

# Castle Rock Special Closure

Northern California - Established December, 2012



## 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 Castle 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 Castle Rock Special Closure is to shield the multiple bird species that breed and rest here from human disturbance. Every year, Castle Rock is used by approximately 100,000 breeding seabirds from 11 different species, including storm-petrels, cormorants, auklets, and puffins. One of the largest common murre colonies on the Pacific Coast gathers at Castle Rock annually. Pelagic cormorants nest on the steep cliffs to avoid predators, while Cassin's auklet and rhinoceros auklet dig burrows in the dirt and nest there. Castle Rock also hosts a breeding colony of northern elephant seals; other marine mammals such as harbor seals, California sea lions, and Steller sea lions haul out on Castle Rock to rest. The special closure's rocky tidepools and shallow reefs are home to various invertebrates like marine worms, octopuses, anemones, and snails, which provide abundant food for other invertebrates and fish.

Placing a special closure here provides very high levels of protection for marine birds and mammals, and the habitats they use.



Report poachers and polluters

Call CalTIP: 1 (888) 334-2258

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



## Quick Facts: Castle Rock Special Closure

- **Size:** 0.05 square miles
- **Depth range:** 0 to 15 feet
- **Habitat composition:**
  - Sand/mud: 0.02 square miles
  - Rock: 0.10 square miles



See Regulations On Back

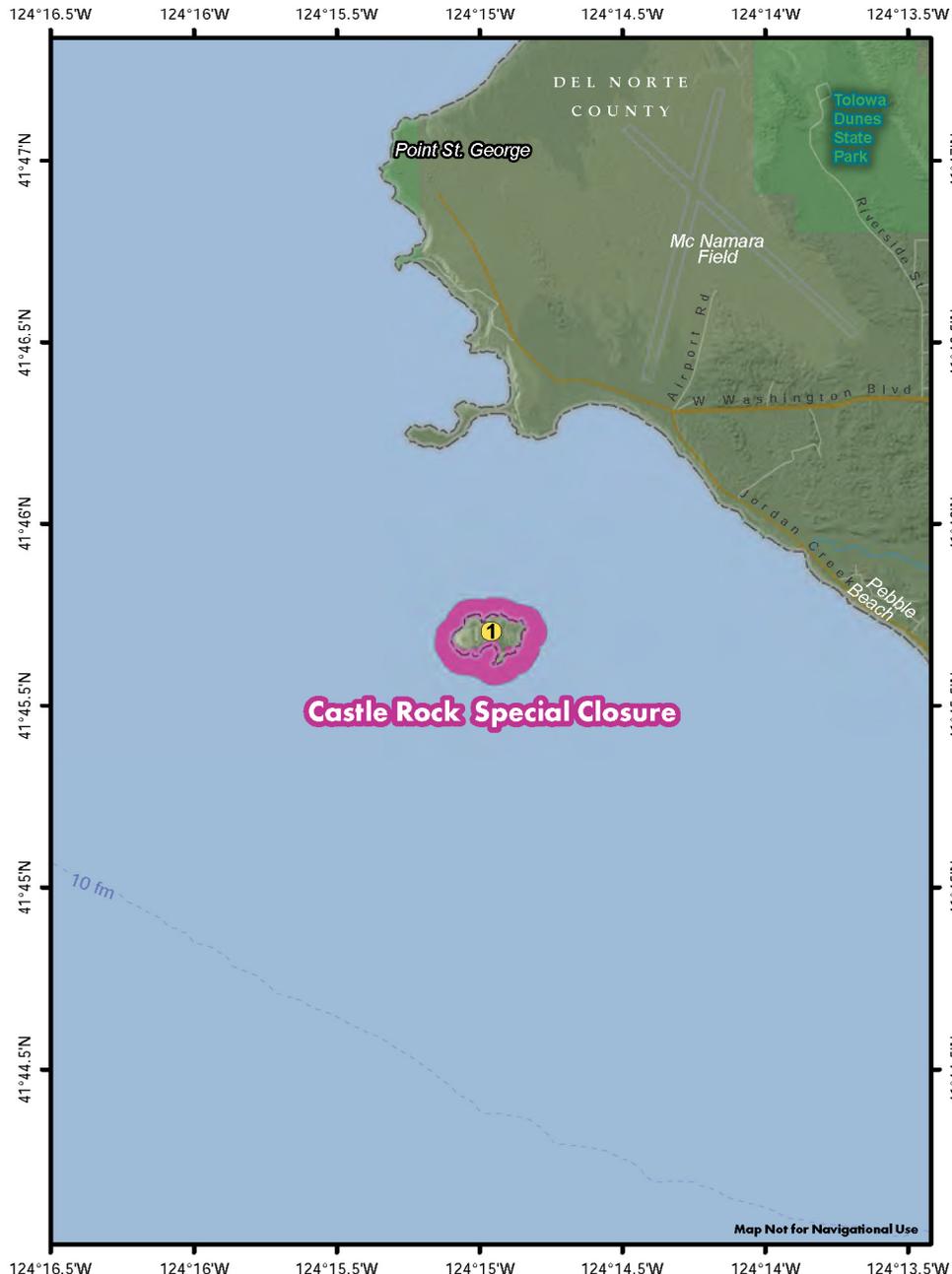
## Further Information:

- MPA Website: [www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs)
- MPA and Sportfishing Interactive Map: [www.wildlife.ca.gov/OceanSportfishMap](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/OceanSportfishMap)
- Email: [AskMarine@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:AskMarine@wildlife.ca.gov)

Photos - Upper: Castle Rock. photo © Calla Allison, MPA Collaborative Network

Lower right: Common murres nesting on Castle Rock. photo © Jeff Ward, CC BY-NC 2.0

Lower left: Common murres nesting on Castle Rock. photo © Jeff Ward, CC BY-NC 2.0



## Castle Rock Special Closure Boundary and Regulations from California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632

Special restrictions on boating and access apply to Castle 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 Castle Rock, located in the vicinity of 41° 45.706' N. lat. 124° 14.949' 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 Castle 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](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/CCR-T14-MPAs).