Elkhorn Slough State Marine Reserve

Central California - Established September 2007

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 Elkhorn Slough 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 Elkhorn Slough State Marine Reserve is to protect part of a large and vital central California estuary. Habitats found in the slough include tidal flats, coastal marsh, and eelgrass beds. Elkhorn Slough is home to the largest concentration of southern sea otters in the world; sea lions and harbor seals also use the slough to give birth, hunt, and rest. At peak times, the slough may see an estimated 30,000 seabirds and shorebirds using its calm waters and vegetation for food and shelter. Flatfishes, bat rays, leopard sharks, thornbacks, longjaw mudsuckers, and a variety of crabs forage in the estuary, while clams and fat inkeeper worms burrow in the sediments.

Elkhorn Slough State Marine Reserve shares a western border with Elkhorn Slough State Marine Conservation Area. On its northern banks, the reserve is bordered by Moss Landing Wildlife Area; the reserve also overlaps a portion of Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve, which was established in 1980. 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
Call CalTIP: 1 (888) 334-2258
or text 847411 - begin message with "Caltip" followed by the details.

CALIFORNIA MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

Quick Facts: Elkhorn Slough State Marine Reserve

- **MPA size:** 2.72 square miles
- **Shoreline span:** 0.7 miles
- **Depth range:** 0 to 10 feet
- **Habitat composition:**
  Estuary: 1.65 square miles
  Eelgrass: 0.03 square miles
  Coastal marsh: 3.99 square miles

ENTRY O.K.

Non-Consumptive Activities

No Fishing

No Collecting

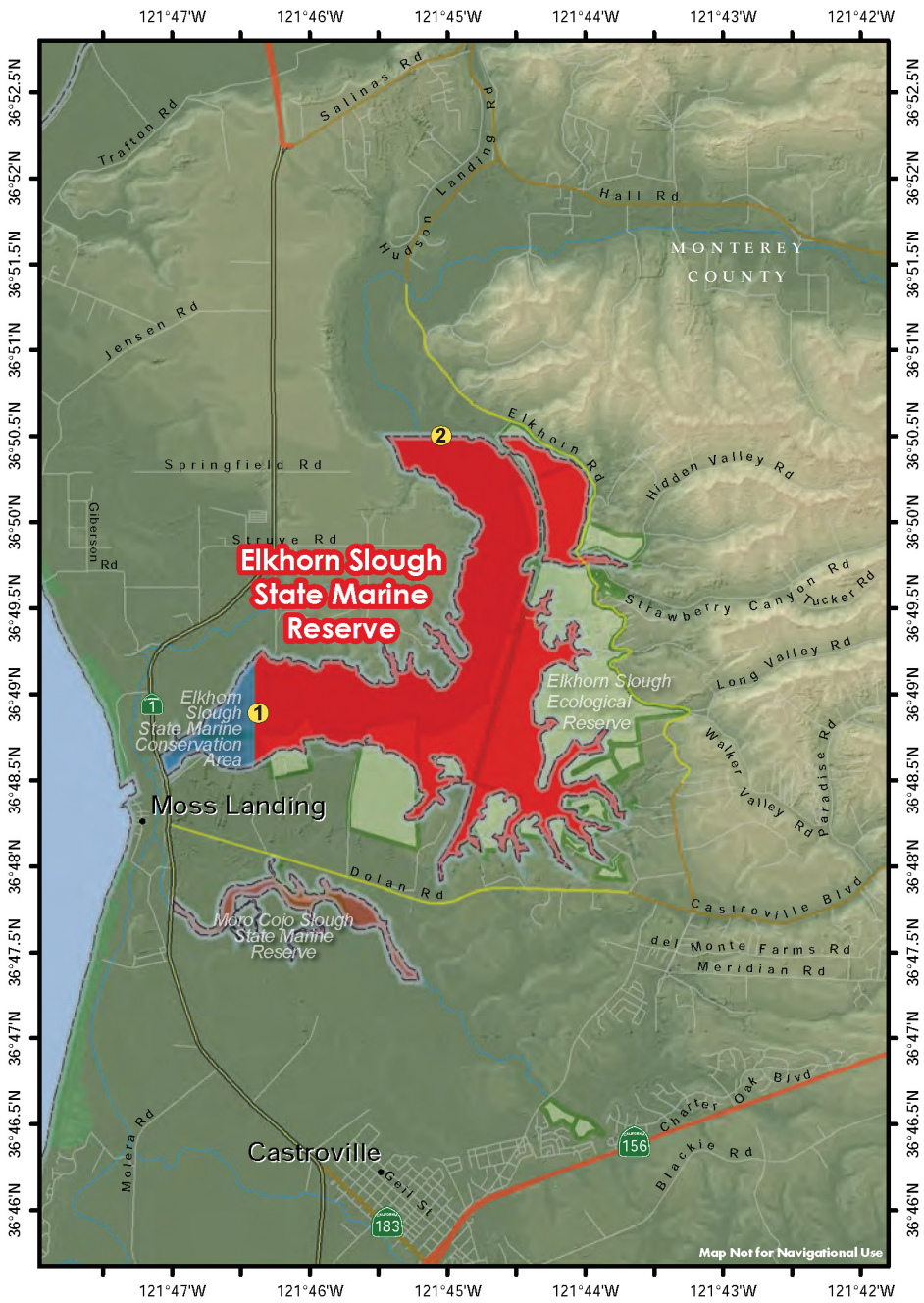
Further Information:

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

Photos - ***Upper:* Elkhorn Slough State Marine Reserve**, *photo © NOAA NOS CC BY 2.0*
***Lower right:* Eared grebe catching a fish at the reserve**, *photo © Paul Fenwick, CC BY-NC 2.0.*
***Lower left:* Striped shore crabs on the tidal flats at the reserve**, *photo © Edward Rooks, CC BY-NC 2.0.*

Elkhorn Slough State Marine Reserve

Central California - Monterey County

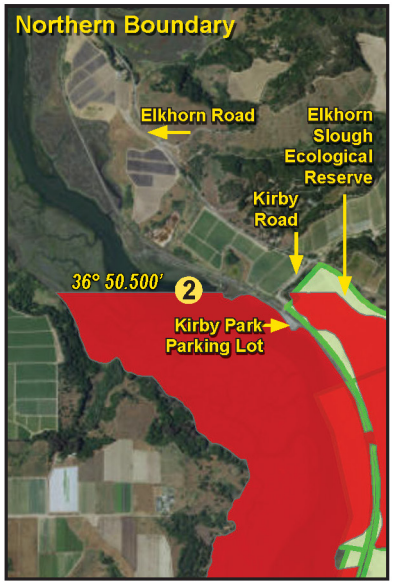


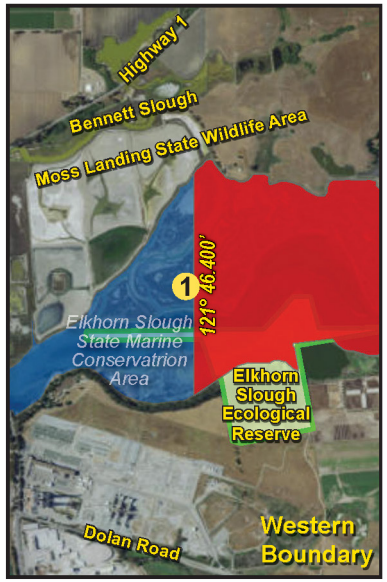
Version 2, September 2022

Elkhorn Slough State Marine Reserve Boundary and Regulations *from* California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632

Boundary:
This area includes the waters below mean high tide within Elkhorn Slough lying east of longitude 121° 46.400' W. ① and south of latitude 36° 50.500' N. 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.