

Southwest Seal Rock Special Closure

Northern California Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), *Implemented December 2012*



Site Overview

Photos are representative of the North Coast Region and may not be within this Special Closure

What is an MPA?

MPAs are a type of [marine managed area](#) (MMA) where marine or estuarine waters are set aside primarily to protect or conserve marine life and associated habitats. California has a coastal network of 124 protected areas designed to help increase the coherence and effectiveness of protecting the state's marine life, habitats, and ecosystems. The network includes three types of MPA: [state marine reserve](#) (SMR), [state marine conservation area](#) (SMCA), and [state marine park](#) (SMP); one MMA: [state marine recreational management area](#) (SMRMA); and [special closures](#). There are 119 MPAs, 5 MMAs and 15 special closures, each with unique boundaries and regulations in the network. Non-consumptive activities, restoration, and permitted scientific research are allowed.

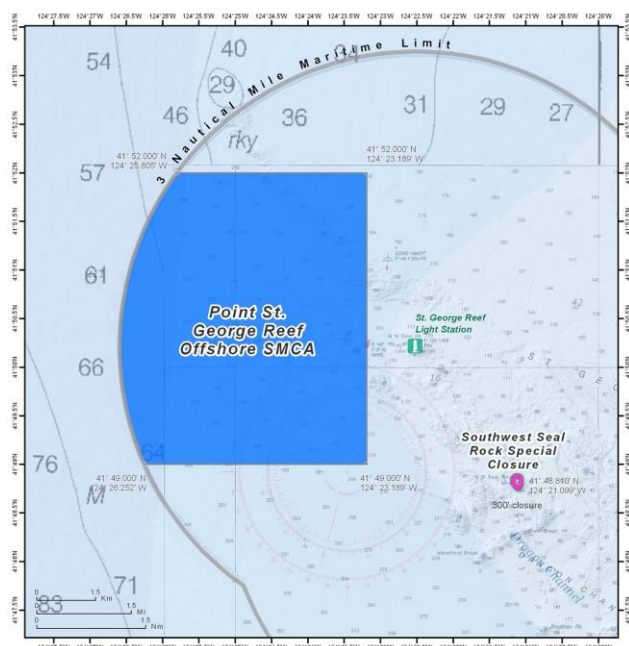
What is a Special Closure?

A **special closure** is an area designated by the Fish and Game Commission in waters adjacent to sea bird rookeries or marine mammal haul-out sites that prohibits access and/or restricts boating activities.

Southwest Seal Rock Special Closure Overview

- **Special closure size:** 0.02 square miles
- **Along-shore span (shoreline):** 0.26 miles
- **Primary habitat:** Rocky shores
- **Closure season:** Year Round
- **Closure distance:** 300 feet

Where is Southwest Seal Rock Special Closure?



Boundaries and Regulations

Boundary; Permitted/Prohibited Uses: Special restrictions on boating and access apply to Southwest Seal Rock as follows.

(A) 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.

(B) Except as permitted by federal law or emergency caused by hazardous weather, or as authorized by subsection 632(b)(3)(C), 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.

(C) 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 subsection 632(b)(3)(B).

Southwest Seal Rock Special Closure

How Southwest Seal Rock was Chosen for a Special Closure

This special closure was developed by a work group made up of members from the larger cross-interest regional stakeholder group (RSG) as part of the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA). Work group members used local knowledge and input, and scientific data to identify areas where the special closure designation could be applied. Suggested special closure locations were then brought to entire RSG, who after open discussion decided what special closures would be included in their regional marine protected area (MPA) proposal. Final proposals were sent to the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) for adoption. Southwest Seal Rock special closure was adopted by the Commission in 2012.

Why Southwest Seal Rock was Chosen for a Special Closure

Special closures are designed to minimize the human disturbance of seabirds and marine mammals by restricting boating and access (seasonal or year round) to the area. Smaller than MPAs, special closures work within the overall MPA network to provide localized protection to seabird rookeries or marine mammal haul-out sites in areas of significant importance to the marine ecosystem. In some instances special closures may offer protection from geographically-specific threats that are not necessarily addressed by MPAs including disturbance.

North Coast RSG Identified Rationale for South West Seal Rock Special Closure:

Protects an important Steller sea lion (*Eumetopias jubatus*) breeding and haul-out site from vessel disturbances. Steller sea lions are listed as "threatened" under the Federal Endangered Species Act* and a California "species of special concern" and are known to breed on Año Nuevo, San Miguel and Farallon Islands, Southwest Seal Rock and Sugarloaf Island.

*As of November 2013 the eastern distinct population of Steller sea lions was de-listed as federally endangered species under the Endangered Species Act.

North Coast Regional Resources

California MPA Overview:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network-Overview

North Coast Regional Goals and Objectives:

www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/pdfs/binders_nc/b1_29.pdf

California MLPA North Coast Study Region Description of MPAs:

www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/northcoastproposals/rec_description_eca.pdf

Methods Used to Evaluate MPAs in the North Coast:

www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/northcoastproposals/evaluationmethods.pdf

MPA Research and Monitoring Activities:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Research-And-Monitoring

Regional MPA Statistics:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Statistics

Regional Planning History:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Planning-Process

California MPA Network Resources

Detailed MPA guidebooks maps and brochures:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network

California Marine Life Protection Act Marine Protected Areas Master Plan:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Master-Plan

Marine Life Protection Act Summary and Network Goals:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network-Goals



For more information, visit:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs

Email:

AskMPA@wildlife.ca.gov

MPA Mobile:



Report poaching and polluting,

Call CalTIP

1-888-334-2258

The information in this document does not replace the official regulatory language found in the California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632 www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Network/Title-14-Section-632