

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 Dana Point 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 Dana Point State Marine Conservation Area is to protect the sandy seafloor, rocky reef, surfgrass, and kelp forest habitat found there. The conservation area's protected tidepools are rich with sea life, including Kellet's whelks, hermit crabs, sea cucumbers, sea stars, and other intertidal residents. Orange County's largest kelp forest is located off Salt Creek Beach, and provides prime habitat for giant sea bass, copper rockfish, and California spiny lobster. [Mole crabs](#) sift and eat plankton from the shallow surf washing over the conservation area's sandy beaches, while California halibut and a variety of flatfish inhabit the deeper sandy seafloor.

Dana Point State Marine Conservation Area shares a northern border with [Laguna Beach State Marine Conservation Area](#). It is one of four consecutive MPAs that together cover approximately 14 square miles of coastal habitat from Corona del Mar State Beach to Dana Point. 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: Dana Point State Marine Conservation Area

- **MPA size:** 3.47 square miles
- **Shoreline Span:** 4.0 miles
- **Depth range:** 0 to 152 feet
- **Habitat composition:**
 Sand/mud: 2.82 square miles
 Rock: 1.60 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: Dana Strand Beach, Dana Point State Marine Conservation Area, photo © Sergei Gussev CC BY-NC 2.0; **Lower right:** Norris's topsnail at Dana Point State Marine Conservation Area, photo © wilderness4u, CC BY-NC 2.0; **Lower left:** Feather boa kelp, coralline algae, and mussels in the conservation area, photo © Ron Vanderhoff, CC BY-NC 2.0



Dana Point State Marine Conservation Area Boundary and Regulations from California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632

Boundary:

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

- 33° 30.050' N. lat. 117° 44.762' W. long. ①;
- 33° 30.050' N. lat. 117° 46.000' W. long. ②;
- 33° 30.000' N. lat. 117° 46.000' W. long. ③;
- 33° 27.300' N. lat. 117° 43.300' W. long. ④;
- 33° 27.478' N. lat. 117° 42.276' W. long. ⑤; and
- 33° 27.622' N. lat. 117° 42.425' W. long. ⑥

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 finfish* by hook-and-line or by spearfishing, and spiny lobster and sea urchin is allowed.
 - b. The commercial take of sea urchin, spiny lobster by trap, and coastal pelagic species** by round haul net, brail gear, and light boat is allowed. Not more than five percent by weight of any commercial coastal pelagic species catch landed or possessed shall be other incidentally taken species.
 - c. Take pursuant to operation and 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.
2. Take of all living marine resources from inside tidepools is prohibited. For purposes of this section, tidepools are defined as the area encompassing the rocky pools that are filled with seawater due to retracting tides between the mean higher high tide line and the mean lower low tide line.

* Finfish are defined here as any species of bony fish or cartilaginous fish (sharks, skates and rays).

** Coastal pelagic species are defined here as northern anchovy (*Engraulis mordax*), Pacific sardine (*Sardinops sagax*), Pacific mackerel (*Scomber japonicus*), jack mackerel (*Trachurus symmetricus*) and market squid (*Doryteuthis (Loligo) opalescens*).

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.