



# what are marine protected areas



Over 100 years ago, the United States protected our natural wonders by creating National Parks. Now, California is doing the same for our ocean through the Marine Life Protection Act. Marine protected areas are underwater parks where sea life can thrive.



## What can I do in marine protected areas?

Like National Parks, marine protected areas are open to the public for education, research, and appreciation. They offer great opportunities for diving, kayaking, surfing, and wildlife viewing.

## Who decides where to put marine protected areas?

Areas are selected based on the best available science and input from the community. The process is a collaboration between divers, fishermen, conservationists, and coastal residents. Public recommendations are reviewed by experts before adoption by California's Fish and Game Commission.

## How do marine protected areas work?

Marine protected areas support the whole web of life. They help restore marine ecosystems so that future generations can enjoy healthy oceans.

## What are National Marine Sanctuaries?

National Marine Sanctuaries, a type of marine protected area, work to protect habitats and biological communities by prohibiting oil exploration, drilling, discharge, and other harmful activities.

## Where can I find California's marine protected areas?

California's marine protected areas are a work in progress. There are 29 along the Central Coast, and several more around the Channel Islands near Santa Barbara. Work continues to extend the network from Mexico to the Oregon border.



project partners



design

Designed by Andrew Schuster / iStock.com/Andrew Schuster  
Illustrations courtesy of Jane Pohl Publishing, Dover Publications, and Farallones Marine Sanctuary Association. Used with permission.  
Printed with 100% recycled ink on biodegradable banner material at Dwell Sign Company in San Rafael, Calif.

