

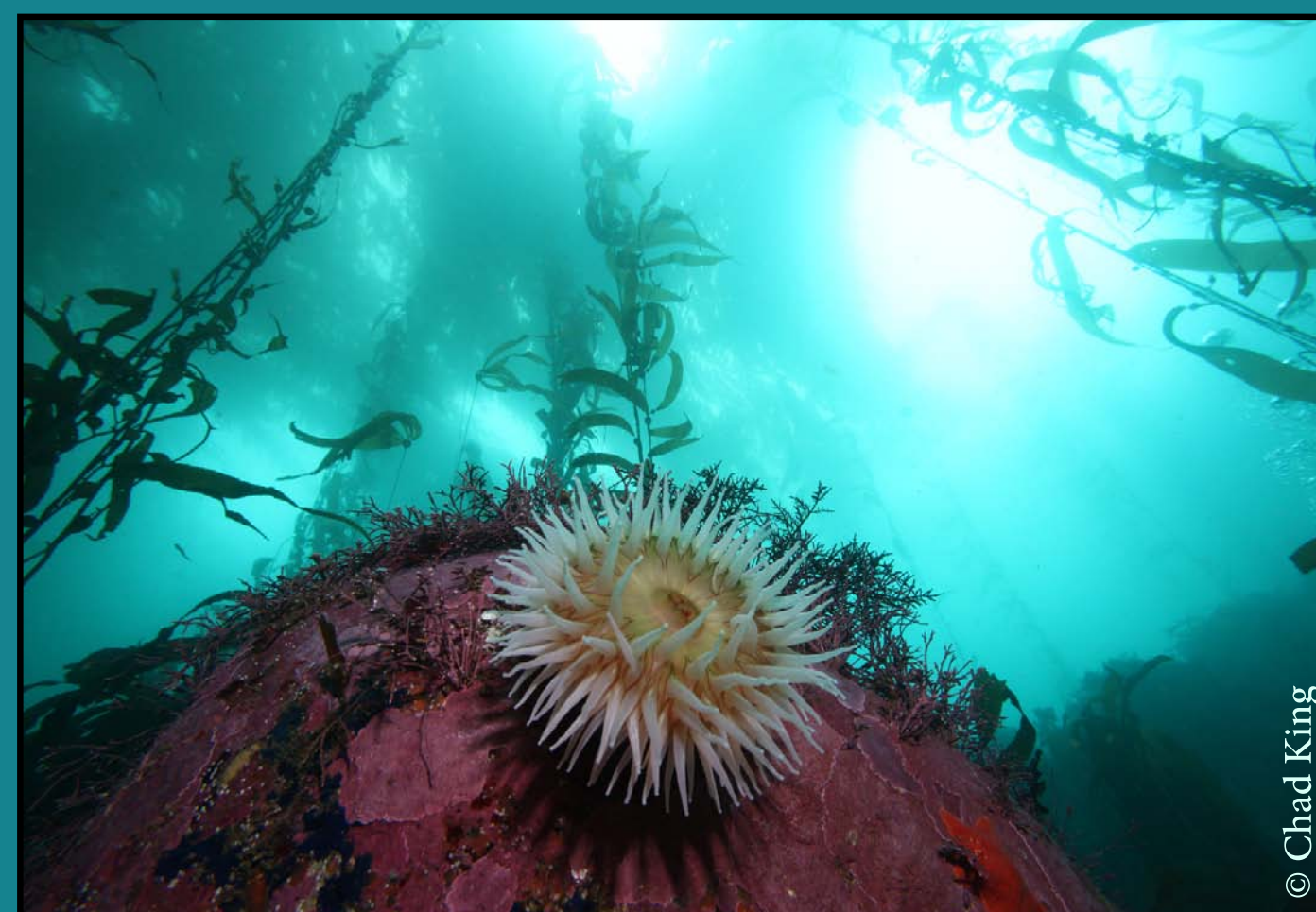
Marine Protected Areas

California's Underwater Parks Safeguard Ocean Life

Marine protected areas (MPAs) are special underwater places designed to protect key ocean habitats and species by managing activities that threaten their integrity.

Just as the nation's parks, forests and wilderness areas protect special places on land, California's MPAs safeguard our underwater wildlife.

Also called underwater parks, they restore marine ecosystems, ensuring the ocean's bounty and beauty remains for future generations to enjoy.



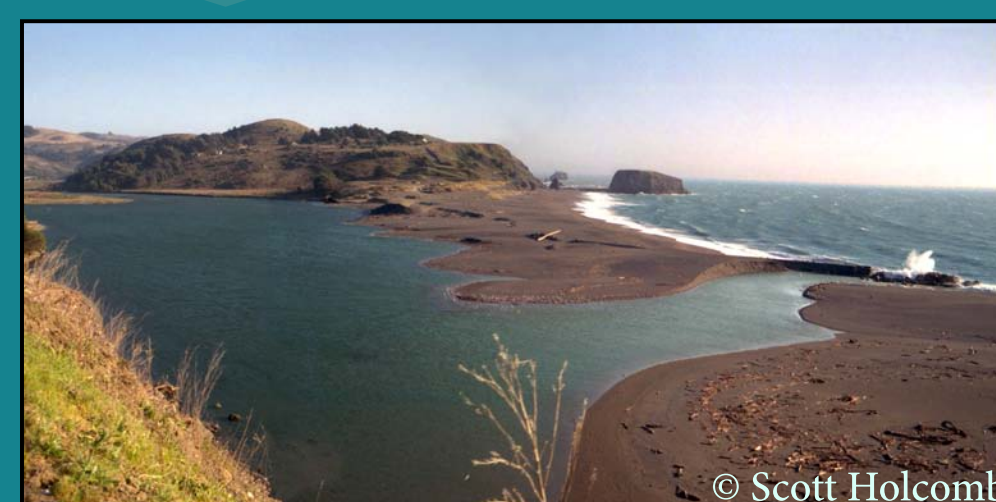
California's network of underwater parks protects many different marine habitats found along our coast from lush kelp forests to sheltered estuaries to intertidal areas and steep underwater canyons. Protecting habitats benefits a range of species including plants (bull kelp), invertebrates (sea stars), and marine mammals such as seals and otters.



California's north coast boasts 20 MPAs & 7 special closures protecting special places like Pyramid Point.



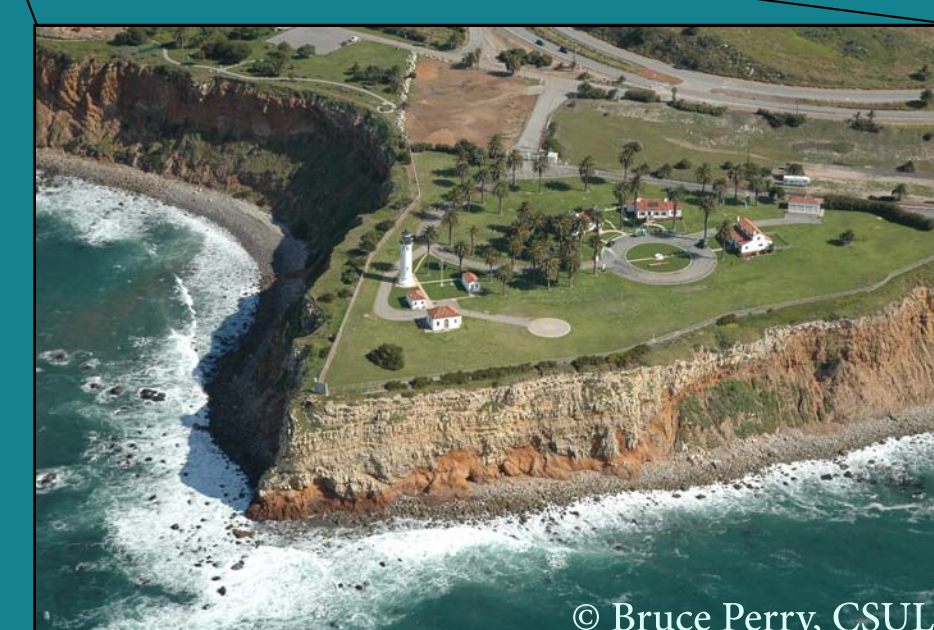
California's central coast MPAs were the first to be established in the state. Here, 29 MPAs safeguard places such as historic Point Sur.



Along California's north central coast, 25 MPAs & 6 special closures help to manage and restore places like the Russian River estuary.

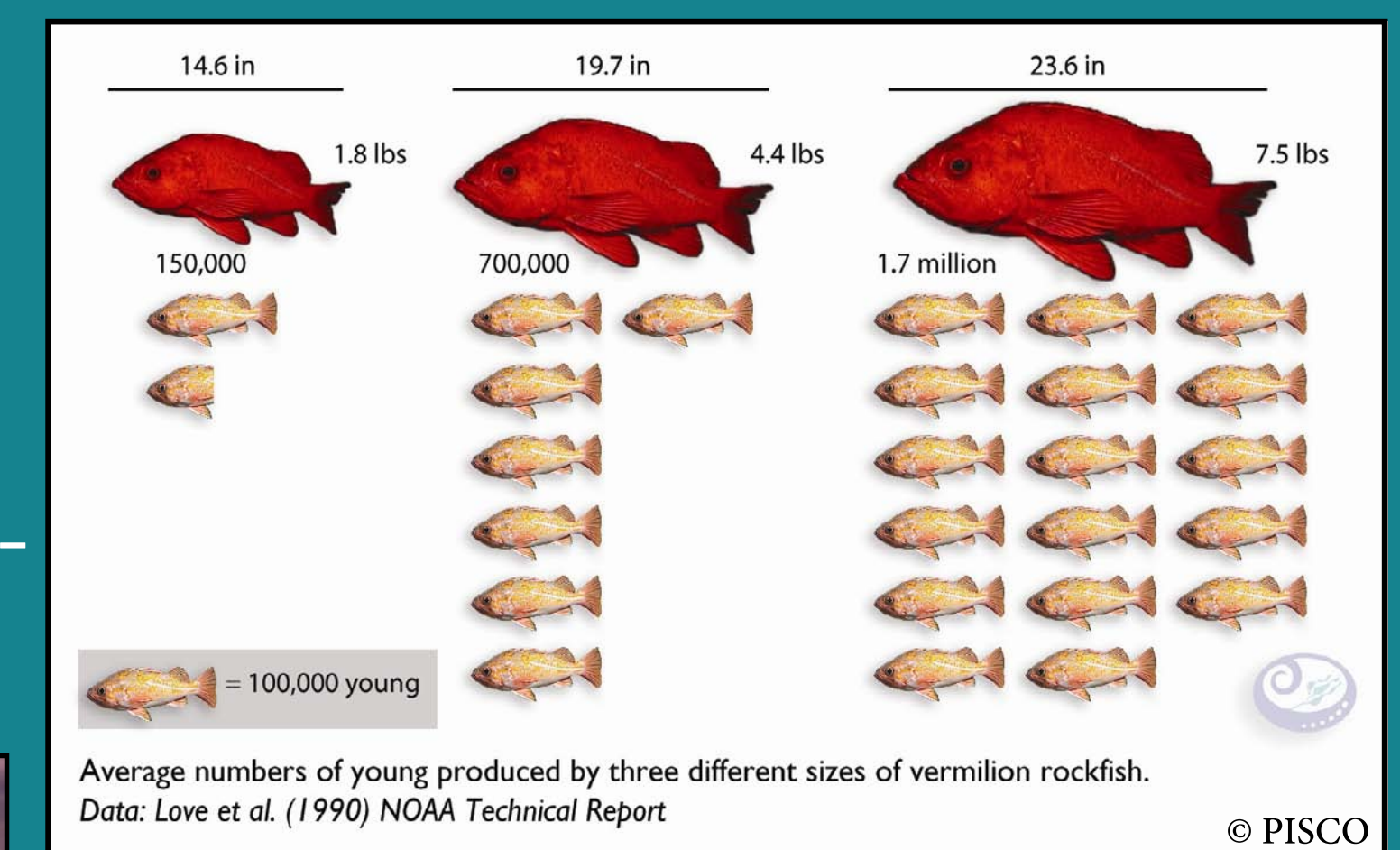
In 2012, California became an international leader in ocean conservation by completing the United States' first statewide network of underwater parks.

Today 124 MPAs stretch along the entire coast from Oregon to Mexico.



California's south coast is protected by 50 MPAs & 2 special closures, including iconic places like Point Vicente and the Channel Islands.

Research from around the world provides strong evidence that MPAs work, providing economic, ecological and cultural benefits. Studies show that MPAs lead to higher bio-diversity and abundance of marine life compared to unprotected areas.



Big, Old, Fertile, Female Fish (BOFFF)

Inside MPAs, fish and invertebrates can mature and reach large sizes. Older, larger female fish are crucial to supporting healthy fish populations. Compared to smaller females, these BOFFFs produce far more and healthier young, helping replenish depleted populations inside and outside MPAs.



There are many ways to enjoy California's underwater parks. You can swim, dive, kayak, surf, watch birds or simply relax in nature.



For more information, please visit www.CaliforniaMPAs.org