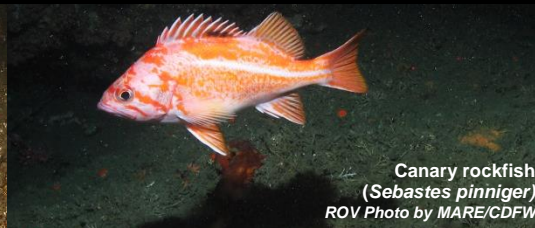


# Big Creek State Marine Conservation Area

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



## 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\(a\)\(1\)\(C\)](#)).

## Big Creek SMCA Overview

- **MPA size:** 7.85 square miles
- **Depth range:** 107 to 1964 feet
- **Along-shore span (shoreline):** 2.5 miles

## Big Creek SMCA Key Habitats

- **Sand (all depths):** 7.75 square miles
- **Rock (all depths):** 0.09 square miles
- **Submarine canyon (all depths):** 2.44 square miles

## Where is Big Creek SMCA?



## Boundaries and Regulations

**Boundary:** This area is bounded by the mean high tide line and straight lines connecting the following points in the order listed except where noted:

36° 07.200' N. lat. 121° 39.000' W. long.;  
36° 07.200' N. lat. 121° 42.869' W. long.; thence southward along the three nautical mile offshore boundary to  
36° 05.200' N. lat. 121° 41.222' W. long.;  
36° 05.200' N. lat. 121° 38.000' W. long.; and  
36° 07.200' N. lat. 121° 39.000' W. long.

**Only the following take is allowed in Big Creek SMCA:**

1. The recreational take of salmon and albacore.
2. The commercial take of salmon, albacore, and spot prawn

# Big Creek State Marine Conservation Area

## How and Why Big Creek 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. Big Creek SMCA was adopted by the Commission in 2007.

### **Summary of Objectives for Big Creek SMCA:**

Provide for increased protection of a diverse area containing shallow and deep, and hard and soft habitats, kelp beds, submarine canyons, and associated fish and invertebrate species while minimizing impact to shelf rockfish fisheries, through the incorporation of part of the Rockfish Conservation Area into the MPA, and to the spot prawn and salmon fisheries. This 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