

Cat Harbor State Marine Conservation Area

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



Cat Harbor SMCA
Photo by Tom Mason



Rocky reef
California spiny lobster
(*Panulirus interruptus*)
ROV Photo by MARE/CDFW



Sandy bottom
Leopard shark
(*Triakis semifasciatus*)
Photo by Allison Lui

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\(a\)\(1\)\(C\)](#)).

Cat Harbor SMCA Overview

- **MPA size:** 0.26 square miles
- **Depth range:** 0 to 186 feet
- **Along-shore span (shoreline):** 0.5 miles

Where is Cat Harbor SMCA?



Cat Harbor SMCA Key Habitats

- **Beaches:** 1.34 miles
- **Rocky shores:** 0.66 miles
- **Tidal flats:** 0.59 miles
- **Sand (all depths):** 0.08 square miles
- **Rock (all depths):** 0.02 square miles
- **Unidentified (all depths):** 0.14 square miles

Boundaries and Regulations

Boundary: This area includes the waters below the mean high tide line on the west side of Catalina Island northward of a straight line connecting Pin Rock (33° 25.486' N. lat. 118° 30.294' W. long.) and Cat Head Point (33° 25.320' N. lat. 118° 30.760' W. long.).

Only the following take is allowed in Cat Harbor SMCA:

1. The recreational take of [finfish](#) by hook and line or by spearfishing, market squid by hook and line, and spiny lobster and sea urchin.
2. The commercial take of sea cucumbers by diving only, and spiny lobster and sea urchin is allowed.
3. Aquaculture of [finfish](#) pursuant to any required state permits.
4. Take pursuant to maintenance of artificial structures inside the conservation area is allowed pursuant to any required federal, state and local permits, or as otherwise authorized by the department.

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How and Why Cat Harbor 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. Cat Harbor SMCA was adopted by the Commission in 2012.

South Coast RSG Identified Rationale for Cat Harbor SMCA:

Protects unique area and improves recreational opportunities [goal 3]. This SMCA also protects eel grass habitat, and strives to improve water quality by proposed ASBS designation.

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

For a list of species likely to benefit from south coast MPAs: www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/binders_sc/b2q.pdf

South Coast Regional Resources

California MPA Overview:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network-Overview

South Coast Regional Goals and Objectives:

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

Methods Used to Evaluate MPAs in the South Coast:

www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/binders_sc/b2b.pdf

MPA Research and Monitoring Activities:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Research-And-Monitoring

Regional MPA Statistics:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Statistics

Regional Planning History:

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

California Marine Life Protection Act Marine Protected Areas Master Plan:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Master-Plan

Marine Life Protection Act Summary and Network Goals:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network-Goals



For more information, visit:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs

Email:

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