

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. Most marine conservation areas such as Saunders Reef State Marine Conservation Area provide some opportunity for commercial and/or recreational take (species and gear exceptions vary by location - see reverse).

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 conservation area?

One of the goals for Saunders Reef State Marine Conservation Area is to protect the kelp forests, rocky reefs, and deep, sandy seafloor habitat found there. Hermit crabs, marine snails, barnacles, and mussels find a home in the conservation area's rocky tidepools, while seals and sea lions rest on the sandy beaches. Saunders Reef slopes away from the beach to a rocky shelf with several pinnacles. The reef is fully encompassed within the conservation area and features gravel and boulder fields, and bedrock with cracks and crevices where abalone find shelter. Giant Pacific octopus and many different species of rockfish, urchins, and sea stars live on and near the reef.

Saunders Reef State Marine Conservation Area overlaps a portion of the [Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary](#) and [Saunders Reef Area of Special Biological Significance](#). Placing a state marine conservation area here provides moderately high levels of protection for marine life 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: Saunders Reef State Marine Conservation Area

- **MPA size:** 9.36 square miles
- **Shoreline span:** 2.5 miles
- **Depth range:** 0 to 276 feet
- **Habitat composition:**
Sand/mud: 6.57 square miles
Rock: 5.62 square miles



Non-Consumptive Activities

Fishing
See Regulations
On Back

No Collecting

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: Shoreline at Saunders Reef State Marine Conservation Area. photo © Leslie Kashiwada. **Lower right:** Kayaker meets a Laysan albatross at the conservation area. photo © Will Richardson, CC BY-NC 2.0 **Lower left:** Hermit crab in a tidepool at the conservation area. photo © epasch, CC BY-NC 2.0

Saunders Reef State Marine Conservation Area

North Central California - Mendocino County



Saunders Reef State Marine Conservation Area 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:

- 38° 51.800' N. lat. 123° 39.230' W. long. ①;
- 38° 51.800' N. lat. 123° 44.780' W. long. ②; thence southward along the three nautical mile offshore boundary to
- 38° 50.000' N. lat. 123° 42.580' W. long. ③; and
- 38° 50.000' N. lat. 123° 37.600' W. long. ④

Permitted/Prohibited Uses

1. It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource for recreational and/or commercial purposes, with the following specified exceptions:

- a. The recreational take of salmon by trolling is allowed.
- b. The commercial take of salmon with troll fishing gear and urchin is allowed.



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.