

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 protections 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). No SMPs exist in Southern California, however this region does include two special closures.

Southern California MPAs

Major revisions and additions to Southern California MPAs went into effect on January 1, 2012. The 50 MPAs encompass close to 355 square miles (just over 15 percent) of state waters in the Southern California region. Of those, about 275 square miles are designated as “no-take” SMCA and SMRs. Southern 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. General 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 AskMarine@wildlife.ca.gov, or visit one of the following Southern California CDFW offices:



Santa Barbara
1933 Cliff Drive, Suite 9

San Diego
3883 Ruffin Road

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 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



Help stop poaching and polluting.
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1-888-334-CaTIP
(1-888-334-2258)



Sustainable Fish and Wildlife Resources



MPA Mobile Website

California Marine Protected Areas



**Southern California:
Point Conception to
California-Mexico Border**



CDFW photos



Coastline near Gaviota
photo by D. Stein

Alternate communication formats of this document are available upon request. If reasonable accommodation is needed, call CDFW at (916) 322-8911 / California Relay Service for the deaf or hearing-impaired from TDD phones: (800) 735-2929



Southern California Marine Protected Areas

California's coast and ocean are among our most treasured resources. The productivity, wildness, and beauty found here is central to California's identity, heritage, and economy. Southern California marine protected areas (MPAs) were designed by local stakeholders with guidance and feedback from scientists, managing agencies, experts, policymakers, and the general public, to achieve the goals set forth in California's Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA). MPAs conserve biological diversity and protect a variety of marine habitats, communities, and ecosystems for their intrinsic value, while allowing for some human use of marine resources under recreational and/or commercial fishing regulations. By protecting sensitive ocean and coastal habitat, marine life flourishes and, in turn, creates a healthier system overall.

Southern California's Marine Protected Areas

California uses a combination of protected areas with varying levels of protection and allowed activities to meet MLPA conservation and natural heritage goals:

State Marine Reserve (SMR): An MPA where injury, damage, take, or possession of any living, geological, or cultural marine resource is prohibited.

No-Take State Marine Conservation Area (No-Take SMCA): An MPA where injury, damage, take, or possession of any living, geological, or cultural marine resource is prohibited, EXCEPT for take incidental to permitted activities such as infrastructure maintenance, sand renourishment, etc.

State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA): An MPA where injury, damage, take, or possession of any living, geological, or cultural marine resource is prohibited EXCEPT for species expressly allowed for recreational and/or commercial take (species and gear exceptions vary by location).

Special Closure: An area that prohibits or restricts access and/or boating activities in waters adjacent to sea bird nesting or marine mammal haulout sites. May overlap other marine protected areas.

MPA Marine Life and Habitats

The Southern California MPA network spans the ocean waters relatively close to shore within the California Bight, from Point Conception to the California-Mexico border. In this area, cold, temperate waters from the north mix with warmer waters from the south, forming a complex system of currents and environmental conditions. Habitats and marine life are amazingly diverse here. Southern California MPAs include a variety of habitat types, from sandy beaches to rocky reefs to deep submarine canyons. Some

MPAs include kelp forests that provide shelter and hunting grounds for fish such as basses, sheephead and seaperch; others encompass tidal estuaries or lagoons that serve as nursery areas for young fish, crab, and shrimp. Some MPAs are located miles offshore, in the state and federal waters surrounding islands. MPAs allow for more natural interactions between popular, heavily-fished species and species that fishermen normally don't target. In total, this area is home to 481 species of fish, four species of sea turtles, 195 species of birds, seven species of seals and sea lions, and more than 5,000 species of invertebrates.



More Information

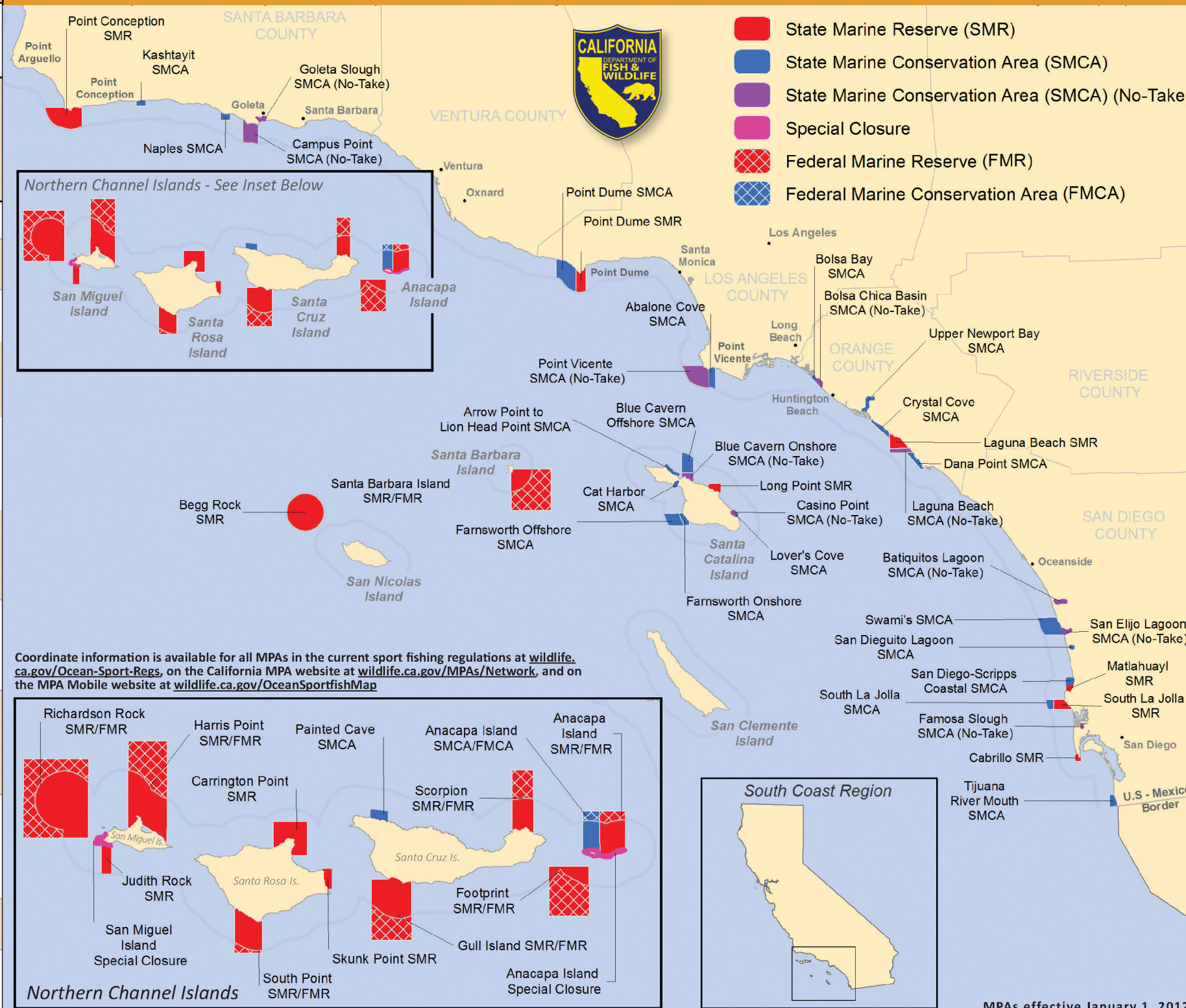
The California Department of Fish and Wildlife maintains several websites with extensive information about Southern California MPAs:

- California MPA website: wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs
- Mobile-device friendly sport fishing and MPA website: wildlife.ca.gov/OceanSportfishMap

Questions? Email AskMarine@wildlife.ca.gov

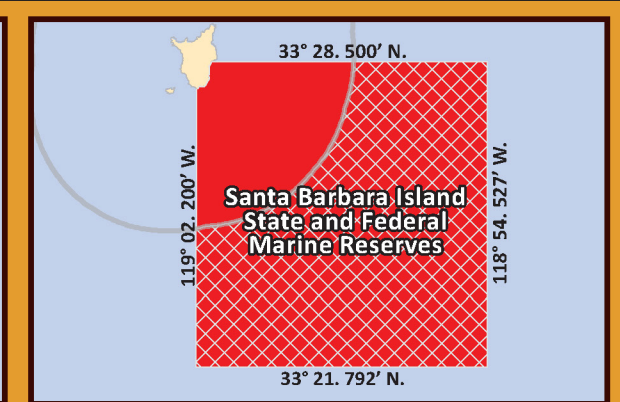
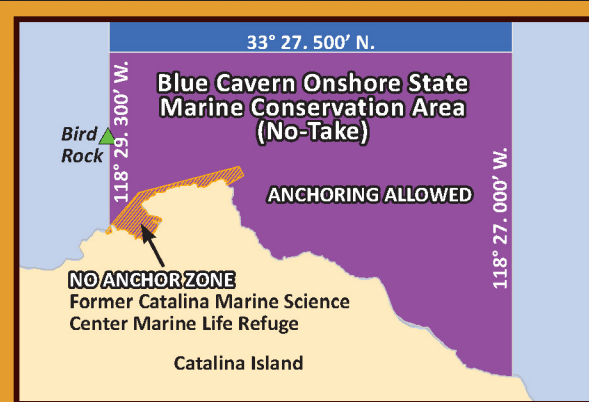
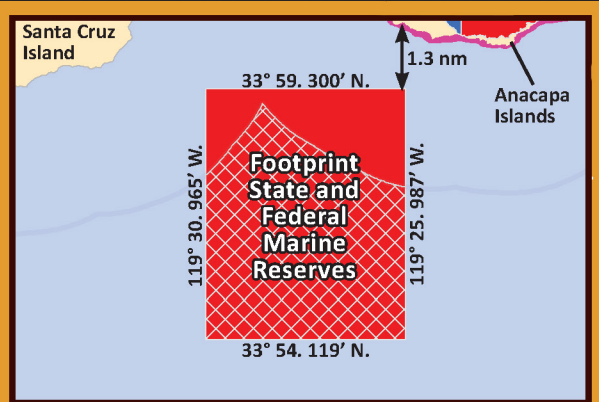
Southern California Marine Protected Areas

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 California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 14



Coordinate information is available for all MPAs in the current sport fishing regulations at wildlife.ca.gov/Ocean-Sport-Regs, on the California MPA website at wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network, and on the MPA Mobile website at wildlife.ca.gov/OceanSportfishMap

MPAs effective January 1, 2012



Mainland MPA Regulations

SMR	Mainland MPA Regulations	
	Name	Permitted/Prohibited Activities
No-Take SMCA	Point Conception, Point Dume, Laguna Beach, Matlahuayl, South La Jolla, Cabrillo	It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource.
	Campus Point, Goleta Slough, Point Vicente, Bolsa Chica Basin, Laguna Beach, Batiquitos Lagoon ² , San Elijo Lagoon, Famosa Slough	It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource. Take incidental to certain permitted activities may be allowed. Other restrictions may apply. See CCR T14 §632(b) for details.
SMCA	It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource, EXCEPT:	
	Kashtayit ^{1,3}	Recreational take of finfish, giant kelp by hand, and invertebrates except rock scallops and mussels is allowed.
	Naples ^{1,3}	Recreational take of white seabass and pelagic finfish by spearfishing is allowed. Commercial take of giant kelp is allowed.
	Point Dume ^{1,3}	Recreational take of white seabass and pelagic finfish by spearfishing is allowed. Commercial take of coastal pelagic species by round haul net, brail gear, and light boat; and swordfish by harpoon is allowed.
	Abalone Cove ¹	Recreational take of market squid by hand-held dip net, and white seabass and pelagic finfish by spearfishing is allowed. Commercial take of coastal pelagic species by round haul net, brail gear, and light boat; and swordfish by harpoon is allowed.
	Bolsa Bay ¹	Recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line from shore in designated areas is allowed. Entry permitted only on established trails, paths or other designated areas. Closed from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. Boating, swimming, wading and diving prohibited.
	Upper Newport Bay ¹	Recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line from shore only is allowed. Shoreline access limited to established trails, paths, or other designated areas. Restrictions exist for boating and swimming. See CCR T14 §632(b) for details.
	Crystal Cove ¹	Recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line or spearfishing and take of spiny lobster and sea urchin is allowed. Commercial take of sea urchin; spiny lobster by trap, and coastal pelagic species by round haul net, brail gear, and light boat is allowed. Take of living marine resources from tidepools is prohibited.
	Dana Point ¹	Recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line or spearfishing, and lobster and urchin is allowed. Commercial take of lobster by trap, sea urchin, and coastal pelagic species by round haul net, brail gear, and light boat is allowed. Take of living marine resources from tidepools is prohibited.
	Swami's ¹	Recreational take by hook-and-line from shore, and white seabass and pelagic finfish by spearfishing is allowed.
	San Dieguito Lagoon ^{1,2}	Recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line from shore is allowed. Boating, swimming, wading and diving are prohibited. Closed from 8 p.m. to 5 a.m.
	San Diego-Scripps Coastal ¹	Recreational take of coastal pelagic species except market squid, by hook-and-line only is allowed.
	South La Jolla	Recreational take of pelagic finfish by hook-and-line only is allowed.
Tijuana River Mouth ¹	Recreational take of coastal pelagic species except market squid, by hand-held dipnet only is allowed. Commercial take of coastal pelagic species except market squid, by round haul net is allowed.	

¹Take incidental to certain permitted activities is allowed. See CCR T14 §632(b) for details.
²PLEASE NOTE: These areas overlap State Ecological Reserves. Current rules restrict all public access to the shoreline to protect sensitive habitat, as authorized under CCR T14 §630(a)(10).
³Certain federally recognized tribes are exempted from the area and take regulations for this MPA. For information regarding tribal take, please see CCR Title 14, Section 632(a)(11).

Finfish: Any species of bony fish or cartilaginous fish (sharks, skates and rays).
 Coastal Pelagic Species: northern anchovy, Pacific sardine, Pacific mackerel, jack mackerel, and market squid.

Island MPA Regulations

SMR	Island MPA Regulations		
	Name	Permitted/Prohibited Activities	
No-Take SMCA	Richardson Rock, Harris Point, Judith Rock, Carrington Pt, Skunk Pt, South Pt Gull Island, Scorpion, Anacapa Island, Begg Rock, Footprint, Santa Barbara Island, Long Point	It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource. <i>NOTE: Boundary coordinates for Santa Barbara Island SMR and Footprint SMR are provided in the inset maps below</i>	
	Blue Cavern Onshore ¹ Catalina Island	It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource. Also, no anchoring or mooring within the former Catalina Marine Science Center Marine Life Refuge. See CCR T14 §632(b) for details.	
SMCA	Casino Pt ¹ Catalina Island	It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource. Feeding of fish for marine life viewing is permitted. See CCR T14 §632(b) for details.	
	It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource, EXCEPT:		
	Painted Cave Santa Cruz Island	Recreational take of lobster and pelagic finfish is allowed.	
	Anacapa Island ²	Recreational take of lobster and pelagic finfish is allowed. Commercial take of lobster is allowed.	
	Arrow Pt to Lion Head Pt Catalina Island	Recreational take of marine plants and finfish is allowed. Take of invertebrates is prohibited.	
	Blue Cavern Offshore Catalina Island	Recreational take of market squid by hand-held dip net, pelagic finfish by hook-and-line or by spearfishing, and white seabass by spearfishing is allowed. Commercial take of pelagic finfish by hook-and-line, and swordfish by harpoon is allowed.	
	Lover's Cove ¹ Catalina Island	Recreational take by hook-and-line from Cabrillo Mole only is allowed. Feeding of fish for marine life viewing is allowed.	
	Farnsworth Onshore Catalina Island	Recreational take of market squid by hand-held dip net; white seabass and pelagic finfish by spearfishing; and marlin, tuna and dorado by trolling is allowed. Commercial take of coastal pelagic species by round haul net, brail gear, and light boat; swordfish by harpoon is allowed.	
	Farnsworth Offshore Catalina Island	Recreational take of market squid by hand-held dip net; white seabass by spearfishing; pelagic finfish by hook-and-line or spearfishing, and marlin, tuna and dorado by trolling is allowed. Commercial take of coastal pelagic species by round haul net, brail gear, and light boat; and swordfish by harpoon is allowed.	
	Cat Harbor ¹ Catalina Island	Recreational take of lobster and sea urchin, squid by hook-and-line, and finfish by hook-and-line or spearfishing is allowed. Commercial take of sea cucumber by diving only, and lobster and sea urchin is allowed.	
	Special Closure	San Miguel Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 300 yd. closure except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mar 15-Apr 30 and Oct 1-Dec 15 closure reduced to 100 yd. Boats operated by commercial sea urchin divers may enter certain areas only between Mar 15-Apr 30 and Oct 1-Dec 15. Additional restrictions exist for boating speed limits, noise, anchoring, landing, and access to offshore rocks and islands. See CCR T14 §632(b) for details.
		Anacapa Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No net or trap may be set in waters less than 20 ft deep off Anacapa Island. 20 fm (120 ft) brown pelican fledgeling area closed Jan 1-Oct 31. No person except employees of CDFW or NPS shall enter this area during closure. See CCR T14 §632(b) for details.

¹Take incidental to certain permitted activities is allowed. See CCR T14 §632(b) for details.
²Certain federally recognized tribes are exempted from the area and take regulations for this MPA. For information regarding tribal take, please see CCR Title 14, Section 632(a)(11)

Pelagic Finfish: northern anchovy, barracudas, billfishes, dorado (dolphinfish), Pacific herring, jack mackerel, Pacific mackerel, salmon, Pacific sardine, blue shark, salmon shark, shortfin mako shark, thresher shark, swordfish, tunas, Pacific bonito, and yellowtail. No commercial take of marlin is allowed.