

## What is a California marine protected area (or “MPA”)?

An MPA is a type of managed area whose main purpose is to protect or conserve marine life and habitats in ocean or estuarine waters. California's MPA Network consists of 124 areas with varying levels of protection and 14 special closures, all designed to help safeguard the state's marine ecosystems. Most marine conservation areas such as Salt Point State Marine Conservation Area provide some opportunity for commercial and/or recreational take (species and gear exceptions vary by location - see reverse).

One goal for California's MPAs was to strategically place them near each other to form an interconnected network that would help to preserve the flow of life between marine ecosystems. Within that network each MPA has unique goals and regulations, and non-consumptive activities, permitted scientific research, monitoring, and educational pursuits may be allowed.

## Why was this location chosen for a state marine conservation area?

One of the goals for Salt Point State Marine Conservation Area is to protect the rocky reef, sandy seafloor and kelp forest habitats found there. Rock walls rise up from the conservation area's sandy seafloor, dotted with large anemones and encrusting sponges, while halibut find camouflage in the sediments. The intertidal zone teems with sea stars, chitons, crabs, and aggregating anemones. Beneath the surface, forests of bull kelp provide habitat and food for blue rockfish, perch, cabezon, and red abalone. Gray whales may be seen migrating seasonally through the conservation area's deeper waters.

Salt Point State Marine Conservation Area shares an eastern border with [Gerstle Cove State Marine Reserve](#), and a land-side border with [Salt Point State Park](#). The conservation area also overlaps a portion of the [Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary](#). Placing a state marine conservation area here provides moderately high levels of protection for marine life and the habitats they use.



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## Quick Facts: Salt Point State Marine Conservation Area

- **MPA size:** 1.84 square miles
- **Shoreline span:** 2.8 miles
- **Depth range:** 0 to 226 feet
- **Habitat composition:**  
Sand/mud: 0.58 square miles  
Rock: 2.66 square miles



Non-Consumptive  
Activities

Fishing  
See Regulations  
On Back

No Collecting

## Further Information:

- MPA Website: [www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs)
- MPA and Sportfishing Interactive Map: [www.wildlife.ca.gov/OceanSportfishMap](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/OceanSportfishMap)
- Email: [AskMarine@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:AskMarine@wildlife.ca.gov)

**Photos - Upper:** Shoreline at Salt Point State Marine Conservation Area. photo © Pandey Farmer, CC BY-NC 2.0 **Lower right:** Red abalone and orange cup coral at Salt Point State Marine Conservation Area. photo © Kevin Joe **Lower left:** School of blue rockfish at the conservation area. CDFW photo by A. Maguire

# Salt Point State Marine Conservation Area

North Central California - Sonoma County



Version 3, February 2026

## Salt Point State Marine Conservation Area Boundary and Regulations from California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632

### Boundary:

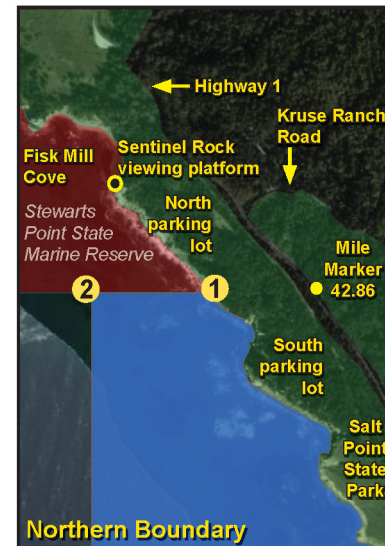
This area is bounded by the mean high tide line and straight lines connecting the following points in the order listed:

- 38°35.600' N. lat. 123°20.800' W. long. ①;
- 38°35.600' N. lat. 123°21.000' W. long. ②;
- 38°33.500' N. lat. 123°21.000' W. long. ③;
- 38°33.500' N. lat. 123°18.910' W. long. ④, except that Gerstle Cove as described in subsection 632... is excluded.

### Permitted/Prohibited Uses

1. It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource for recreational and/or commercial purposes, with the following specified exceptions:

- a. The recreational take of abalone\* and finfish\*\* is allowed.



\*Note: The recreational abalone fishery is closed until at least April, 2036.

\*\*Finfish are defined here as any species of bony fish or cartilaginous fish (sharks, skates and rays).

Take may be authorized for research, restoration, and monitoring purposes under a scientific collecting permit. See California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632(a).

The information in this document does not replace the official regulatory language found in the California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632. View these regulations online at

[www.wildlife.ca.gov/CCR-T14-MPAs](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/CCR-T14-MPAs).