

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 Blue Cavern Offshore 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 Blue Cavern Offshore State Marine Conservation Area is to protect the sandy sea floor found there. Market squid lay egg cases along the deep sandy seafloor, and flatfish like California halibut and sole camouflage themselves in the ripples of sand that cross the ocean floor. Deepwater rocky reef habitat is used by a variety of fish, including rockfish and lingcod. Yellowtail, white seabass, and Pacific bonito roam the shallower waters in search of prey.

A portion of this area has been protected since 1974, when the State of California established the [Northwest Santa Catalina Island Area of Special Biological Significance](#). The offshore conservation area shares a southern border with [Blue Cavern Onshore State Marine Conservation Area](#). Placing a state marine conservation area here provides moderately high levels of protection for marine life and the habitats they use.



Report poachers and polluters

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



Quick Facts: Blue Cavern Offshore State Marine Conservation Area

- **MPA size:** 7.70 square miles
- **Depth range:** 267 to 2,616 feet
- **Habitat composition:**
 - Rock: < 0.01 square miles
 - Sand/mud: 7.69 square miles



Non-Consumptive Activities

Fishing
See Regulations
On Back

No Collecting

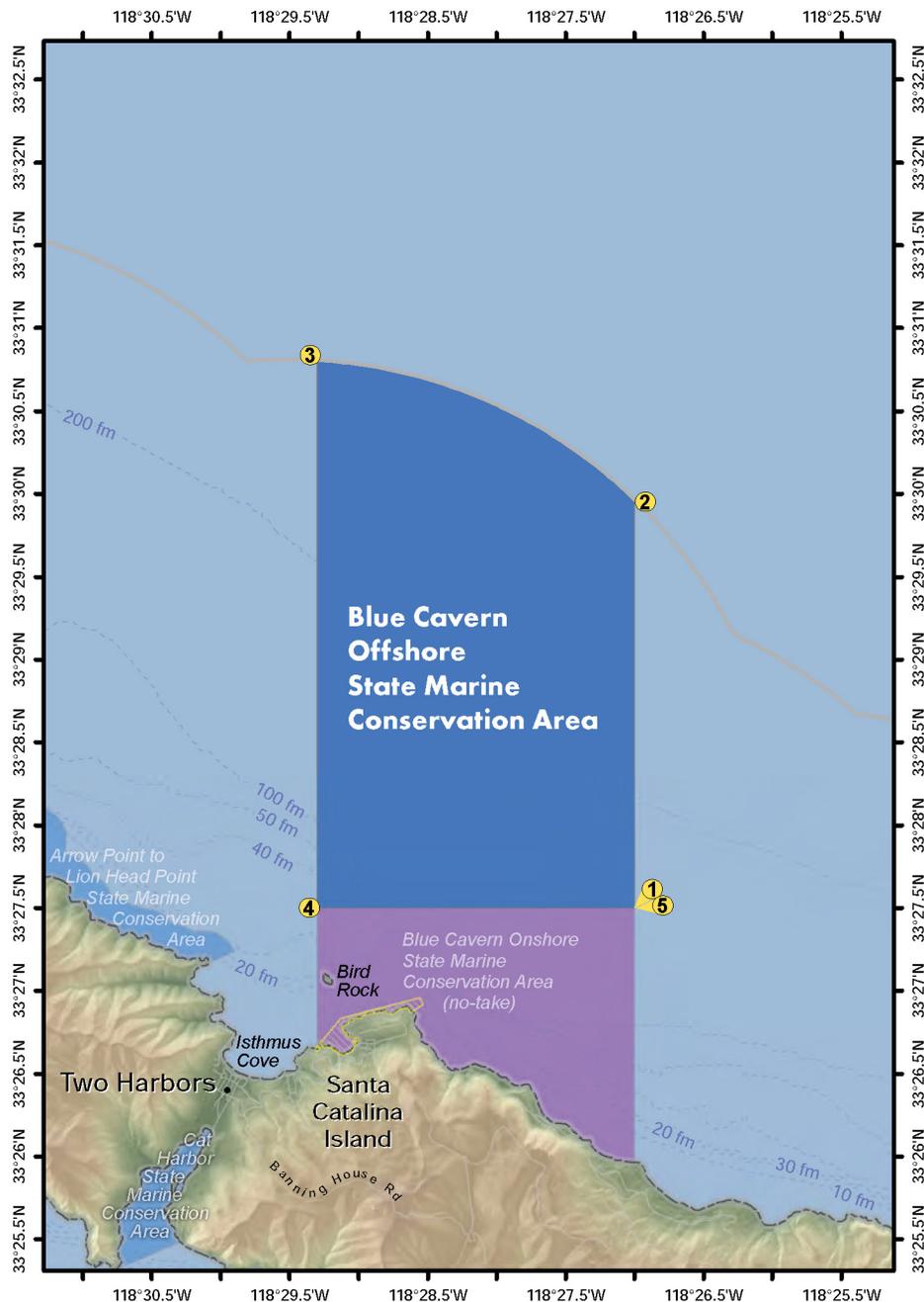
Further Information:

- MPA Website: www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs
- MPA and Sportfishing Interactive Map: www.wildlife.ca.gov/OceanSportfishMap
- Email: AskMarine@wildlife.ca.gov

Photos - Upper: View of the conservation area and receding island shore, CDFW photo by L. Gatlin Lower right: Market squid egg cases and orange gorgonians, CDFW/MARE photo Lower left: Risso's dolphin in the conservation area, photo © tegmort, CC BY-NC 2.0

Blue Cavern Offshore State Marine Conservation Area

Southern California - Santa Catalina Island



Blue Cavern Offshore State Marine Conservation Area Boundary and Regulations from California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632

Boundary:

This area is bounded by straight lines connecting the following points in the order listed except where noted:

- 33° 27.500' N. lat. 118° 27.000' W. long. ①;
- 33° 29.970' N. lat. 118° 27.000' W. long. ②; thence northwestward along the three nautical mile offshore boundary to
- 33° 30.810' N. lat. 118° 29.300' W. long. ③;
- 33° 27.500' N. lat. 118° 29.300' W. long. ④; and
- 33° 27.500' N. lat. 118° 27.000' W. long. ⑤

Permitted/Prohibited Uses:

1. It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource for recreational and/or commercial purposes, with the following specified exceptions:
 - a. The recreational take of pelagic finfish* by hook-and-line or by spearfishing, white seabass by spearfishing and market squid by hand-held dip net is allowed.
 - b. The commercial take of pelagic finfish* by hook-and-line and swordfish by harpoon is allowed.

* Pelagic finfish are defined here as: northern anchovy (*Engraulis mordax*), barracudas (*Sphyraena* spp.), billfishes* (family Istiophoridae), dolphinfish (*Coryphaena hippurus*), Pacific herring (*Clupea pallasii*), jack mackerel (*Trachurus symmetricus*), Pacific mackerel (*Scomber japonicus*), salmon (*Oncorhynchus* spp.), Pacific sardine (*Sardinops sagax*), blue shark (*Prionace glauca*), salmon shark (*Lamna ditropis*), shortfin mako shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*), thresher sharks (*Alopias* spp.), swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*), tunas (family Scombridae) including Pacific bonito (*Sarda chiliensis*), and yellowtail (*Seriola lalandi*).
*Marlin is not allowed for commercial take.

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.