

What is a Marine Protected Area (MPA)?

MPAs are areas off the coast of California dedicated to the protection of marine habitat and wildlife. MPAs have been established so that ocean ecosystems may recover and future generations can enjoy marine life for years to come.



There are three types of Marine Protected Areas in San Diego.

State Marine Reserve (SMR) – Take, damage, injury, or possession of any marine resource (living, geological or cultural) is prohibited. Areas include Matlahuayl, South La Jolla and Cabrillo.

No-Take State Marine Conservation Areas (SMCA) – Take, damage, injury, or possession of any natural resource (living, geological or cultural) is prohibited. Foot traffic is restricted on designated paths. No swimming, diving or boating. Areas include Batiquitos Lagoon, San Elijo Lagoon and Famosa Sloughs.

State Marine Conservation Areas (SMCA) – Take, including fishing/harvest of some marine/resources is permitted. Areas include Swami's, San Dieguito Lagoon, San Diego Scripps, outer water portion of South La Jolla and Tijuana River Mouth.

Southern California Marine Protected Areas went into effect January 1st, 2012.

Is fishing still allowed from Southern California piers?

Yes, Southern California's public piers are generally open to recreational fishing. Even though licenses and stamps are not required while fishing from a public pier, all other regulations apply (including minimum size, bag limits, seasons, and report card requirements).

Is anchoring allowed inside MPAs?

Yes, anchoring your boat is allowed inside MPAs under specific regulations listed in Section (§) 632(a) of Title 14 California Code of Regulations or at the official "Guide for Southern California Marine Protected Areas."

The maps show both State Marine Reserves SMRs (red) and "No-Take" State Marine Conservation Areas SMCAs (purple). What is the difference between the two designations?

Both SMRs and "No-Take" SMCAs do not allow fishing or harvest of any living marine resource. However, in "No-Take" SMCAs, some indirect take is authorized during permitted operations within the MPA.

Where can I find more information on Southern California MPAs?

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is the managing government agency in charge of MPA enforcement, monitoring activities and regulations, and it maintains several websites with extensive MPA information. The websites are provided on the back of this brochure.

www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/mpa

San Diego MPAs	Fishing/Harvest Restriction*
Batiquitos Lagoon SMCA (No-Take)	No Take Allowed. **
Swami's SMCA	No Take Allowed EXCEPT: recreational take by hook and line from shore only, and spearfishing of pelagic finfish (See definition 1 below) Pacific bonito and white seabass.
San Elijo Lagoon SMCA (No-Take)	No Take Allowed**
San Dieguito Lagoon SMCA	No Take Allowed EXCEPT: recreational take of finfish by hook and line from shore. ** +
San Diego-Scripps Coastal SMCA	No Take Allowed EXCEPT: recreational take of coastal pelagic species (see definition 2 below) by hook and line.
Matlahuayl SMR	No Take Allowed
South La Jolla SMCA	No Take Allowed EXCEPT: Recreational take of pelagic finfish (see definition 1 below), and Pacific bonito, by hook and line.
South La Jolla SMR	No Take Allowed
Famosa Slough SMCA (No-Take)	No Take Allowed
Cabrillo SMR	No Take Allowed
Tijuana River Mouth SMCA	No Take Allowed EXCEPT: Recreational take of coastal pelagic species (see definition 2), except market squid, by hand-held dip net; and commercial take of coastal pelagic species (see definition 2), except market squid, by round haul net.

Definition 1

Pelagic finfish: Yellowtail, Northern anchovy, barracudas, billfishes, dolphinfish, Pacific herring, jack mackerel, Pacific mackerel, salmon, Pacific sardine, blue shark, salmon shark, shortfin mako shark, thresher sharks, swordfish and tunas. The commercial take of Marlin is not allowed.

Definition 2

Coastal pelagic species: Northern anchovy, Pacific sardine, Pacific mackerel, jack mackerel, and market squid.

* Other restrictions may exist. See www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/mpa ** Swimming, boating, wading & diving are prohibited. + This area overlaps a State Ecological Reserve: access to the ecological reserve shoreline is currently closed to the public, as authorized under CCR Title 14, Section 630 (a)(10)