

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 Natural Bridges 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 Natural Bridges State Marine Reserve is to protect the rocky and sandy intertidal area found there. The reserve's tidepools are home to sandcastle worms, acorn and gooseneck barnacles, mussels, anemones, bat stars, snails, and tidepool sculpins. Beyond the shoreline, surfgrass beds offer nursery habitat to fish and invertebrates, improve water clarity, and protect the coast from erosion. Surf smelt, barred surfperch, and grass rockfish inhabit the nearshore waters. Offshore rocks and miles of mostly undeveloped coastline provide abundant feeding, resting, and breeding areas for migratory and resident birds. Black oystercatchers, willets, and godwits hunt onshore by probing the sand for buried prey or picking through the tidepools, while brown pelicans, cormorants, and murrets dive into the productive waters to feed on schools of small fish.

Along the shore, this reserve is bordered by [Natural Bridges State Beach](#) and [Wilder Ranch State Park](#). The reserve also overlaps a small portion of [Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary](#). Placing a state marine reserve here provides very high levels of protection for local marine species and the habitats they use.



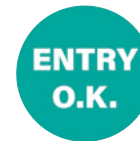
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Quick Facts: Natural Bridges State Marine Reserve

- **MPA size:** 0.25 square miles
- **Shoreline span:** 3.9 miles
- **Depth range:** 0 to 10 feet
- **Habitat composition:**
 - Rock: 0.17 square miles
 - Sand/mud: 0.05
 - Other: 0.03 square miles



Non-Consumptive
Activities

No Fishing

No Collecting

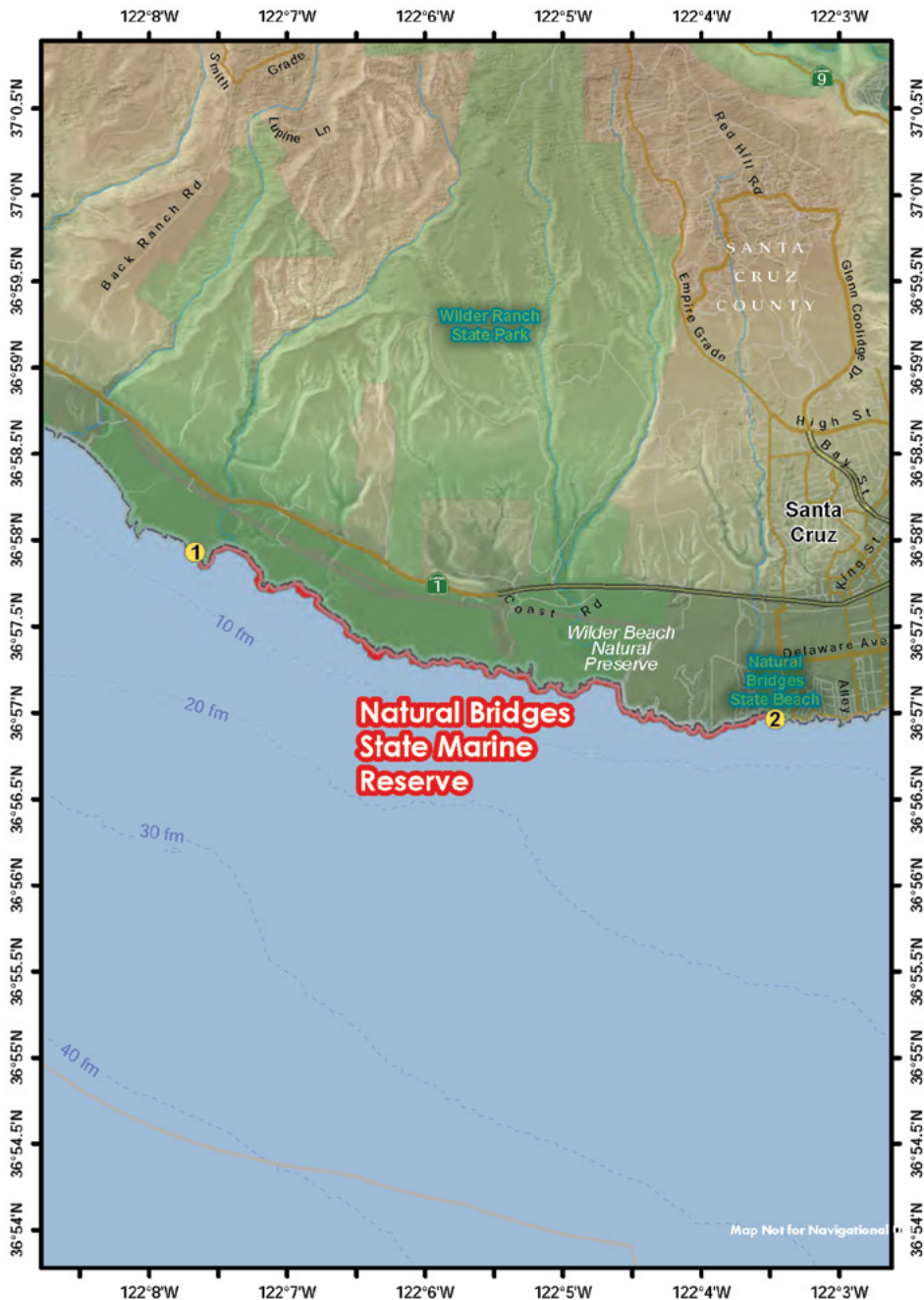
Further Information:

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

Photos - Upper: Brown pelicans on a rock in the reserve, photo © cuihenggang CC BY-NC 2.0. Lower right: Black oystercatcher and chick foraging in the reserve tidepools, photo © Idjaffe, CC BY-NC 2.0. Lower left: Blue-ringed top snail in the intertidal area at the reserve, photo © vivienneo, CC BY-NC 2.0.

Natural Bridges State Marine Reserve

Central California - Santa Cruz County



Natural Bridges State Marine Reserve Boundary and Regulations from California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632

Boundary:

This area is bounded by the mean high tide line and a distance of 200 feet seaward of mean lower low water between the following two points:

- 36° 57.912' N. lat. 122° 07.650' W. long. ①; and
- 36° 57.015' N. lat. 122° 03.504' 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.