



## 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. The ban on collecting and fishing in no-take marine conservation areas such as Bolsa Chica Basin State Marine Conservation Area provides very high levels 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 conservation area?

One of the goals for Bolsa Chica Basin State Marine Conservation Area is to protect part of the largest remaining saltwater marsh in Southern California. The conservation area protects tidal flats in the estuary's low-lying intertidal wetland as well as higher, marshy areas. The intertidal portion, with its eelgrass and pickleweed, is a prime nursery area for young marine fish and invertebrates. California halibut and white seabass hunt smaller fish in the estuary such as topsmelt and California killifish, while clams filter the water for food, and California sea hares graze on various algae. The wetland is an important seasonal stop-over for migrating birds, a nesting area for endangered snowy plovers, and an essential feeding and resting site for year-round visitors like brown pelicans and whimbrels.

This conservation area shares a northern border with [Bolsa Bay State Marine Conservation Area](#), and overlaps a portion of the [Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve](#). Placing a no-take state marine conservation area here provides very high levels of protection for marine species and the habitats they use.



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or text 847411 - begin message with "CalTIP" followed by the details.



## Quick Facts: Bolsa Chica Basin State Marine Conservation Area

- **MPA size:** 0.70 square miles
- **Habitat composition:**
  - Estuary: 0.65 square miles
  - Eelgrass: 0.05 square miles
  - Coastal marsh: 2.95 square miles



Entry and Hiking Restrictions  
See Regulations On Back



No Boating, Diving,  
Swimming, or  
Wading



No Fishing



No Collecting

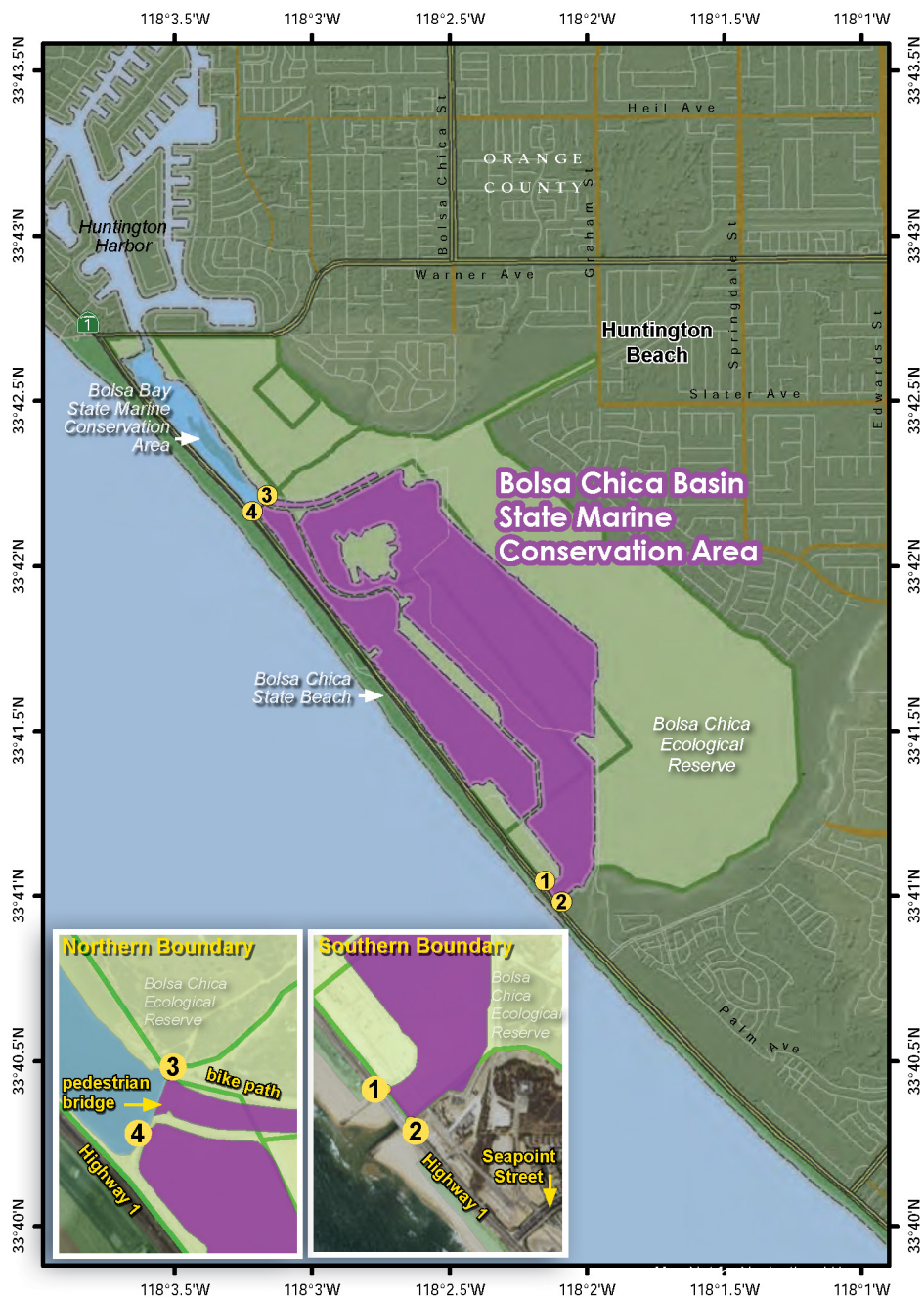
## Further Information:

- 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: Bolsa Chica Basin State Marine Conservation Area, photo © Sergei Gushev CC BY 2.0.  
Lower right: Topsmelt leaps from the water in the conservation area, photo © James Bailey CC BY-NC 2.0.  
Lower left: California sea hare in the conservation area, photo © socialwombat CC BY-NC 2.0

# Bolsa Chica Basin State Marine Conservation Area

Southern California - Orange County



## Bolsa Chica Basin 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 the Bolsa Chica Basin estuary northeastward of the Pacific Coast Highway Bridge, approximated by a straight line between the following two points:

- 33° 41.028' N. lat. 118° 02.153' W. long. ①; and
- 33° 40.981' N. lat. 118° 02.109' W. long. ②;
- and southeastward of a straight line 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. Take pursuant to 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.

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).