

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 Vandenberg 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 Vandenberg State Marine Reserve is to protect the sandy beaches and seafloor, rocky reef, tidal flats, kelp forest, and estuary habitat found there. The soft seafloor is inhabited by sea pens and a variety of skates, soles, and other flatfish, while kelp forests anchored by rocky pinnacles and reefs provide shelter and hunting grounds for perch, leopard shark, and rock scallop. The tidal mudflats and estuary at the mouth of the Santa Ynez River hosts hundreds of resident and migrant waterbird species. The remote reserve also protects nesting sites for the endangered least tern, and is one of the largest California breeding sites for the threatened western snowy plover.

Prior to 2007, this area benefitted from protections provided by a previous state marine reserve, and restrictions on vessel traffic due to the presence of Vandenberg Air Force Base. Placing a state marine reserve here provides very high levels of protection for local marine species and the habitats they use.

Quick Facts: Vandenberg State Marine Reserve

- **MPA size:** 32.91 square miles
- **Shoreline span:** 14.5 miles
- **Depth range:** 0 to 127 feet
- **Habitat composition:**
 - Rock: 2.84 square miles
 - Sand/mud: 29.95 square miles
 - Other: 0.12 square miles



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

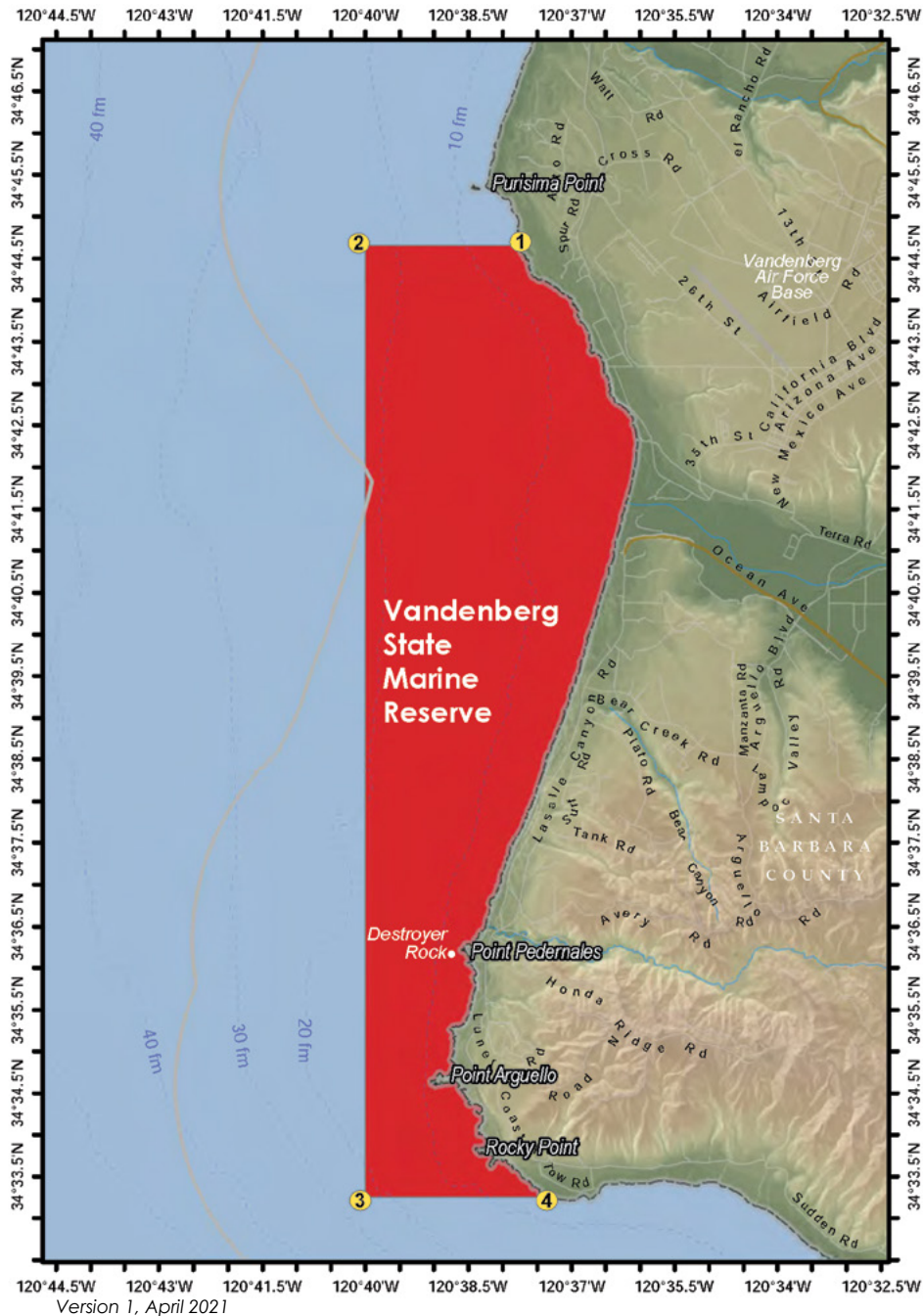
Photos - Upper: Coastline at Vandenberg State Marine Reserve, photo © USFWS Pacific Southwest Region CC BY 2.0 **Lower right:** Sandpiper eating a sand crab, Vandenberg State Marine Reserve, photo © Conor McMahon CC BY-NC 2.0. **Lower left:** California mussels and purple urchins in a tidepool at Vandenberg State Marine Reserve, photo © rclarke33 CC BY-NC 2.0.



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Vandenberg State Marine Reserve Boundary and Regulations from California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632

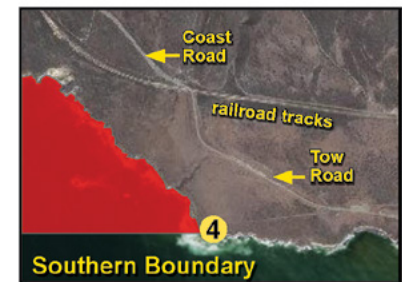
Boundary:

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

- 34° 44.650' N. lat. 120° 37.750' W. long. ①;
- 34° 44.650' N. lat. 120° 40.000' W. long. ②;
- 34° 33.250' N. lat. 120° 40.000' W. long. ③; and
- 34° 33.250' N. lat. 120° 37.407' W. long. ④

Permitted/Prohibited Uses:

1. It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource, with the following specified exceptions: take incidental to base operations and commercial space launch operations identified by the Vandenberg Air Force Base Commander as mission critical is allowed.
2. Public Entry. Public entry into the Vandenberg State Marine Reserve may be restricted at the discretion of the Department to protect wildlife, aquatic life, or habitat, or by the Commander of Vandenberg Air Force Base to protect and provide safety for base operations.
3. The Department shall enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Commander of Vandenberg Air Force Base for the mutually beneficial management and administration of the Vandenberg State Marine Reserve. The MOU shall include, but not be limited to, the identification of Vandenberg Air Force Base's national defense mission activities that are unrestricted by the subject regulations and details on management and administrative roles and responsibilities.



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.