

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 Portuguese Ledge 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 [Portuguese Ledge State Marine Conservation Area](#) is to protect shallow and deep submarine canyon habitats, and the fish and invertebrates that live on the sea floor. The cold, nutrient rich water that rises from the depths of the Monterey Submarine Canyon helps to support a remarkable array of life within these habitats. Submarine canyon habitat, including rocky deepwater reefs and sand/mud seafloor, is used by a wide variety of marine species, such as sponges, eelpouts, and spot prawn. The conservation area protects deepwater rockfish like greenspotted rockfish and darkblotched rockfish, as well as bizarre deep-dwelling creatures like the [fangtooth fish](#) and the [bloody-belly comb jelly](#).

This conservation area has the greatest depth range of any MPA in the network, with over a square mile of the Monterey Submarine Canyon within its boundaries, and overlaps part of the [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.



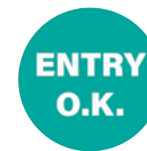
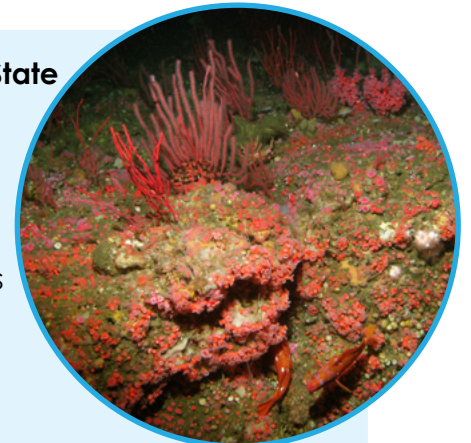
Report poachers and polluters
Call CalTIP: 1 (888) 334-2258

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



Quick Facts: Portuguese Ledge State Marine Conservation Area

- **MPA size:** 10.64 square miles
- **Depth range:** 302 to 4,793 feet
- **Habitat composition:**
 - Sand/mud: 10.44 square miles
 - Rock: 0.20 square miles



Non-Consumptive Activities

Fishing
See Regulations On Back

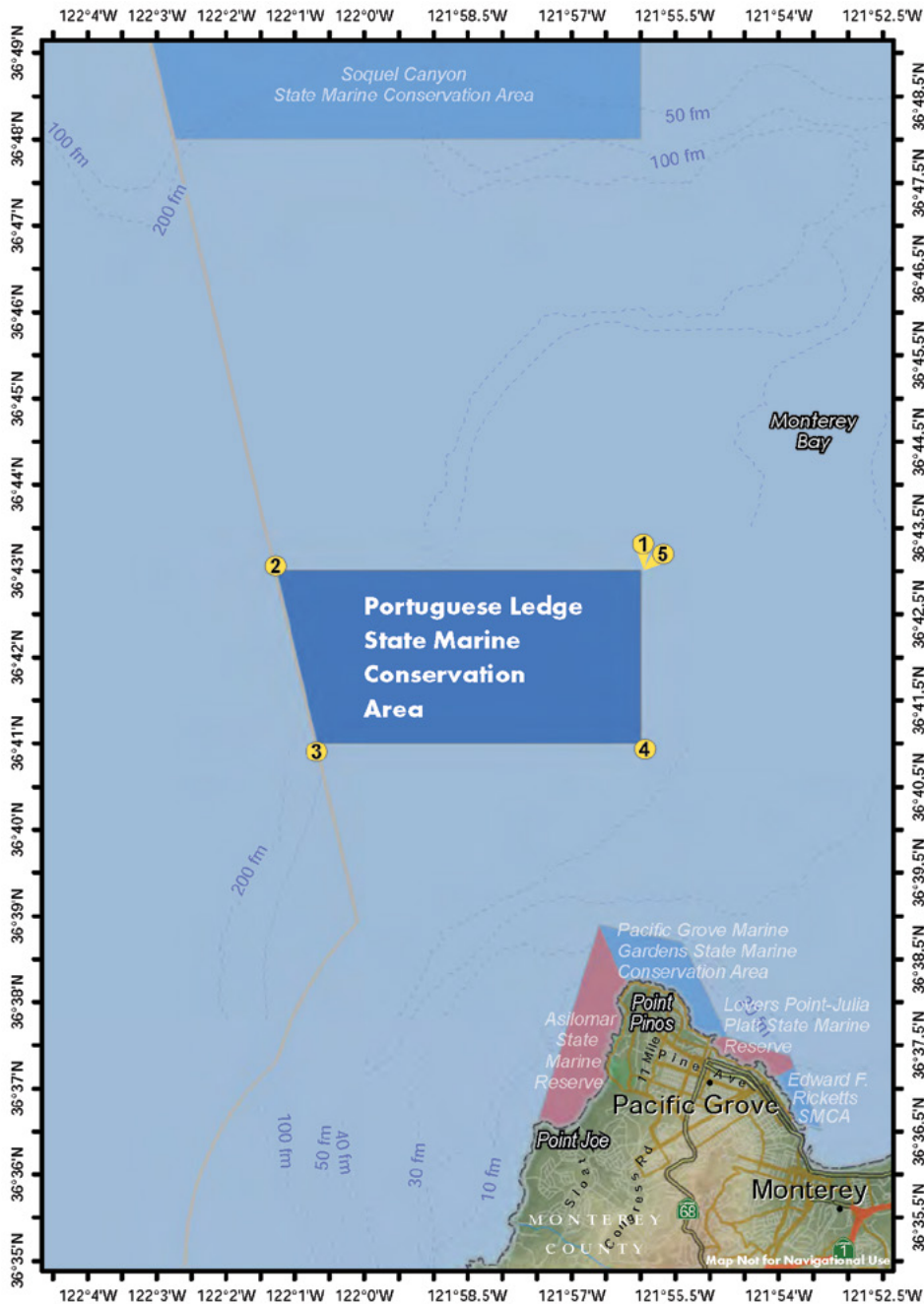
No Collecting

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: Deepwater reef at Portuguese Ledge State Marine Conservation Area.
Lower right: Darkblotched rockfish and sea cucumber at the conservation area.
Lower left: Spot prawns and sea pens at the conservation area.

CDFW/MARE photos



Version 1, April 2021

Portuguese Ledge 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° 43.000' N. lat. 121° 56.000' W. long. ①;
- 36° 43.000' N. lat. 122° 01.294' W. long. ②;
- 36° 41.000' N. lat. 122° 00.706' W. long. ③;
- 36° 41.000' N. lat. 121° 56.000' W. long. ④; and
- 36° 43.000' 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.