

## What is a California marine protected area (or “MPA”)?

An MPA is a type of managed area whose main purpose is to protect or conserve marine life and habitats in ocean 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. Most marine conservation areas such as Bolsa Bay State Marine Conservation Area provide some opportunity for commercial and/or recreational take (species and gear exceptions vary by location - see reverse).

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 conservation area?

One of the goals for Bolsa Bay State Marine Conservation Area is to protect a portion of the largest remaining saltwater wetlands in Southern California. The tidal flats here provide important nursery habitat for young fish, as well as crabs, shrimp, and other marine invertebrates. Yellowfin croaker, California scorpionfish, and spotted sand bass search the flats for prey, while clams filter the water for bits of food, and California sea hares graze on various algae. The wetland is an important seasonal stop-over for migrating birds, a feeding area for sandpipers and many other shorebirds, and an essential feeding and resting site for year-round visitors like brown pelicans and terns.

This conservation area shares a southern border with [Bolsa Bay State Marine Conservation Area](#), and overlaps a portion of the [Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve](#). Placing a state marine conservation area here provides moderately high levels of protection for marine life and the habitats they use.



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## Quick Facts: Bolsa Bay State Marine Conservation Area

- **MPA size:** 0.07 square miles
- **Habitat composition:**  
Estuary: 0.07 square miles  
Coastal marsh: 0.70 square miles



Fishing, Entry, and Hiking Restrictions  
See Regulations On Back



No Boating, Diving,  
Swimming or  
Wading



No Collecting

## Further Information:

- MPA Website: [www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs)
- MPA and Sportfishing Interactive Map: [www.wildlife.ca.gov/OceanSportfishMap](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/OceanSportfishMap)
- Email: [AskMarine@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:AskMarine@wildlife.ca.gov)

**Photos - Upper:** View looking north across Bolsa Bay State Marine Conservation Area. CDFW photo by P. Serpa **Lower right:** California sea hare at the conservation area. photo © Sara Cristina Medina, CC BY-NC 2.0 **Lower left:** Least sandpipers feeding at Bolsa Bay State Marine Conservation Area. photo © Diane Etchison, CC BY-NC 2.0



## Bolsa Bay State Marine Conservation Area Boundary and Regulations from California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632

This area overlaps a portion of the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve. Ecological reserve rules are in effect as defined in CCR Title 14, Section 630 or as posted.

### Boundary:

This area includes the waters below the mean high tide line within Bolsa Bay estuary southward of a line that approximates the Warner Avenue bridge located between the following two points:

- 33° 42.700' N. lat. 118° 03.633' W. long. ①; and
- 33° 42.700' N. lat. 118° 03.604' W. long. ②;
- and northward of a line that approximates the pedestrian bridge located between the following two points:
- 33° 42.219' N. lat. 118° 03.167' W. long. ③; and
- 33° 42.177' N. lat. 118° 03.186' W. long. ④

### Permitted/Prohibited Uses:

1. It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource for commercial and/or recreational purposes, with the following specified exceptions:
  - a. The recreational take of finfish\* by hook-and-line from shore in designated areas only is allowed.
  - b. Take pursuant to the routine operation and maintenance, habitat restoration, maintenance, dredging, research and education, and maintenance of artificial structures inside the conservation area is allowed pursuant to any required federal, state and local permits, or activities pursuant to Section 630, or as otherwise authorized by the department.
2. Boating, swimming, wading, and diving are prohibited within the conservation area.
3. No person, except state and local law enforcement officers, fire suppression agencies and employees of the department in the performance of their official duties or persons possessing written permission from the department or employees of Signal Corporation and its invitees for the purpose of carrying out oil and gas operations, shall enter this conservation area and remain therein except on established trails, paths, or other designated areas.
4. No person shall enter this conservation area between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

\*Finfish are defined here as any species of bony fish or cartilaginous fish (sharks, skates and rays). 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](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Network).