

# Soquel Canyon State Marine Conservation Area

Central California Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), *Established September 2007*



Canary rockfish  
(*Sebastes pinniger*)  
ROV Photo by MARE/CDFW



Bocaccio rockfish  
(*Sebastes paucispinis*)  
Photo by MARE/CDFW



Vermilion rockfish  
(*Sebastes miniatus*)  
ROV Photo by MARE/CDFW

## Site Overview

Photos are representative of the Central Coast Region and may not be within this MPA.

## What is an MPA?

MPAs are a type of [marine managed area](#) (MMA) where marine or estuarine waters are set aside primarily to protect or conserve marine life and associated habitats. California has a coastal network of 124 protected areas designed to help increase the coherence and effectiveness of protecting the state's marine life, habitats, and ecosystems. The network includes three types of MPA: [state marine reserve](#) (SMR), [state marine conservation area](#) (SMCA), and [state marine park](#) (SMP); one MMA: [state marine recreational management area](#) (SMRMA); and [special closures](#). There are 119 MPAs, 5 MMAs and 15 special closures, each with unique boundaries and regulations in the network. Non-consumptive activities, restoration, and permitted scientific research are allowed.

## What is an SMCA?

An **SMCA** is a type of MPA that protects resources by allowing for only specific types of recreational and/or commercial take to occur. (Area restrictions are defined in [Title 14, Section 632\(a\)\(1\)\(C\)](#)).

## Soquel Canyon SMCA Overview

- **MPA size:** 22.97 square miles
- **Depth range:** 247 to 2113 feet
- **Along-shore span (shoreline):** 7.8 miles

## Soquel Canyon SMCA Key Habitats

- **Sand (all depths):** 17.76 square miles
- **Rock (all depths):** 5.2 square miles
- **Submarine canyon (all depths):** 2.87 square miles

## Where is Soquel Canyon SMCA?



## Boundaries and Regulations

**Boundary:** This area is bounded by straight lines connecting the following points in the order listed:

- 36° 51.000' N. lat. 121° 56.000' W. long.;
- 36° 51.000' N. lat. 122° 03.652' W. long.;
- 36° 48.000' N. lat. 122° 02.767' W. long.;
- 36° 48.000' N. lat. 121° 56.000' W. long.; and
- 36° 51.000' N. lat. 121° 56.000' W. long.

**Only to following take is allowed in Soquel Canyon SMCA:** the commercial and recreational take of [pelagic finfish](#). Not more than five percent by weight of any commercial pelagic finfish catch landed or possessed shall be other incidentally taken species.

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## How and Why Soquel Canyon was Chosen for an SMCA

MPAs were designed through a collaborative, regional public process by a cross-interest regional stakeholder group (RSG). Using scientific criteria, public input and local resource knowledge the RSG developed MPA proposals. RSG proposals included specific objectives (why the site should be an MPA-*included below*), the classification (type of MPA), boundaries, and regulations. Final MPA proposals were sent to the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) for their adoption process. Soquel Canyon SMCA was adopted by the Commission in 2007.

### **Summary of Objectives for Soquel Canyon SMCA:**

Provide increased protection to shallow and deep complex submarine canyon habitat and the majority of associated benthic species. The Soquel Canyon area is important to the formation of an ecologically sound MPA network component, by linking these habitats to similar habitats in other parts of the region.

## Species Likely to Benefit from the Establishment of MPAs in California

Species likely to benefit from establishing an MPA are those, whose home range, behavior, reproduction, exploitation rate or population status indicates that they may benefit from spatial management. This includes species that are directly targeted by fisheries, those which are caught incidental to fishing for the target species (bycatch) and which cannot be returned to the water with a high rate of survival, and those which may be indirectly impacted through ecological changes within MPAs.

For a list of species likely to benefit from MPAs statewide: [www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/mpa/species.asp](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/mpa/species.asp)

For a list of species likely to benefit from central coast MPAs: [www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/binder3b.pdf](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/binder3b.pdf)

## Central Coast Regional Resources

California MPA Overview:

[www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network-Overview](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network-Overview)

Central Coast Regional Goals and Objectives:

[www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/rqop092805.pdf](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/rqop092805.pdf)

2008 Master Plan Appendix O: Regional Management Plan:

[www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/revisedmp0108o.pdf](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/revisedmp0108o.pdf)

MPA Research and Monitoring Activities:

[www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Research-And-Monitoring](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Research-And-Monitoring)

Regional MPA Statistics:

[www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Statistics](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Statistics)

Regional Planning History:

[www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Planning-Process](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Planning-Process)

## California MPA Network Resources

Detailed MPA guidebooks maps and brochures:

[www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network)

California Marine Life Protection Act Marine Protected Areas Master Plan:

[www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Master-Plan](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Master-Plan)

Marine Life Protection Act Summary and Network Goals:

[www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network-Goals](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network-Goals)



For more information, visit:

[www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs)

Email:

[AskMPA@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:AskMPA@wildlife.ca.gov)

MPA Mobile:



Report poaching and polluting,  
Call CalTIP

1-888-334-2258

The information in this document does not replace the official regulatory language found in the California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632 [www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Network/Title-14-Section-632](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Network/Title-14-Section-632)