

What are Marine Protected Areas?

Marine protected areas (MPAs) are marine or estuarine waters set aside primarily to protect or conserve marine life and its associated habitat. MPAs have varying levels of protection and allowed activities, with special regulations in addition to general fishing regulations.

Types of MPAs

California uses three main MPA classifications: State Marine Reserve (SMR), State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) and State Marine Park (SMP). The North Central California region also includes State Marine Recreational Management Areas (SMRMA) and special closures.

North Central California MPAs

Major revisions and additions to North Central California MPAs went into effect on May 1, 2010. The 22 MPAs and three SMRMAs now encompass close to 153 square miles (20 percent) of state waters in the North Central California region. Of those, about 84 square miles are designated as “no-take” SMRs. North Central California MPAs are part of a statewide network of MPAs that extends all along the California coastline.

Fishing may be restricted, but what other activities are permitted in an MPA?

Unless specifically prohibited, non-consumptive activities such as diving, surfing, swimming and boating are allowed within MPAs, as long as take restrictions are followed. Fishing regulations may be found online at wildlife.ca.gov/Ocean-Sport-Regs. It's a good idea to review the regulations before visiting an MPA.

For more information, visit wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs, email AskMPA@wildlife.ca.gov, or visit one of the following CDFW offices:



Santa Rosa
5355 Skylane Blvd. Suite B

Napa
7329 Silverado Trail

Monterey
20 Lower Ragsdale Dr., Suite 100

In 1999, California's Marine Life Protection Act was passed into law with a clear mandate: to re-evaluate all existing marine protected areas (MPAs) and potentially design new MPAs with input from a broad array of stakeholders. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) was integral to this effort. The MPAs in this brochure were designed, in part, to:

- Protect and sustain marine life, habitats and ecosystems
- Provide opportunities to learn from and enjoy marine areas subject to reduced human disturbance

For more information, visit the California Marine Protected Area website at

wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs

For general fishing regulations that are in effect in addition to MPA regulations, visit

wildlife.ca.gov/Ocean-Sport-Regs



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Sustainable Fish and Wildlife Resources



MPA Mobile Website

California Marine Protected Areas



North Central California
Alder Creek, near Pt. Arena to Pigeon Pt.



CDFW photos by M. Elyash and D. Stein



Rocky coastline near Point Arena
CDFW/S. Ashcraft

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North Central California MPA Regulations

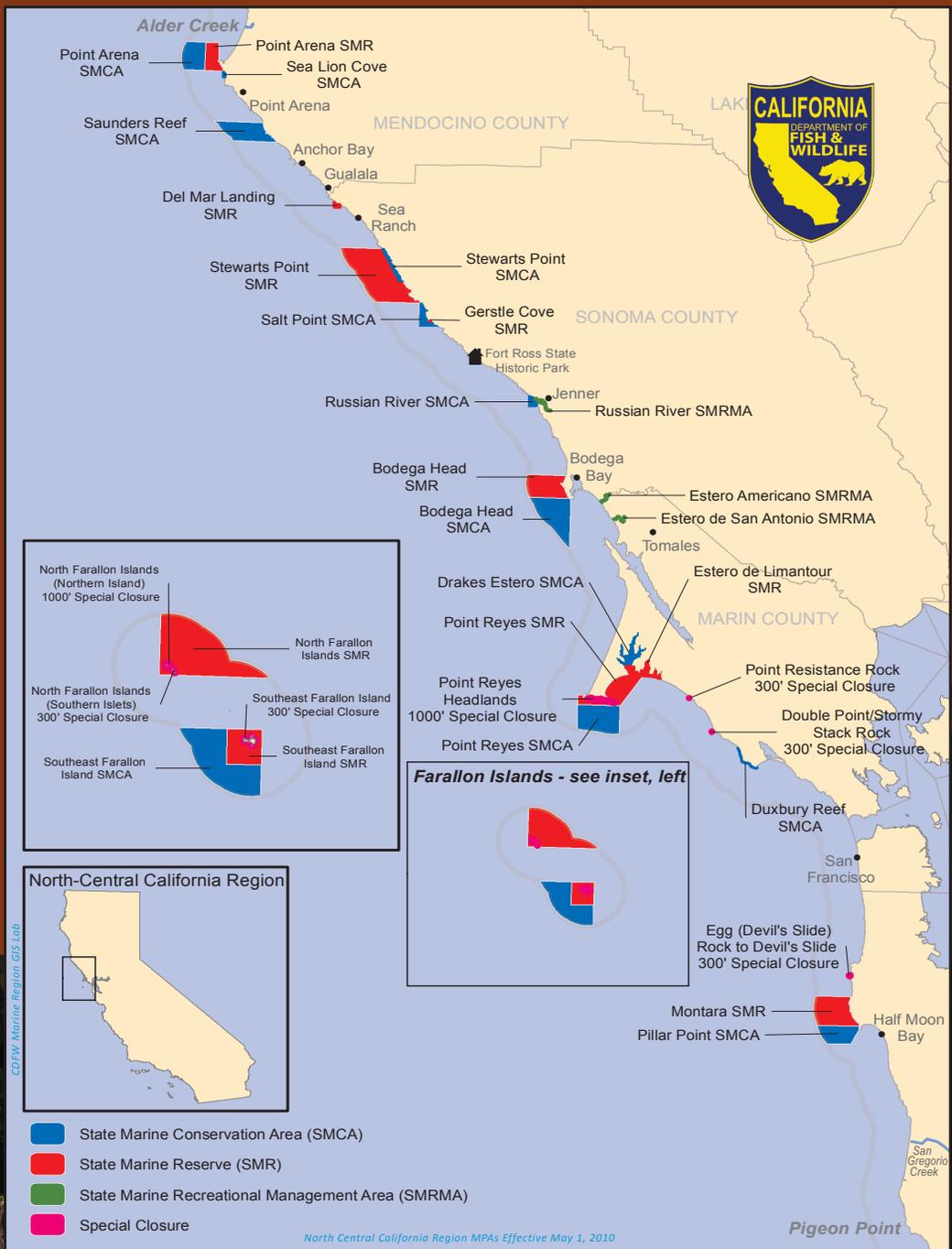
Effective May 1, 2010

SMR	MPA Name	Permitted/Prohibited Activities
	Pt. Arena, Del Mar Landing, Stewarts Pt., Gerstle Cove, Bodega Head, Pt. Reyes, Estero de Limantour, North Farallon Islands, Southeast Farallon Island, Montara	It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource. Additionally, within the Bodega Marine Life Refuge (a small nearshore area within Bodega Head SMR): No anchoring except as permitted by federal law, or during hazardous weather. CDFW and the Bodega Marine Life Refuge director may permit access, anchoring, and take for scientific or educational purposes. See CCR T14 and Fish and Game Code for details.
	It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource, EXCEPT:	
	Pt. Arena, Southeast Farallon Island	Recreational and commercial take of salmon by trolling is allowed.
	Sea Lion Cove	Recreational and commercial take of finfish is allowed.
	Saunders Reef	Recreational and commercial take of salmon by trolling is allowed. Commercial take of urchin is allowed.
	Stewarts Pt.	Recreational take of plants (no sea palm), invertebrates, finfish by hook-and-line, surf smelt by beach net, and species listed in CCR T14 §28.80 by hand-held dip net is allowed.
	Salt Pt.	Recreational take of abalone and finfish is allowed.
	Russian River	Recreational and commercial take of Dungeness crab by trap is allowed. Recreational take of surf smelt by hand-held dip net or beach net is allowed.
	Bodega Head, Pillar Point	Recreational take of Dungeness crab by trap, market squid by hand-held dip net, and pelagic finfish ¹ by trolling is allowed. Commercial take of Dungeness crab by trap, market squid by round-haul net, and pelagic finfish ¹ by trolling or round-haul net is allowed.
	Drakes Estero	Recreational take of clams is allowed.
	Pt. Reyes	Recreational and commercial take of salmon by trolling and Dungeness crab by trap is allowed.
	Duxbury Reef	Recreational take of abalone, and finfish from shore only, is allowed.
SMRMA	Russian River, Estero Americano, Estero de San Antonio	Take of waterfowl in accordance with general waterfowl regulations is allowed.
Special Closure	Boating, access, and other specific activities are restricted as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pt. Reyes Headlands, Pt. Resistance Rock, Double Point/Stormy Stack Rock, North Farallon Islands, Southeast Farallon Island, and Egg (Devil's Slide) Rock to Devil's Slide restrict boating and access. No person except employees of CDFW, USFWS, NOAA or USCG during performance of their official duties, or unless permission is granted by CDFW, shall enter these areas. Additional restrictions related to: boating speed limits, anchoring, seasonal closure, commercial diving operation exhaust procedures, and transit exist for North Farallon Islands, Southeast Farallon Island and Egg (Devil's Slide) Rock to Devil's Slide special closures. See CCR T14 §632 for details. 	

MPA boundaries, maps, coordinates and allowed activities are available on your smartphone or other mobile or web-enabled device at wildlife.ca.gov/m/MPA. This information is also available on the CDFW website at wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs and through your local CDFW office.



North Central California Marine Protected Areas



Note: This document is provided as a courtesy, and does not replace the official laws and regulations found in the California Fish and Game Code or the California Code of Regulations Title 14.

¹ See current fishing regulations for definition of "pelagic finfish."