

## 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 Tijuana River Mouth 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 Tijuana River Mouth State Marine Conservation Area is to protect the sandy seafloor, surfgrass, and kelp forest habitat found there. It also protects part of the largest offshore cobble reef in the region. These habitats are used by a variety of marine species, including barred sand bass, which gather to spawn in the MPA. Brown smoothhound shark and California halibut are also found here. The MPA and the adjacent [Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve](#) together form one of the largest protected estuarine/marine complexes in Southern California. Over 370 species of birds use the area, including marbled godwits, California least terns, and western snowy plovers.

Placing a state marine conservation area here provides moderately high levels of protection for marine life and the habitats they use.

## Quick Facts: Tijuana River Mouth State Marine Conservation Area

- **MPA size:** 3.02 square miles
- **Shoreline Span:** 2.2 miles
- **Depth range:** 0 to 55 feet
- **Habitat composition:**
  - Sand: 2.89 square miles
  - Rock: 0.08 square miles



Non-Consumptive Activities

Fishing  
See Regulations  
On Back

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: Tijuana River mouth. NOAA photo

Lower right: Marbled godwit in Tijuana River Mouth State Marine Conservation Area. photo © BJ Stacey, CC BY-NC 2.0

Lower left: Giant kelp, elk kelp, and surfgrass beach wrack at sunset in the Tijuana River Mouth State Marine Conservation Area. photo © hikingsandiego, CC BY-NC 2.0



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# Tijuana River Mouth State Marine Conservation Area

Southern California - San Diego County



## Tijuana River Mouth 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 except where noted:

- 32° 34.000' N. lat. 117° 07.980' W. long. ①;
- 32° 34.000' N. lat. 117° 09.000' W. long. ②;
- 32° 31.970' N. lat. 117° 09.000' W. long. ③; thence eastward along the U.S./Mexico Border to
- 32° 32.064' N. lat. 117° 07.428' W. long. ④

### 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 coastal pelagic species\*, except market squid, by hand-held dip net only is allowed.
  - b. The commercial take of coastal pelagic species\*, except market squid, by round haul net 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, including market squid.
  - c. Take pursuant to beach nourishment and other sediment management activities and 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.



\* 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 opalescens*). Take may be authorized for research, restoration, and monitoring purposes under a scientific collecting permit. See CCR 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).