Piedras Blancas State Marine Reserve

Central California - Established September 2007

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 Piedras Blancas 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 Piedras Blancas State Marine Reserve is to protect the diverse surfgrass, rock, sand, tidal flat, coastal marsh, and kelp forest habitat found there. Each year, thousands of northern elephant seals haul out onto the reserve's sandy beaches to mate, give birth, and molt. Offshore, rocky pinnacles and reefs attract lingcod, rock crab, and brown rockfish, and extensive kelp beds provide habitat and hunting grounds for diverse marine species including leopard shark and wolf-eel. Brown smoothhound shark and perch cruise the sand flats and surfgrass beds near shore. Rocks close to the coastline serve as haulout sites for marine mammals like harbor seals and sea lions, and resting and nesting areas for seabirds like black oystercatchers and brown pelicans.

This reserve shares a western boundary with Piedras Blancas State Marine Conservation Area, and overlaps a small portion of Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. The reserve also borders a portion of Hearst San Simeon State Park. Placing a state marine reserve here provides very high levels of protection for local marine species 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.

CALIFORNIA MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

Quick Facts: Piedras Blancas State Marine Reserve

- **MPA size:** 10.44 square miles
- **Shoreline span:** 6.5 miles
- **Depth range:** 0 to 157 feet
- **Habitat composition:**
  Rock: 9.95 square miles
  Sand/mud: 6.21 square miles

ENTRY O.K.

Non-Consumptive Activities

No Fishing

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:* Northern elephant seals on the beach at Piedras Blancas State Marine Reserve**, *photo © Lindsay Wright CC BY-NC 2.0.* ***Lower right:* Orange-peel doris at the reserve**, *photo © Jeff Goddard CC BY-NC 2.0.* ***Lower left:* Lingcod and a school of smaller fish at the reserve**, *CDFW/MARE photo.*

Piedras Blancas State Marine Reserve

Central California - San Luis Obispo County

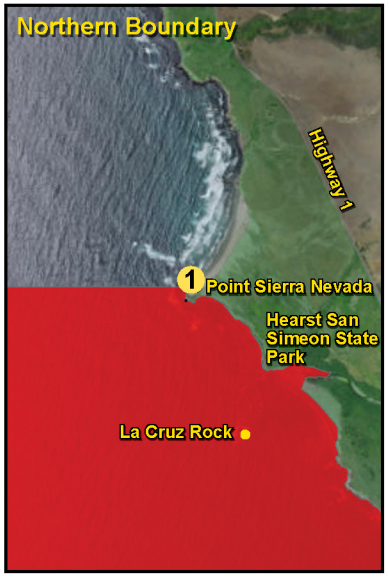
Version 2, September 2022

Piedras Blancas State Marine Reserve Boundary and Regulations *from* California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632

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

35° 42.850' N. lat. 121° 18.950' W. long.①;
35° 42.850' N. lat. 121° 21.000' W. long.②;
35° 39.150' N. lat. 121° 18.500' W. long.③; and
35° 39.150' N. lat. 121° 14.519' W. long.④

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.