

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.