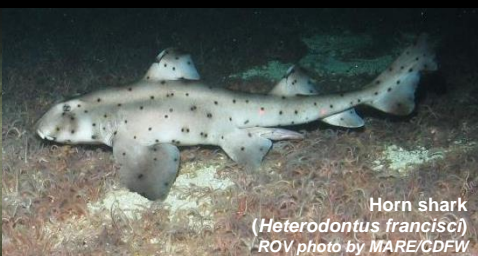


# Blue Cavern Offshore State Marine Conservation Area

Southern California Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), *Established January 2012*



Market squid egg cases and sandy bottom community  
ROV photo by MARE/CDFW



Horn shark  
(*Heterodontus francisci*)  
ROV photo by MARE/CDFW



Male California sheephead  
(*Semicossyphus pulcher*)  
ROV Photo by MARE/CDFW

## Site Overview

Photos are representative of the South 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 an SMCA?

An **SMCA** is a type of MPA that protects resources by allowing for only specific types of recreational and/or commercial take to occur. (Area restrictions are defined in [Title 14, Section 632\(a\)\(1\)\(C\)](#)).

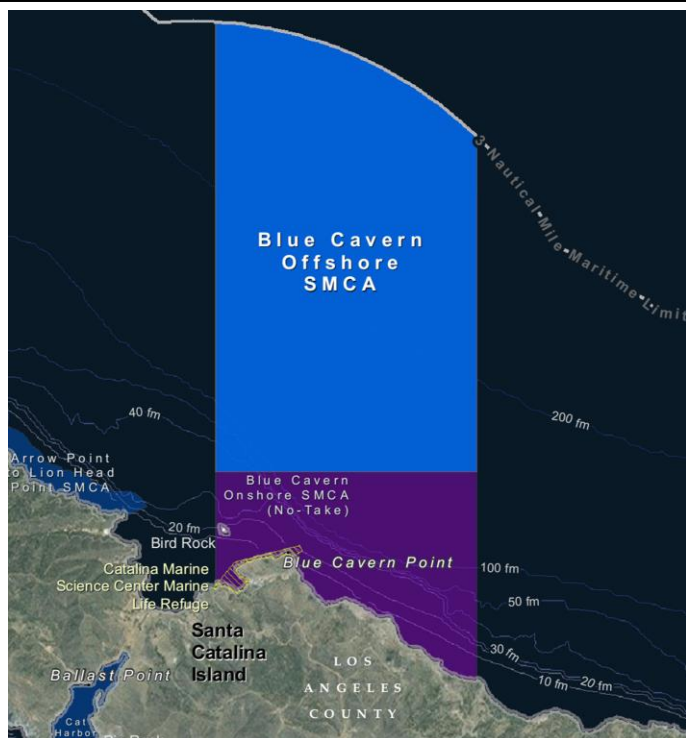
## Blue Cavern Offshore SMCA Overview

- **MPA size:** 7.7 square miles
- **Depth range:** 267 to 2616 feet
- **Along-shore span (shoreline):** 2.3 miles

## Blue Cavern Offshore SMCA Key Habitats

- **Sand (all depths):** 7.21 square miles
- **Unidentified (all depths):** 0.49 square miles

## Where is Blue Cavern Offshore SMCA?



## Boundaries and Regulations

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

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

**Only the following take is allowed in Blue Cavern Offshore SMCA:**

1. 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.
2. The commercial take of [pelagic finfish](#) by hook-and-line and swordfish by harpoon.

# Blue Cavern Offshore State Marine Conservation Area

## How and Why Blue Cavern Offshore was Chosen for an SMCA

MPAs were 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 site specific rationale (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. Blue Cavern Offshore SMCA was adopted by the Commission in 2012.

### **South Coast RSG Identified Rationale for Blue Cavern Offshore SMCA:**

Together with near shore Blue Cavern SMR, provide a backbone MPA on the leeward side of Catalina Island. Provide protection for deep water species like rockfish while providing for recreational and commercial take of pelagic species.

## 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](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/mpa/species.asp)

For a list of species likely to benefit from south coast MPAs: [www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/binders\\_sc/b2q.pdf](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/binders_sc/b2q.pdf)

## South Coast Regional Resources

California MPA Overview:

[www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network-Overview](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network-Overview)

South Coast Regional Goals and Objectives:

[www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/binders\\_sc/b1n.pdf](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/binders_sc/b1n.pdf)

California MLPA South Coast Study Region Description of MPAs:

[www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/binders\\_sc/b1pv.pdf](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/binders_sc/b1pv.pdf)

Methods Used to Evaluate MPAs in the South Coast:

[www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/binders\\_sc/b2b.pdf](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/binders_sc/b2b.pdf)

MPA Research and Monitoring Activities:

[www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Research-And-Monitoring](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Research-And-Monitoring)

Regional MPA Statistics:

[www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Statistics](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Statistics)

Regional Planning History:

[www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Planning-Process](http://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](http://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](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Master-Plan)

Marine Life Protection Act Summary and Network Goals:

[www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network-Goals](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network-Goals)



For more information, visit:

[www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs)

Email:

[AskMPA@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:AskMPA@wildlife.ca.gov)

MPA Mobile:



Report poaching and polluting,  
Call CalTIP

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](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Network/Title-14-Section-632)