

Big Flat State Marine Conservation Area

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



Black rockfish
(*Sebastes melanops*)
Photo by M. Winscher



School of juvenile rockfish
Photo by Kevin Joe



Flat abalone
(*Haliotis walallensis*)
Photo by R. Alvarez



Strawberry anemones
(*Corynactis californica*)
Photo by M. Winscher

Site Overview

Photos are representative of the North Coast Region and may not be within this MPA.

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 an SMCA?

An **SMCA** is a type of MPA that protects resources by allowing for only specific types of recreational and/or commercial take to occur. (Area restrictions are defined in [Title 14, Section 632\(a\)\(1\)\(C\)](#)).

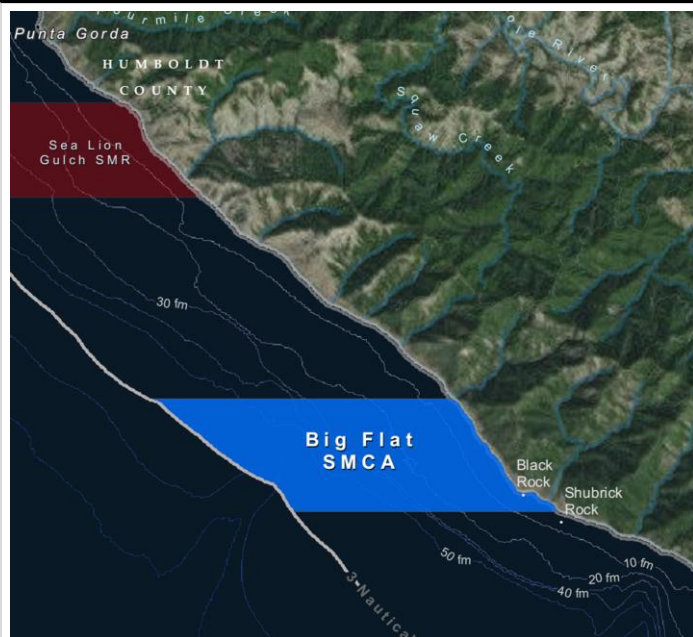
Big Flat SMCA Key Habitats

- **Beaches:** 3.21 miles
- **Rocky shores:** 1.35 square miles
- **Sand (all depths):** 10.73 square miles
- **Rock (all depths):** 0.03 square miles
- **Submarine canyon:** 0.66 square miles
- **Unidentified (all depths):** 0.70 square miles

Big Flat SMCA Overview

- **MPA size:** 11.59 square miles
- **Depth range:** 0 to 1110 feet
- **Along-shore span (shoreline):** 2.5 miles

Where is Big Flat SMCA?



Boundaries and Regulations

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° 09.400' N. lat. 124° 12.671' W. long.;
40° 09.400' N. lat. 124° 19.366' W. long.; thence southward along the three nautical mile offshore boundary to
40° 07.500' N. lat. 124° 16.203' W. long.; and
40° 07.500' N. lat. 124° 10.313' W. long.

Only the following take is allowed in Big Flat SMCA:

1. The recreational take of salmon by trolling; and Dungeness crab by trap, hoop net or hand.
2. The commercial take of salmon with troll fishing gear; and Dungeness crab by trap.
3. Certain federally recognized tribes are exempt from the area and take regulations for this MPA. For information regarding tribal take, please see California Code of Regulations Title 14, subsection 632(a)(15)(3).

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How and Why Big Flat was Chosen for an SMCA

MPAs were designed through a collaborative, regional public process by a cross-interest regional stakeholder group (RSG). Using scientific criteria, public input and local resource knowledge the RSG developed MPA proposals. RSG proposals included site specific rationale (why the site should be an MPA-*included below*), the classification (type of MPA), boundaries, and regulations. Final MPA proposals were sent to the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) for their adoption process Big Flat SMCA was adopted by the Commission in 2012.

North Coast RSG Identified Rationale for Big Flat SMCA:

This SMCA is designed to enhance and preserve rock fish habitat while at the same time posing, due to its remote location, minimal socioeconomic impacts to commercial or recreational fishermen. Designed to maintain a moderate to high preliminary level of protection (LOP).

Species Likely to Benefit from the Establishment of MPAs in California

Species likely to benefit from establishing an MPA are those, whose home range, behavior, reproduction, exploitation rate or population status indicates that they may benefit from spatial management. This includes species that are directly targeted by fisheries, those which are caught incidental to fishing for the target species (bycatch) and which cannot be returned to the water with a high rate of survival, and those which may be indirectly impacted through ecological changes within MPAs.

For a list of species likely to benefit from MPAs statewide: www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/mpa/species.asp

For a list of species likely to benefit from north coast MPAs: www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/binders_nc/b2_3.pdf

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