

What is a California marine protected area (or “MPA”)?

An MPA is a type of managed area whose main purpose is to protect or conserve marine life and habitats in ocean or estuarine waters. California's MPA Network consists of 124 areas with varying levels of protection and 14 special closures, all designed to help safeguard the state's marine ecosystems. Special closures such as Southwest Seal Rock Special Closure are specifically designed to minimize human disturbance at significant marine mammal haulout sites and seabird rookeries by restricting boating and access, seasonally or year-round.

One goal for California's MPAs was to strategically place them near each other to form an interconnected network that would help to preserve the flow of life between marine ecosystems. Within that network each MPA has unique goals and regulations, and non-consumptive activities, permitted scientific research, monitoring, and educational pursuits may be allowed.

Why was this location chosen for a special closure?

One of the goals for Southwest Seal Rock Special Closure is to shield Steller sea lions from human disturbance. Steller sea lions give birth to pups from May through July on this small, rocky pinnacle. A previously overhunted species, Steller sea lions have been carefully monitored and many habitats important to their success have been placed under protection. The Steller sea lion population from California to Canada has recovered largely due to increased protection of important habitat and rookery sites, like Southwest Seal Rock Special Closure.

The waters surrounding Southwest Seal Rock are filled with rockfish, lingcod, salmon, and halibut. Placing a special closure here provides very high levels of protection for Steller sea lions and the habitats they use.

Quick Facts: Southwest Seal Rock Special Closure

- **Size:** 0.02 square miles
- **Depth range:** 0 to 93 feet
- **Habitat composition:**
 - Sand/mud: < 0.01 square miles
 - Rock: 0.04 square miles



See Regulations On Back

Further Information:

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

Photos - Upper: Female Steller sea lions greet one another. photo © John Garrett, CC BY-NC 2.0

Lower right: Steller sea lion and pup. photo © datadan CC BY-NC 2.0

Lower left: Steller sea lion and pup. photo © John Garrett, CC BY-NC 2.0



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or text 847411 - begin message with "Caltip" followed by the details.





Southwest Seal Rock Special Closure Boundary and Regulations from California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632

Special restrictions on boating and access apply to Southwest Seal Rock as follows.

1. A special closure is designated from the mean high tide line to a distance of 300 feet seaward of the mean lower low tide line of any shoreline of Southwest Seal Rock, located in the vicinity of 41° 48.810' N. lat. 124° 21.099' W. long. ①
2. Except as permitted by federal law or emergency caused by hazardous weather, or as authorized by [3., below], no vessel shall be operated or anchored at any time from the mean high tide line to a distance of 300 feet seaward of the mean lower low tide line of any shoreline of Southwest Seal Rock.
3. No person except Department employees or employees of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or United States Coast Guard, in performing their official duties, or unless permission is granted by the Department, shall enter the area defined in [2., above].

Take may be authorized for research, restoration, and monitoring purposes under a scientific collecting permit. See California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632(a).

The information in this document does not replace the official regulatory language found in the California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632. View these regulations online at www.wildlife.ca.gov/CCR-T14-MPAs.