

## 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 Soquel Canyon 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 Soquel Canyon State Marine Conservation Area is to protect both shallow and deep submarine canyon habitats, including rocky canyon walls and sand/mud seafloor. Soquel Submarine Canyon, a northern branch of Monterey Submarine Canyon, funnels cold, nutrient-rich water towards the surface where it helps to support a remarkable array of life. Plankton, krill, and schools of small baitfish like sardine and anchovy attract fish, birds, and whales that feast on the bounty. Spot prawns and octopus live in rocky crevices, while Pacific hake, cat sharks, and sleeper sharks forage in the dark waters. The conservation area offers ideal habitat for deepwater rockfishes, invertebrates like sea stars, sea pens, and urchins, and fragile deepwater corals and sponges.

[Soquel Canyon State Marine Conservation Area](#) overlaps a small portion of [Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary](#). Placing a state marine conservation area here provides moderately high levels of protection for marine life and the habitats they use.



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



## Quick Facts: Soquel Canyon State Marine Conservation Area

- **MPA size:** 22.97 square miles
- **Shoreline span:** 2.9 miles
- **Depth range:** 274 to 2,113 feet
- **Habitat composition:**
  - Sand/mud: 20.79 square miles
  - Rock: 2.18 square miles



Non-Consumptive Activities

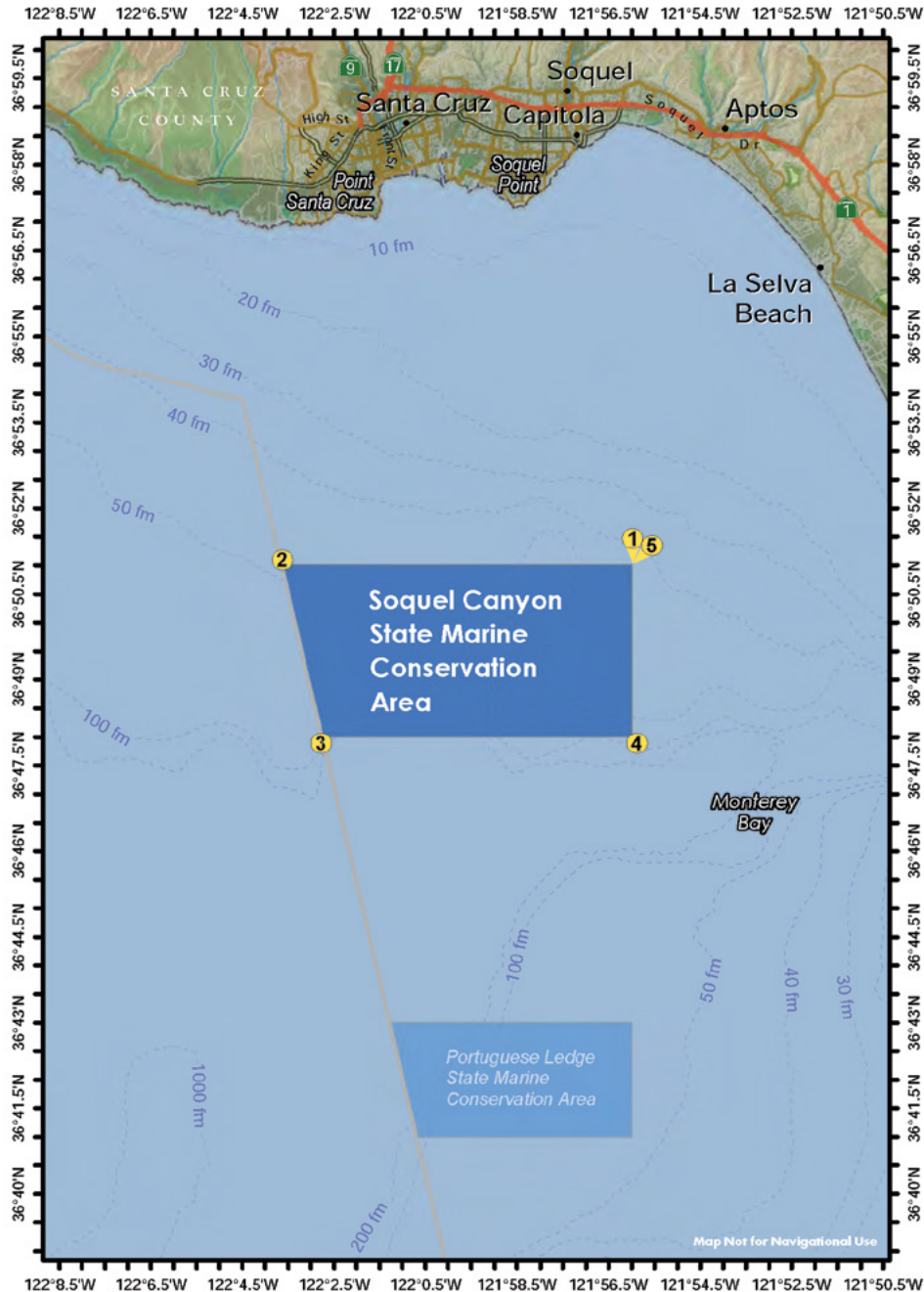
Fishing  
See Regulations On Back

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: Humpback whale eating small fish at Soquel Canyon State Marine Conservation Area. photo © Robin Gwen Agarwal, CC BY-NC 2.0 Lower right: Rockfish and feather star in the conservation area. CDFW/MARE photo Lower left: Fragile pink sea urchins at the conservation area. CDFW/MARE photo



**Soquel Canyon State Marine Conservation Area Boundary and Regulations from California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632**

**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. ①;
- 36° 51.000' N. lat. 122° 03.652' W. long. ②;
- 36° 48.000' N. lat. 122° 02.767' W. long. ③;
- 36° 48.000' N. lat. 121° 56.000' W. long. ④; and
- 36° 51.000' N. lat. 121° 56.000' W. long. ⑤

**Permitted/Prohibited Uses:**

1. It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource for commercial and/or recreational purposes, with the following specified exceptions:  
**a.** The commercial and recreational take of pelagic finfish\* is allowed. Not more than five percent by weight of any commercial pelagic finfish catch landed or possessed shall be other incidentally taken species.

\* Pelagic finfish are defined here as: northern anchovy (*Engraulis mordax*), barracudas (*Sphyraena* spp.), billfishes (family Istiophoridae), dolphinfish (*Coryphaena hippurus*), Pacific herring (*Clupea pallasii*), jack mackerel (*Trachurus symmetricus*), Pacific mackerel (*Scomber japonicus*), salmon (*Oncorhynchus* spp.), Pacific sardine (*Sardinops sagax*), blue shark (*Prionace glauca*), salmon shark (*Lamna ditropis*), shortfin mako shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*), thresher sharks (*Alopias* spp.), swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*), tunas (family Scombridae) including Pacific bonito (*Sarda chiliensis*), and yellowtail (*Seriola lalandi*). The commercial take of marlin is not 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](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Network).