



Marine Protected Areas

Conserve key marine life and habitats

Preserve natural diversity

Help rebuild depleted populations

Protect geologic features and
cultural areas

Support research and education

Offer recreational and economic
opportunities

Image above: Morro Rock (Mike Baird, flickr.bairdphotos.com)
below: white pelicans (Mike Baird, flickr.bairdphotos.com)

California State Parks

San Luis Obispo Sector Office:
805-534-2801
711, TTY RELAY SERVICE
www.parks.ca.gov

Morro Bay State Park

805-772-2694

California Department of Fish and Game

For more information:
www.dfg.ca.gov

For boundaries and
regulations, go to:
www.dfg.ca.gov/MLPA

Help stop poaching and polluting:
1-888-DFG-CALTIP (1-888-334-2258)

This publication is available in
alternate formats by contacting
Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation:
831-647-4209



Morro Bay

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

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



Cover: southern sea otters (Mike Baird, flickr.bairdphotos.com)

Central Coast Marine Protected Areas



From the salt marsh to the sea

California Is Making a Difference

by creating a statewide network of marine protected areas (MPAs). Marine protected areas are underwater places designed to protect key habitats and species by prohibiting or restricting the take of marine life. Just as the nation's parks, forests and wilderness areas protect special places on land, California's MPAs protect unique areas in the ocean. The California MPA network includes the many different types of habitats found along our coast, from sheltered estuaries and lush kelp forests to steep underwater canyons.

Image above left: sea lion (Mike Baird, flickr.bairdphotos.com)
above right: leopard shark (Chad King)

Tidal creeks and streams carry freshwater from the inland areas of California and converge in a maze of coastal marshes and wetlands at Morro Bay Estuary. Killifish, striped bass, topsmelt, leopard shark and starry flounder roam the submerged eelgrass beds of the estuary year-round. Acting as protective nursery grounds, the shallow waters also teem with cockles, mussels, clams, shrimp, and oysters. Many species that live as adults in the ocean spend their early life in the protected bay habitat. Chorro and Los Osos creeks host steelhead trout, a threatened species in this region that spawns in creeks, migrates to the estuary and the ocean, and returns to the creeks.

Lagoons and wetlands were once common along the Southern California coast, but almost all were filled and developed before we understood the importance of these delicate ecosystems. Morro Bay has largely survived, a rare

example of a vast coastal estuary showing how much of California's west coast once appeared. Today the estuary is struggling with the impacts of coastal development and other human activities. The newly designated MPAs are a step toward restoring and protecting this special place.

Amazing Diversity of Life

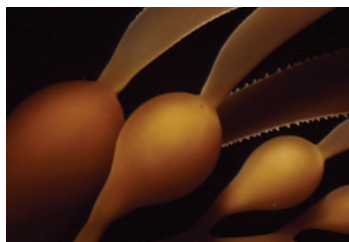
- Fish in estuaries can tolerate a mix of salt and fresh water. These nutrient-rich wetlands are prime habitat for a variety of fish.
- Eelgrass beds provide habitat for many animals, including black brant, a small goose that spends the winter in the area.
- Marine mammals such as sea otters, sea lions and harbor seals eat and rest along the banks of Morro Bay.
- Invertebrates such as gaper clams, shore crabs, and fat innkeeper worms along with many other species reside in the mud.
- Hundreds of species of birds reside or migrate to these rich and diverse MPAs.



nudibranch (Ken Bondy)



diver (Jerry Loomis)



giant kelp (Jerry Loomis)



striped shore crab (Jerry Kirkhart)



lemon nudibranch (Ken Bondy)



Morro Rock (Jerry Kirkhart)

California Marine Protected Areas

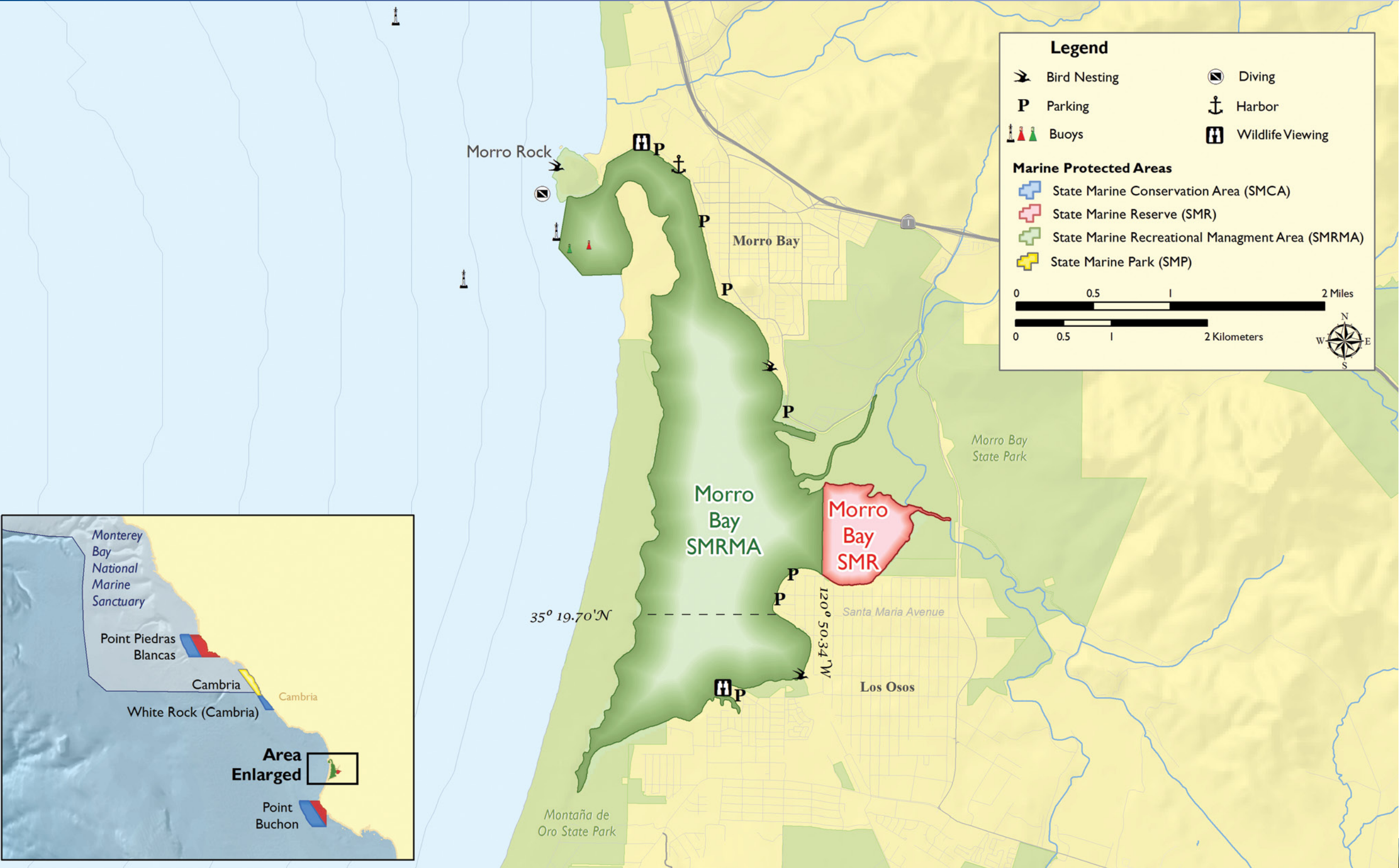
The California statewide MPA network includes four different types that vary in their purpose and level of protection, ranging from limited to no take. The MPA designations are:

- State Marine Reserves:** No damage or take of living marine resources, geologic or cultural resources is allowed.
- State Marine Parks:** No commercial take of resources is allowed, but some recreational take may be allowed (restrictions vary).
- State Marine Conservation Areas:** Some recreational and/or commercial take of marine resources may be allowed (restrictions vary).
- State Marine Recreational Management Areas:** Restricts the take of living marine resources while allowing for waterfowl hunting to occur (restrictions vary).



great egret (Mike Baird, flickr.bairdphotos.com)

Morro Bay Marine Protected Areas



Morro Bay MPAs

MPA	Recreational Uses
Morro Bay State Marine Recreational Management Area	No recreational or commercial take of living marine resources, except north of 35°19.70' N, recreational take of finfish and oyster aquaculture is allowed; Waterfowl hunting is allowed unless otherwise restricted by hunting regulations.
Morro Bay State Marine Reserve	No fishing; All take is prohibited.

Regulations

This document does not replace the official regulatory language found in California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 632, including commercial allowances and restrictions.

- A fishing license is required for any fishing.
- All existing take regulations still apply in addition to the ones listed above.
- Unless otherwise stated, all non-consumptive recreational activities are allowed.

* Boundaries for the Morro Bay MPAs include the area below mean high tide line.