

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 Drakes Estero 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 Drakes Estero State Marine Conservation Area is to protect one of California's largest and most complex coastal estuaries, including miles of tidal mudflats, coastal marsh, sand/mud estuary bottom, and eelgrass beds. Recent removal of tons of commercial oyster racks and other debris has helped to [restore the ecological function](#) of this estuary. Dungeness crab, perch, and flatfish such as California halibut depend on the extensive eelgrass beds for nursery habitat. Brants are commonly seen in the area feeding on eelgrass. Migrating and resident birds in the thousands, including cormorants, sandpipers, and pelicans, feed and rest in the estuary. Harbor seals may also be seen resting on the mudflats.

Drakes Estero State Marine Conservation Area is surrounded by [Point Reyes National Seashore](#) and shares a southern border with [Estero de Limantour State Marine Reserve](#). 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

Call CalTIP: 1 (888) 334-2258

or text 847411 - begin message with "Caltip" followed by the details.



Quick Facts: Drakes Estero State Marine Conservation Area

- **MPA size:** 2.50 square miles
- **Shoreline span:** 0.6 miles
- **Depth range:** 0 to 10 feet
- **Habitat composition:**
 - Estuary: 2.40 square miles
 - Eelgrass: 1.16 square miles
 - Coastal marsh: 2.76 square miles



Non-Consumptive Activities

Fishing

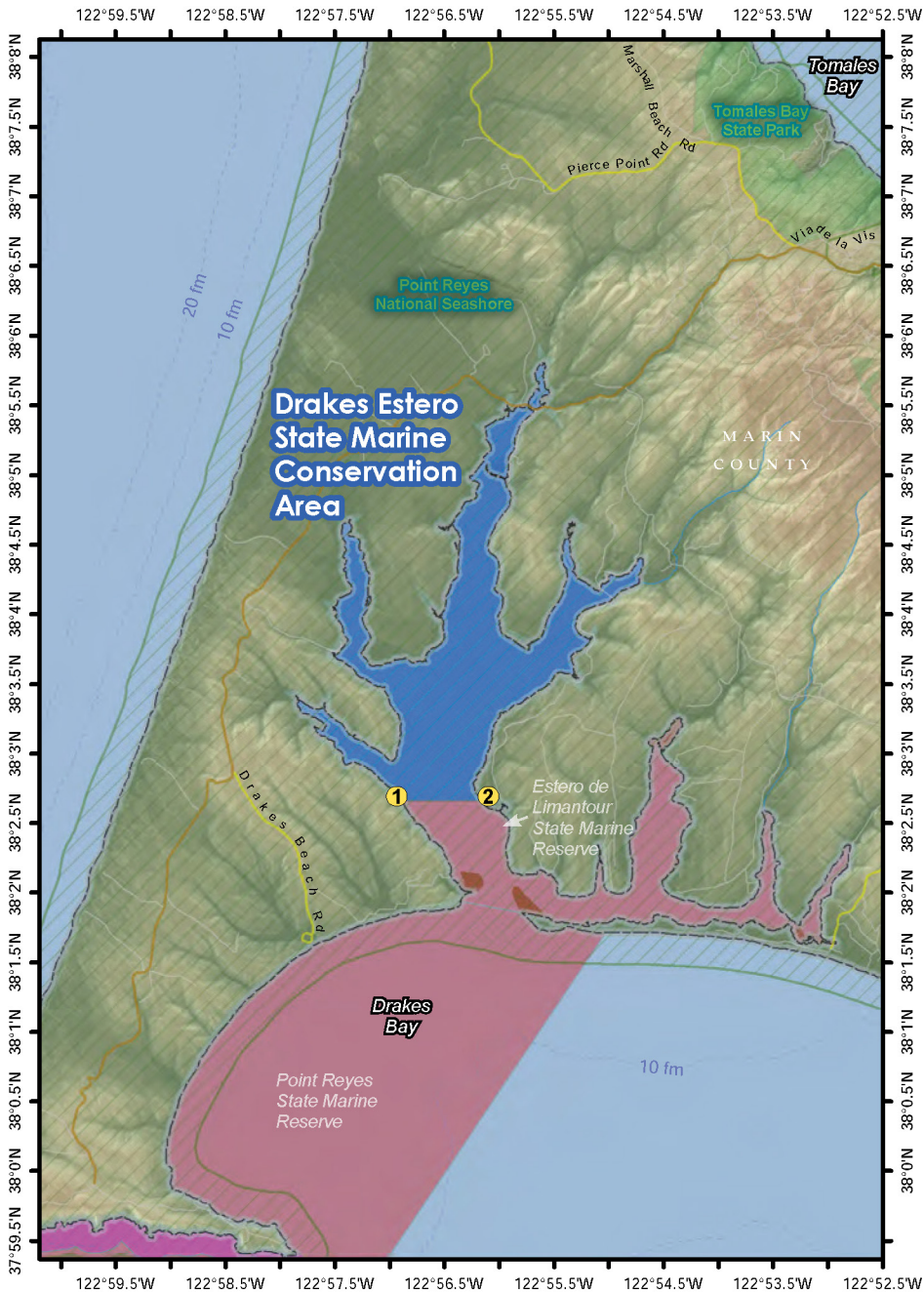
No Collecting

Only Recreational Clamming is Allowed
See Regulations on Back

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: Drakes Estero State Marine Conservation Area. photo © phoca2004, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 **Lower right:** Brants eating eelgrass at Drakes Estero State Marine Conservation Area. photo © Amelia Ryan, CC BY-NC 2.0 **Lower left:** Black perch in eelgrass habitat at the conservation area. photo © Amelia Ryan, CC BY-NC 2.0



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Drakes Estero State Marine Conservation Area Boundary and Regulations from California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632

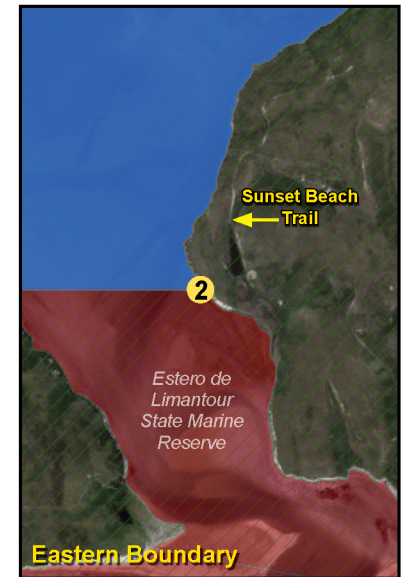
Boundary:

This area includes the waters below the mean high tide line within Drakes Estero northward of a line connecting the following two points:

- 38° 02.660' N. lat. 122° 56.900' W. long. ①; and
- 38° 02.660' N. lat. 122° 56.150' W. long. ②

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 clams 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/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Network.