

Marine Protected Areas



Kelp forest in MPA Anacapa Island, Ca



Marine Biologists monitoring an MPA

What's an MPA?

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are areas that have government designated restrictions on human use put in place to protect marine life. In the Santa Barbara Channel, we have 19 MPAs with varying restrictions: no-take, limited entry and limited commercial use. Globally, there are about 1000 MPAs in the world. The ocean is highly interconnected, and all of these MPAs work together to maintain marine biodiversity. If MPA restrictions were not carried out, many ecosystems would suffer.



Fishing boat that might be prohibited in an MPA

How do they work?

MPAs only work if community members agree to follow all restrictions and are held accountable for their actions. MPAs are often monitored by law enforcement and are able to give large fines to those who do not abide by restrictions. Researchers are constantly creating new technologies and methods to monitor fishermen to ensure that they stay out of MPAs. Additionally, researchers from UC Santa Barbara have compiled years of data to create a detailed list of quantifiable requirements to demonstrate the success of MPAs. These results proved that the success of any particular MPA depends on the success of surrounding MPAs.



Signage at an MPA

Why are they important?

The ocean is filled with incredible ecosystems and biodiversity, as well as food and resources that humans benefit from. When humans overfish, it doesn't just deplete that species, but also the entire ecosystem. Researchers took data from fishermen over 6 years, and found that the implementation of MPAs increased their catch rates by 225%. This is because some fish that are conserved in MPAs migrate outside of the MPA where they are fair game for fishermen. This proves that both marine organisms and humans depend on the success of MPAs in order to coexist.



Marine Biologists processing MPA samples in their laboratory

Marine Protected Areas of the Santa Barbara Channel

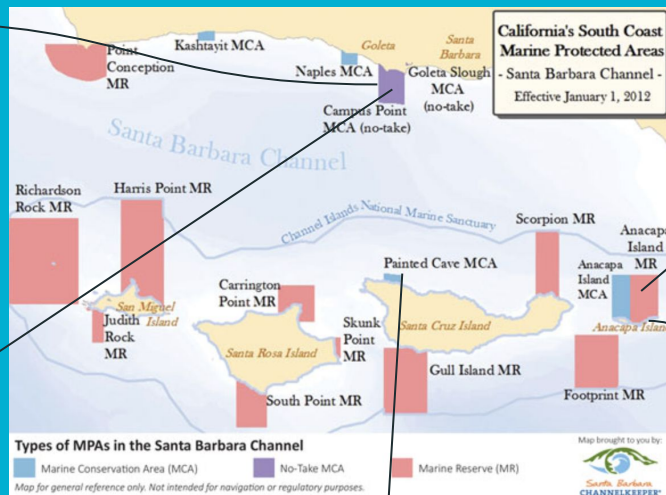
In the Santa Barbara Channel, we have 19 MPAs with varying restrictions: no-take, limited entry and limited commercial use. Researchers from UC Santa Barbara's Marine Science Institute continuously take data from MPAs to evaluate their effectiveness. They measure sizes, quantities, and interactions between populations to demonstrate MPA successes. Many of our kelp forests and sandy beaches in the Santa Barbara Channel are protected. This allows these areas to be excellent destinations for recreational use as they are brimming with marine life.



Snowy Plover birds at Campus Point

Campus Point

This local MPA limits all take, but is perfect for surfers and beachgoers. Parts of Sands beach have limited access in order to protect endangered Snowy Plover birds. Thanks to conservation efforts, Campus Point now has the largest population of Snowy Plovers in California.



Painted Cave

While commercial and recreation take at this reserve are limited, some recreational fishing is permitted here. This makes it a great destination for spearfishing and collecting lobster. The beautiful cave is accessible by kayak and charter boat.

Anacapa Island

At this marine reserve, damage and take of all resources is prohibited. Additionally, there are special closure to protect brown pelicans. This makes it an incredible destination for snorkeling, scuba diving, and kayaking.



Seal in Anacapa Island kelp forest

Campus Point



Devereux Beach



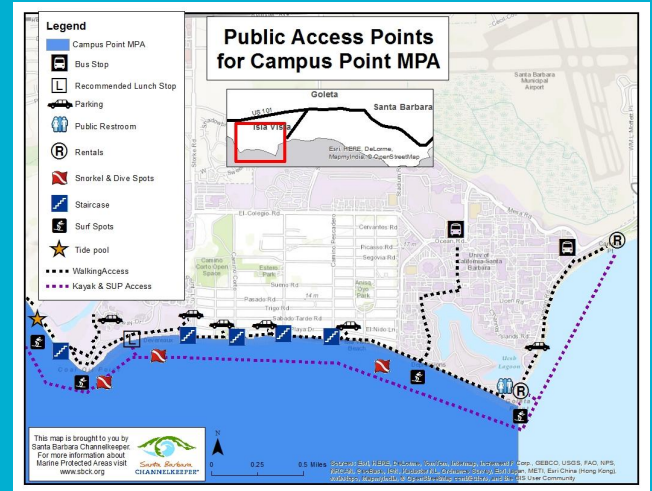
Sands Beach/ Coal Oil Point

Something for Everyone

Whether you want to take a long walk, lie down and relax, play games with your family, swim, surf, kayak, paddle board, snorkel, scuba dive, bird watch, or anything else you can think of, Campus Point MPA is a great place to it all!

During Your Visit

- Wear reef safe sunscreen
- Don't run in the ocean! Shuffle your feet to avoid stingrays
- Avoid blocked off restoration sites
- Treat any animals you see with respect
- Take only pictures
- Leave only footprints
- Respect other people
- Avoid entering the ocean for 3 days after it rains
- Bring baby oil to clean tar off your feet
- Have fun!!



Campus Point Beach

Why YOU Should Care

Ecological Benefits

The complexity of ocean ecosystems lies in intricate food webs characterized by delicate balances. Any disturbance to a single organism has a ripple effect across the entire ecosystem. The establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) serves as a safeguard for natural health, providing a conducive environment for endangered species to reproduce undisturbed and restore their populations.



Economic Benefits

If you enjoy eating seafood, MPAs are essential for your diet. Marine conservation works with fisheries management to protect MPAs from commercial fishing. When overfishing occurs, fish become scarce and expensive because their populations are wiped out. MPAs ensure that fish are consistently reproducing so that fishermen always have something to catch.



Recreational Benefits

Nothing makes a great beach day more than finding unique shells, or seeing a wide array of colorful fish in the water. The best places to take in the ocean's biodiversity recreationally are MPAs. It's important to leave everything where you found it, so that others may have the opportunity to see the wonders of beaches and ocean. Remember next time see a cool shell at an MPA and want to take it home, consider following the rules and leave it for the next people to see,

