



California's Marine Life Protection Act Initiative Second Phase (2007-2008)

What is the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative? A public-private partnership designed to help the State of California implement the Marine Life Protection Act, using the best readily available science as well as the advice and assistance of scientists, resource managers, experts, stakeholders and members of the public.

Why are you doing this? The Marine Life Protection Act was signed into law in 1999 and directs the state to redesign California's system of marine protected areas to increase its coherence and effectiveness in protecting the state's marine life and habitats, marine ecosystems, and marine natural heritage, as well as to improve recreational, educational and study opportunities provided by marine ecosystems.

What are marine protected areas? Marine protected areas (MPAs) are named, discrete geographic marine or estuarine areas designed to protect or conserve marine life and habitat. Examples within California that you may be familiar with include Tomales Bay State Marine Park, James V. Fitzgerald State Marine Park, Point Lobos State Marine Reserve, Painted Cave State Marine Conservation Area, and Crystal Cove State Marine Conservation Area.

What can I do in a marine protected area? There are three types of MPAs: state marine reserve, state marine park, and state marine conservation area, each with different rules about what activities can or cannot be done within each. In general, marine reserves do not allow any type of extractive activities (including fishing or kelp harvesting), marine parks do not allow any commercial extraction, and marine conservation areas do not allow some combination of commercial and/or recreational extraction.

When and where did the MLPA Initiative start? Redesigning the system of MPAs along California's 1,100 mile coastline is such a large task that it was decided to take a regional approach and implement the MLPA in phases. In the first phase of the initiative, a master plan framework was created to help guide the planning process within individual geographic areas, called study regions. After the framework was created, the first effort to redesign a group of MPAs in a region took place along the central coast, from Pigeon Point in San Mateo County to Point Conception in Santa Barbara County. In April 2007 the California Fish and Game Commission adopted a final package of MPAs for the central coast.

When will the MLPA Initiative be in my area? The current study region being evaluated is the north central coast, from Alder Creek/Point Arena in Mendocino County to Pigeon Point in San Mateo County (see map on reverse side). Eventually the remainder of the coast will also be re-evaluated, starting with the south coast (Point Conception to the California/Mexico border), then the north coast (the California/Oregon border to Alder Creek/Point Arena), and finally San Francisco Bay.

How do I get involved in the process? The success of the first phase of the MLPA Initiative was highly dependent upon the active involvement of stakeholders and the general public in a variety of ways, including a regional stakeholder group, workshops, public meetings, and providing input on documents and MPA packages as they were developed. The second phase of the MLPA Initiative will again afford many opportunities for public involvement, which began with a series of workshops in March 2007 along the north central coast. For more information about the MLPA Initiative and opportunities for involvement, please visit the initiative website:

