

California Marine Life Protection Act North Coast Project
Ruby Draft MPA Proposal 1 – Draft Proposed Special Closures
Document Created May 27, 2010

Special closures are designated by the California Fish and Game Commission in the marine environment to provide geographically-specific protection of resources from human activities. In some instances special closures may offer protection, such as to breeding seabird and marine mammal populations, from geographically-specific threats that are not necessarily addressed by marine protected areas (MPAs), including disturbance.

The MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force has indicated that the MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group may elect to include recommendations for special closures so long as it does not detract from completing the primary task of developing alternative MPA proposals. Therefore, draft proposed special closures have been developed by the MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group separately from draft MPA proposals. The special closures listed below are intended to link to Ruby Draft MPA Proposal 1, but are separate from that proposal. Refer to the Ruby Draft MPA Proposal 1 maps and the specific special closure maps to view the locations and boundaries for each of the special closures listed in this document.

Special Closure Name	Boundaries or Extent	Closure Time	Focus Species	Site-Specific Rationale/ Justification	Uses Potentially Impacted	Other Information
Southwest Seal Rock Special Closure	300 feet	Year-round	Steller sea lion	One of only two breeding locations for Steller sea lions - the other is Sugarloaf Island	Potential impacts to bottom fishermen, recreational fishers	It's not an easy area to get a boat close to, but is a popular area when conditions are favorable for getting out there.
Castle Rock Special Closure	300 feet	Year-round	Breeding seabirds	One of the most important bird breeding areas along the California coast.	Recreational kayaking and small boat fishing.	Currently, Fish and Wildlife recommends a closure for Castle Rock of 500 feet. If it extended to 1000 feet then it starts to infringe on some popular beaches and boat travel lanes.

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Special Closure Name	Boundaries or Extent	Closure Time	Focus Species	Site-Specific Rationale/Justification	Uses Potentially Impacted	Other Information
False Klamath Rock Special Closure	300 feet	Year-round	Breeding seabirds, specifically Brandt's Cormorants	Brandt's Cormorants are struggling and particularly prone to disturbance from human activities.	Recreational kayaking and small boat fishing.	Even if this area is proposed within an MPA, it still may be considered for a special closure. The Redwood National and State parks jurisdiction overlaps this area so there is potential for co-management or at least co-enforcement. The area is one of the most easily accessed beaches. Kayaks and other small boats occasionally go out here. Closeness to shore means potential disturbance from human users. If it extended to 1000 feet then it starts to infringe on some popular beaches.
Green Rock Special Closure	300 feet	Year-round	8 bird species found here, including Tufted Puffin and petrels	No MPAs proposed in this area in Round 1, so no benefits outside of potential special closure	Boat traffic between Green Rock and Flatiron Rock	Green Rock and Flatiron Rock are relatively close together and about 2000 feet offshore. Want to be sure to allow passage between the rocks.
Flatiron Rock Special Closure	300 feet	Year-round	8 bird species found here, including Tufted Puffin and petrels. Also pinnipeds present.	No MPAs proposed in this area in Round 1, so no benefits outside of potential special closure	Boat traffic between Green Rock and Flatiron Rock	Green Rock and Flatiron Rock are relatively close together and about 2000 feet offshore. Want to be sure to allow passage between the rocks. Low elevation rock - more exposure to boat disturbance.
False Cape Rock Special Closure	300 feet	Year-round	Breeding seabirds, specifically Brandt's Cormorants	Brandt's Cormorants are struggling and particularly prone to disturbance from human activities. There are also pinnipeds that would gain benefits from this closure	Fishing, including charter boats	Opportunity to protect both bird and pinniped species.

Special Closure Name	Boundaries or Extent	Closure Time	Focus Species	Site-Specific Rationale/Justification	Uses Potentially Impacted	Other Information
Sugarloaf Island Special Closure	300 feet	Year-round	Steller sea lion	One of only two breeding locations for Steller sea lions - the other is Southwest Seal Rock	Fishing	Area is remote.
Steamboat Rock Special Closure	300 feet	Year-round	Breeding seabirds, specifically Brandt's Cormorants	Brandt's Cormorants are struggling and particularly prone to disturbance from human activities.	Fishing	There is a larger Brandt's Cormorant population at False Cape Rock.
Rockport Rocks Special Closure	300 feet	Year-round	Breeding seabirds, specifically Brandt's Cormorants	Brandt's Cormorants are struggling and particularly prone to disturbance from human activities.	Fishing, recreational abalone divers	Private beach here so possibly not a lot of use.
Vizcaino Rock Special Closure	300 feet seaward of the rock	Seasonal closure - January 1 through August 1	Breeding seabirds	It is one of two most important nesting areas on this portion of the coast	Potential impact to urchin divers	Vizcaino Rock is surrounded by smaller, lesser rocks and has a very uneven bottom so is not really visited by commercial fisherman (including crab fishermen). It is just barely offshore. It is an exposed point and getting to the rock is difficult (it is off an area that is pretty inaccessible from land), probably not even accessible at a low low tide. It is fairly close to Rockport Bay, but the bay is not well-used because the beach is owned by lumber company that doesn't give many use permits.