

WHAT ARE MARINE PROTECTED AREAS?

Marine protected areas are defined in the California Public Resources Code, Sections 36602 and 36710

A **marine protected area (MPA)** is a named, discrete geographic marine or estuarine area seaward of the mean high tide line or the mouth of a coastal river, including any area of intertidal or subtidal terrain, together with its overlying water and associated flora and fauna that has been designated by law or administrative action to protect or conserve marine life and habitat. MPAs are primarily intended to protect or conserve marine life and habitat”

For the State of California, MPAs include three, unique, MPA designations:

In a **state marine reserve (SMR)**, all extractive activities (including fishing and kelp harvesting) are prohibited.

In a **state marine park (SMP)**, all commercial extractive activities and potentially some recreational activities are prohibited.

In a **state marine conservation area (SMCA)**, some recreational and/or commercial extractive activities may be limited.



Garibaldi



Bluebanded Goby

Examples of MPAs within California that you may be familiar with include Goleta Slough State Marine Park, Painted Cave State Marine Conservation Area, Crystal Cove State Marine Conservation Area and San Elijo Lagoon State Marine Park.

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- (a) In a **state marine reserve (SMR)**, it is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource, except under a permit or specific authorization from the managing agency for research, restoration, or monitoring purposes. While, to the extent feasible, the area shall be open to the public for managed enjoyment and study, the area shall be maintained to the extent practicable in an undisturbed and unpolluted state. Access and use for activities such as walking, swimming, boating, and diving may be restricted to protect marine resources. Research, restoration, and monitoring may be permitted by the managing agency. Educational activities and other forms of non-consumptive human use may be permitted by the designating entity or managing agency in a manner consistent with the protection of all marine resources.
- (b) In a **state marine park (SMP)**, it is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living or nonliving marine resource for commercial exploitation purposes. Any human use that would compromise protection of the species of interest, natural community or habitat, or geological, cultural, or recreational features, may be restricted by the designating entity or managing agency. All other uses are allowed, including scientific collection with a permit, research, monitoring, and public recreation, including recreational harvest, unless otherwise restricted. Public use, enjoyment, and education are encouraged, in a manner consistent with protecting resource values.
- (c) In a **state marine conservation area (SMCA)**, it is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource for commercial or recreational purposes, or a combination of commercial and recreational purposes, that the designating entity or managing agency determines would compromise protection of the species of interest, natural community, habitat, or geological features. The designating entity or managing agency may permit research, education, and recreational activities, and certain commercial and recreational harvest of marine resources.