

# Saunders Reef State Marine Conservation Area

North Central California Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), *Established May 2010*



## Site Overview

Photos are representative of the North Central 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\(a\)\(1\)\(C\)](#)).

## Saunders Reef SMCA Overview

- **MPA size:** 9.36 square miles
- **Depth range:** 0 to 276 feet
- **Along-shore span (shoreline):** 3.0 miles

## Where is Saunders Reef SMCA?



## Saunders Reef SMCA Key Habitats

- **Beaches:** 1.83 miles
- **Rocky shores:** 4.29 miles
- **Sand (all depths):** 5.28 square miles
- **Rock (all depths):** 2.68 square miles
- **Average kelp (1989 to 2008):** 0.17 square miles
- **Unidentified (all depths):** 1.39 square miles

## 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:

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

**Only the following take is allowed in Saunders Reef SMCA:**

1. The recreational take of salmon by trolling.
2. The commercial take of salmon with troll fishing gear, and urchin.

# Saunders Reef State Marine Conservation Area

## How and Why Saunders Reef 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 specific objectives (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. Saunders Reef SMCA was adopted by the Commission in 2010.

### North Central Coast RSG Specific Objectives for Saunders Reef SMCA:

Protects complex and highly productive rocky reef and kelp habitat including part of an extensive stand of bull kelp, and associated species, including nearshore finfish and multiple abalone species. Protects deeper sand and rock habitat in a regional center of high productivity.

## 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](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/mpa/species.asp)

For a list of species likely to benefit from north central coast MPAs: [www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/binders/b2dc.pdf](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/binders/b2dc.pdf)

## North Central Coast Regional Resources

California MPA Overview:

[www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network-Overview](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network-Overview)

North Central Coast Regional Goals and Objectives:

[www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/binders/b4da.pdf](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/binders/b4da.pdf)

California MLPA North Central Coast Study Region Description of MPAs:

[www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/ipa\\_description.pdf](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/ipa_description.pdf)

Methods Used to Evaluate MPAs in the North Central Coast:

[www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/nccrsg-dprops/evaluationmethods.pdf](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/nccrsg-dprops/evaluationmethods.pdf)

MPA Research and Monitoring Activities:

[www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Research-And-Monitoring](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Research-And-Monitoring)

Regional MPA Statistics:

[www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Statistics](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Statistics)

Regional Planning History:

[www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Planning-Process](http://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](http://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](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Master-Plan)

Marine Life Protection Act Summary and Network Goals:

[www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network-Goals](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network-Goals)



For more information, visit:

[www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs)

Email:

[AskMPA@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto: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](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Network/Title-14-Section-632)