

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 Gerstle Cove 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 [Gerstle Cove State Marine Reserve](#) is to protect the sheltered cove's rocky seafloor habitat. The cove has a rugged, rocky bottom composed of bedrock, sandstone, and coarse- and fine-grained sand. Numerous rocky tidepools are home to sculpin, anemones, sponges, algae, and turban snails. Mussel beds cover the southern side of the cove's gently sloping, rocky incline, while sea palm, an intertidal kelp, tops the nearshore rocks on the north side of the cove. Bull kelp anchored on the rocky seafloor shelters and feeds countless marine species including red abalone, owl limpets, sea stars, lingcod, and rockfish.

Gerstle Cove State Marine Reserve is surrounded by [Salt Point State Park](#) and [Salt Point State Marine Conservation Area](#). The reserve also overlaps a portion of [Gerstle Cove Area of Special Biological Significance](#) and the [Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary](#). 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: Gerstle Cove State Marine Reserve

- **MPA size:** 0.01 square miles
- **Shoreline span:** 0.01 miles
- **Depth range:** 0 to 10 feet
- **Habitat composition:**
Rock: 0.02 square miles



Non-Consumptive Activities

No Fishing

No Collecting

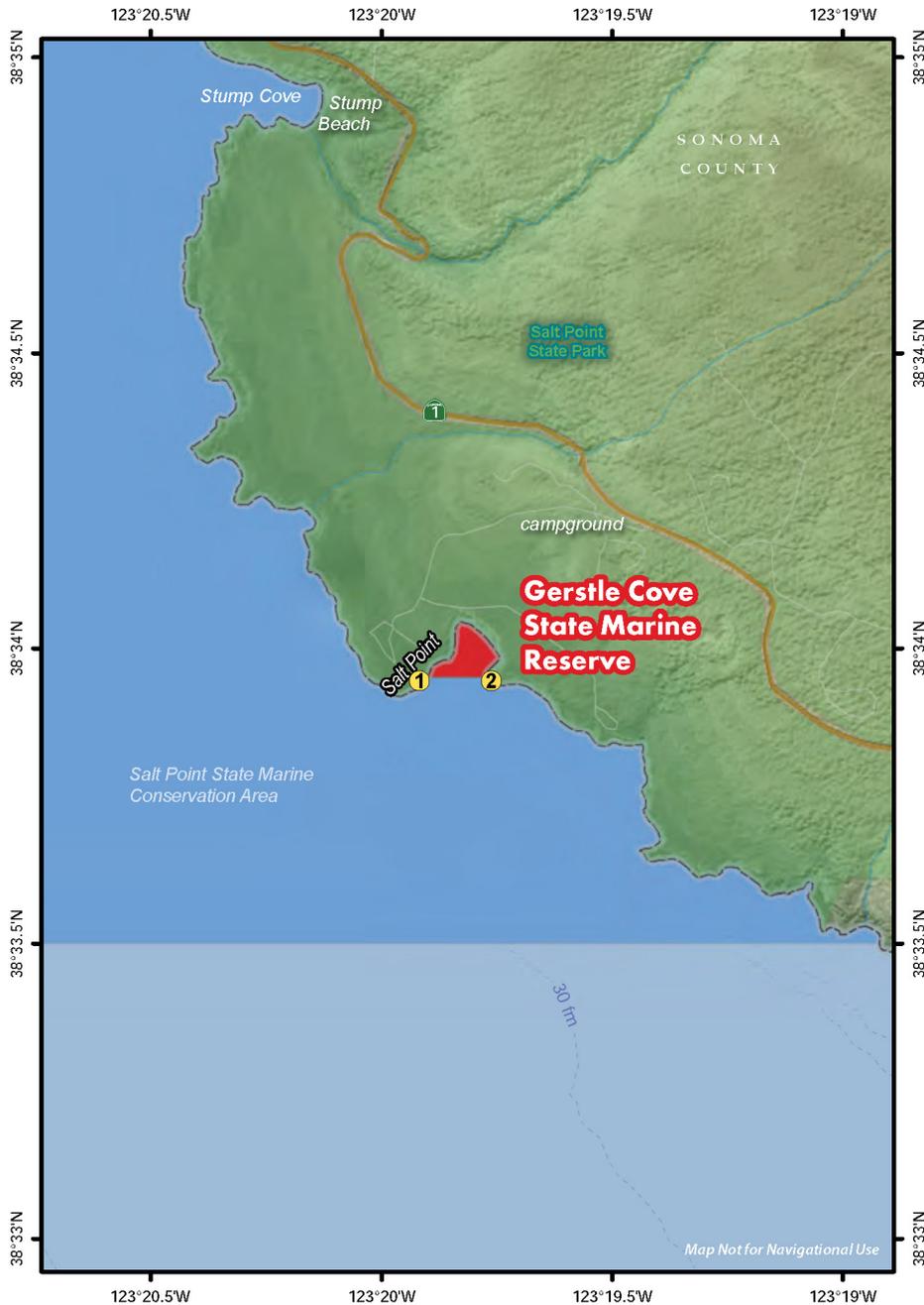
Further Information:

- MPA Website: www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs
- MPA and Sportfishing Interactive Map: www.wildlife.ca.gov/OceanSportfishMap
- Email: AskMarine@wildlife.ca.gov

Photos - Upper: Gerstle Cove State Marine Reserve, photo © Wayne Hsieh, CC BY-NC 2.0. Lower right: Sculpin in a tidepool at the reserve, photo © Chris Shuck, CC BY-NC 2.0 Lower left: Brooding anemone, coralline algae, and orange sponge at the reserve, photo © Merav Vonshak, CC BY-NC 2.0

Gerstle Cove State Marine Reserve

North Central California - Sonoma County



Gerstle Cove State Marine Reserve Boundary and Regulations from California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632

Boundary:

This area lies within the Salt Point State Marine Conservation Area and is bounded by the mean high tide line and a straight line connecting the following points:

- 38° 33.950' N. lat. 123° 19.920' W. long. ①; and
- 38° 33.950' N. lat. 123° 19.760' W. long. ②

Permitted/Prohibited Uses:

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/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Network.