and of all life forms on the planet. The ecological recovery of the MPAs that have been established has been encouraging as it shows us what is still possible after years of pollution, warming and overfishing. Please support ocean conservation and adaptive management that will keep our [renowned](#) marine protected area network strong!

Thank you for your consideration,  
sue y. lee mossman



**From:** Charlie Graham <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 11, 2026 04:18 PM  
**To:** FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>  
**Subject:** 2023 - 27. Anacapa Island

Hello California Fish and Game Commissioners,

I have been a commercial lobster fisherman since 1993 and care deeply about the environment and our fishery as well. I have participated in numerous collaborative management projects with UCSB scientists, researchers and CDFW aimed at ensuring the sustainability of the lobster fishery. Some examples include working with Calobster and the Bren school on port sampling, tag and recapture programs, as well as a tried but failed attempt to create a program to self tax our fishery to fund getting the Marine Stewardship Council's certification of sustainability (Governor Schwarzenegger denied the bill).

Over the years I have witnessed the displacement of fishing effort due to the implementation of marine protected areas and can attest to the negative impacts which have ensued. Gear compaction is a major problem in the lobster fishery. The stocks are doing great, but lobster fishermen are constantly stepping on each other and there's no shortage of conflict on the ever shrinking grounds. I would like to see a major reduction in trap limits, but that is a discussion for another time.

For now, please follow the Department's recommendation to deny the Anacapa Island petition regarding eelgrass.

Sincerely,

Charlie Graham  
FV March Gale

Sent from my iPhone



April 30th, 2026

Erika Zavaleta, President  
California Fish and Game Commission  
715 P Street, 16th Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Support for Petition 2023-28MPA**

Dear President Zavaleta and Honorable Commissioners:

I am writing to express the California Central Coast Chapter of The Wildlife Society's strong support of the proposed Point Sal State Marine Reserve (Petition 2023-28MPA) near the city of Guadalupe. Conserving this special area will help protect and restore ocean health, enhance coastal recreation experiences, and help ensure Santa Barbara County's coastal economy thrives for decades to come. The California Central Coast Chapter urges you to approve this proposal.

Point Sal MPA would conserve important habitats that support rich biodiversity, such as kelp forests, rocky reefs, tidepools, sandy beaches, migratory whale corridors, an important larval retention zone, and a seabird and sea lion rookery. Protecting these areas would have positive impacts that spread beyond their boundaries, bolstering ocean resilience and keeping our coastal waters healthy. This area holds cultural significance for several Indigenous communities in our region. Designating this MPA would honor and strengthen the Chumash peoples' stewardship of the area and elevate their historical and present-day connection to the region.

In addition, this area holds special importance for ocean and coastal recreation communities. Point Sal is home to stunning coastal bluff trails that are frequented by local hikers and tourists to view wildlife, relax at the beach, and enjoy the remote and pristine area. By making the ocean healthier and more resilient to climate change, strong marine protections help preserve everyone's ability to enjoy these areas through a variety of recreational activities, far into the future. This also benefits our economy – collectively, ocean-based recreational activities

contribute to our state's \$28 billion ocean tourism and recreation economy.<sup>1</sup> In 2023, coastal tourism brought just over \$2 billion in travel-related spending to Santa Barbara County and supported more than 20,000 jobs.<sup>2</sup>

The California Central Coast Chapter of the Wildlife Society has over 475 members across Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, and Monterey Counties. Our mission is to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and habitats through responsible conservation strategies and science-based management. The Chapter would like to formally recognize that the future of wildlife and diverse ecosystems depends heavily on human stewardship. Such stewardship must consider the growing human population, decreasing availability of pristine wildlife habitats, and the need to maintain and manage wildlife populations for sustained human use and enjoyment in economically, socially, and environmentally acceptable ways for present and future generations. We believe a responsible conservation strategy to preserve and steward our oceans and dependent marine life would be the establishment of the Point Sal State Marine Preserve.

The Commission's continued work to protect our state's biodiversity is critical, at a time when ocean conservation is more important than ever. Thank you for the opportunity to express our strong support for this proposal that aims to fill a current gap in network design to improve ecological connectivity throughout the region, provide additional resilience in the face of climate change, and protect critical marine habitats.

Sincerely,

*Alyssa Gomez*

Alyssa Gomez  
Conservation Affairs Committee Chair  
California Central Coast Chapter of The Wildlife Society

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<sup>1</sup> NOAA 2016, The National Significance of California's Ocean Economy  
<https://coast.noaa.gov/data/digitalcoast/pdf/california-ocean-economy.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Visit California, 2024. The Economic Impact of Travel in California.  
<https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/research/economic-impact>

**From:** Gianna Patchen <[REDACTED]>

**Sent:** Friday, May 1, 2026 11:56 AM

**To:** FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

**Subject:** Comments in support of the Point Sal MPA & MPA network

Dear California Fish & Game Commission,

The following comments are from 37 Central Coast youth community-members in support of marine protections, including for the Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area and the MPA network as a whole. These letters were written after education about the Point Sal MPA proposal at SLO Earth Fest and Nipomo Nature Fest during the month of April 2026.

This comment is not submitted on behalf of the Sierra Club, but on behalf of the youth whose letters are attached.

Thank you for your work to protect the Central Coast ocean and beyond. We appreciate this opportunity to uplift youth voices.



**Gianna Patchen** (she/her)

**Santa Lucia Chapter Coordinator**

[REDACTED]

Office Ph (landline, no text): (805) 543-8717

P.O. Box 15755, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

[www.sierraclub.org/santa-lucia](http://www.sierraclub.org/santa-lucia)

🌿 You can also support SLO Sierra Club's work by [becoming a member](#) and/or [donating](#) 🌿

**Point Sal MPA Support  
Youth Comments  
April 2026**

The following comments are from Central Coast youth in support of marine protections, including the Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area and the MPA network as a whole. These letters were written at SLO Earth Fest and Nipomo Nature Fest during the month of April 2026.

Thank you for your work to protect the Central Coast ocean and beyond. We appreciate this opportunity to uplift youth voices.





# I LOVE THE OCEAN



**WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?** I want to make  
less trash in the ocean.

Draw it  
too!



**NAME:** Lionel Gomez **AGE:** 10



# I LOVE THE OCEAN



**WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?**

I love ocean animals

"I love ocean animals"

Draw it too!



**NAME:**

WILLOW

**AGE:**

7

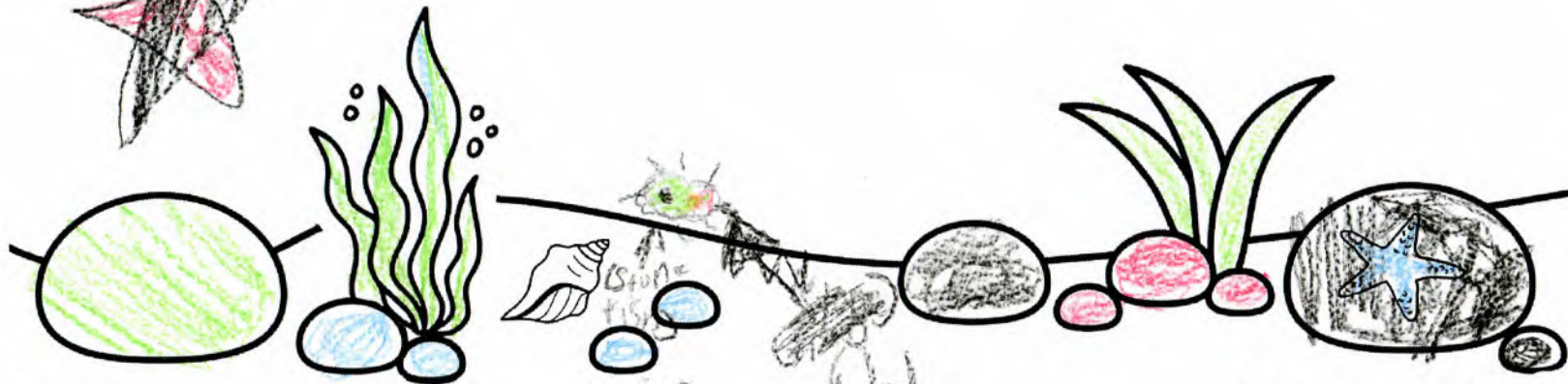


# I LOVE THE OCEAN



**WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?** because of the  
stone fish and the Pike (fish)

Draw it too!  
↙



**NAME:**

MALIN VINCENT

**AGE:**

11

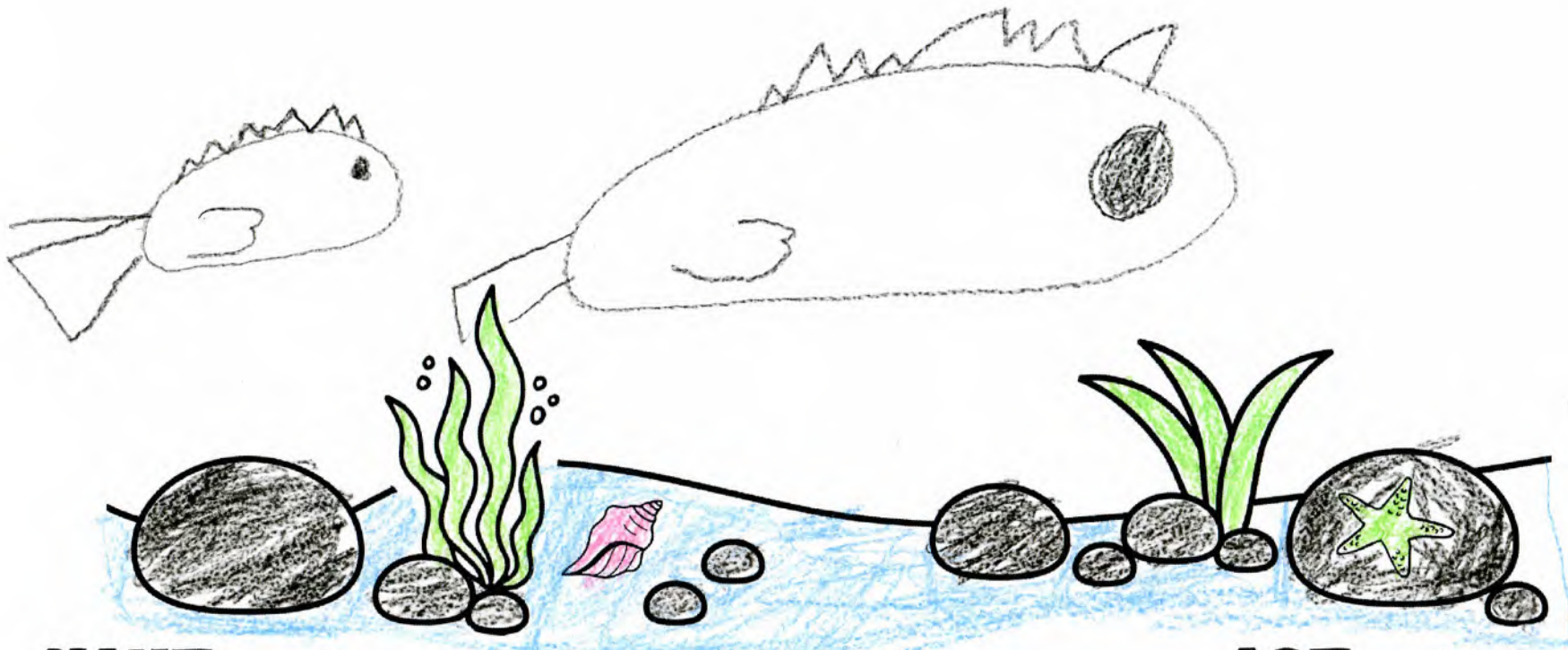


# I LOVE THE OCEAN



**WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?** So we can have

more museum and see our fav animal *Draw it too!*



**NAME:** Kathian

**AGE:** 11



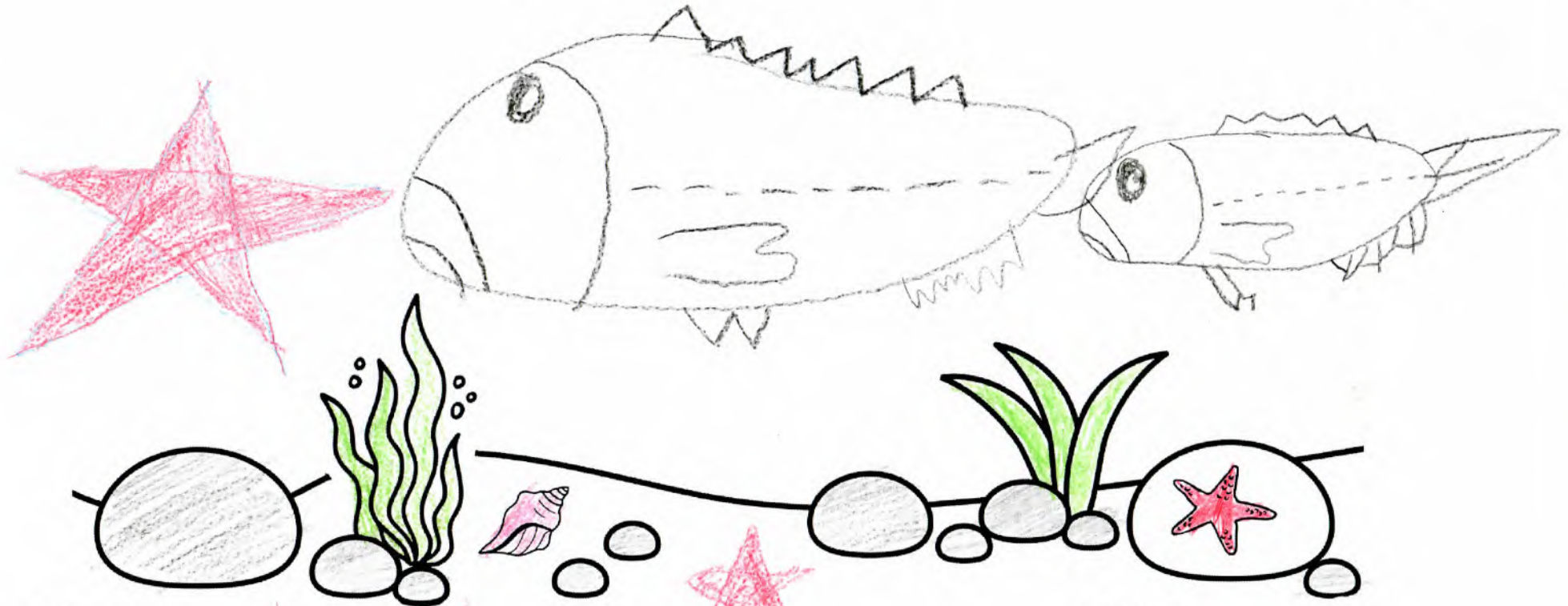
# I LOVE THE OCEAN



**WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?** So the animals

don't die.

Draw it too!  
↙



**NAME:**

Ja'myah

**AGE:**

9



# I LOVE THE OCEAN



WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN? tide pools

Draw it too!  
↙



NAME: Callum

AGE: 6



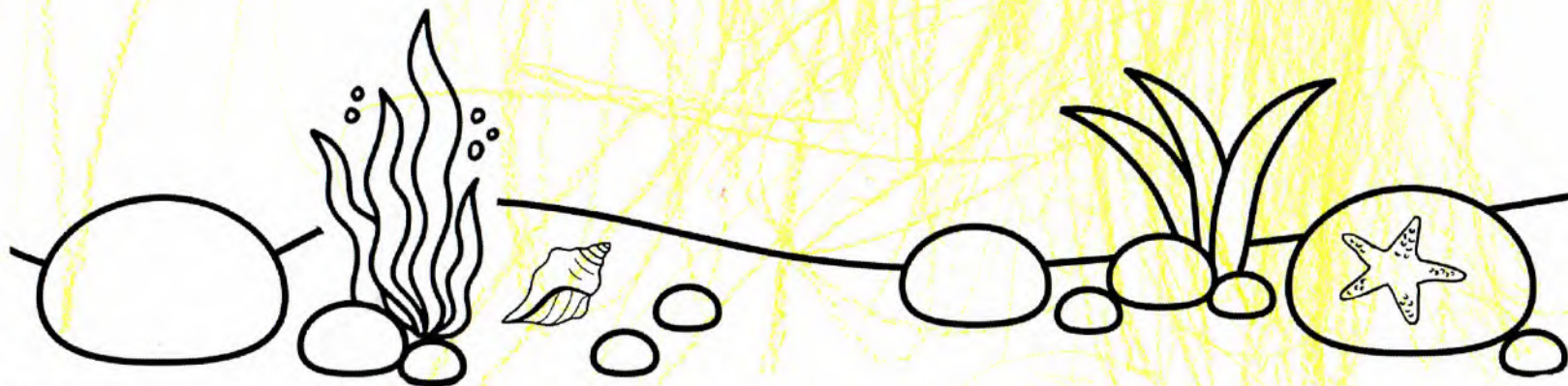
# I LOVE THE OCEAN



**WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?**

Whales

Draw it too!  
↙



**NAME:**

Leanna

**AGE:**

3



# I LOVE THE OCEAN



WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?

Animals

Draw it too!  
↙



NAME:

PALOMA

AGE:

2



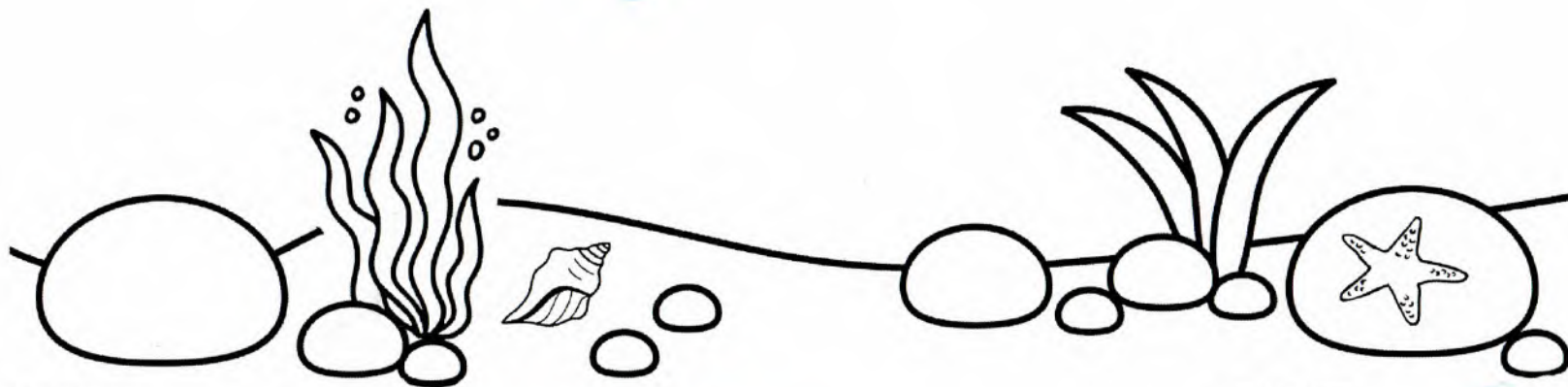
# I LOVE THE OCEAN



**WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?** because

its so beautiful.

Draw it too!  
↙



**NAME:** Gwynn

**AGE:** 8



# I LOVE THE OCEAN



**WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?**

*because*

*it's blue*

Draw it too!  
↙



**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**AGE:** \_\_\_\_\_



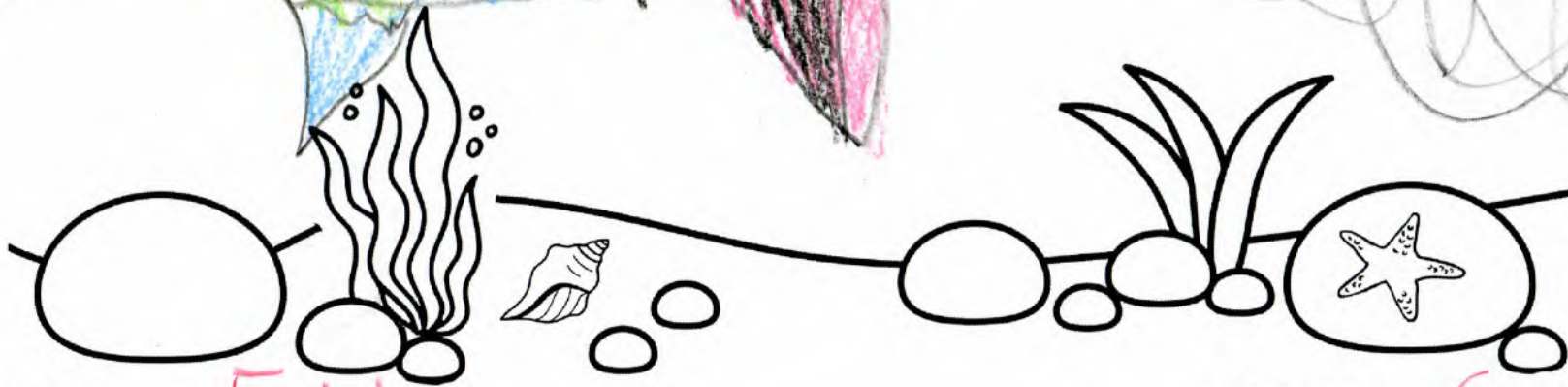
# I LOVE THE OCEAN



WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?

So im not killing  
hammer head shark animals

Draw it too!



NAME:

Ethan

AGE:

6.6

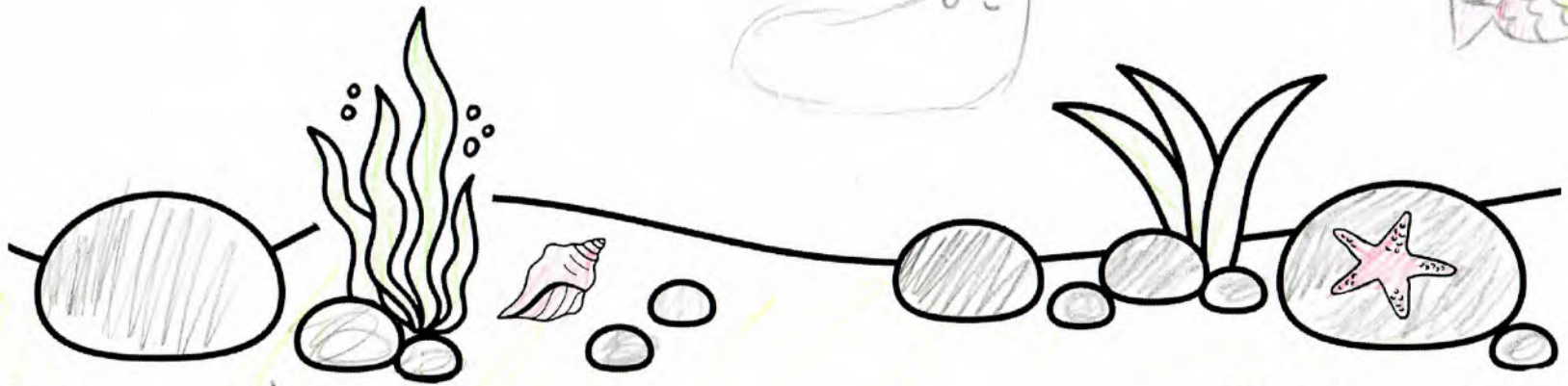


# I LOVE THE OCEAN



**WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?** To protect the wild life  
also because there are many baby animals

Draw it too!  
↙



**NAME:** ellie

**AGE:** 10



# I LOVE THE OCEAN



**WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?** SO MORE SEA

LIFE CAN COME TO THE WORLD!

Draw it too!  
↙

Fish

Jelly  
FISH

Sea  
Lion



**NAME:** Aleksandra

**AGE:** 10



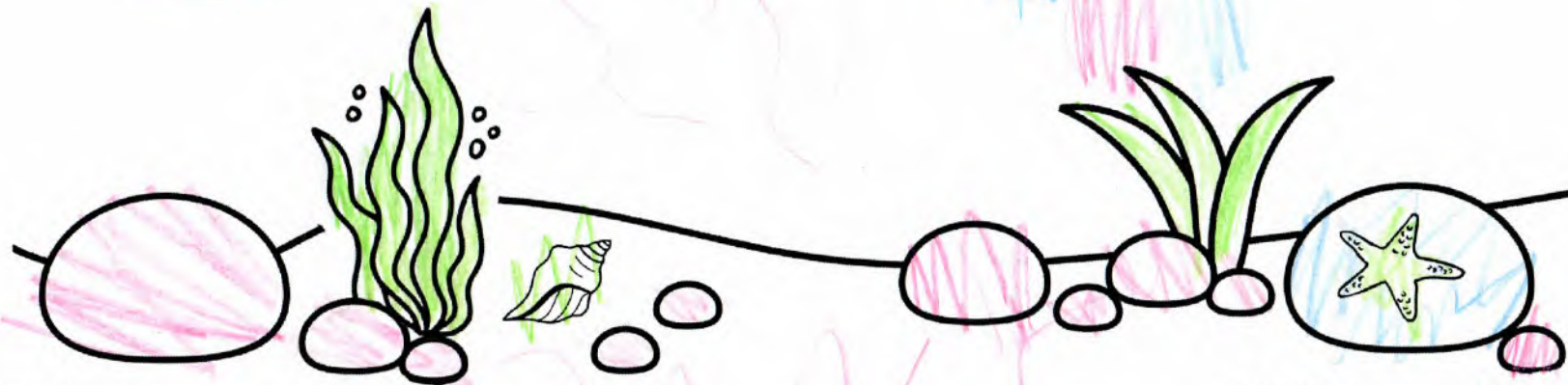
# I LOVE THE OCEAN



WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN? protect

their home

Draw it too!  
↙



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: \_\_\_\_\_



# I LOVE THE OCEAN



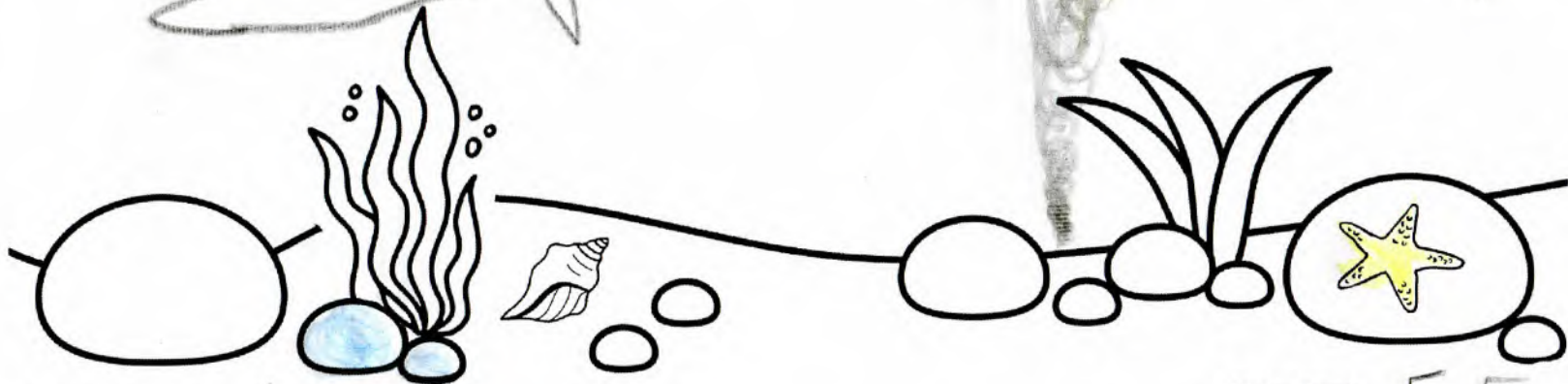
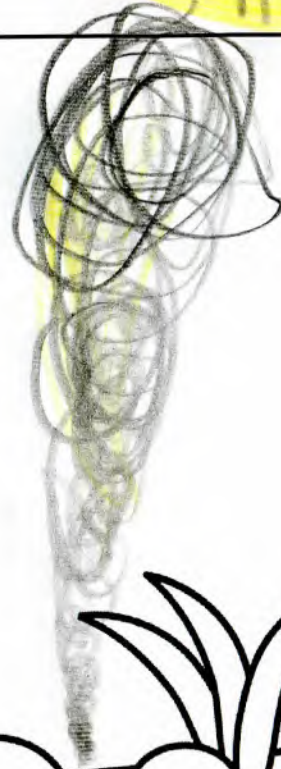
WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN? \_\_\_\_\_

hammet

Head

Shark

Draw it too!  
↙



NAME: LIAM

AGE: 5.5



# I LOVE THE OCEAN



**WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?** "To protect the animals & I like going to the beach"

Draw it too!  
↙



**NAME:**

Juliana

**AGE:**

5



# I LOVE THE OCEAN



WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN? to protect dolphins

"to protect dolphins"

Draw it too!  
↙



NAME: Piper + Roxy 4

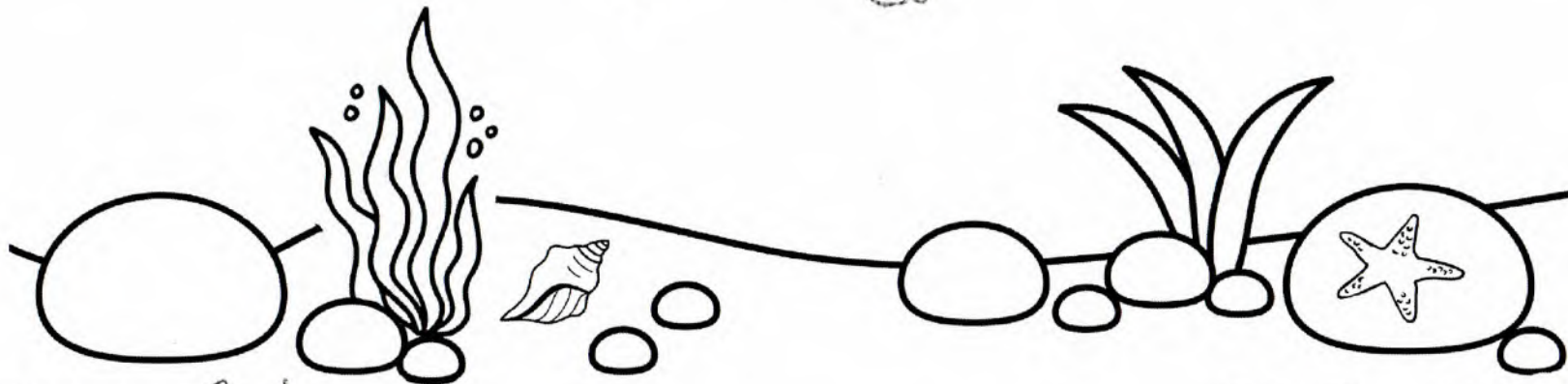
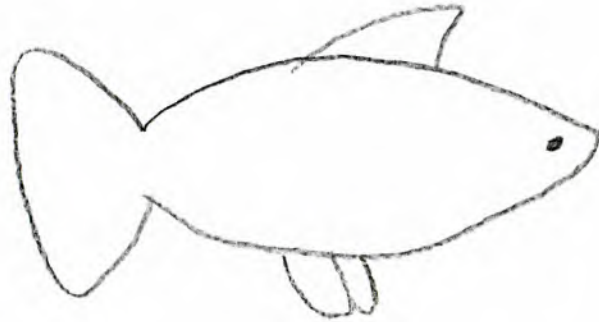
AGE: 5 + 13



# I LOVE THE OCEAN



**WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?** I want to protect the  
ocean because I love animals and I want *Draw it*  
them to live. *too!*



**NAME:** Celia

**AGE:** 8



# I LOVE THE OCEAN



WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN? Sea Lion!

Draw it too!  
↙



NAME: Ell

AGE: 6



# I LOVE THE OCEAN



WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN? Seahorse!

Draw it too!  
↙



NAME: SWETHE AKOBE

AGE: 6

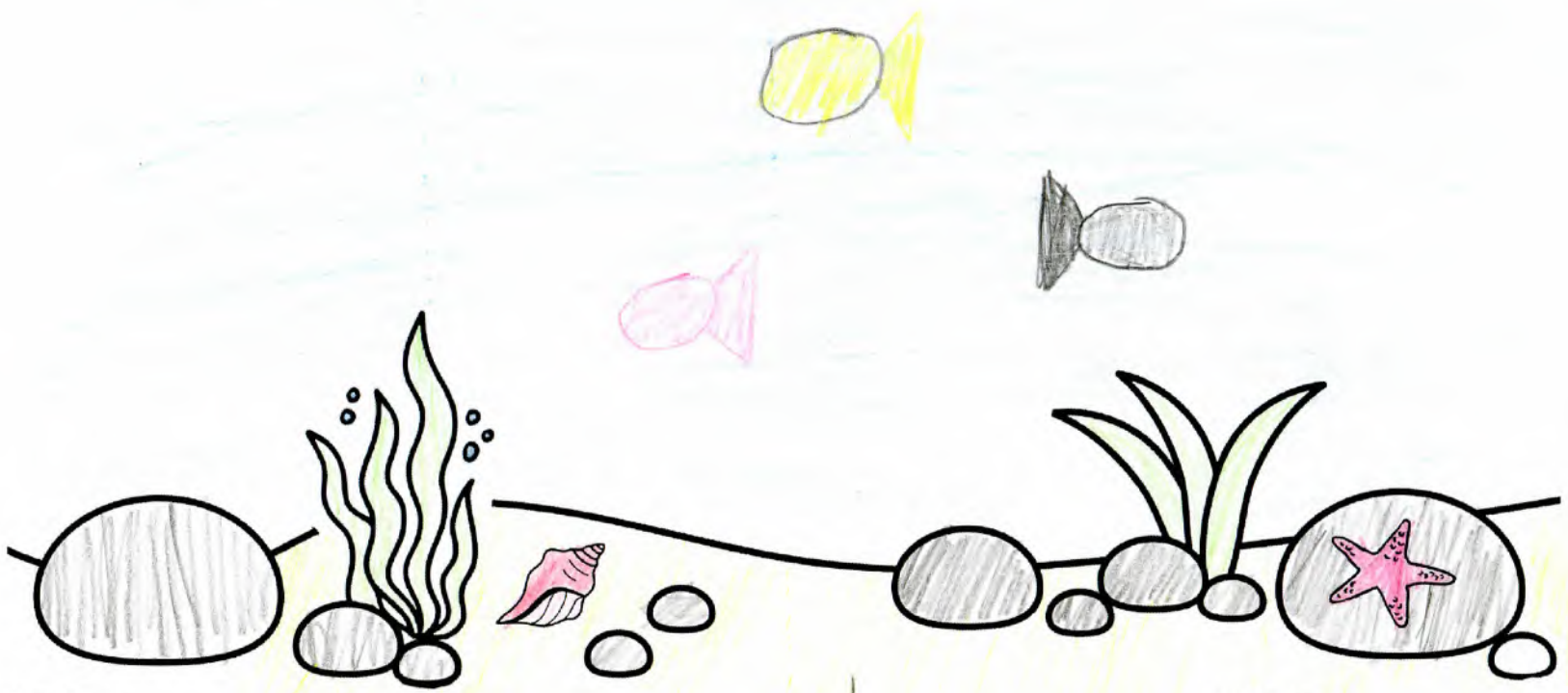


# I LOVE THE OCEAN



WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN? fish

Draw it  
too!  
↙



NAME: Kaiden shah AGE: 11

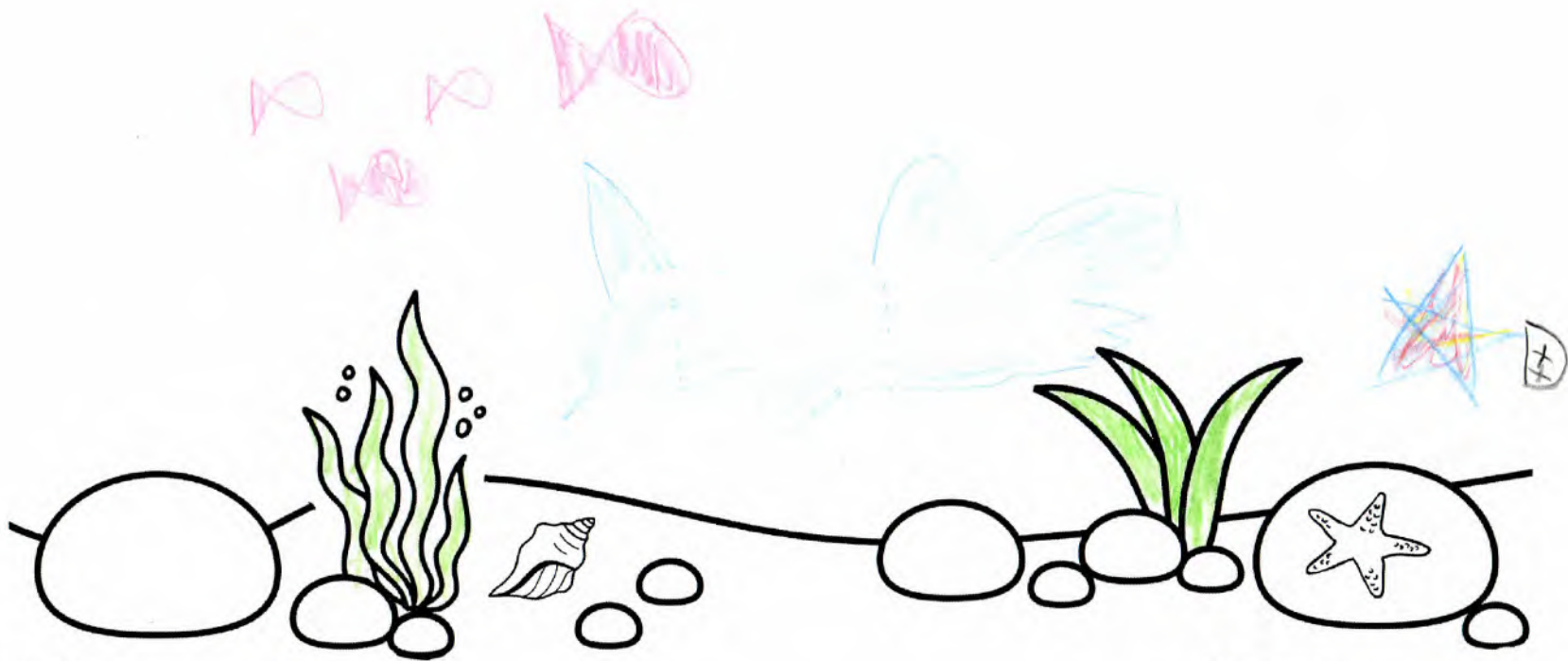


# I LOVE THE OCEAN



WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN? Sharks, Starfish and fish

Draw it too!  
↙



NAME: Lily F.

AGE: 7



# I LOVE THE OCEAN

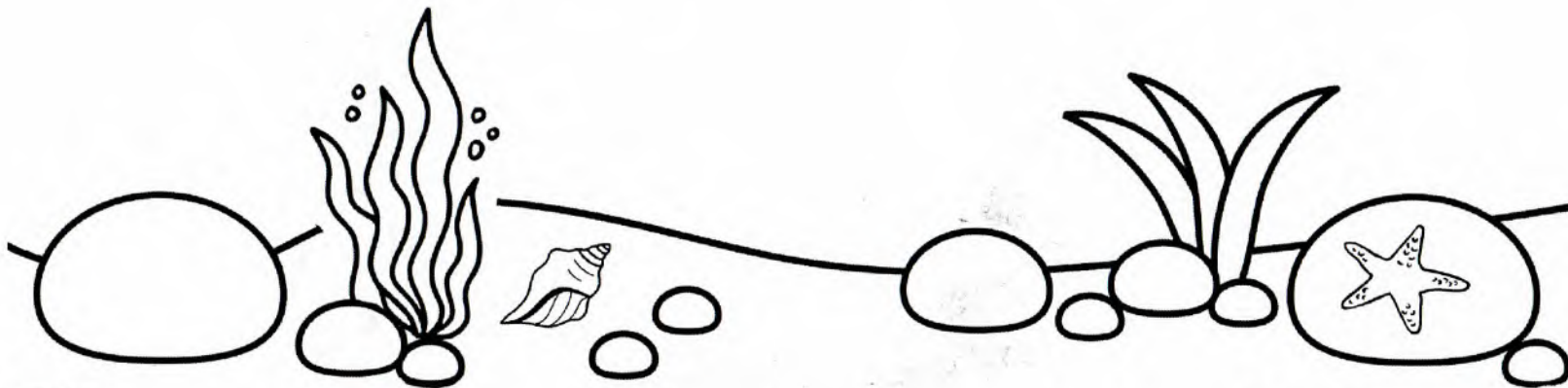


**WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?**

I want to protect

the ocean to save the others!

Draw it too!  
↙



**NAME:**

Bayla

**AGE:**

6



# I LOVE THE OCEAN



**WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?**

Because the

Ocean is full of cool creatures

Draw it too!  
↙



**NAME:**

Dylan

**AGE:**

12

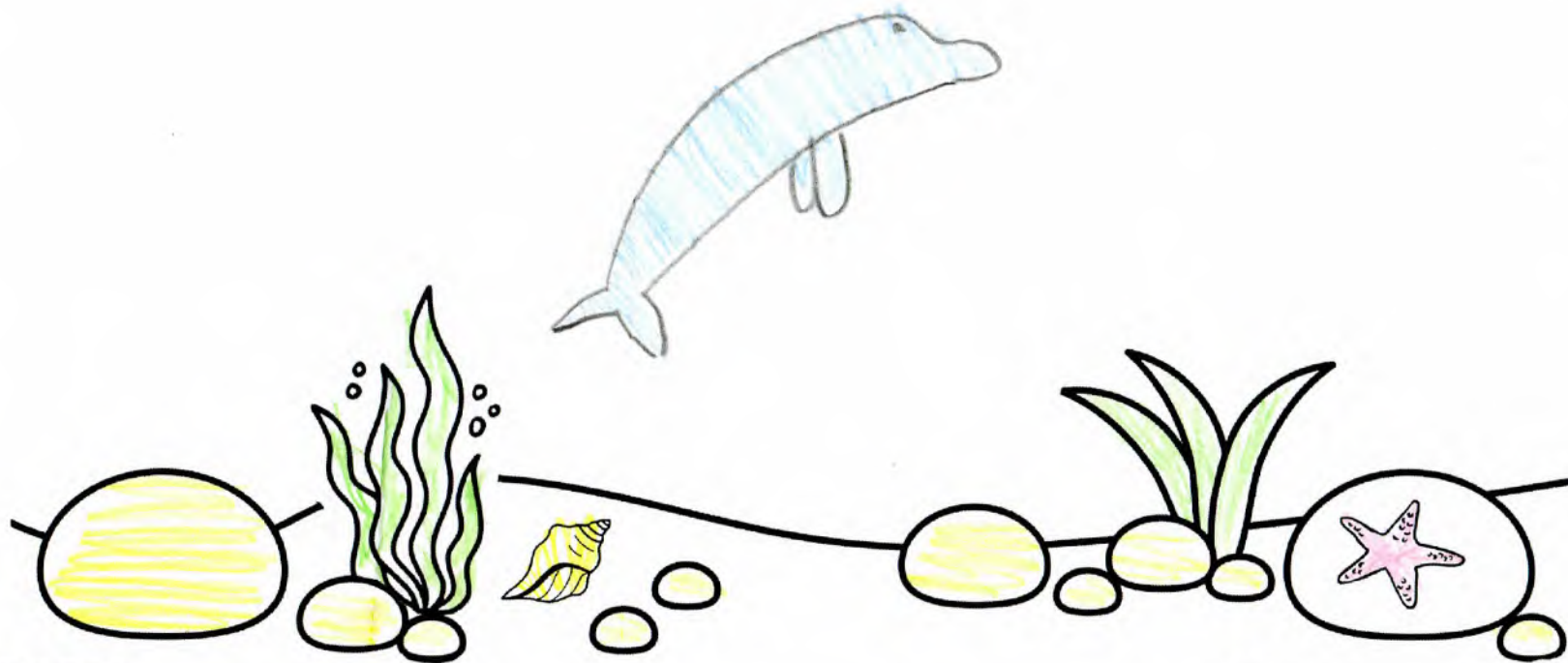


# I LOVE THE OCEAN



**WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?** So the animals have  
a clean place to live

Draw it  
too!  
↙



**NAME:**

Ashna

**AGE:**

8



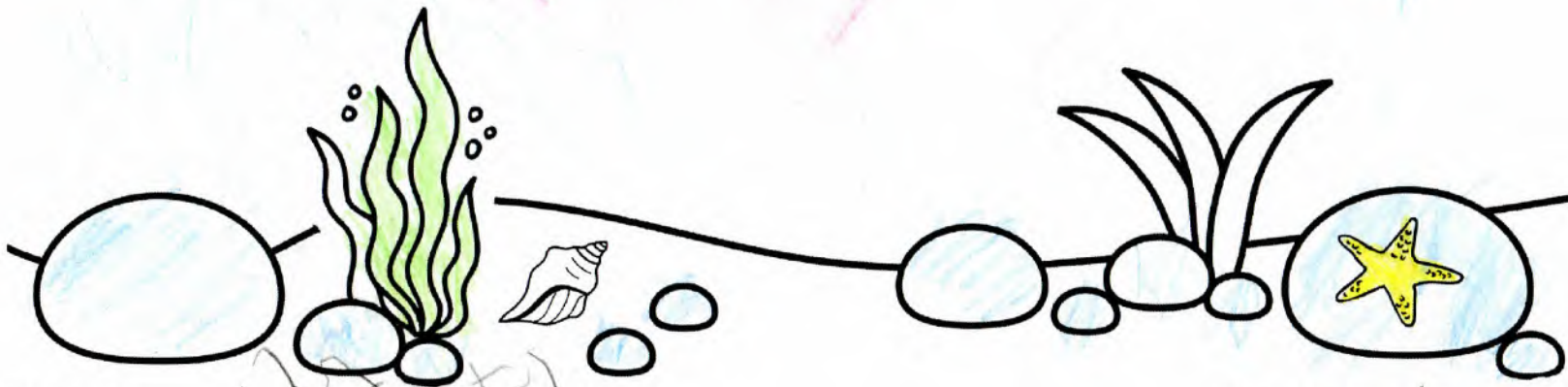
# I LOVE THE OCEAN



WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?

Dolphins

Draw it too!  
↙



NAME:

Hannah

AGE:

4



# I LOVE THE OCEAN



WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?

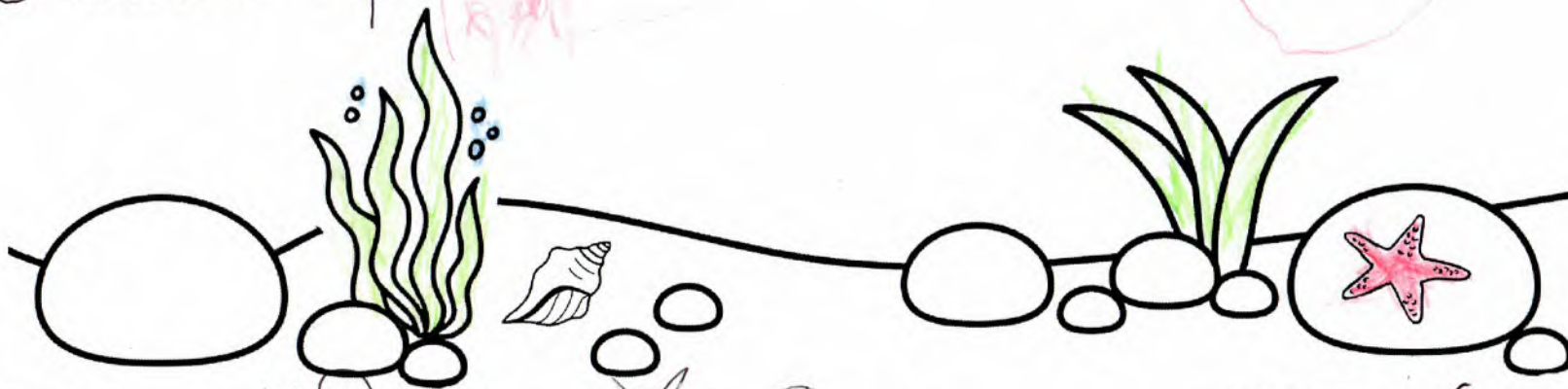
I LIKE

[Coloring instructions]

Draw it too!



"I like colossal squid"



NAME:

Jordan Smith

AGE:

6



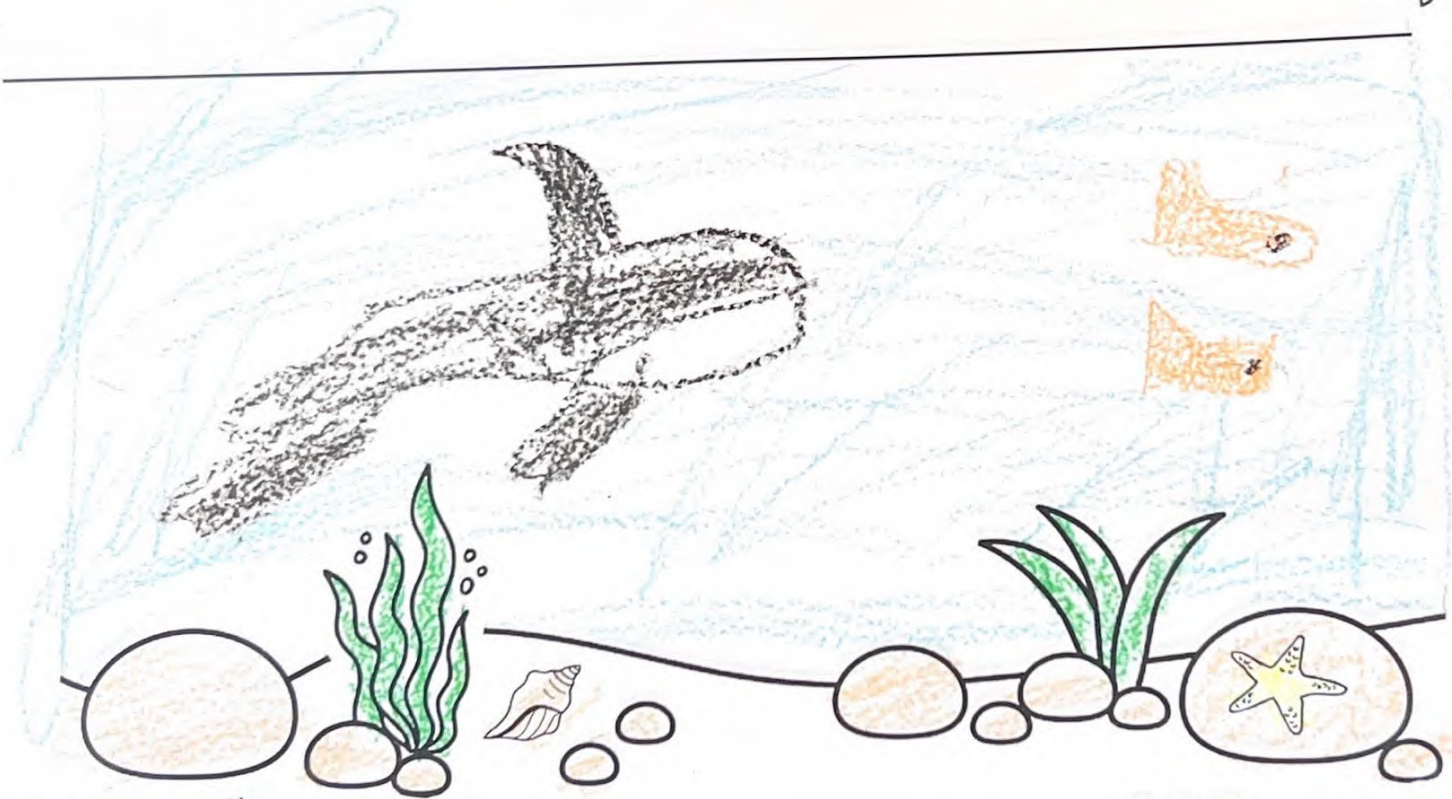
# I LOVE THE OCEAN



WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?

Ocean and Fish

Draw it too!  
↙



NAME:

Brayden

AGE:

10



# I LOVE THE OCEAN

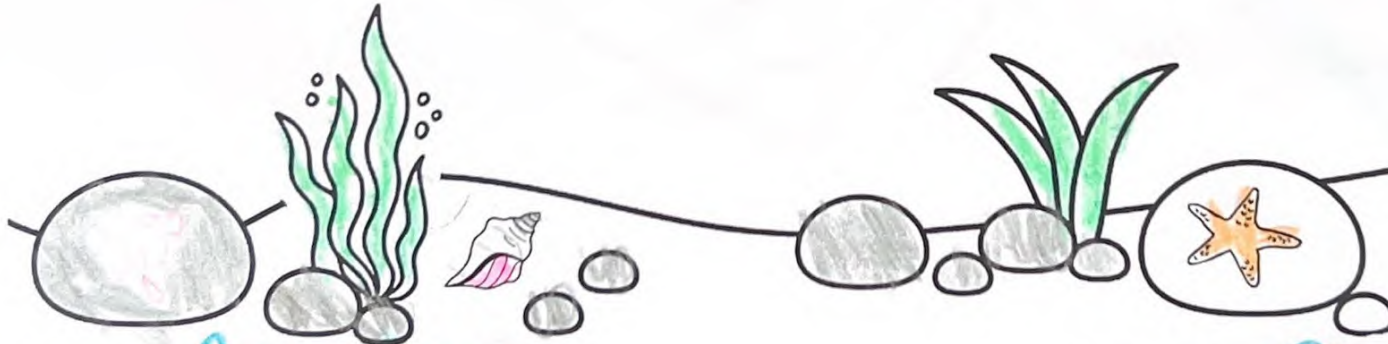


WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?

to keep animals

safe

Draw it too!  
↙



NAME:

Pranav

AGE:

10



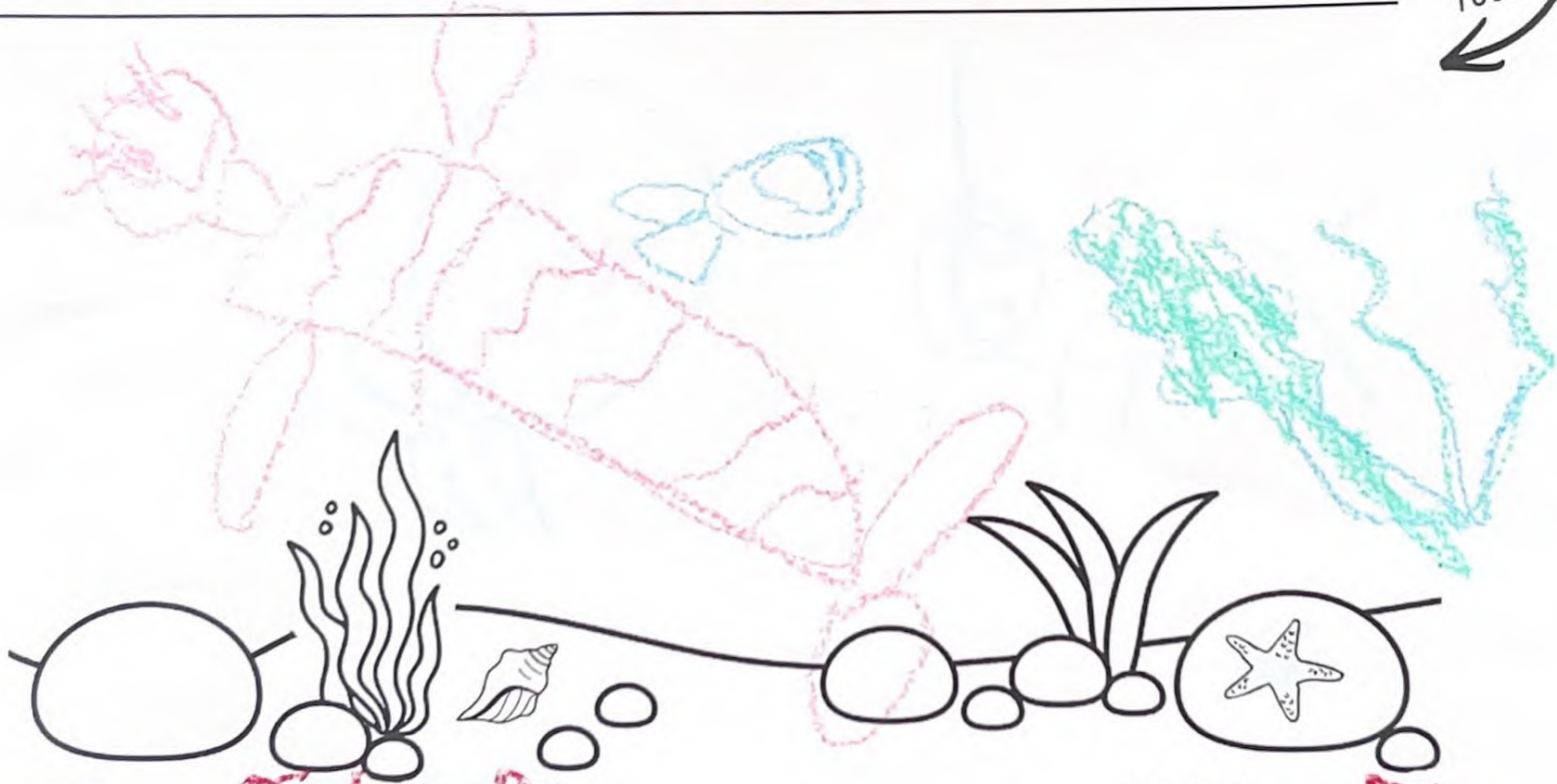
# I LOVE THE OCEAN



WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN? \_\_\_\_\_

Protect the ANIMALS

Draw it too!  
↙



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ETIA

AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

5



# I LOVE THE OCEAN



WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?

to keep with

Life alive

Draw it too!  
↙



NAME: OLIVIA

AGE: 5



# I LOVE THE OCEAN

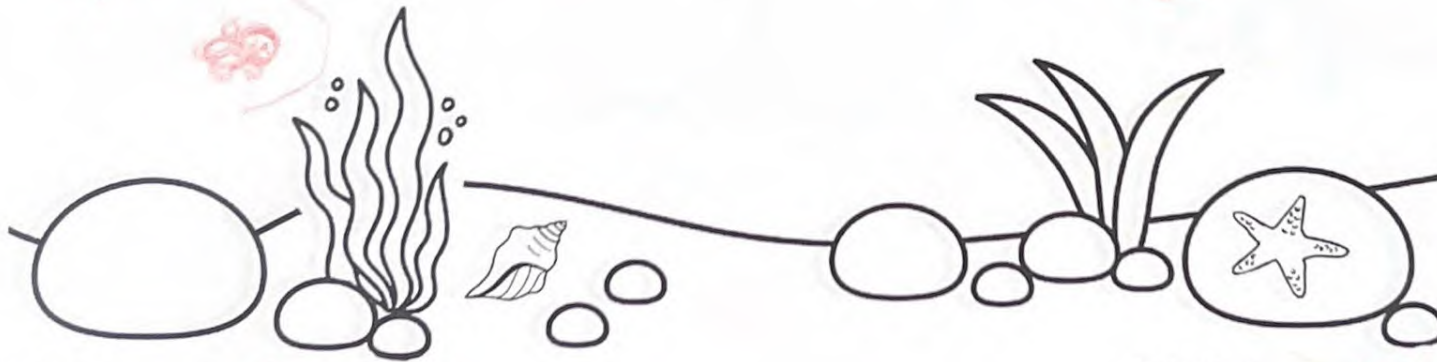


WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN? Because we don't want  
to pollute the ocean because there is so *Draw it too!*  
*much life*

help  
the  
Animals



clean  
oceans ✓



NAME: Arielle AGE: 10



# I LOVE THE OCEAN



WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?

Sharks

Draw it too!  
↙



NAME:

te

AGE:

9

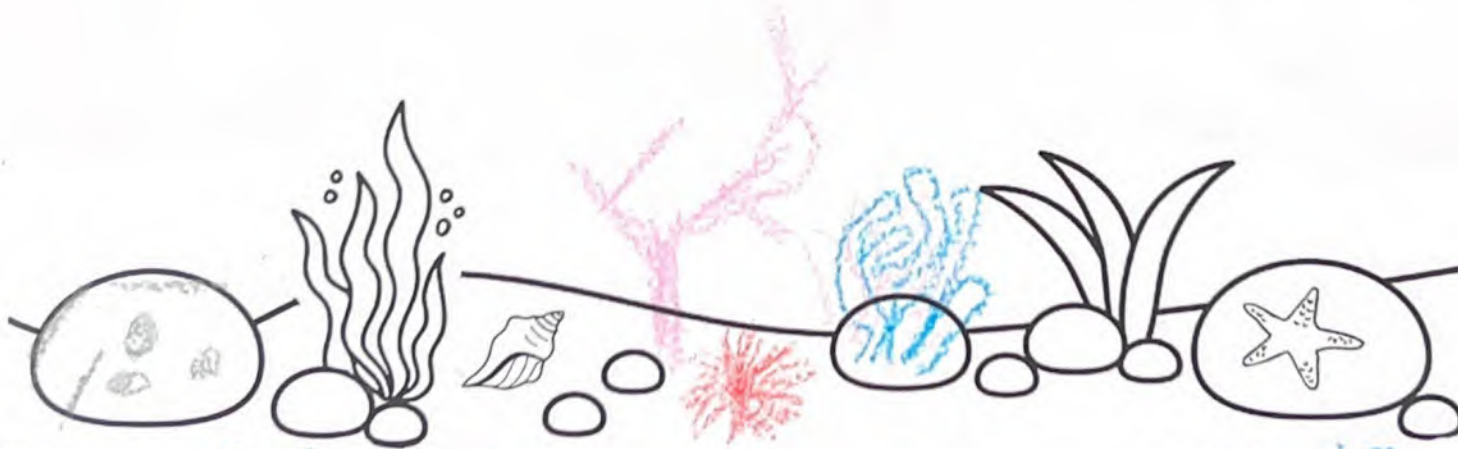


# I LOVE THE OCEAN



WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN? Coral reefs

Draw it  
too!  
↙



NAME: Graham Navent P O

AGE: 12



# I LOVE THE OCEAN



WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?

pe2

Draw it too!



NAME:

MAX MONTANA

AGE:

10



# I LOVE THE OCEAN



WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN? animals

Draw it too!  
↙



NAME: GIOVANNI

AGE: 6

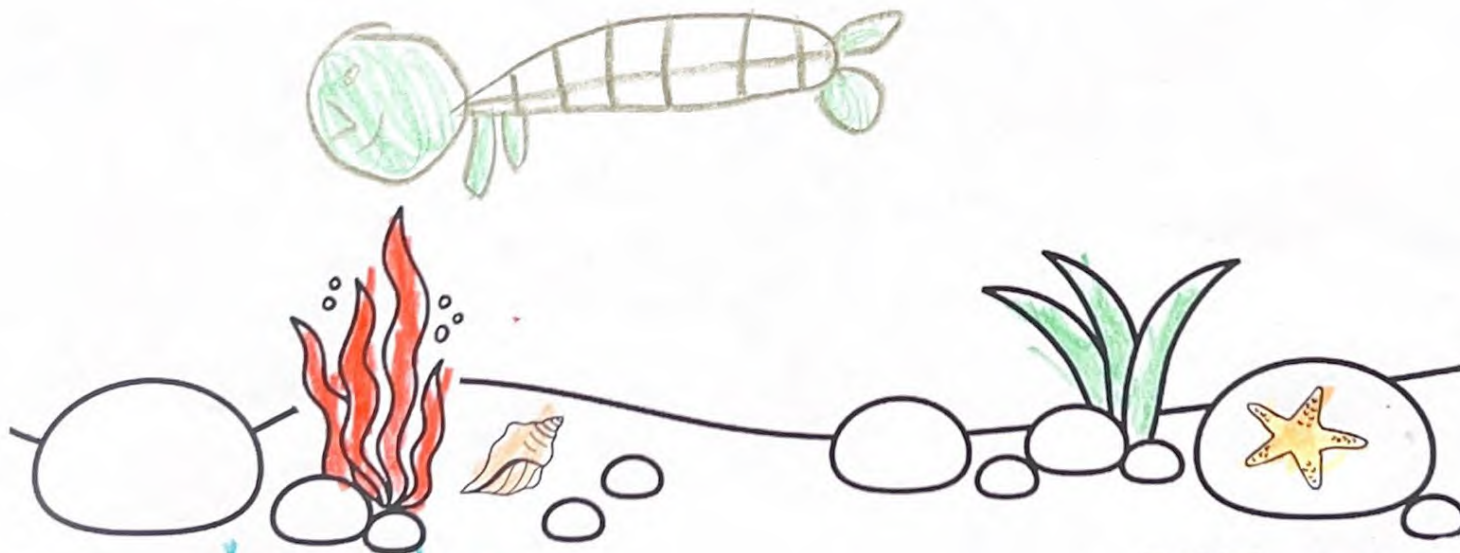


# I LOVE THE OCEAN



WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN? because it has  
beautiful sea creatures.

Draw it  
too!  
↙



NAME:

Amelia

AGE:

7½



# I LOVE THE OCEAN



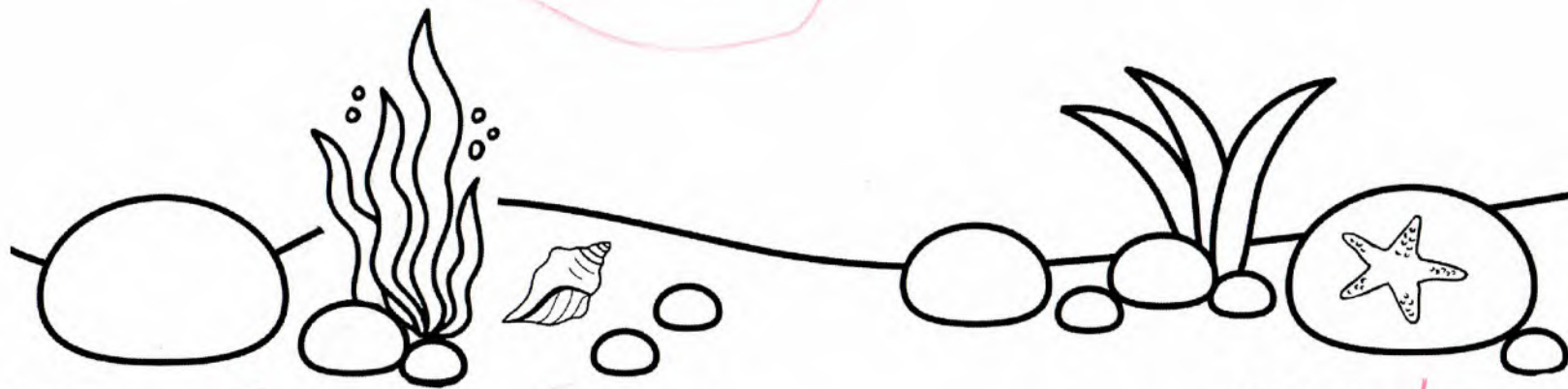
**WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE OCEAN?**

I want to

protect the ocean  
because it is cool

Draw it too!  
↙

"I want to protect the ocean because it is cool."



**NAME:** Cameron

**AGE:** 10



Outlook

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## Marine Protected Area - Point Sal

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**From** Melanie Backer [REDACTED]

**Date** Tue 05/05/2026 07:39 AM

**To** FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

**Cc** Melanie Backer [REDACTED]

Dear FGC,

I am a Guadalupe resident and I'm very much in favor of making a Marine Protected Area off the coast of Point Sal. I hike Point Sal all the time, IE: this past weekend. Point Sal and the Guadalupe Dunes Preserve are the reasons I moved to Guadalupe six years ago. Their beauty, serenity, and health benefits of walking in nature, are unsurpassed. Making the area Marine Protected insures that the beauty and the hiking area will be conserved and preserved for generations to come. Making the area off of Point Sal a marine protected area will also help businesses in Guadalupe grow and thrive. If more tourists visit this protected area; it will help all the businesses in Guadalupe.

Thank you for your time.

Melanie Backer  
Guadalupe resident



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**Written comment on Point Sal MPA**

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**From** Cynthia Houben [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 05/05/2026 12:12 PM  
**To** FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

I was on zoom for 3 hours waiting to comment today but for some reason was not seen. Please see my comments below and thank you for all your hard work!

My name is Cindy Houben and I live in Aspen. Even from this distance, I want to express how extraordinary and irreplaceable the coastal region of Point Sal, Vandenberg Space Force Base, and the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes truly is.

I didn't fully understand how rare and biologically rich it was. It is only now, through learning more about this proposal and after having visited coastlines all over the world, that I realize how exceptional this place is. I treasure it deeply. It even smells different—rich with kelp, salt, and wet sand—a wild, living scent that feels increasingly uncommon on so many coastlines today.

Guadalupe is woven into my family's history. My mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother were all from there. Some of my earliest memories are family picnics—with far too much Italian salami—overlooking the coast near Point Sal, back when you could still drive a 1960s Cadillac up the road. Those memories are part of what make this place so meaningful to me.

More recently, I had the opportunity to hike Point Sal with a guide from the Dunes Center, and I was reminded not only of its stunning natural beauty, but of its remarkable history: the old loading dock, the small community that once depended on it, and the role it played in supplying this remote coastline during its early development. There is also the deep and important Chumash Tribe history here—history I wish I knew better, and which deserves greater recognition and

preservation. To me, this coastline feels worthy not only of marine protection, but of historic designation as well.

Establishing a Marine Preservation Area here, alongside continued land conservation and recognition of its historic and Indigenous significance, would be a powerful commitment to the future. It would help safeguard biodiversity, protect cultural heritage, and create lasting educational opportunities for scientists, historians, students, and nature lovers. It could also bring well-deserved recognition and sustainable economic support to the community of Guadalupe.

Places like this—authentic, ecologically rich, culturally layered, and still largely intact—are becoming increasingly rare. Once lost, they cannot be recreated.

I strongly urge you to vote yes in support of this Marine Preservation Area, so that future generations may know and experience the same wild beauty, history, and living abundance that make this coastline so extraordinary.

Thank You,

Cindy Houben



Sent from my iPhone



Outlook

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## proposed Point Sal MPA

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From wayne blichia <flyingfishsportfishing@gmail.com>

Date Thu 05/07/2026 05:53 PM

To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Hello commisioners,

My name is Wayne Blichia. I am the owner/operator of the CPFV Flying Fish, which operates inPort San Luis. I recently attended the CDFW meeting on May 6 in Goleta. Unfortunately, I was given only one minute to make my comments concerning the proposed MPA at Point Sal.

I would like to state that I have been an operator of a CPFV since 1997, and have been working in the Port San Luis area since 1998. The fishery that exists in Point Sal area (block 632) is an extremely popular one with my clientele. They like the variety of fish available and that it is a shallow water fishery.

Closing this area would have a devastating effect on my business. The fishery at Point Sal is important as the area open to fishing has been drastically reduced since the implimentation of the Point Buchon MPA, the one mile perimeter closure at Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant, and the MPA at Vandenberg. A Google Earth examination of these boundry areas (Point Buchon to Vandenberg) will reveal a shrinking amount of rocky/reef habitat available. Since my fishery is rockfish/lingcod, I feel that closing the Point Sal area will place greater effort on the remaining available habitat. A decline in catches will result in anglers chosing to stop fishing in the Port San Luis area.

I urge you to allow recreational boat based fishing in the proposed Point Sal area.

Respectfully submitted,

Wayne Blichia  
Owner/operator  
M/V Flying Fish  
CDFW#33477

**From:** Blake Kopcho <[REDACTED]>

**Sent:** Friday, May 8, 2026 11:56 AM

**To:** FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

**Subject:** Support for 2023-29MPA - Mishopshno SMCA

Dear Fish and Game Commission,

I attended the most recent public hearing but was unable to speak on item 2023-29MPA due to the high volume of comments it received.

Please find attached my official comment in support of the petition.

Thank you,

Blake

Blake Kopcho  
[REDACTED]

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email

## **2023-29MPA - Create a new State Marine Conservation Area at Carpinteria.**

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Blake Kopcho.

I'm a Santa Barbara resident, currently living in West Beach. I've lived in Santa Barbara and Goleta for around 10 years.

I strongly support this petition which would fill a significant gap in California's network of marine protected areas.

I surf, kayak, scuba dive, free dive, spear fish, boat and hang out at the beach in Santa Barbara, Goleta, Gaviota, out at the Channel Islands, and in Carp.

I love body surfing at Santa Claus, wandering Loon Point, and watching juvenile white sharks get fully airborne just offshore at Padaro Beach.

I care deeply about protecting marine wildlife and maintaining healthy marine ecosystems.

The Mishopshno SMCA would protect important habitats that support biodiversity, including Macrocytis kelp forests, rocky reefs, and sandy beaches, and an important aggregation zone for those juvenile white sharks.

Some of the biodiverse species that this MPA would protect include leopard sharks, harbor seals, octopus, kelp bass, spiny lobster, humpback whales, common dolphins, and perhaps even sea otters.

We should protect this special place so it can remain ecologically rich, and be given a chance to recover and thrive.

At a time when the planet and marine environments in particular face multiple threats from climate change, ocean acidification, pollution and overfishing, protecting California's reefs is a modest but critical step we can take to preserve the beauty, tourist appeal, and biodiversity of our local marine environment.

Thank you.

**From:** Luke Rice <[REDACTED]>

**Sent:** Sunday, May 3, 2026 11:39 AM

**To:** FGC <[FGC@fgc.ca.gov](mailto:FGC@fgc.ca.gov)>

**Cc:** Will McClintock <[REDACTED]>

**Subject:** Alternate boundaries for Mishopshno MPA

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Luke Rice. I am attaching my proposal for alternate boundaries for the Mishopshno MPA. I will be presenting my plan at the meeting on Tuesday.

Thank you for your consideration.

Dear Commissioners,

The proposed marine conservation area outlined in my petition offers a more comprehensive and ecologically balanced approach compared to the current amended **Misopshno** version. Covering 9.53 square miles, my proposal makes fuller use of the allowable area than the current 8.97 square miles, providing greater protection without exceeding guidelines. One of the most significant advantages is its coastline coverage—extending 6.5 miles, it meets the preferred guideline and ensures stronger protection of critical nearshore environments. In contrast, the current petition includes only 4.68 miles of coastline, meeting the minimum but falling short of optimal conservation goals.

Beyond size and coastline, habitat diversity is where my proposal clearly stands out. It incorporates 0.28 square miles of estuarine habitat and 1.62 miles of rocky shoreline, along with expanded beach and marsh areas. These habitats are essential for supporting a wide range of marine species, especially juvenile fish, invertebrates, and bird populations that rely on estuaries and intertidal zones. The current petition lacks both estuaries and rocky shorelines, significantly limiting the ecological variety and resilience of the protected area.

While the amended version does include slightly more kelp forest coverage (2.22 miles compared to 1.62 miles in my proposal), this single advantage does not outweigh the broader ecological benefits of increased habitat diversity and coastline protection.

In addition to environmental benefits, my proposal reflects a personal connection to these areas. I have been diving and fishing here for years with my friends and family, and places like Carp Reef and Serena are especially important to us and many others in the community. My petition is designed to keep portions of these areas open, allowing people to continue responsible recreational use without losing access to places that hold both personal and cultural value.

Overall, my petition provides a more well-rounded and effective conservation design by balancing size, coastline coverage, habitat diversity, and responsible public access, making it better suited to support long-term marine ecosystem health while still respecting the community that depends on it.

Please note the key differences between my proposal and the current petition below. Note that the proposed regulations are the same between the two.

Sincerely,  
Luke Rice  
Laguna Blanca High School Student

# Key Features and Differences

## Size + Guidelines

- **My petition:** 9.53 mi<sup>2</sup>
- **Current petition:** 8.97 mi<sup>2</sup>

## Coastline Coverage

- **My version:** 6.5 miles → meets **preferred** guideline
- **Current:** 4.68 miles → only meets **minimum**

## Habitat Diversity

### My version includes:

- Estuaries (0.28 mi<sup>2</sup>)
- Rocky shores (1.62 mi)
- More beach + marsh habitat

### Current petition:

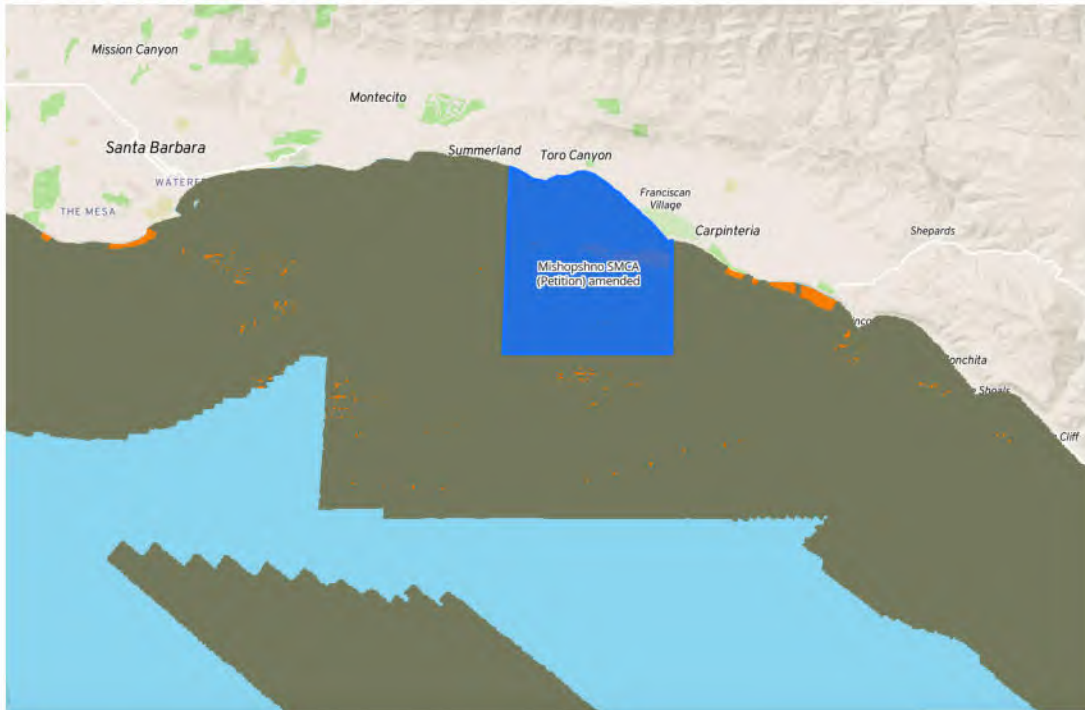
- No estuaries
- No rocky shores
- Less beach/marsh

## Kelp

- **My version:** 1.62 mi
- **Current:** 2.22 mi

# Maps:

## Current **Misopshno** Petition:



## My petition, a modified version of the **Misopshno** petition:



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## Proposed Carp MPA

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**From** Das Williams [REDACTED]  
**Date** Thu 04/30/2026 03:11 PM  
**To** FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Dear President Sklar and Commissioners,

As the former Santa Barbara County Supervisor for District 1, a former state legislator, a long-time advocate for coastal conservation, and a Carpinterian, I am writing to express my opposition to the size and scope of Petition 2023-29MPA, which proposes a new State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) off the coast of Carpinteria. While my career has been defined by a deep commitment to environmental protection, I believe this specific proposal lacks a specific scientific merit and will disproportionately affect Carpinterians, especially the disadvantaged members of our community.

The scientific justifications for this SMCA are redundant and inconsistent with state guidelines. The petitioner argues the site is needed to fill a "connectivity gap" between Campus Point and Point Dume, yet official measurements show the spacing is 60.60 miles, which falls within the state's 31–62-mile science-based guideline. The petition's focus is on juvenile white shark nurseries when there is evidence that the juvenile white shark nursery is doing better than it has in decades.

The Carpinteria coastline is a vital resource for our disadvantaged community members who rely on these waters for subsistence fishing and affordable recreation. The Santa Barbara Channel is already significantly more protected than the rest of the state, with 21% of its sanctuary waters restricted compared to the 16% state average. Adding another closure ignores the important negotiation reached during the original Marine Life Protection Act process and places an undue economic burden on the local families and small-boat fishermen who have acted as stewards of this reef for generations.

I urge the Commission to deny Petition 2023-29MPA and instead focus on inclusive, science-based management of our existing marine resources.

Sincerely,  
Das Williams

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**Petition 2023-29MPA\_AM1 Opposition**

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**From** David DaSilva [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 05/05/2026 09:01 PM  
**To** FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

I am writing to strongly oppose Petition 2023-29MPA\_AM1. This petition will cause irreparable harm to Carpinteria's local blue-economy based community. Good local people will lose their ability to provide for their families. It also restricts the ability for individuals to put food on the table, especially those in our underserved communities.

The science does not back this petition. The Commission voted that stationary MPAs in fact do not help migratory animals like the white sharks mentioned in the petition. Also, Carpinteria was intentionally left out of the original MPA mapping because of its connection to the local town. The Santa Barbara Channel is already heavily protected, with 21% of its waters being protected as opposed to the state average of 16%. A new MPA would mean more pressure on other fisheries, leading to worsening ecological conditions across the whole coast. Furthermore, the collection of only finfish and not shellfish means even shore fishermen would not be able to collect sand crabs or bait to use for catching finfish. Lastly, the "gap" mentioned in the network is well within the state's 31-62 mile spread, showing there actually is no true gap in the network.

Kids will lose their ability to connect with the ocean how our families have been for generations. Lack of access to the reef will force local commercial sport fishing ships to reduce their programs, not allowing space for half day trips. These trips are crucial for the education of our young students and disabled community. This MPA would heavily exclude undeserved members of our community, not help them like the petitioners claim.

Frankly, this petition feels like an attack on the people of Carpinteria and Santa Barbara. Nobody representing this petition ever came to speak with the local community. There was no outreach, no explanation, no care. Our community cares. We have for generations and would like to continue doing so for future generations. Please I respectfully urge you to deny Petition 2023-29MPA\_AM1.

Best,  
David Da Silva

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**Petition 2023-29 MPA\_AM1**

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**From** Andy Sheaffer [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 05/05/2026 07:37 AM  
**To** FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Dear President Sklar, Commissioners and staff,

My name is Andy Sheaffer, and I serve as the President of the Board of Education for the Carpinteria Unified School District (CUSD). I am writing to express our district's serious concerns regarding the potential negative impacts of Petition 2023–29MPA and all the proposed expansions of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) off our coastline.

Our schools are a mirror of our community, and the data from our district reveals a population that is deeply tied to local resources for both its livelihood and its well-being. Of our 1,924 enrolled students, nearly 68% are classified as socioeconomically disadvantaged. 72.1% of our student population is Hispanic, and nearly 9% are currently experiencing homelessness. For a community with such a high percentage of vulnerable families, the ability to access local fishing grounds is a matter of food security, economic opportunity, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Significantly, many of our community members are local commercial fishermen, harvesting lobster, urchin, fin fish, and more. These individuals are the backbone of our local economy and, most importantly, they are the parents of our current students. In many cases, these fishermen were students in our district themselves, representing a multi-generational legacy that Petition 2023–29 threatens to disrupt.

We are a rural, isolated community that prides itself on teaching our children to value the outdoors and healthy, sustainable living. This starts as early as middle school with Kevin Brannon's "Real Guppy Outdoors" after-school program. As these students progress to Carpinteria High School, we see a growing number of graduates choosing to enter local commercial fisheries.

As these students progress to Carpinteria High School, we see a growing number of graduates choosing to enter local commercial fisheries and agriculture. Our Career Technical

Education (CTE) programs are

specifically designed to support these pathways. Our Culinary CTE program partners with the local seafood company Get Hooked Seafood, teaching students how to select, clean, fillet and prepare locally

caught, sustainable fish. We are not just teaching a craft; we are preparing

our students for a viable career in an industry that shapes our town's identity. Furthermore, our Food Services Director, Chef Hernandez, actively purchases local seafood to incorporate into our school lunch program. This ensures that our students, many of whom face significant economic hurdles, have consistent access to fresh, healthy, and high-quality protein.

Restricting access to the fishing grounds off our town would directly undermine these efforts. It would:

- Threaten the livelihoods of our district parents who work as commercial fishermen.
- Limit the career prospects of our high schoolers and graduates entering the workforce.
- Disrupt the supply chain for our school lunch programs and culinary CTE partnerships.
- Reduce the ability of our disadvantaged families to participate in healthy, local recreational activities.

We urge the Commission to consider the demographic reality of Carpinteria. Our students represent a hardworking, diverse, and economically challenged population that depends on the ocean. Please do not close the door on their heritage and their future.

Sincerely,

Andy Sheaffer

President

Board of Education Carpinteria Unified School District

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**From:** Adrienne & Matt Oliver [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 6, 2026 8:05 AM  
**To:** fgc@fgc.ca.gov  
**Cc:** Adrienne Oliver  
**Subject:** Reject MPA 2023-29!

Hello,

I'm Matt Oliver, a father in Carpinteria. I attended the California Fish and Game Commission meeting in Goleta on the Marine Protected Area petitions, and I'm writing because the most important angle on this story isn't being told. I'm not a commercial fisherman. I don't have a business stake in opposing closures. I'm writing as a parent and as someone who believes that we protect the ocean by teaching the next generation to love it. For thousands of years, the Chumash have shown what real ocean stewardship looks like: passing down traditions of careful management, deep respect, and generational responsibility from elder to child. The proposed Mishopshno MPA off Carpinteria is named for the Chumash village that thrived on this same shore, where they once built tomols. The cultural and spiritual significance of this place is real, and I support the Chumash voice in shaping how it's protected. What concerns me is the broader package of MPA expansions before the Commission. I think those proposals could unintentionally undo the very thing the Chumash tradition has always modeled: that stewardship is something a person learns by doing, in the water, with their family. My wife and I take our kids out to these local shores almost daily. We also take families out to the islands to share the hidden gems just 20 miles offshore. We support these experiences with smiles because we believe a child who has snorkeled through a kelp forest, or watched a sea lion in its own house, or has heard a dolphin chirp from the boat is a child who will fight to protect that ocean for the rest of their life.

If the closures are approved as proposed, the path by which ordinary Central Coast families introduce their kids to the ocean grows narrower and narrower. The waters where my kids learned to freedive and surf, and where I've taken nieces, nephews, and neighbors' children, where stewardship is passed down the same way the Chumash have for generations, have become harder and harder to reach. You don't raise the next generation of ocean stewards by walling off the ocean from them. You raise them by putting their hands in it.

Thank you for your consideration,

Matt Oliver  
[REDACTED]



May 10, 2026

**To:** The California Fish and Game Commission, [fgc@fgc.ca.gov](mailto:fgc@fgc.ca.gov)

**Re:** May 2026 Regional MPA Meetings – Opposition to MPA Petitions Affecting the California Spiny Lobster Fishery

Dear Fish and Game Commissioners,

Since 1994, the California Lobster & Trap Fishermen's Association (CLTFA), a 501(c)6 non-profit organization, has been established as a corporation to aid, encourage, and promote activities and affairs that maintain California Spiny Lobster populations off the coast and islands of the State of California at levels of maximum sustained yields as well as further the goal of viable and equitable access to such living marine resources by commercial fishermen licensed by the State of California. CLTFA is a well-respected organization within the California fishing community and represents the interests of vastly experienced trap fishermen from a variety of regions from Point Conception to San Diego. On behalf of CLTFA, we respectfully submit the following comments regarding MPA petitions specifically as it pertains to the bioregional meetings both past and upcoming.

First and foremost, we want to thank the Commission, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and staff for all your diligent efforts over the past few weeks to host these regional meetings in the first place - We know it is not an easy task but we are extremely grateful for the opportunity to speak in our respective hometowns.

Please see our comments below on the petitions to be discussed on the May 19th meeting in San Clemente:

**Petition 2023-24, Petition 2023-33, Petition 2023-34:**

We oppose all petitions that propose the expansion or introduction of MPAs. They would permanently eliminate additional lobster fishing grounds in an area that is already heavily restricted by existing MPAs and coastal development without clear scientific evidence demonstrating measurable ecosystem or fishery benefits relative to the detrimental socioeconomic impact.

To reiterate, California's commercial spiny lobster fishery is managed under CDFW's Fishery Management Plan and is widely recognized as one of the state's most sustainably managed fisheries with seasonal closures, trap limits, size limits, and extensive monitoring already in



place. Additional closures would increase fishing efforts in the few remaining open areas (fishing compaction), raise operational safety concerns (more lines/competition in less space), and diminish economic stability on the community's small-scale fishermen, their families, beneficiaries, and working waterfronts. To quote one fisherman based out of Point Loma, CA, when asked specifically how Petition 2023-33 would impact him, he responded that, "if that closure goes through, it's game over for me. I will have to completely change my life and forgo the industry that I've invested so much in." This sentiment is representative of how almost all if not the entire fleet feels about losing more grounds.

Furthermore, we want to emphasize that we support tribes having access to existing MPAs, especially considering they were excluded from the original process over a decade ago. However, we do not feel the introduction of new closures that position tribes and fishermen against one another is the solution to developing a successful comanagement plan. It has been our ongoing stance that we have an interest in and respect for how we can work together to get tribes more access to fishing that they deserve, but many of their objectives being sought are well beyond our authority (permits, access to existing MPAs, etc.). More broadly, it is concerning to see well-funded external organizations influence decisions that could remove local access to areas fishermen also deeply value and consider sacred. We believe the collective focus should remain on building a fair and collaborative path forward for everyone involved.

Speaking on behalf of myself, I want to address Petition 2023-29 because I did not get the opportunity to speak on this. I take responsibility for not submitting my speaker card sooner or ceding time. We intentionally did *not* want to cede time because we felt it was more important for as many fishermen to speak as possible, and I'm so glad they did. After watching the meeting in San Mateo with 60+ speakers, I assumed that it would be the same in Goleta. I do apologize for disrupting the flow of the meeting by asking to speak, I would have been remiss had I not at least tried. Regarding the presentation, the petitioner mentioned the spillover effect in the lobster fishery as grounds to support their proposal. While that may be documented at other MPAs, **that does not mean that we support this petition.** We still rely on this area and more importantly, we have a fleet mentality that supports all of our local commercial fisheries regardless of the targeted species. We would never put our fishery first for the chance that it might be advantageous for us but put our colleagues and shipmates out of business. It should also be noted that almost every fisherman in our local lobster fleet participates in other fisheries (e.g. urchins, crab, groundfish, etc.) in order to diversify their efforts and earn a living that allows them and their families to live in this expensive area, so it would be self defeating to support this closure on the basis that it would "benefit" the lobster fishery, but eliminate everything else. I submitted



a [letter](#) for the April 14th Tribal Committee Meeting that further delves into our stance on this petition specifically.

Additionally, per my public comment on Petition 2023-33, I want to apologize if what I said was upsetting to anyone when I spoke about how disturbing it is to have proposed spatial loss taken by a non-local entity. I realized in the following days that that may have come off as insensitive to tribes given the fact that they had everything taken from them and in horrific ways; It was not, nor is it ever, my intention to be offensive or insensitive to what they have endured. As mentioned during general public comment, I have scheduled time with Calpirg students at UCSB and I am looking forward to connecting with them because I do believe we are on the same team, whether we are all aware of it or not. Lastly, I reached out to the petitioner of Petition 2023-33 with no response (see screenshot below), and am still unsure of the “communication” they put forth that “we did not respond to.” It is understandable that the Commission cannot police the outreach efforts on behalf of the petitioners as stated during the meeting, however we respectfully dispute any suggestion that we were unwilling to engage in communication regarding these proposals.

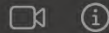
In closing, we want to thank you very much again for your time spent reading our letter. We know you have extremely busy lives and are grateful for all of your hard work and dedication throughout this process.

Ava Schulenberg  
Executive Director, CLTFA

Cameron Cribben  
President, CLTFA



To: Laura Deehan



iMessage  
Wednesday 17:58

Hi Laura this is Ava Schulenberg with CFSB and CLTFA I got your number from Cameron Cribben I hope you don't mind me reaching out. I know you mentioned you contacted CFSB at today's meeting and that someone responded on Monday but after talking with our team no one is aware of that interaction, but we certainly don't want to avoid giving credit where it's due so if you wouldn't mind giving me some more details about who you reached out to I would greatly appreciate it, thanks!

Delivered



iMessage



**Statement for General Public Comment Item 17 on 5/6/26**

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**From** Caren Quay [REDACTED]

**Date** Tue 05/05/2026 09:33 PM

**To** FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

**Cc** Mollie Lounibos [REDACTED] Caren Quay [REDACTED]

My name is Caren Quay and I live in Bolinas. I oppose the EAC's 2023-32 petition.

Long-term UCSC monitoring has demonstrated stable conditions at the reef, there have been ZERO citations issued since 2019, and elected officials have retracted their support citing concerns about limited community engagement. There are also legitimate concerns about the fairness of the history of this process.

I have heard folks from age 8 to over 80 speak eloquently about changing the existing boundaries of the Duxbury Reef SMCA. Based on scientific evidence, economic impact, existing protections, cultural equity, consensus of a conscientious community, and the legal process, I urge you not to change the existing boundaries. Thank you.

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**Completion of comments on 2023-33MPA from 5/6/26 Goleta meeting**

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**From** [REDACTED]**Date** Wed 05/06/2026 04:06 PM**To** FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Dear Commissioners,

It was nice to meet you all at today's meeting in Goleta, CA. As a reminder, I am the freediver that participated intimately with the MRWG 25 years ago in helping to establish a marine reserve network at the Channel Islands. With my knowledge and experience gained from over 1500 days spent freediving these islands over the past 40 years, I ultimately became the architect of the Gull Island MPA.

The Gull Island MPA was proposed and supported by the freediving community due to its incredible biodiversity with myriad fish, pinnipeds and bird life. In exchange for putting this sacred area into a no-take Marine Reserve we asked for a small kelp bed adjacent to the reserve to be left open for game take.

This area is called Poza Anchorage and is a mile long beach with 2 small lines of kelp each about 20 feet wide separated by about 50 feet of sand channel. This kelp bed grows on flat shale. There are no holes, pinnacles or caves and is otherwise featureless. There are no rockfish, abalone, sheephead or black seabass in this area.

Most people who may dive this bed would consider it a "dead" or "barren" kelp bed. True, not all kelp beds are the same. There is very little biodiversity in this area. We value this kelp bed because on a seasonal basis the pelagic white seabass tend to frequent the bed. This is the main target fish for freedivers. In the name of biodiversity we made a bona fide good faith agreement to give up our cherished Gull Island to keep Poza open for us to practice our craft and hunt the elusive white seabass.

This agreement was supported by 100% of the stakeholders involved in the MPA process. The original reserve lines were square and the Western boundary went straight south. At the 11th hour I was approached by some preservationist stakeholders who wanted to capture into the reserve the deeper sand shrimp and prawn areas just outside Poza as well as a deepwater canyon. I agreed as long as our kelp bed was kept outside the reserve as previously agreed upon. This is the reason that the reserve line is drawn in a NW direction which seems a little odd but is reflective of the strength of the process, which is to incorporate the voices and desires of all parties involved. Again we had 100% stakeholder acceptance to this modification.

The Channel Islands MPA process was a groundbreaking multi-stakeholder, community-based, collaborative process admired and respected around the world as a model of marine conservation. To close off our kelp bed now by increasing the reserve line to the NW would betray us...the lowest impact user group as well as the entire MPA process.

Every reserve, open area, and boundary line at the Channel Islands represents a bona fide good faith agreement made between various stakeholders. There is a great feeling of accomplishment and unity attached to these reserves. Please deny petition 15 which calls for additional kelp capture without any good reason or science. We cannot change what we agreed upon 25 years ago. This would destroy the unity borne from years of painstaking negotiations and re-ignite divisiveness, anger and mistrust.

We are being watched by the rest of the world. Changing these reserves at this time will destroy trust in the process and will give notice that collaborative processes don't work. Let's keep being the model for successful community based conservation processes.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Lum  
Representing Freedivers and the Public at Large



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Public Comment Regarding Santa Rosa Island MPA Proposal - 5/6

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From Natasha Liso [REDACTED]  
Date Thu 05/07/2026 06:46 AM  
To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Dear Fish and Game Commission,

Thank you for your time, your consideration, and for listening to the many perspectives shared during yesterday's meeting regarding the proposed MPA changes at Santa Rosa Island. Unfortunately, I was unable to speak publicly because I was in the middle of travel, but I wanted to submit my comments afterward for the record, I have been up since early AM distraught and want to ensure I am heard.

I am opposed to the proposed MPA expansion at Santa Rosa Island.

As the wife of a commercial fisherman, I bring a somewhat "zoomed out" perspective to this issue. I understand and appreciate the importance of responsible management and conservation. Coming from a finance background, I firmly believe in controls and accountability. In this fishery, many controls are already in place, including quotas, seasonal regulations, and size limits, all designed to support sustainability.

However, I also believe deeply in understanding the cause and effect of additional regulation.

One issue that felt unclear during yesterday's discussion, and one I believe deserves serious future consideration, is the economic impact of this proposal. **If this MPA were to move forward, who would be responsible for conducting the economic assessment and developing a mitigation plan for the financial consequences that could severely impact Santa Barbara Harbor and the surrounding community?**

The effects would extend far beyond fishermen alone. They would impact restaurants, consumers, harbor businesses, support industries, and our local fleet as a whole. **I have very little confidence that, if this proposal passes, many commercial fishermen will still be operating in three to five years.**

The younger generation of fishermen entering this industry are not doing it for the money, there is very little money left to be made. They continue because of passion, tradition, and commitment to providing local seafood and sustaining a way of life. An unnecessary closure like this may ultimately become the final straw for many of them.

**I respectfully ask the Commission to more fully examine the long term economic responsibility and consequences associated with this proposal before moving forward.**

**Thank you again for your time and for considering my comments.** I hope to better understand who would ultimately bear responsibility for the economic assessment and mitigation efforts should this proposal advance.

Note: I will also formally mail in this communication for the record but please let me know if there's another method.

Respectfully,

Natasha Liso

**From:** Renee Golder <[rgolder@santacruzca.gov](mailto:rgolder@santacruzca.gov)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, April 21, 2026 04:15 PM

**To:** FGC <[FGC@fgc.ca.gov](mailto:FGC@fgc.ca.gov)>

**Cc:** Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson <[SKalantari-Johnson@santacruzca.gov](mailto:SKalantari-Johnson@santacruzca.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: 04/21/2026 Fish and Game Commission Bio Regional Meeting & Petition 2023-33MPA

California Fish and Game Commission

P.O. Box 944209

Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Submitted electronically to [fgc@fgc.ca.gov](mailto:fgc@fgc.ca.gov)

**Re: 04/21/2026 Fish and Game Commission Bio Regional Meeting & Petition 2023-33MPA**

Dear President Sklar and Honorable Commissioners and Staff,

Thank you for your work on this very important matter.

The Santa Cruz City Council is deeply committed to protecting our natural resources and the people who live among and depend on them. The thriving ocean ecosystem right off our coast is paramount to the identity, environmental sustainability, and overall public health of our seaside community. Our approach to policymaking reflects a Health in All Policies (HiAP) framework recognizing that environmental stewardship, economic vitality, and equitable access to natural resources are all interconnected determinants of community health and well-being.

The City of Santa Cruz has long prioritized policies that advance environmental protection while also supporting equitable coastal access, food systems, and economic resilience. Through initiatives reflected in our General Plan, Climate Action Plan, and sustainability efforts, the City works to ensure that decisions impacting our coastline also consider public health outcomes such as access to outdoor recreation, local food sources, cultural practices, and economic stability for working families.

In reviewing Petition 2023-33MPA, particularly the proposed actions affecting the Santa Cruz area, we support the California Department of Fish and Wildlife MPA Team's recommendation to deny Action 6 (expansion of the Natural Bridges SMR) and Action 7 (creation of a new 3.2 square mile SMCA near Pleasure Point). The Department's analysis clearly indicates that these proposed changes are unlikely to produce meaningful ecological benefits beyond existing protections.

From a Health in All Policies perspective, it is critical to also weigh the broader impacts of these proposals. Limiting access to coastal resources without clear environmental gain may negatively affect community health by reducing opportunities for recreation, subsistence fishing, and cultural connection to the ocean activities that are essential to both physical and mental well-being. Additionally, the potential economic impacts on local fishermen, seafood suppliers, processors, restaurants, and small businesses raise concerns about income stability, food access, and community resilience key social determinants of health.

Santa Cruz's coastal economy and identity are deeply tied to sustainable fishing and ocean access. These sectors are already carefully managed by state and federal agencies to ensure long-term ecological health. Policies that unnecessarily restrict these activities, without demonstrated environmental benefit, risk undermining both economic and public health outcomes.

For these reasons, and consistent with our commitment to advancing policies that promote environmental sustainability, economic vitality, and community health, we strongly encourage the Commission to heed the Department's recommendation and deny Petition 2023-33MPA Actions 6 and 7.

Respectfully,

Renee Golder

**Renée Golder**

**City of Santa Cruz | Councilmember District 6**

809 Center Street, Room 101, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Web: [cityofsantacruz.com](http://cityofsantacruz.com)



**Need to Reach your other Representatives?**

County of SC District 3 Representative [Justin Cummings](#)

State Assembly District 28 [Assemblymember Gail Pellerin](#)

State Senate District 14 [Senator John Laird](#)

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**Support marine protections and stop extractive use in our oceans!!!**

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From Sarah Wood [REDACTED]

Date Wed 05/06/2026 10:00 AM

To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

I strongly oppose any petitions that would reduce protections or reopen MPAs to increased extractive use (including proposal 2023-18, 2023-14, and 2023-15). Instead, I strongly strengthening and expanding MPAs, especially through Tribally Led efforts (2023-28, 2023-29, 2029-19, 2023-20; 2023-34, 2023-33, 2023-27, and 2023-33). I am a SCUBA diver who has spent lots of time diving at Catalina, the Channel Islands, and Laguna Beach, even conducting eelgrass and juvenile kelp bass research at Big Fisherman's Cove out of Two Harbors. I've seen firsthand how limiting take allows kelp forests and marine life to recover, creating thriving ecosystems that benefit everyone who depends on the ocean. The proposed expansion of protections for critical habitats like eelgrass and kelp—paired with Indigenous stewardship approaches—represents a forward-looking model grounded in both science and traditional ecological knowledge. Experiences abroad, including in Palau, highlight what's possible when marine ecosystems are truly prioritized—they become more resilient and economically valuable through tourism and fisheries spillover benefits. At a time when kelp forests and marine life face unprecedented threats, we should be strengthening protections, not weakening them. **I strongly urge the Commission to support the tribally led petitions and ensure Indigenous leadership remains central to ocean stewardship. Healthy oceans are the foundation for long-term environmental and economic sustainability across California, and MPAs are vital in establishing that health.**

Thanks for your consideration,  
Sarah Wood



Mr. Eric Sklar

April 30, 2026

President

California Fish and Game Commission (FGC)

Sent electronically to meliisa.miller-henson@fgc.ca.gov

Dear President Sklar,

Please accept the following comments from the Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries (ACSF), regarding Marine Protected Area (MPA) petitions for the Central Coast. Thank you for providing an opportunity to comment on this important topic.

### **Who we are**

The Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries (ACSF) is a 25-year-old 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, founded for the purposes of educating the public on fisheries issues, connecting fishing women and men (“fishermen”) with their communities, and representing fishing interests in state and federal processes. The ACSF is a regional organization, with commercial fishing leaders, representing Monterey, Moss Landing, Santa Cruz, Morro Bay, Pillar Point, Port San Luis, and Santa Barbara, on our Board of Directors. Thus, the ACSF represents a large cross-section of fishing and community interests for the Central Coast of California.

### **General Comment on MPA petitions for San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties**

We all know that most Californians love fresh, locally-caught, seafood. We value food products which have a low carbon-footprint to produce, and are therefore wary of seafood that must travel thousands of miles to reach the state. As Fish and Game Commissioners, you are knowledgeable about the deep layer of science-based fishing regulations that the state has already adopted to assure sustainability and habitat protections (in addition to federal regulations).

It is from this perspective that we request the Commission reject all MPA petitions which place further restrictions on commercial and recreational seafood harvesting. The amount of regulations, including state and federal fishing closures and including pending new closures for offshore wind and aquaculture projects, now threaten the socioeconomic viability of many of the state's fisheries. These restrictive petitions bypass the Commission's Coastal Fishing Communities Policy by proposing permanent access restrictions without meaningful community engagement, socioeconomic analysis, or serious evaluation of adaptive fishery management alternatives. They reduce resilience rather than strengthening it.

Of note, this petition process is not evaluating whether MPAs are needed or appropriate to address any clearly defined problem. Instead, it assumes MPAs are the correct tool and then focuses on how to apply or expand them. MPAs are one management tool, not a substitute for fisheries management, and should not be treated as a default response. Before considering commercial fishing closures, the Commission must evaluate whether existing targeted management tools are already addressing the asserted underlying issues in these petitions.

### **Tribal Co-Management Petitions**

The ACSF respects Tribal interest in co-management of certain new and existing MPAs. To that end, we offer a straight-forward solution: Allow Tribal ceremonial and Tribal subsistence fishing inside the state's existing SMR's and SMCA's. This solution makes sense for several reasons:

- 1) The existing state MPA's feature some of the best habitats and therefore the best fishing opportunities
- 2) Since Tribes have harvested seafood from these areas for thousands of years, their use of these MPA's should be considered a part of the natural seascape
- 3) The use of existing MPA's avoids complexity and conflicts over closing new areas to public use, including difficulties in management and enforcement

We ask the Commission to support this recommendation.

### **Santa Barbara-Area MPA petitions**


The ACSF fully supports the detailed comment from letters directed to the FGC from the , Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara and the Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association.

### **San Luis Obispo-Area New or More-restrictive MPA petitions**

For petitions 2023-19 and 2023-20, please see the recommendation RE Tribal co-management MPA's, above.

For petition 2023-34, from Environment California and AZUL, the ACSF urges the Commission to support the Department of Fish and Wildlife's science-based recommendation to deny this petition. We note that there is no strong connection between seafood harvesting under existing regulations, and the health of kelp forest. If anything, the harvest of sea urchins will benefit kelp growth. Specific to the Point Sal MPA proposal, it is particularly important to keep this area open, being one of the few rocky habitats left between Port San Luis and Pt. Conception. It is heavily used by the nearshore fisheries, salmon, and Dungeness crab. Further restricting commercial fishing harvest from this is another blow, undermining the socioeconomic viability of Morro Bay and Port San Luis fishermen.

Thank you for considering comments from the Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries.



Alan Alward

Co-Chair

Cc

ACSF Board of Directors

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## Public Comment - Regional Marine Protected Area Petitions (San Luis Obispo through Santa Barbara Counties)

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From Robert Carr [REDACTED]  
Date Wed 05/06/2026 07:14 AM  
To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Dear Commission,

My name is Matt Carr, born and raised here as a die hard sport fisherman for 52 years. In my experience, the fishing in our area over the last five years is the best it has ever been. Thus I am opposed to any new MPA or MPA expansion.

Here is my recommendation.

**We should not have any new MPAs** because your team has already established them in the most productive habitats. **Stop the habitat grab on the few remaining biodiverse hotspots that still remain open to fishing.** We can have thriving marine ecosystems and fishing there too. This can be accomplished with bag and size limits, quotas, gear restrictions, limited entry, and time and area closures just to name a few.

An important observation is having more enforcement at the existing MPAs would provide the greatest benefit to all stakeholders. I feel like there is a lot of poaching within the MPAs. We could fund extra Wardens through having a cow cod tag lottery, kind of like deer tags. Maybe \$200 for 1 Cow Cod per season? There are high densities of Cow Cods in the deep waters. It's a nightmare to descend a 20 lb Cow Cod, 10 lber no problem to descend. Fishermen could use a TAG for a giant Cow Cod and fund Wardens.

In addition, the best way to protect our systems from **marine heat waves** are to continue to improve and develop our sustainable commercial fisheries. This would lower our carbon footprint to help prevent marine heat waves and support local jobs. Our fancy seafood restaurants should have Santa Cruz Island Seabass not Chilean Seabass, and San Francisco Salmon not New Zealand semi-farm raised Salmon. We need to better education our public about the delicious seafood that is in our backyard.

These recommendations of no new MPAs or MPA expansion, use proven management techniques such as size and bag limits, improved enforcement, enhance sustainable commercial fisheries and educational outreach will benefit all stakeholders.

My qualifications are

1. deeply passionate about protecting the environment
2. fisherman for life
3. Marine Ecology degree UCSC
4. High School Marine Biology teacher for 2 decades
5. 20 year volunteer for CINPS running the "Scientist in Training Program" on Anacapa Island

Thank you for your tireless work in managing all the different stakeholders concerns regarding these resources. It is a monumental task. Many of your polices have helped to improve the fishing.

PS - if we have to create a MPA at Carpinteria, then we need to reopen Naples for fishing.

Sincerely

Matt Carr  
[REDACTED]





**From:** Karen Callejas Sanchez <[REDACTED]>

**Sent:** Monday, May 4, 2026 10:09 AM

**To:** FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

**Cc:** Carolina Avner <[REDACTED]>

**Subject:** Public Comment: May 19 Meeting (Hesperia Junior High Student)

Dear Commissioners,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_Karen Callejas\_\_\_\_\_. I am an 8th-grade student from Hesperia Junior High School, in Hesperia, California. I have been studying **Human Impact** on our oceans for the last two weeks.

I am writing to support the **expanded Marine Protected Areas** for Los Angeles, San Diego, and Catalina Island. Our oceans need help because:

- **The Problem:** I learned that trawler nets destroy our oceans
- **The Effect:** This is bad because trawler nets destroy the marine animal homes
- **The Solution:** Making these areas "Safe Zones" will protect the marine animal homes.

Please vote to protect these areas at your meeting in San Clemente on May 19. Thank you for listening to us.

Sincerely,

*Karen Callejas*



Outlook

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## MPA petition comments

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From Deane Plaister [REDACTED]

Date Tue 05/05/2026 04:54 PM

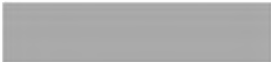
To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Dear DFG,

As an avid surfer and ocean swimmer, I would simply like to urge the decision-makers in the Department of Fish and Game to evaluate any MPA petition additions or changes with the health and productivity of the ocean topmost in mind. MPAs were established to provide sanctuary for the plants and animals heavily stressed in areas open to fishing and harvesting. The MPAs have proved their worth as incubators of increased numbers and size of marine organisms and should neither be diminished nor made less restrictive of extractive activities.

Scientific study results should guide all management decisions in order to ensure continued success in increasing biodiversity. Further, management of protected areas that includes Native American Tribal input should be encouraged. Following these suggestions, California will also advance its goal of fighting climate change, and by establishing new MPAs, help achieve the targets of its 30x30 land and water conservation program.

Thank you,  
Deane Plaister





Outlook

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## Changes to Marine Protected Areas

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From Norma Jellison 

Date Thu 05/07/2026 11:45 AM

To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Commissioners:

I volunteer as a Gray Whale docent in Bodega Bay Sonoma County CA. The location where I volunteer, Bodega Head, overlooks a Marine Protected Area.

California's Marine Protected Areas are one of the strongest tools for protecting ocean ecosystems. It is important to protect migration routes for Gray Whales that span the entire coast of California and the critical ocean resources in Marine Protected Areas that support them and all ocean life.

I urge the California Fish and Game Commission to support strong, science-based Marine Protected Areas along California's coast.

Not only are these Marine Protected Areas critical to protect, retain and restore biodiversity, MPAs build climate resilience, and contribute to meeting California's 30x30 conservation goals.

Furthermore, future generations should inherit a healthy ocean made possible by these protections.

Please consider my comments as you meet to consider proposals associated with Marine Protected Areas along the Central Coast, Channel Islands and Southern California.

*Norma Jellison*

Norma Jellison  




Outlook

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## No more MPAs

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From John Mueller [REDACTED]

Date Tue 05/05/2026 04:16 PM

To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

To whom it may concern,

Do not close any more areas to recreational fishing along the Coast!

The current MPAs and fishing season are sufficient.

There is not a legitimate reason for closing more areas..

Thank you,

Jack Mueller, Ventura CA.

**From:** Dylan Legere <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 11, 2026 01:39 PM  
**To:** FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>  
**Subject:** 5/19 Fish and Game commission public comment

Hello My name is Dylan Legere. I am a commercial and recreational fisherman in Southern California. I am sending an email to voice my comment for myself and my family. I oppose any the proposed further expansion of current MPA's and I am asking you to support the Fish and Wildlife's recommendation regarding the proposed MPA's. I understand there is a balance between conservation and the livelihoods of commercial fisherman but most importantly preserving access for future generations of fisherman including my sons. Increasing MPA area will limit fishing access to fisherman.

Thank you,  
Legere family

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Vitaly Sviridov <[REDACTED]>

**Sent:** Monday, May 11, 2026 1:42 AM

**To:** FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

**Subject:** comment

My comment about upcoming MPA's meeting would be:

We were losing so much fish grounds during the last 15 years( i'm fishing for 18 years)

I don't know about other fisheries, but in lobster fishing less room we have

more we are fishing against our selves! That creates lot of territory problems between commercial fishermen's. It completely doesn't look healthy a front of recreational guys and boat owners. Aditonal MPA set up heavy lines with hundreds of traps! which is not healthy!

My opinion to close some areas for MPA's we need to open some areas which had been closed in the past. Or make a new trap limit for less amount of traps which can be fit without over trapping the ocean floor.

Thank you for your time!

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## Support for CDFW Recommendations Regarding Non-Tribal Bin 2 MPA Petitions

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From Frank Ursitti <frank@hmlanding.com>

Date Thu 04/30/2026 07:32 PM

To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

President Sklar and members of the Commission,

**My name is Frank Ursitti, Owner of H&M Landing in San Diego, and a 50-year veteran of California's sportfishing community. I respectfully submit this letter in strong support of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's recommendations regarding the non-tribal bin 2 Marine Protected Area (MPA) petitions.**

**I have spent a lifetime on the water—as a CPFV owner and operator during the creation of California's current MPA network, and now as the operator of one of the largest sportfishing landings on the West Coast. I was among those who navigated the challenges of the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) process and adapted my business to the resulting system of reserves. That process was not easy, but it was deliberate, inclusive, and grounded in sound science. It brought together stakeholders from all sides—fishermen, scientists, conservationists, and regulators—to create what is now one of the most comprehensive and interconnected MPA networks in the world.**

**It is precisely because of that rigorous process that I urge this Commission to maintain the integrity of the existing network. Further alteration or expansion of these well-established MPAs—without clear, science-based justification and without undergoing the same level of stakeholder engagement—does not honor the foundation upon which this system was built.**

**The words of this Commission carry weight and meaning. The actions of this Commission matter more.**

**Expanding existing MPAs or establishing new ones without a demonstrated biological need risks creating unintended consequences. These areas are not abstract lines on a map—they represent real access points for working waterfronts, small businesses, and the public. A broad, "land grab" approach to conservation can mean the difference between meaningful access and no access at all—whether along our coastline or at our offshore islands. These decisions directly affect livelihoods, local economies, and the public's ability to responsibly engage with the marine environment.**

**Since the network was finalized in 2012, the maritime and sportfishing communities have adapted. We have learned to operate within these boundaries, and the system is already demonstrating its intended benefits. Stability in management is critical. Constant changes to established MPAs undermine that stability and erode the trust built through the original MLPA process.**

**We support conservation. We support science. And we support thoughtful, deliberate policy. However, we do not support changes that are not rooted in demonstrable scientific need or that bypass the collaborative framework that made this network successful.**

**For these reasons, I strongly support the Department's recommendation of no action on the non-tribal bin 2 petitions. The current MPA network should remain intact unless and until there is a compelling, science-based reason to revisit it through a similarly rigorous and inclusive process.**

**Thank you for your time and for your continued commitment to the stewardship of California's marine resources.**

**Sincerely,**

**Frank Ursitti  
Owner, H&M Landing  
San Diego, California**

*Frank Ursitti*

**General Manager**

**H & M Landing**

United Sport fishers of San Diego Inc.

2803 Emerson Street

San Diego, Ca. 92106

**619.222.1144**

[\*frank@hmlanding.com\*](mailto:frank@hmlanding.com)

[\*www.hmlanding.com\*](http://www.hmlanding.com)

4/10/2026

California Fish and Game Commission  
P.O. Box 944209 Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Subject: Support for CDFW Recommendations Regarding Non-Tribal Bin 2 MPA Petitions

To the California Fish and Game Commission,

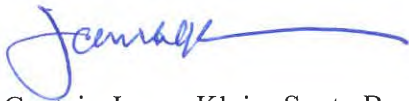
As a boat captain with 25 years of experience navigating California's coastal waters, I am writing to express my strong support for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) recommendations regarding non-tribal bin 2 marine protected area (MPA) petitions. My livelihood and the future of our coastal communities depend directly on the health of our ocean, making the protection of our marine resources paramount. California's MPAs were designed to safeguard the diversity and abundance of marine life, ensuring that the productivity and beauty of our coast are preserved for generations to come.

It is important to remember that the current MPA network is the result of an extensive, 13-year regional planning process mandated by the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) of 1999. This landmark effort was not arbitrary; it was a stakeholder-driven process that integrated local knowledge with the best available science and included direct input from fishermen, conservationists, scientists, and agency representatives. We moved away from an ineffective "patchwork" of reserves to create the largest ecologically connected MPA network in the world. In the years since the coastal network was finalized in 2012, the maritime community has adapted to this system. We have learned to navigate these boundaries, and the network is already demonstrating its intended benefits, such as increased fish biomass—particularly in species targeted by fisheries—and enhanced ecological connectivity. Altering this network now would disrupt the stability that stakeholders have worked hard to achieve.

Therefore, I believe the network should remain as is unless there is an extreme, science-based reason to alter it. Any modifications to these protections must be biologically appropriate and grounded in the same rigorous scientific standards that defined the network's creation.

Thank you for your dedication to the long-term health of California's marine ecosystems.

Sincerely,



Captain James Klein, Santa Barbara Sea Charters, Inc.

[captjim@sbseacharters.com](mailto:captjim@sbseacharters.com)





Stephanie Mutz

Los Alamos, CA

May 1, 2026

California Fish and Game Commission  
P.O. Box 944209  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Dear Members of the California Fish and Game Commission,

I am writing to express my opposition to the current Marine Protected Area (MPA) proposals under consideration.

I am a commercial fisherman based out of Santa Barbara and have been actively fishing for 20 years. Throughout my career, I have worked to build a sustainable livelihood that not only supports my family, but also provides fresh, responsibly harvested seafood directly to local restaurants and consumers all around the country. In addition to my practical experience, I hold a Master's degree in Marine Ecology, which informs my understanding of ocean systems and resource management, and I teach Environmental Science at Ventura College.

From both a professional and scientific standpoint, I am deeply concerned that the current MPA proposals are not adequately supported by sound science. As fisheries scientist Ray Hilborn has argued in multiple peer-reviewed publications, including *Marine Protected Areas miss the boat* (Science, 2015) and *Are MPAs effective?* (ICES Journal of Marine Science, 2017), marine protected areas are not a one-size-fits-all solution and often fail to outperform well-managed fisheries. In *Marine biodiversity needs more than protection* (Nature, 2016), Hilborn further emphasizes that protection alone is insufficient without strong, active fisheries management. More recent work, such as *A path forward for analysing the impacts of marine protected areas* (Nature, 2022), also highlights that some claims about MPAs rely on uncertain assumptions and incomplete data.

Equally important, the largest and most pressing threat to ocean health today is global climate change. Warming waters, ocean acidification, and shifting ecosystems are already transforming marine environments on a global scale. MPAs, by design, are spatial management tools—they do not address these broader, systemic stressors. Protecting areas that are not significantly impacted by fishing activity does little to mitigate climate-driven changes, and risks creating a false sense of progress while the primary drivers of ecosystem decline remain unaddressed.

Commercial fishermen are already engaged in meaningful stewardship and collaborative management efforts. We have participated in and supported numerous conservation measures, including sea urchin capacity reduction programs, trap limits for spiny lobster fisheries, fisheries debris clean ups and active



involvement in the 2013 MPA stakeholder meetings. These efforts demonstrate our commitment to maintaining healthy marine ecosystems while sustaining our livelihoods.

The future of fishing is rooted in community. Those of us who work on the water are not abstract stakeholders—we are individuals with families, mortgages, and deep ties to the communities we serve. We play a direct role in local food systems, providing fresh, traceable seafood to our neighbors. Many of the proposed restrictions threaten to remove these opportunities and disrupt the economic and social fabric of coastal communities.

I urge the Commission to consider a critical question: if these policies move forward as proposed, where will your food come from? A petri dish? Another country with less strict regulations which further contributes to your food's carbon footprint?

We are not advocating for unchecked or unregulated harvesting. On the contrary, we highly support responsible fishing practices within the framework of existing strict regulations. What we are asking for is a meaningful voice in the process - a seat at the table to help shape policies that balance conservation goals with the realities of working waterfronts.

Our goal is simple: to continue feeding our communities responsibly, sustainably, and with a long-term vision for both marine ecosystems and the people who depend on them.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Mutz  
Commercial Fisherman and People Feeder  
Santa Barbara, California

Remington Hotchkis

████████████████████  
Santa Ynez, CA ██████████  
████████████████████

5/6/2026

California Fish and Game Commission  
P.O. Box 944209  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090  
fgc@fgc.ca.gov

Dear Members of the California Fish and Game Commission,

I am writing to express my opposition to the current Marine Protected Area (MPA) proposals under consideration.

I am a seafood consumer who makes a deliberate effort to seek out local, fresh ingredients that are harvested responsibly. Supporting my local fishing community is important to me, and I value knowing where my food comes from and how it is caught. I also choose to buy locally because California has some of the most stringent and well-enforced fishing regulations in the world, giving me confidence that the seafood I purchase is sustainably managed.

From an informed standpoint, I am concerned that the current MPA proposals are not adequately supported by sound science. As fisheries scientist Ray Hilborn has argued in multiple peer-reviewed publications, including *Marine Protected Areas miss the boat* (Science, 2015) and *Are MPAs effective?* (ICES Journal of Marine Science, 2017), marine protected areas are not a one-size-fits-all solution and often fail to outperform well-managed fisheries. In *Marine biodiversity needs more than protection* (Nature, 2016), Hilborn emphasizes that protection alone is insufficient without strong, active fisheries management. More recent work, such as *A path forward for analysing the impacts of marine protected areas* (Nature, 2022), further highlights that some claims about MPAs rely on uncertain assumptions and incomplete data.

Equally important, the largest and most pressing threat to ocean health today is global climate change. Warming waters, ocean acidification, and shifting ecosystems are already transforming marine environments on a global scale. MPAs are spatial tools and do not address these broader systemic stressors. Protecting areas that are not significantly impacted by fishing does little to mitigate climate-driven changes and risks diverting attention from the primary drivers of ecosystem decline.

The fishermen who supply my food are already operating under strict regulations and are actively engaged in responsible stewardship. They participate in conservation measures such as sea urchin capacity reduction, trap limits for spiny lobster, and collaborative management efforts like the 2013 MPA stakeholder process. These actions demonstrate a commitment to sustainability that should be recognized and supported.

As a consumer, I care deeply about maintaining access to local, responsibly harvested seafood. Restricting these fisheries further could push consumers like me toward imported seafood from regions with far fewer regulations and less transparency.

I urge the Commission to consider: if access to local, sustainable seafood is reduced, where will that food come from?

I am not advocating for unregulated harvesting. I support responsible fishing within California's existing strict regulatory framework. What I ask is that policy decisions be grounded in sound science and that the voices of those who depend on and support these fisheries-including consumers-are meaningfully considered.

My goal is to continue supporting a local food system that prioritizes sustainability, accountability, and long-term ocean health.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Remington Hotchkis

Santa Ynez, California

**From:** Brad Mathews <[REDACTED]>

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 6, 2026 03:22 PM

**To:** FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

**Subject:** MPA Public Comment

Dear Members of the California Fish and Game Commission,

I am writing to express my opposition to the current Marine Protected Area (MPA) proposals under consideration.

I am the Chef at Bar Le Cote based out of California and have been in the industry for 20 years. Throughout my career, I have worked hard to source local, fresh ingredients that are harvested responsibly. Supporting my local fishing community is central to my work, and I take pride in contributing to a food system that prioritizes sustainability, transparency, and regional economic strength. California already operates under some of the strictest and most comprehensive fishing regulations in the world, and I rely on those standards to confidently serve seafood to my customers.

From both a practical and informed standpoint, I am deeply concerned that the current MPA proposals are not adequately supported by sound science. As fisheries scientist Ray Hilborn has argued in multiple peer-reviewed publications, including *Marine Protected Areas miss the boat* (Science, 2015) and *Are MPAs effective?* (ICES Journal of Marine Science, 2017), marine protected areas are not a one-size-fits-all solution and often fail to outperform well-managed fisheries. In *Marine biodiversity needs more than protection* (Nature, 2016), Hilborn further emphasizes that protection alone is insufficient without strong, active fisheries management. More recent work, such as *A path forward for analysing the impacts of marine protected areas* (Nature, 2022), also highlights that some claims about MPAs rely on uncertain assumptions and incomplete data.

Equally important, the largest and most pressing threat to ocean health today is global climate change. Warming waters, ocean acidification, and shifting ecosystems are already transforming marine environments on a global scale. MPAs, by design, are spatial management tools—they do not address these broader, systemic stressors. Protecting areas that are not significantly impacted by fishing activity does little to mitigate climate-driven changes, and risks creating a false sense of progress while the primary drivers of ecosystem decline remain unaddressed.

The fishermen I work with are deeply committed to stewardship and sustainable practices. They operate within strict regulatory frameworks and have participated in conservation measures such as sea urchin capacity reduction, trap limits for spiny lobster, and

stakeholder engagement processes like the 2013 MPA meetings. These are not extractive industries operating without limits - they are active partners in marine management.

The future of food is local and community based. Chefs, fishermen, and consumers are increasingly connected through shared values of sustainability and accountability. Policies that further restrict access to responsibly harvested local seafood threaten not only fishermen, but also the chefs, restaurants, and communities that depend on them.

I urge the Commission to consider: if access to local, sustainable seafood is reduced, where will that food come from? Will it be replaced by imports from regions with far fewer regulations and less oversight and a bigger carbon footprint?

I am not advocating for unregulated harvesting. I support responsible fishing within the already strict and science-based regulations California has in place. What I ask is that the Commission ensure that policy decisions are grounded in sound science and include meaningful input from the communities they impact.

My goal, and the goal of the fishermen I work with, is to continue feeding our communities responsibly, sustainably, and with a long-term vision for both ocean health and local economies.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Brad Mathews**

*Executive Chef / Co-Owner*



[Bar Le Côte](#) | Los Olivos, CA

[@barlecote](#)

[Companion Hospitality](#)

G2KR Written comments May 19 FGC meeting, Agenda Item 6A, General Public Comments

Massive kelp loss is the major theme across all the Decadal Management Review petitions and we must ask ourselves, why? Who or what is to blame for the destruction of the kelp forests and proliferation of urchin barrens? The answer is complex and involves many environmental factors, some are just Mother Ocean doing her thing, but some of which we had a hand in creating.

Taking fossil fuels out of the ground and pumping carbon dioxide into the atmosphere was never a good idea for the ocean and that is the root of the problem, and we are all to blame for that. Fertilizer for food is another great stressor, creating green water in the ocean. Chemical pollution and once-through cooling heat from industry is obvious. But the biggest stressor on kelp, the one that created the most damage, and the one that we could have addressed, is Marine Protected Areas without adaptive management.

When the MPAs were established by FGC nobody really considered what would happen if the MPAs were overwhelmed by pests! When all the recreational fishing in Monterey was channeled into a small accessible area off Pacific Grove, the fishing pressure reduced the fish population to such a low level that kelp grazers, the food of the fish, flourished. When a marine heat wave caused the kelp to decline, the urchins came out of hiding and ate what remained. That urchin colony spawned and spread into Monterey Bay and all down the Big Sur Coast. The State Marine Reserves had the best kelp and only served to feed the growing urchin population so that they could spread further.

The fishers were only working in the place they were allowed, there were no rotational closures, so it is not fair to blame the fishers. Besides, urchin barrens also started at Bluefin Cove in the Point Lobos SMR where no fishing is allowed. Fishing can't be the primary cause, but it was a contributing factor that we could have controlled with adaptive management that was promised but never delivered.

When Commissioner Zavaleta said that she was for kelp restoration but didn't see that prohibiting fishing in kelp forests would help kelp forests, that created insurmountable problems for all the DMR petitioners. Why have MPAs at all if there are no benefits? The science of the DMR proved that MPAs had greater biodiversity and better kelp forests, but because urchins don't follow the boundaries, MPAs were wrecked by urchin barrens as well. The SMRs afforded just a little protection from kelp loss but actually made things worse by feeding the urchins. In a way, Commissioner Zavaleta is right, but only because letting pests destroy our kelp forests is so wrong.

How could we have gotten this far in a 19 year process, had the best scientists working on this, but not determine if fishing was detrimental to kelp forests? Why was this central

question left unanswered? This question is best answered by how science is done. Science is funded by grants and nobody wants to fund an agenda driven experiment to prove that fishing causes harm. That would incite the wrath of the fishing industry.

To determine if fishing causes harm to kelp we have to sneak up on the answer in the simplest terms by looking at where the rubber meets the road, where the mouth eats the food. Urchins and snails eat kelp so removing the predators of urchins and snails would be detrimental to kelp. We know sheephead and lobsters eat large urchins in southern California, but in central and northern California the fishers are targeting rockfish and lingcod that live in the kelp forests. If those targeted fish ate kelp grazers, fishing would be detrimental, to some degree, to the kelp. This would be a contributing stressor on kelp that society can control effortlessly by simply *not doing something* in the kelp forests.

Dr. Milton Love examined the contents of these targeted fish species and determined that indeed their bellies had kelp grazers in them! I [posted scans of these pages](#) on social media and was blasted in the comments by fishers saying that I was wrong; they never saw urchins inside the fish they filleted! But they (mostly) calmed down when I shared that the urchins and snails are very small, like bits of grit to the naked eye. The fish are eating the urchins and snails by digesting planktonic larvae with each breath.

Think about it from a whole of circumstance perspective. A kelp forest ecosystem is very complex and, due to evolutionary design over millennia, everything in it has a specific role to play in keeping it healthy and thriving. How could removing functioning parts be anything but detrimental? If one experimented and determined that removing the biomass of fish from the forest was beneficial to kelp, I would advocate for more fishing to help the kelp! But obviously that is not the case, and it would be foolish for the fishing industry to pursue that kind of experiment, so they don't and they never will. The lack of science around this central question reveals the truth.

The whole Decadal Management Review basically taught us one thing: Fishing kills fish. Kelp forests are the nurseries of the fish and taking the adult fish in the kelp forests is detrimental to the kelp and also to fishing because it takes 8-10 years for rockfish to reach sexual maturity and make more fish. Taking the reproductive adults in the kelp nursery has depleted the fish population both inside and outside the nurseries.

The best way to improve fishing opportunities is to only fish outside of the kelp forest nurseries. That is why we need State Marine Reserves to protect kelp forests from fishing pressure and why we also need a Kelp Restoration Management Plan to remove pests in those Reserves so that biodiversity and species richness are conserved.

Keith Rootsart

**A STATEMENT FROM COASTAL CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION (CCA) OF CALIFORNIA**  
**May 4, 2026**

CCA California expresses our unequivocal condemnation of the insensitive and unacceptable comments made during a recent CA Fish & Game Commission Tribal Committee meeting by an individual claiming association with CCA California. We offer our sincere apology to all those impacted, especially California's Native American Tribes. This was not a minor misstep. Alluding to our previous email, the remarks were egregious, harmful, and fundamentally at odds with the values we expect of our members and the broader community of recreational anglers we seek to serve. We were shocked and deeply dismayed by this conduct. We have begun the process of addressing the individual's membership status.

CCA California is a mission-driven organization representing anglers of all ages, experiences, backgrounds, and cultures. We are built on a core set of values that include consideration for people, stewardship of our natural resources, and a commitment to science-based decision-making which includes constructive, civil, and inclusive engagement in public processes. These values are not aspirational - they are expectations. We call on all current and future members to conduct themselves in every setting, including public meetings and policy discussions, in a manner that reflects mutual respect, responsible conduct, and integrity. Our work depends on trust, and that trust is only maintained when our actions align with these principles.

We deeply regret that this incident occurred, for the offense it caused, and that it detracted from the science-based and community-driven approach critical to effective fisheries management. We will take ongoing future action to reinforce the standards we expect within our community. We are committed to ensuring that our organization is one where all individuals are treated with dignity, and where all ideas, values and cultures are welcomed, heard and respected, and where dialogue, even when difficult, is grounded in respect.

CCA California has been and will continue to be committed to working alongside all communities who care passionately for California's coastal marine resources. We sincerely hope that this moment may open new pathways to partnership and understanding between environmental advocates and tribal stakeholders, and look forward to the conversations to come.

We will continue to hold ourselves and our membership accountable to the values we represent.

---

**Bill Shedd**  
Chairman of the Board

**Doug Lasko**  
President

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Vice Chairman

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