

Blue Cavern Onshore State Marine Conservation Area (No-Take)

Southern California Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), *Established January 2012*



Pink Abalone
(*Haliotis corrugate*)
Photo by Mark Winscher



Kelp Rockfish
(*Sebastes atrovirens*),
Giant kelp (*Macrocystis*)
Photo by Mark Winscher



California Spiny Lobster
(*Panulirus interruptus*)
Photo by Mark Winscher

Site Overview

Photos are representative of the South Coast Region and may not be within this MPA.

What is an MPA?

MPAs are a type of [marine managed area](#) (MMA) where marine or estuarine waters are set aside primarily to protect or conserve marine life and associated habitats. California has a coastal network of 124 protected areas designed to help increase the coherence and effectiveness of protecting the state's marine life, habitats, and ecosystems. The network includes three types of MPA: [state marine reserve](#) (SMR), [state marine conservation area](#) (SMCA), and [state marine park](#) (SMP); one MMA: [state marine recreational management area](#) (SMRMA); and [special closures](#). There are 119 MPAs, 5 MMAs and 15 special closures, each with unique boundaries and regulations in the network. Non-consumptive activities, restoration, and permitted scientific research are allowed.

What is an SMCA (No-Take)?

An **SMCA (No-Take)** is a type of MPA that protects resources by prohibiting commercial and recreational take while allowing take incidental to the permitted operation and maintenance of artificial structures inside the SMCA.

Blue Cavern Onshore SMCA (No-Take) Key Habitats & Overview

- **MPA size:** 2.61 square miles
- **Depth range:** 0 to 892 feet
- **Along-shore span (shoreline):** 2.3 miles
- **Beaches:** 1.66 miles
- **Rocky shores:** 1.68 miles
- **Surfgrass:** 1.4 miles
- **Sand (all depths):** 2.52 square miles
- **Rock (all depths):** 0.09 square miles
- **Average kelp (1989 to 2008):** 0.02 square miles

Where is Blue Cavern Onshore SMCA (No-Take)?



Boundaries and Regulations

Boundary: This area is bounded by the mean high tide line and straight lines connecting the following points in the order listed:
33° 25.960' N. lat. 118° 27.000' W. long.;
33° 27.500' N. lat. 118° 27.000' W. long.;
33° 27.500' N. lat. 118° 29.300' W. long.; and
33° 26.640' N. lat. 118° 29.300' W. long.

Only the following take is allowed: Take pursuant to maintenance of artificial structures inside the conservation area per any required federal, state and local permits, or as otherwise authorized by the department.

Except as pursuant to Federal law, emergency caused by hazardous weather, or as provided in subsection 632(b)(124)(D)(E), it is unlawful to anchor or moor a vessel in the formerly designated Catalina Marine Science Center Marine Life Refuge). The director of the Catalina Marine Science Center Marine Life Refuge, or any person that the director of the refuge has authorized may anchor or moor a vessel or take, for scientific purposes, any fish or specimen of marine plant life in the formerly designated Catalina Marine Science Center Marine Life Refuge under the conditions prescribed in a scientific collecting permit issued by the department.

Blue Cavern Onshore State Marine Conservation Area (No-Take)

How and Why Blue Cavern was Chosen for an SMCA (No-Take)

MPAs were designed through a collaborative, regional public process by a cross-interest regional stakeholder group (RSG). Using scientific criteria, public input and local resource knowledge the RSG developed MPA proposals. RSG proposals included site specific rationale (why the site should be an MPA-*included below*), the classification (type of MPA), boundaries, and regulations. Final MPA proposals were sent to the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) for their adoption process. Blue Cavern Onshore SMCA (No-Take) was adopted by the Commission in 2012.

South Coast RSG Identified Rationale for Blue Cavern Onshore SMCA (No-Take):

Blue Cavern Onshore SMCA, clustered with Blue Cavern Offshore SMCA provides a backbone MPA for the leeward side of Catalina Island. This MPA was carefully designed with 2 goals in mind: 1) To expand the tiny existing USC Wrigley Marine Lab MPA to include the ecologically important offshore Bird Rock and extend the coastal reserve further east; and 2) To balance (& improve in long term) recreational fishing opportunities for island residents and visitors to Isthmus area by providing open fishing areas around major mooring coves, piers, and reefs, including Isthmus Reef and Ship Rock. Northern region of Santa Catalina Island hosts highly diverse features including along-shore headland, coves, sea caves, walls, reefs and stable sand habitats; and unique offshore rocks and reefs. Proposed MPA contains key habitat giant kelp, elk kelp, and surfgrass. Will protect and enhance fishes and invertebrates, including sea bass, rockfishes, sheephead, kelp bass, halibut, abalone, lobster, cucumbers, mussels, limpets, and rock scallops. This expansion of the existing reserve by USC Wrigley Marine Science Center, greatly improves the opportunity for enhanced research, monitoring, and education.

Species Likely to Benefit from the Establishment of MPAs in California

Species likely to benefit from establishing an MPA are those, whose home range, behavior, reproduction, exploitation rate or population status indicates that they may benefit from spatial management. This includes species that are directly targeted by fisheries, those which are caught incidental to fishing for the target species (bycatch) and which cannot be returned to the water with a high rate of survival, and those which may be indirectly impacted through ecological changes within MPAs.

For a list of species likely to benefit from MPAs statewide: www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/mpa/species.asp

For a list of species likely to benefit from south coast MPAs: www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/binders_sc/b2q.pdf

South Coast Regional Resources

California MPA Overview:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network-Overview

South Coast Regional Goals and Objectives:

www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/binders_sc/b1n.pdf

California MLPA South Coast Study Region Description of MPAs:

www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/binders_sc/b1pv.pdf

Methods Used to Evaluate MPAs in the South Coast:

www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/pdfs/binders_sc/b2b.pdf

MPA Research and Monitoring Activities:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Research-And-Monitoring

Regional MPA Statistics:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Statistics

Regional Planning History:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Planning-Process

California MPA Network Resources

Detailed MPA guidebooks maps and brochures:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network

California Marine Life Protection Act Marine Protected Areas Master Plan:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Master-Plan

Marine Life Protection Act Summary and Network Goals:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs/Network-Goals



For more information, visit:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs

Email:

AskMPA@wildlife.ca.gov

MPA Mobile:



Report poaching and polluting,
Call CalTIP

1-888-334-2258