Año Nuevo State Marine Conservation Area and Greyhound Rock State Marine Conservation Area

Factsheet
1

Size of MPA:
22.8 mi²

Depth range of MPA:
Shore to 175 feet

Key habitats protected:
Rocky intertidal, sandy beach, estuary, offshore rocks and islands, shale reef, bull kelp and giant kelp forest

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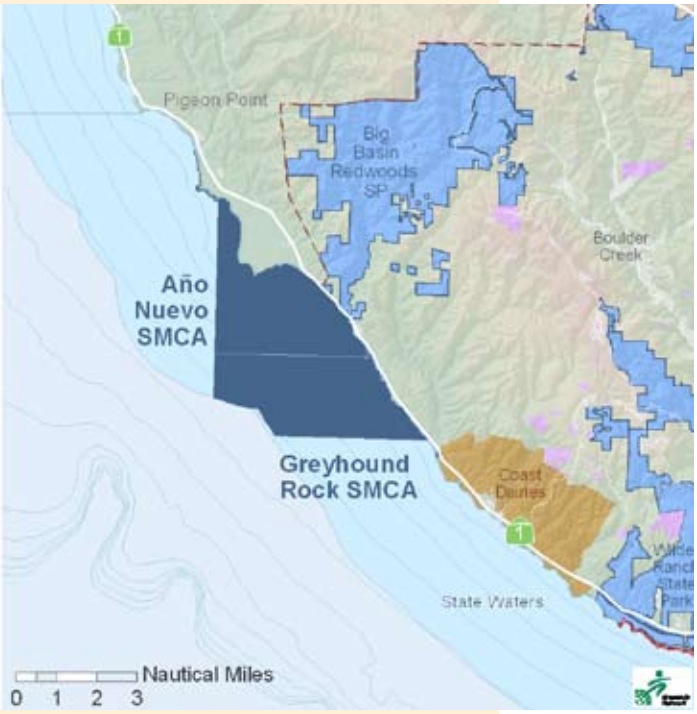


Año Nuevo is a critical biological area of the Central Coast.

- Año Nuevo is a biodiversity hotspot, supporting more than 300 species of invertebrates, as well as numerous fish, seabirds and marine mammals. This site has long been recognized for its natural heritage values.
- Point Año Nuevo is used by thousands of breeding seabirds and marine mammals and support a world famous major elephant seal haul out and breeding ground. The waters surrounding the point attract a concentration of great white sharks and include documented "hotspots" for depleted canary rockfish. Threatened marbled murrelets rest on shore and forage in the lee of the point.
- The MPAs are adjacent to the Año Nuevo State Reserve and State Park in the north and Big Basin State Park to the south. The adjacent State Parks have extensive docent programs, outreach and interpretive facilities, parking, and an on-site ranger presence to assist with management and enforcement.
- The Año Nuevo MPAs were designed to protect marine life while keeping favored recreational fishing grounds open to fishing. Important fishing grounds to the north of the Point Año Nuevo and from Moss Landing through Davenport would remain open to fishing.

Natural Bridges State Marine Reserve

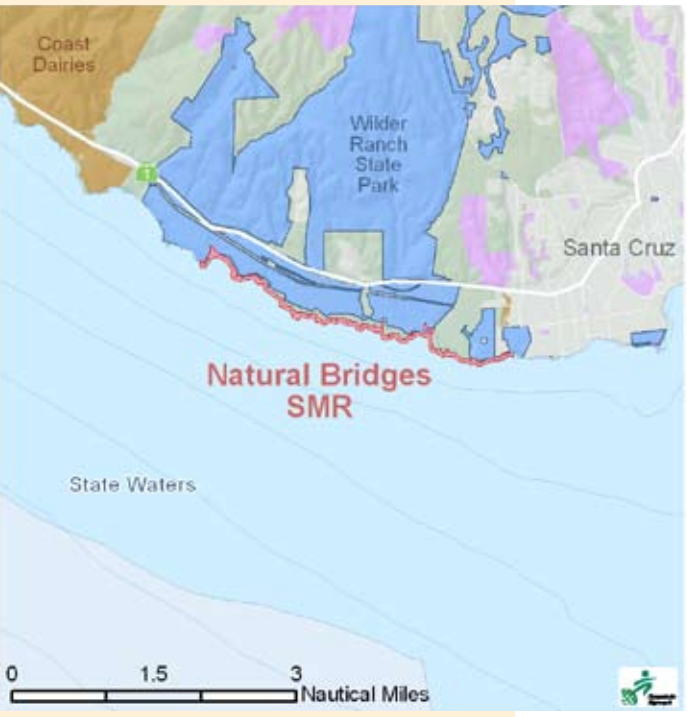
Factsheet **2**

Size of MPA:
.58 mi²

Depth range of MPA(s):
Shore to 21 feet

Key habitats protected:
Sandy beach, rocky intertidal, surfgrass

John Pearse



Located at the northern edge of the City of Santa Cruz, Natural Bridges is an accessible and popular area where visitors and scientists alike can explore extensive and biologically rich tide pools and sandy beaches.

- Dramatic wave-cut platforms, exposed rocky cliffs, salt marsh, and sandy and rocky shores provide habitat for a wide range of species that inhabit the edge between land and sea.
- Natural Bridges State Marine Reserve is adjacent to Natural Bridges State Beach and Wilder Ranch State Park with excellent volunteer programs, outreach and interpretive facilities, parking and on-site ranger presence to assist with management and enforcement.
- Natural Bridges State Marine Reserve is also adjacent to the University of California at Santa Cruz's marine lab and its interpretive public aquarium – the Seymour Discovery Center - providing excellent opportunities for enhanced research and education.

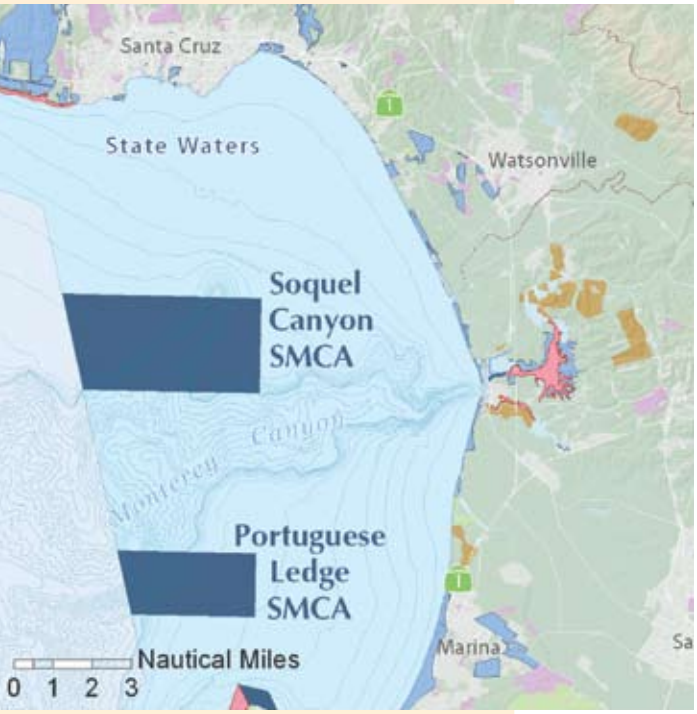
Soquel Canyon State Marine Conservation Area and Portuguese Ledge State Marine Conservation Area

Factsheet **3**

Size of MPA(s):
34.32 mi² (combined area)

Depth range of MPA(s):
Shore to 247-4838 feet

Key habitats protected: Submarine Canyon, deepwater rock, cold water corals



The Monterey Submarine Canyon is a unique and biologically productive habitat.

- Plunging to depths greater than the Grand Canyon, the Monterey Bay Submarine Canyon and Soquel Canyon funnel cold, nutrient rich waters into the Monterey Bay.
- The Soquel Canyon SMCA captures an entire side-branch of the Monterey Submarine Canyon – from relatively shallow waters at the canyon's head to very deep waters. The rocky canyon walls and mud-and-sand canyon floor offer ideal habitat for rockfishes including depleted species. It contains communities of fragile deepwater corals and sponges. The area is also an important seabird forage grounds and whale feeding area.
- Portuguese Ledge State Marine Conservation Area protects important refuge habitat for several overfished deepwater rockfish species and is expected to contribute to the recovery of these species.
- The Monterey Bay Area Aquarium Research Institute has performed submarine surveys at these sites and is building an undersea monitoring station in this area.
- Since this area is a favorite spot for the Santa Cruz, Moss Landing and Monterey fleets, the SMCA allows fishing for salmon, mackerel and sardines in the waters above these MPAs.

Elkhorn Slough State Marine Reserve and Marine Park and Moro Cojo State Marine Reserve

Factsheet
4

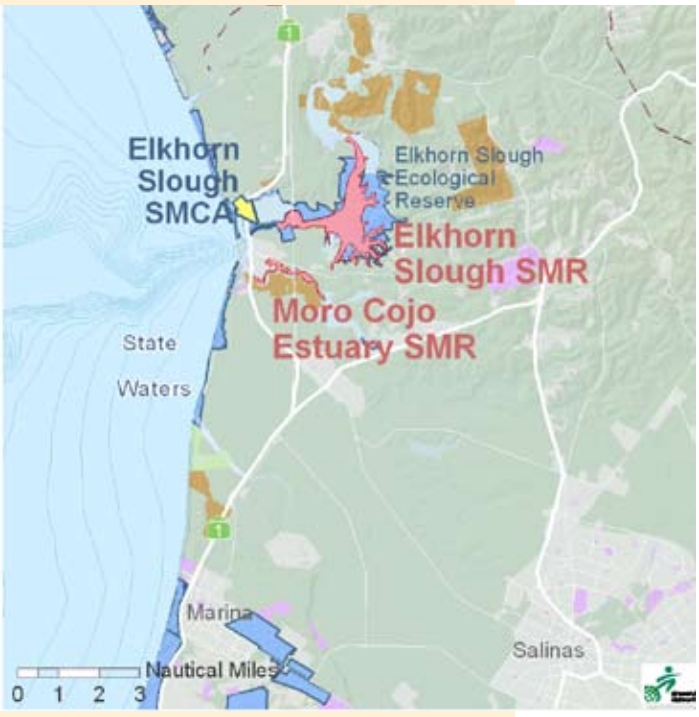
Size of MPA(s):
2.03 mi² (combined area)

Depth range of MPA(s):
Shore to 10 feet

Key habitats protected:
Mudflats, tidal creeks and channels, and eel-grass beds

Hoffman

Zaretsky



Elkhorn Slough, one of the largest estuaries in California, provides essential habitat for over 700 species, including aquatic mammals, birds, fish, invertebrates, algae, and plants. Moro Cojo Slough provides representation of rare brackish habitats that support threatened species.

- Meandering tidal creeks and channels are flanked by broad mudflats and salt marshes in a watershed setting of rolling hills supporting a mosaic of land uses. Elkhorn and Moro Cojo sloughs host year-round residents tightly associated with estuaries, such as pickleweed, eelgrass, oysters, gaper clams, and long-jawed mudsuckers, as well as important seasonal visitors such as migratory shorebirds, sea otters, and sharks and rays.
- The expanded MPAs will enhance both protection of the sloughs' diverse habitats and species while improving recreational opportunities. The Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve and Elkhorn Slough Foundation provide on-site management, education, and stewardship and offer public access via extensive trails, as well as a Visitor Center and volunteer opportunities.

Edward F. Ricketts State Marine Conservation Area; Lovers Point State Marine Reserve; Pacific Grove State Marine Conservation Area; Asilomar State Marine Reserve

Factsheet 5

Size of MPA(s):
2.96 mi² (combined area)

Depth range of MPA(s):
Shore to 172 feet

Key habitats protected:
Kelp forest, beach, rocky intertidal, soft and hard bottom

Photo courtesy of NOAA

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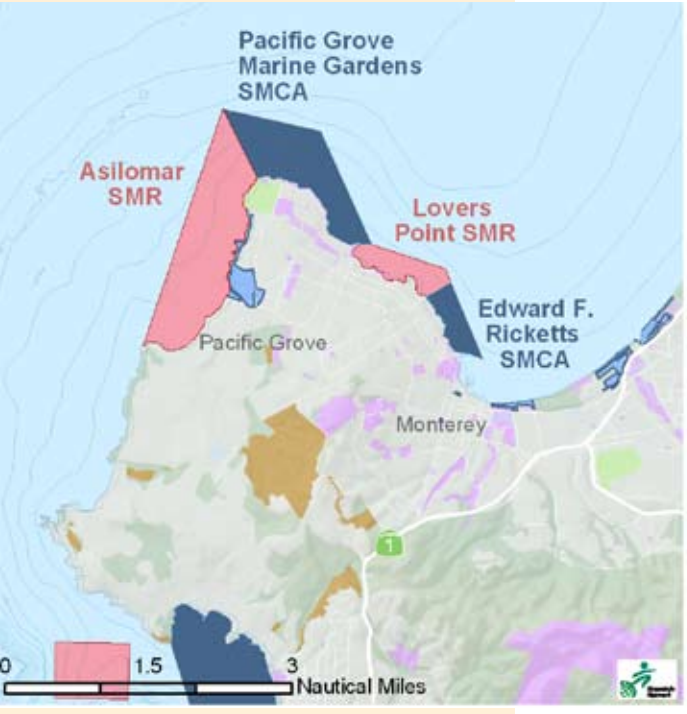

The natural beauty and bountiful ocean resources of the Monterey Peninsula draw millions of visitors from around the world each year, including more than 60,000 scuba divers attracted by the area's vibrant underwater living treasures.

- Located adjacent to the cities of Monterey and Pacific Grove, this series of small MPAs helps protect some of the central coast's most heavily used and most accessible nearshore areas while maintaining traditional recreational access and open fishing grounds offshore.
- The Monterey Peninsula includes extensive tidepools teeming with marine life, sandy beaches used by pupping harbor seals, and dense kelp beds that provide shelter for sea otters.
- The Monterey Peninsula MPAs provide unsurpassed research opportunities for scientific and educational institutions including the Hopkins Marine Station, the Monterey Bay Aquarium and Moss Landing Marine Laboratories.

Carmel Pinnacles State Marine Reserve and Carmel Bay State Marine Conservation Area

Factsheet **6**

Size of MPA(s):
2.65 mi²

Depth range of MPA(s):
Shore to 471 feet

Key habitats protected:
Rocky pinnacles, kelp forest, sandy beach, submarine canyon head, surfgrass

Photo Courtesy of NOAA

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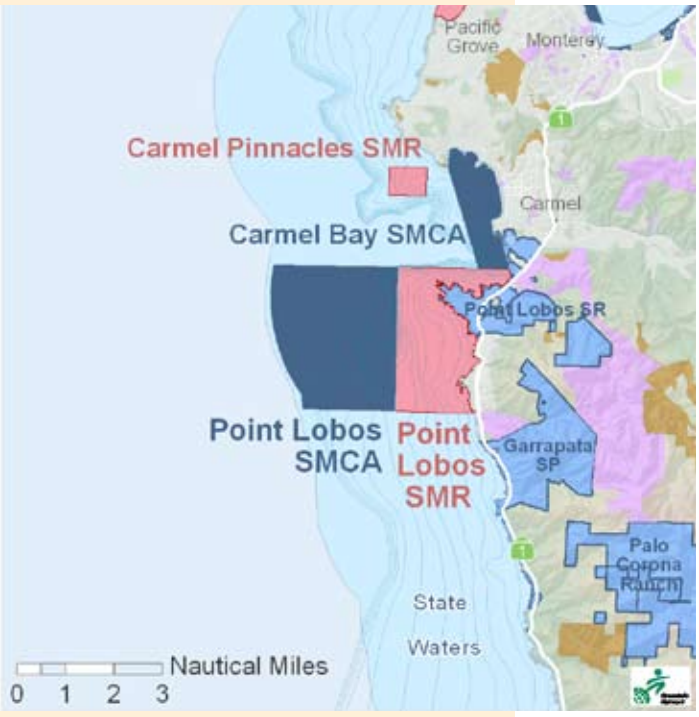


Carmel Bay is an unsurpassed ocean recreational playground serving as a destination for divers and kayakers attracted to its unique pinnacle formations, granite reefs and kelp forests.

- The Carmel Pinnacles State Marine Reserve protects a unique underwater pinnacle formation that supports colonies of hydrocorals and a diversity of marine invertebrates and fish. This area is a prime destination for scuba divers.
- The Carmel Bay State Marine Conservation Area enhances recreational fishing opportunities in an area convenient to port by precluding commercial extraction or take of invertebrates throughout the Bay but allowing sport fishing for finfish from shore, kayak, or boat.

Point Lobos State Marine Reserve and Marine Conservation Area

Factsheet 7

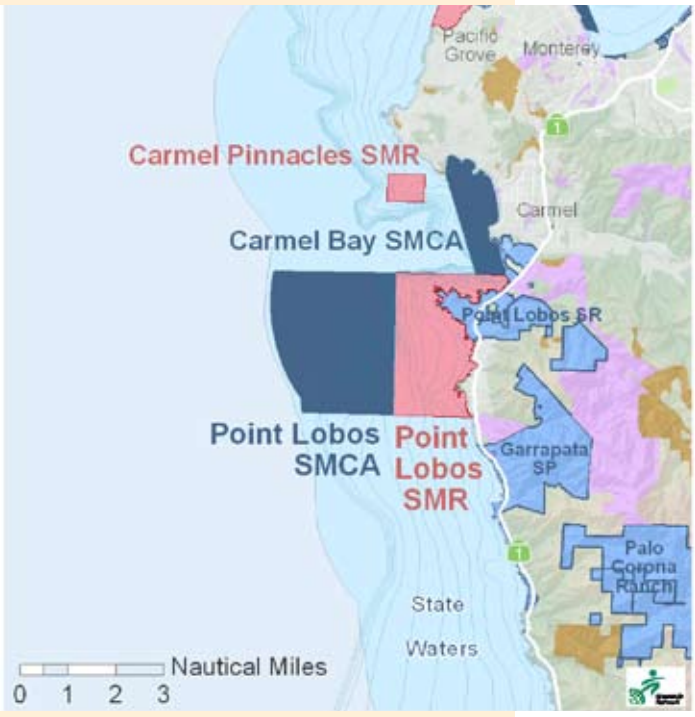
Size of MPA(s):
14.21 mi²

Depth range of MPA(s):
Shore to 1858 feet

Key habitats protected:
Submarine canyon, kelp forest, offshore rocks, rocky intertidal, pinnacles, soft and hard bottom habitats.

Photo Courtesy of NOAA

Beatrice F. Howitt © California Academy of Sciences



The Point Lobos area is spectacular, geologically unique, and contains a rich and diverse plant and animal life both on shore and in the water.

- Called the "greatest meeting of land and water in the world" Point Lobos is considered a crown jewel in the state park system. The Point Lobos State Marine Reserve and Conservation Area expand protection of an existing small marine reserve and lie offshore of the Point Lobos State Reserve on land.
- The Point Lobos MPAs provide shelter to a wide range of fish, invertebrates, birds and marine mammals from those that rely on the nearshore kelp forest to those that inhabit the deep waters of the Carmel Submarine Canyon.
- The adjacent terrestrial reserve, managed by California State Parks, has a longstanding docent programs, outreach and interpretive facilities, parking and on-site ranger presence to assist with management and enforcement.

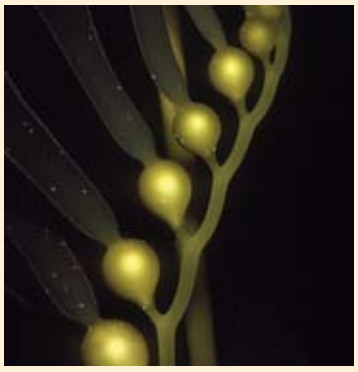
Point Sur State Marine Reserve and Marine Conservation Area

Factsheet **8**

Size of MPA:
19.68 mi²

Depth range of MPA:
Shore to 624 feet

Key habitats protected:
Largest persistent kelp bed on the central coast, unique offshore rocky reef, Sur submarine canyon head.



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Point Sur may be the most significant natural heritage site on the Central Coast.

- This spectacular site contains a wide diversity of habitats that support a range of fish, seabird and invertebrate species. Point Sur itself contributes to the unique oceanographic conditions at this site where gyres carry water and larvae both north and south.
- The protected lee of Point Sur supports a large kelp bed that provides a shelter and nursery habitat to rockfish and other species. Offshore, the head of the Sur submarine canyon acts as a fish highway, linking the protected shallows to offshore features nourished by upwelling. Remote from port and from urban development, the Point Sur MPAs protect one of the few remaining areas in central California that support large, healthy fish populations and pristine habitat.
- The site is adjacent to Andrew Molera State Park and the Point Sur State Historic Park providing excellent opportunities for interpretive and education facilities and on-site docent and ranger presence.

Big Creek State Marine Reserve and Marine Conservation Area

Factsheet 9

Size of MPA:
22.45 mi²

Depth range of MPA:
Shore to 2393 feet

Key habitats protected:
Submarine canyons,
Canyon heads.

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The Big Sur coast is world renowned for its spectacular views and rugged topography. Offshore, the submerged geography is equally dramatic - a series of unique narrow finger canyons plunge for the shoreline into the ocean's depths.

- In the waters off the Big Sur/Big Creek coast are a unique series of narrow and steep finger canyons that serrate the continental shelf. The canyons provide habitat to a variety of deepwater rockfishes such as cabezon and bocaccio.
- The Big Creek MPAs expand upon an existing tiny underwater reserve established in recognition of the high natural heritage value of this area where underwater canyons and rock formations have been compared to Yosemite.
- The Big Sur coast is an important forage area for southern sea otters and also provides habitat for a variety of fish species such as cabezon, kelp greenling, and rockfish.
- These MPAs were designed specifically to address concerns raised by spot prawn fishermen and to allow continued fishing for spot prawns in adjacent, favored fishing grounds.
- This SMR is bordered by a SMCA that would allow some fishing. This allows a scientific comparison of similar habitats that are protected in MPAs and open to some forms of fishing.

Piedras Blancas State Marine Reserve and Marine Conservation Area

Factsheet **10**

Size of MPA:
19.68 mi²

Depth range of MPA:
Shore to 337 feet

Key habitats protected:
Diverse shoreline from sandy beach, to pebble beach to rocky intertidal. Offshore reef and two varieties of kelp forest.

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Piedras Blancas is one of California's most biologically rich as well as scenic coastal areas attracting millions of visitors for marine wildlife viewing each year.

- The Piedras Blancas MPAs protect a rich nearshore including extensive tidepools, two species of kelp, and both sandy and cobble beaches. Offshore, a high relief deepwater rocky structure attracts large forage fish populations and provides shelter for rockfish.
- Piedras Blancas supports a particularly high diversity of birds and marine mammals including California sea lions, Elephant seals, harbor seals, northern fur seals and sea otters. Historically this area was one of the most productive abalone beds in California.
- The land adjacent to the MPAs has recently been added to the San Simeon State Park and the site has exceptional educational value, high visitation rates, good public access, parking, and interpretive facilities and an active volunteer program.

Cambria State Marine Park and Marine Conservation Area

Factsheet
11

Size of MPA:
8.58 mi² (combined)

Depth range of MPA(s):
Shore to 105 feet

Key habitats protected:
Steelhead streams, kelp forest, rocky intertidal, sandy and cobble beach, reef and sandy bottom, pinnacles and offshore rocks.

Jim Webb

Nancy McKarney

The coastal village of Cambria attracts year round visitors drawn to its scenic and recreational opportunities and the chance to view sea otters, birds and other ocean wildlife.

- The Cambria State Marine Park will enhance sport-fishing opportunities at a traditional recreational use site used by shore anglers as well as small boaters and kayakers launching from Leffingwell Landing in the village of Cambria.
- The adjacent Cambria State Marine Conservation Area, located immediately offshore of the terrestrial Ken Norris University of California Reserve, allows limited kelp harvesting but protects all other living resources from recreational and commercial harvest.
- The Cambria MPAs provide excellent research opportunities by allowing scientific comparison of fished areas, recreational use only areas, and closed areas. The proximity of the MPAs to the University of California Reserve assists with monitoring and management of these areas.

Morro Bay East State Marine Reserve; Morro Bay State Marine Recreational Management Area

Factsheet 12

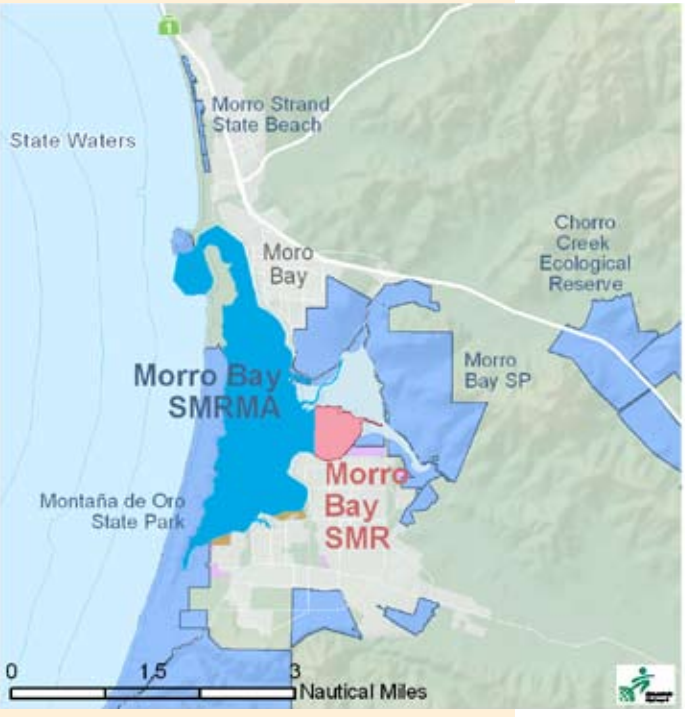
Size of MPA(s):
3.31 mi² (combined area)

Depth range of MPA(s):
Shore to 22 feet

Key habitats protected:
Coastal salt marsh, eelgrass, tidal channels, mudflat

Angus

Ream



Morro Bay National Estuary is one of the largest and most important wetland systems on the central coast, sustaining diverse habitats that support sensitive and endangered species.

- Morro Bay serves as an important resting and foraging ground for migratory birds using the Pacific Flyway. Large and diverse invertebrate populations inhabit the mudflats of the Bay; fish use the Bay as a nursery ground and dense meadows of eelgrass support a highly productive environment.
- Morro Bay also supports a variety of recreational activities such as bird watching, sea kayaking, and recreational fishing and is a working commercial and sport fishing harbor. The Morro Bay State Marine Reserve and State Marine Recreational Management Area enhance protection and recreational values in this area.

Point Buchon State Marine Reserve and Marine Conservation Area

Factsheet
13

Size of MPA:
18.21 mi²

Depth range of MPA:
Shore to 377 feet

Key habitats protected:
Offshore rock formations, hydrocorals, kelp forest, rocky reef.

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Point Buchon is an area with documented high diversity and abundance of fish and seabirds, remarkably clear water, underwater pinnacles, and some of the shallowest coldwater corals in the Central Coast.

- The exceptionally high quality habitats found at Point Buchon support diverse assemblages of nearshore and deep rocky feef fish species, as well as intertidal invertebrates, seabird colonies and marine mammals. Over 800 taxa have been documented in this area. Protection of Point Buchon is expected to have spillover benefits to adjacent fished areas.
- The Point Buchon MPAs were designed to allow continued access to popular fishing grounds to both the north (near Morro Bay) and south (near Port San Luis) and to allow continued salmon and albacore fishing in the State Marine Conservation Area's deeper waters offshore.

Vandenberg State Marine Reserve

Factsheet
14

Size of MPA:
32.84 mi²

Depth range of MPA:
Shore to 127 feet

Key habitats protected:
Rocky cliffs, offshore reef and sandy bottom habitats.

The Vandenberg area contains representative reef and sandy habitat as well as rocky cliffs that provide critical nesting habitat for guillemots, cormorants, and oystercatchers as well as hundreds of endangered brown pelicans, and other seabirds.

- Forage studies in this area have documented a wide range of fish and invertebrate species associated with reef and sandy bottom habitats as well as the interactions between these prey species and seabirds and marine mammals using this area.
- The Vandenberg State Marine Reserve was designed to maintain fishing access to the more popular and more accessible reefs closer to port such as those found off Point Sal and Purisima Point. Proximity to the Vandenberg Air Force Base assists with management and enforcement at this remote site. In addition, the Vandenberg State Marine Reserve leverages existing security restrictions imposted by the military in this area.