

### **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 Moro Cojo 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 Moro Cojo Slough State Marine Reserve is to protect one of the few coastal estuaries left in central California, including the marsh, mudflat, and eelgrass habitats found there. Moro Cojo Slough's primarily brackish water has been polluted by upstream agriculture for many years, although wetland restoration efforts have improved conditions for estuary residents. This shallow estuary plays a vital role in filtering and cleaning the water before it drains into Moss Landing Harbor, and eventually enters the Pacific Ocean. An array of plants and animals reside in these brackish waters, including pickleweed, oysters, gaper clams, longjaw mudsuckers, and the endangered tidewater goby. The reserve is also part of a tidal estuary complex that is vital for migratory and local waterbirds, including common murres, pelicans, sandpipers, and ducks.

Placing a state marine reserve here provides very high levels of protection for local marine species and the habitats they use.

### **Quick Facts: Moro Cojo Slough State Marine Reserve**

- **MPA size:** 0.20 square mile
- **Shoreline span:** 0.10 mile
- **Depth range:** 0 to 10 feet
- **Habitat composition:**  
Estuary: 0.10 square mile



Non-Consumptive Activities

No Fishing

No Collecting

### **Further Information:**

- MPA Website: [www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs)
- MPA and Sportfishing Interactive Map: [www.wildlife.ca.gov/OceanSportfishMap](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/OceanSportfishMap)
- Email: [AskMarine@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:AskMarine@wildlife.ca.gov)

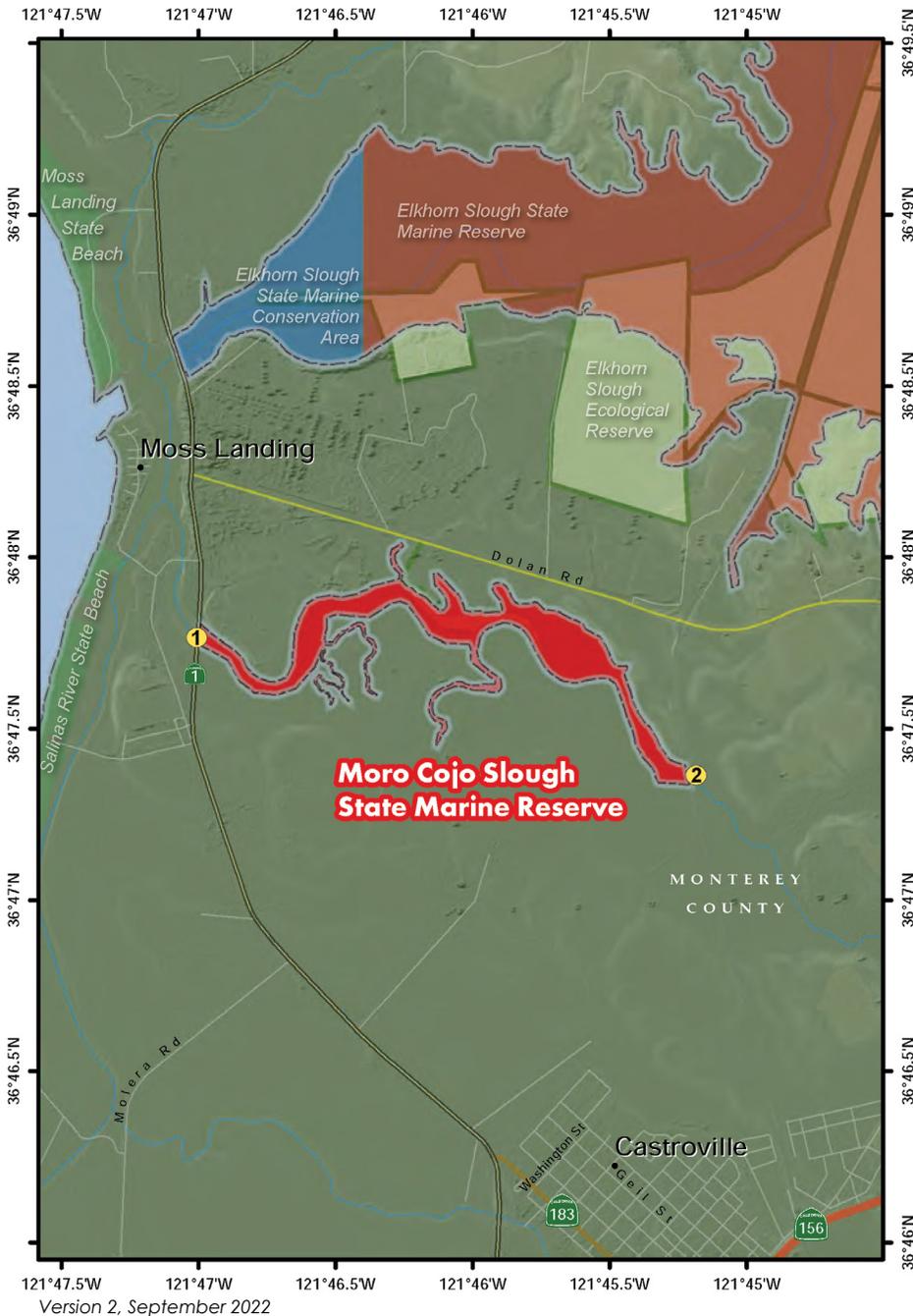
**Photos - Upper:** Moro Cojo Slough State Marine Reserve, CDFW photo by C. Wilson.  
**Lower right:** Pectoral sandpiper at the reserve, photo © southwestwanderer, CC BY-NC 2.0.  
**Lower left:** Buffleheads at the reserve, photo © Howard Friedman, CC BY-NC 2.0.



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## Moro Cojo Slough State Marine Reserve Boundary and Regulations from California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632

### Boundary:

This area includes the waters within Moro Cojo Slough below mean high tide and east of the Highway 1 Bridge ① and west of the crossing of the Southern Pacific railroad tracks 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](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Network).