

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

Piedras Blancas SMCA Overview

- **MPA size:** 8.84 square miles
- **Depth range:** 94 to 337 feet
- **Along-shore span (shoreline):** 4.9 miles

Piedras Blancas SMCA Key Habitats

- **Sand (all depths):** 8.15 square miles
- **Rock (all depths):** 0.56 square miles

Where is Piedras Blancas 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:

35° 42.850' N. lat. 121° 21.000' W. long.;
35° 42.850' N. lat. 121° 22.763' W. long.; thence southward along the three nautical mile offshore boundary to
35° 39.150' N. lat. 121° 20.913' W. long.;
35° 39.150' N. lat. 121° 18.500' W. long.; and
35° 42.850' N. lat. 121° 21.000' W. long.

Only the following take is allowed:

1. The recreational take of salmon and albacore.
2. The commercial take of salmon and albacore.

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How and Why Piedras Blancas 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. Piedras Blancas SMCA was adopted by the Commission in 2007.

Summary of Objectives for Piedras Blancas SMCA:

Provide for increased protection of a diverse area containing shallow hard and soft habitats, kelp beds, pinnacles, and associated fish and invertebrate species in an area receiving increased public visitation due to marine mammal viewing opportunities, while minimizing impact to the salmon fishery. 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

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

Central Coast Regional Resources

California MPA Overview:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network-Overview

Central Coast Regional Goals and Objectives:

www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/rgop092805.pdf

2008 Master Plan Appendix O: Regional Management Plan:

www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/revisedmp0108o.pdf

MPA Research and Monitoring Activities:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Research-And-Monitoring

Regional MPA Statistics:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Statistics

Regional Planning History:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Planning-Process



For more Information, visit:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs

Email:

AskMPA@wildlife.ca.gov

MPA Mobile:



Report poaching and polluting,
Call CalTIP

1-888-334-2258

California MPA Network Resources

Detailed MPA guidebooks maps and brochures:

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

Marine Life Protection Act Summary and Network Goals:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network-Goals

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