

### What is a California marine protected area (or "MPA")?

An MPA is a type of managed area primarily set aside to protect or conserve marine life and habitats in marine 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. Fishing and collecting are banned at marine reserves such as South Cape Mendocino State Marine Reserve, providing this MPA with the highest level of protection.

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 state marine reserve?

One of the goals for [South Cape Mendocino State Marine Reserve](#) is to protect sandy and rocky seafloor habitat, from the shore's rocky tidepools and black sand beaches to deeper offshore waters. The reserve provides habitat for many plants, fishes, and invertebrates, including bull kelp, sea urchin, rockfish, and lingcod, and is especially important as a rookery for sea lions and seabirds. Abalone, acorn barnacles, California mussels, and ochre sea stars find refuge in the rocky nearshore portions of the reserve. Many different species of birds including Brandt's cormorants, tufted puffins, common murrelets, western gulls, and black oystercatchers can be found nesting, hunting, and resting in the reserve. Depending on the season, you may see gray whales, blue whales, or humpback whales passing along this stretch of isolated northern California coast during their long migrations.

This reserve overlaps a portion of [Steamboat Rock Special Closure](#) to the south, and is adjacent to Sugarloaf Island Special Closure to the north. Placing a state marine reserve here provides very high levels of protection for local marine species and the habitats they use.



Report poachers and polluters  
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or text 847411 - begin message with "Caltip"  
followed by the details.



### Quick Facts: South Cape Mendocino State Marine Reserve

- **MPA size:** 9.08 square miles
- **Shoreline span:** 1.4 miles
- **Depth range:** 0 to 277 feet
- **Habitat composition:**  
Rock: 5.33 square miles  
Sand/mud: 5.03 square miles



Non-Consumptive Activities

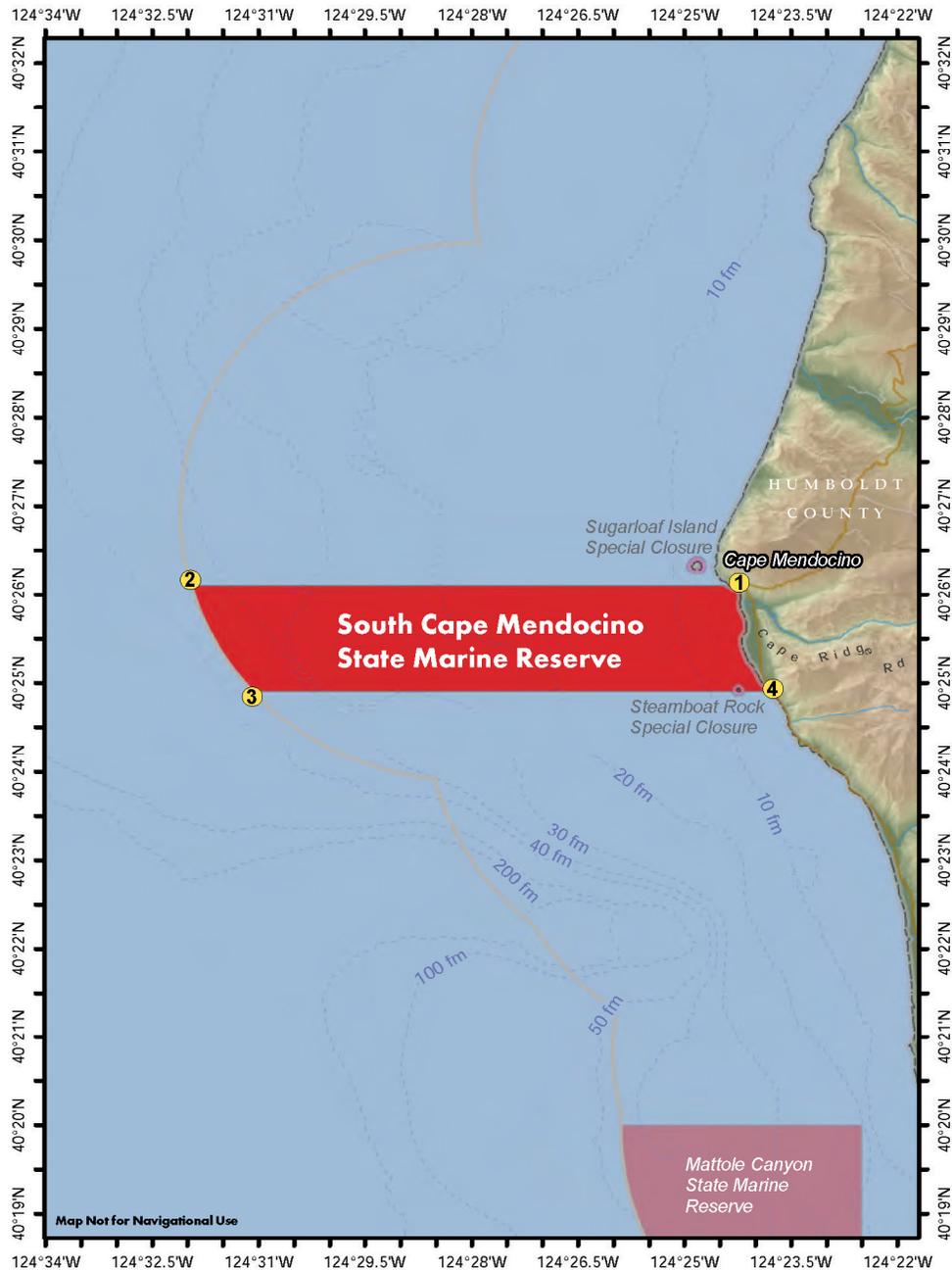
No Fishing

No Collecting

### 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: Shoreline at South Cape Mendocino State Marine Reserve, photo © Aleksandr Zykov, CC BY-SA 2.0 Lower right: Yelloweye rockfish at the reserve. CDFW/MARE photo  
Lower left: Pacific red octopus and grey puffball sponge at the reserve. CDFW/MARE photo



**South Cape Mendocino State Marine Reserve Boundary and Regulations from California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632**

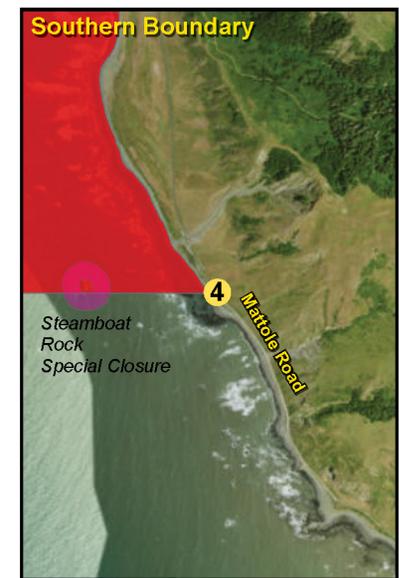
**Boundary:**

This area is bounded by the mean high tide line and straight lines connecting the following points in the order listed except where noted:

- 40° 26.100' N. lat. 124° 24.340' W. long. ①;
- 40° 26.100' N. lat. 124° 31.958' W. long. ②; thence southward along the three nautical mile offshore boundary to
- 40° 24.900' N. lat. 124° 31.084' W. long. ③; and
- 40° 24.900' N. lat. 124° 23.800' W. long. ④

**Permitted/Prohibited Take:**

It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource.



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).