

Morro Bay State Marine Recreational Management 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 a SMRMA?

A **SMRMA** is a type of MMA that provides protection equivalent to an MPA, a SMRMA generally prohibits the take of marine resources. (Area restrictions are defined in [Title 14, Section 632\(a\)\(1\)\(D\)](#)).

Morro Bay SMRMA Overview

- **SMRMA size:** 3.07 square miles

Where is Morro Bay SMRMA?



Morro Bay SMRMA Key Habitats

- **Beaches:** 1.46 miles
- **Tidal flats:** 9.19 miles
- **Coastal marsh:** 6.25 miles
- **Marsh:** 0.11 square miles
- **Estuary:** 3.02 square miles
- **Eelgrass:** 1.04 square miles
- **Unidentified (all depths):** 0.01 square miles

Boundaries and Regulations

Boundary: This area includes the area below mean high tide within Morro Bay east of the Morro Bay entrance breakwater and west of longitude 120° 50.340' W.

Only the following take is allowed north of latitude 35° 19.700'N:

1. The recreational take of [finfish](#).
2. Aquaculture of oysters, pursuant to a valid state water bottom lease and permit.
3. Storing [finfish](#) Storing [finfish](#) taken outside the Morro Bay SMRMA in a receiver for bait purposes.

Recreational hunting of waterfowl is allowed in Morro Bay SMRMA unless otherwise restricted by hunting regulations (sections 502, 550, 551, and 552).

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How and Why Morro Bay was Chosen for a SMRMA

This SMRMA was 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. Morro Bay SMRMA was adopted by the Commission in 2007.

Summary of Objectives for Morro Bay SMRMA:

Provide increased protection for one of the few estuarine areas of the central coast while allowing for the traditional use of waterfowl hunting.

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/rqop092805.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

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



For more information, visit:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs

Email:

AskMPA@wildlife.ca.gov

MPA Mobile:



Report poaching and polluting,

Call CaTIP

1-888-334-2258

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