

# THE NATIONAL SYSTEM OF MPAs: ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL SYSTEM SITES (MARCH 2011)

[www.mpa.gov](http://www.mpa.gov)

The information provided here is for the 297 MPAs that are members of the national system of MPAs. Information is current as of March 2011. The national system will expand as federal, state, territorial, tribal, and local agencies nominate additional sites. Additional information on these sites can be found on the List of National System MPAs, available at [www.mpa.gov](http://www.mpa.gov).

## THE NATIONAL SYSTEM OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

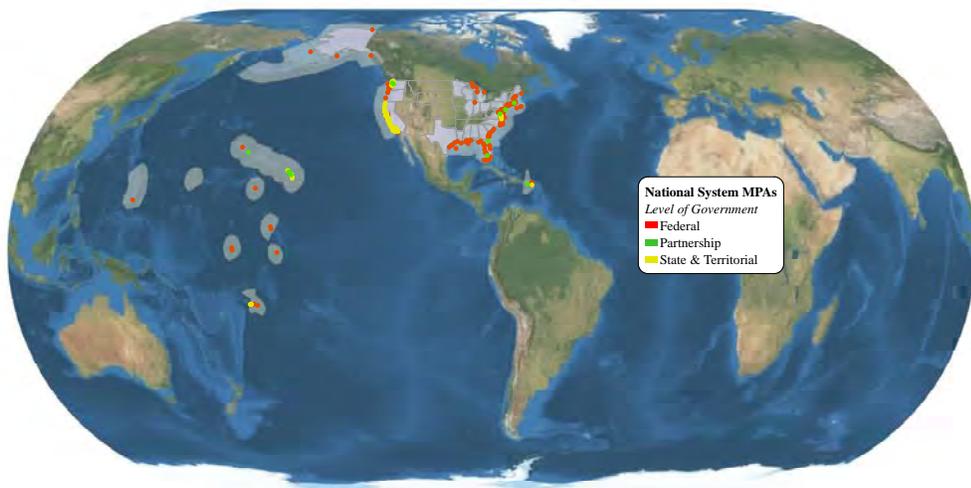
In 2009, the United States established the National System of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to support the effective stewardship, conservation, restoration, sustainable use, understanding and appreciation of the nation's marine resources. The national system, which currently includes 297 federal, state and territorial MPAs, will expand over time.

The national system coordinates MPAs managed by diverse agencies across all levels of government to work toward national conservation objectives. The system benefits the nation's collective conservation efforts as well as participating MPAs, providing them with a means to address issues that extend beyond their boundaries.

The national system is described in detail in the Framework for the *National System of Marine Protected Areas of the United States of America*.

Key benefits of the national system include:

- Enhancing MPA stewardship
- Building partnerships
- Building MPA capacity
- Increasing support for marine conservation
- More effective outreach on MPAs
- Promoting cultural heritage
- Protecting MPA resources



## NATIONAL SYSTEM SITES AT A GLANCE:

- The national system contains 297 sites and covers an area of 176,252 square miles
- 4% of U.S. waters (0-200 nautical miles) is covered by the national system sites
- Most of the sites in the national system (72%) are multiple use MPAs that allow a variety of human activities, including fishing and other extractive uses.
- All 21 of the national system's priority conservation objectives are addressed by national system members
- Every major ecoregion in the U.S. is represented in the national system

NOAA's National Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Center's mission is to facilitate the effective use of science, technology, training, and information in the planning, management, and evaluation of the nation's system of marine protected areas. The MPA Center works in partnership with federal, state, tribal, and local governments and stakeholders to develop a science-based, comprehensive national system of MPAs. These collaborative efforts will lead to a more efficient, effective use of MPAs now and in the future to conserve and sustain the nation's vital marine resources.



## IN FOCUS: NATIONAL SYSTEM GOALS

The goals of the national system are to conserve and manage:

- **Natural heritage** – the nation’s biological communities, habitats, ecosystems, and processes and the ecological services, values and uses they provide
- **Cultural heritage** – cultural resources that reflect the nation’s maritime history and traditional cultural connections to the sea, as well as the uses and values they provide
- **Sustainable production** – the nation’s renewable living resources and their habitats (including, but not limited to, spawning, mating, and nursery grounds and areas established to minimize bycatch of species) and the social, cultural and economic values and services they provide

### Natural Heritage Focus: Elkhorn Slough State Marine Reserve (CA)



Elkhorn Slough, one of the largest estuaries in California, provides essential habitat for over 700 species, including aquatic mammals, birds, fish, invertebrates, algae, and plants. Elkhorn Slough hosts year-round residents associated with estuaries, such as pickleweed, eelgrass, oysters, gaper clams, and long-jawed mudsuckers, as well as important seasonal visitors such as migratory shorebirds, sea otters, and sharks and rays.

### Cultural Heritage Focus: Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MI)



Located in northwestern Lake Huron, the 448-square-mile Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary protects one of America’s best-preserved and nationally-significant collections of shipwrecks. Fire, ice, collisions, and storms have claimed over 200 vessels in and around Thunder Bay. To date, more than 50 shipwrecks have been discovered within the sanctuary and an additional 30 wrecks have been located outside of the sanctuary boundaries.

### Sustainable Production Focus: Oceanographer Canyon (MA)

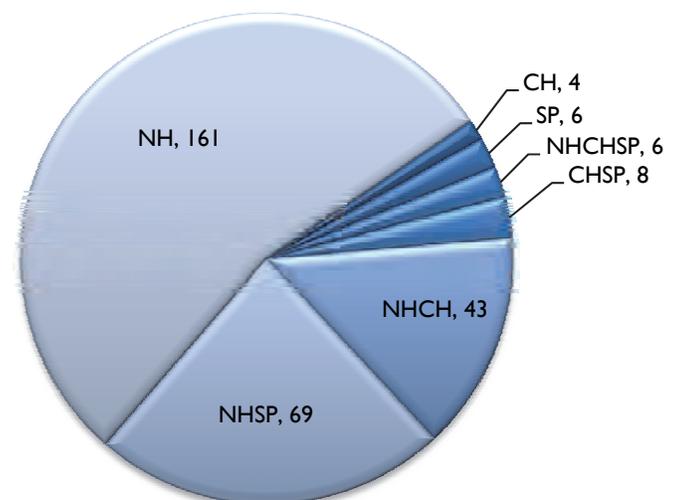


Oceanographer Canyon is one of four canyons in the Mid-Atlantic region managed by the National Marine Fisheries Service in cooperation with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. The four canyons are closed to bottom trawling under the Tilefish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to protect 113,000 acres of deep-sea corals, sponges, and clay outcroppings. Tilefish are shelter-seeking, and create complex burrows in clay outcrops in underwater canyons. Their burrowing habitats can significantly alter the topography of the continental shelf off the East Coast of the U.S.

## CONSERVATION FOCUS

Almost all (91%) of the national system sites have a primary conservation focus on conserving natural heritage. Approximately 5% of sites have a primary conservation focus on conserving cultural resources, and 4% of sites are primarily focused on sustainable production. Almost half (42%) of all the national system sites have more than one conservation focus.

NUMBER OF SITES BY CONSERVATION FOCUS



NH = Natural Heritage



CH = Cultural Heritage



SP = Sustainable Production

## PRIORITY CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

All 21 of the national system's priority conservation objectives (see Framework document on [www.mpa.gov](http://www.mpa.gov) for complete list) are addressed by member sites. The majority of sites (291, or 98%) meet at least one natural heritage priority conservation objective. Approximately 185 sites (62%) meet at least one sustainable production priority conservation objective, while 89 sites (30%) meet at least one cultural heritage priority conservation objective.

### Top Five Priority Conservation Objectives Addressed by Member Sites:

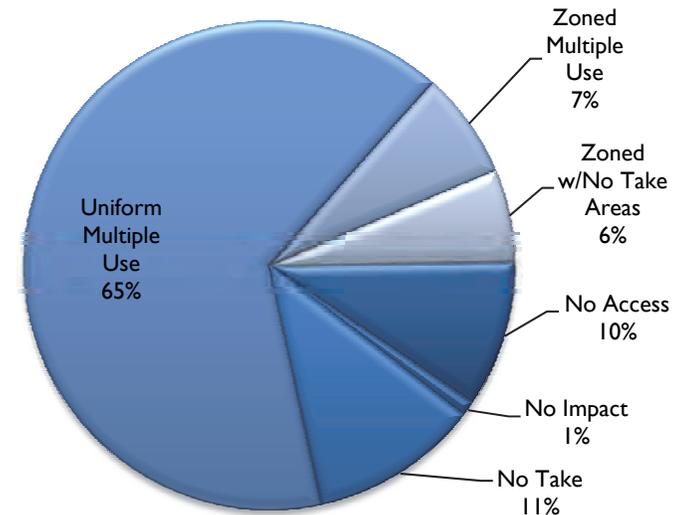
#### Natural Heritage

- Key areas that provide compatible opportunities for education and research (241)
- Areas of high species and/or high diversity (241)
- Key reproduction areas and nursery grounds (207)
- Key biogenic habitats (199)
- Unique or rare species, habitats and associated communities (196)

## LEVEL OF PROTECTION

Most of the sites in the national system (72%) are multiple use MPAs that allow a variety of human activities, including fishing and other extractive uses. By contrast, 28% of the sites are no-take, which prohibit the extraction or significant destruction of natural and cultural resources. However, because one of these no-take sites, the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in the Northwest Hawaiian Islands, is so large (140,000 square miles), about 83% of the area of MPAs in the national system are no-take. Less than 1% of U.S. waters overall are no-take.

PERCENT OF SITES BY LEVEL OF PROTECTION



## SITES BY CEC MARINE ECOREGIONS

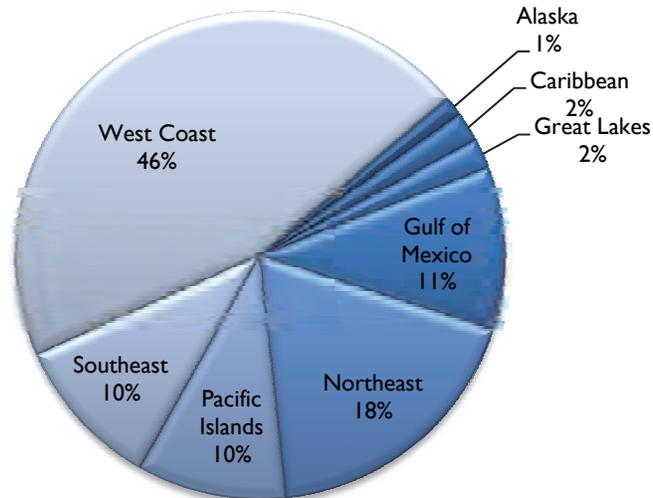


Created by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, (CEC), the Marine Ecoregions of North America classifies marine ecoregions according to oceanographic features and geographically distinct assemblages of species from the Beaufort Sea to the Gulf of Mexico, covering the continent's territorial waters in the Pacific, Atlantic and Arctic Oceans. The largest number (87, or 29%) of national system sites are located within the Montereyan Pacific Transition marine ecoregion, which stretches along the central California coast from Point Conception to Cape Mendocino. However, the second highest number (48, or 16%) of national system sites are found in the Virginian Atlantic marine ecoregion. Only one MPA is found in the Aleutian Archipelago marine ecoregion.

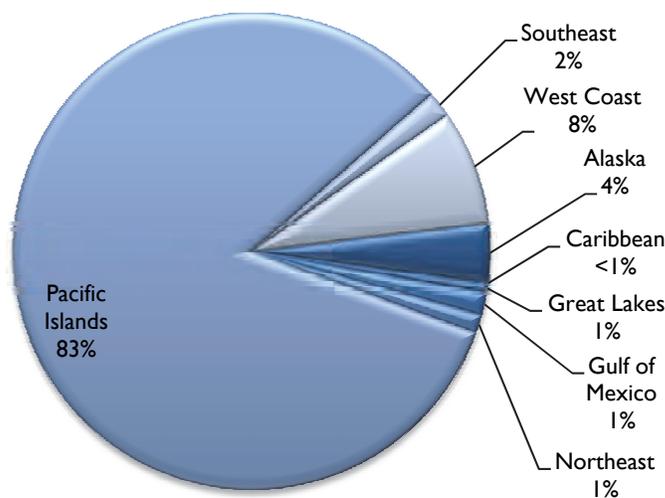
## REGIONS AND LOCATIONS

The west coast (California in particular), has the highest number of sites in the national system. The Pacific Islands region has the largest area of sites in the national system, due to the size of the Papahānaumokuākea National Marine Monument in Hawaii, which extends over 140,420 square miles. In contrast, there are 120 sites (40%) in the national system that cover less than 1 square mile of marine area each. In all, 30 states and territories are represented in the national system, plus additional offshore areas under federal jurisdiction.

PERCENT OF SITES BY REGION



PERCENT OF AREA BY REGION



## PROGRAMS

Of the 297 national system sites, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages 106 sites (36%). The National Park Service manages 29 national system sites, or 10%. There are 13 (4%) National Marine Sanctuaries and five (2%) National Estuarine Research Reserve Sites included in the system. Altogether, 51% of the national system sites are managed by federal agencies, while 37% are managed by state agencies. The remainder are managed by federal/state partnerships or territories.

## WHERE CAN I FIND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION?



The National Marine Protected Areas Center launched a new interactive online mapping tool that, for the first time, allows users to view boundaries and access data for more than 1,600 marine protected areas (MPAs) in the United States.

The tool provides an interface to explore MPA information that was previously limited to expert geographic information system users. The site has easy-to-use functions to visualize MPA boundaries, review MPA classification information (e.g., level of protection, managing agency, fishing restrictions), and explore all MPAs in a given location.

The MPA Center's interactive MPA mapping tool, available at [www.mpa.gov](http://www.mpa.gov), allows users to view boundaries and access data for more than 1,600 MPAs in the U.S., including all national system sites.

[www.mpa.gov](http://www.mpa.gov)

**Lauren Wenzel**  
Acting Director, National MPA Center  
[Lauren.Wenzel@noaa.gov](mailto:Lauren.Wenzel@noaa.gov)  
(301) 563-1136

**Dr. Mimi D'Iorio**  
GIS/Database Manager  
[Mimi.Diorio@noaa.gov](mailto:Mimi.Diorio@noaa.gov)  
(831) 645-2703

**Kara Yeager**  
Communications Coordinator  
[Kara.Yeager@noaa.gov](mailto:Kara.Yeager@noaa.gov)  
(301) 563-1162



# THE LIST OF NATIONAL SYSTEM MPAS (List is current as of June 2011; MPAs in blue represent the 43 added in 3rd and 4th nominations)

## FEDERAL MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

### Marine National Monument

Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (Hawaii)

### National Marine Fisheries Service

[Lydonia Canyon Gear Restricted Area](#)

[Norfolk Canyon Gear Restricted Area](#)

[Oceanographer Canyon Gear Restricted Area](#)

[Veatch Canyon Gear Restricted Area](#)

### National Marine Sanctuaries

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (California)

Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary (California)

Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary (American Samoa)

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (Florida)

Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary (Texas)

Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary (Georgia)

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary (Massachusetts)

Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (California)

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary (Hawaii)

Monitor National Marine Sanctuary (North Carolina)

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (California)

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (Washington)

Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary (Michigan)

### National Parks

Assateague Island National Seashore (Virginia, Maryland)

Biscayne National Park (Florida)

Buck Island Reef National Monument (US Virgin Islands)

Cabrillo National Monument (California)

Canaveral National Seashore (Florida)

Cape Cod National Seashore (Massachusetts)

Cape Hatteras National Seashore (North Carolina)

Cape Lookout National Seashore (North Carolina)

Channel Islands National Park (California)

Dry Tortugas National Park (Florida)

Everglades National Park (Florida)

Fire Island National Seashore (New York)

Gateway National Recreation Area (New York)

Glacier Bay National Park (Alaska)

Golden Gate National Recreation Area (California)

Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (Indiana)

Isle Royale National Park (Minnesota, Michigan)

Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve (Louisiana)

Kalaupapa National Historical Park (Hawaii)

Kaloko-Honokahau National Historical Park (Hawaii)

National Park of American Samoa (American Samoa)

Olympic National Park (Washington)

Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore (Michigan)

Point Reyes National Seashore (California)

Salt River Bay National Historical Park and Ecological Preserve (US Virgin Islands)

San Juan Islands National Historical Park (Washington)

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (Michigan)

Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument (US Virgin Islands)

Virgin Islands National Park (US Virgin Islands)

### National Wildlife Refuges

ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge (South Carolina)

Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge (Alaska)

Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge (North Carolina)

Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge (Texas)

Aransas National Wildlife Refuge (Texas)

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (Alaska)

Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge (Virginia)

Baker Island National Wildlife Refuge (Hawaii)

Bandon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge (Oregon)

Big Boggy National Wildlife Refuge (Texas)

Big Branch Marsh National Wildlife Refuge (Louisiana)

Blackbeard Island National Wildlife Refuge (Georgia)

Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge (Maryland)

Block Island National Wildlife Refuge (Rhode Island)

Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge (Delaware)

Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge (Alabama)

Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge (Texas)

Breton National Wildlife Refuge (Louisiana)

Cape May National Wildlife Refuge (New Jersey)

Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge (South Carolina)

Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge (North Carolina)

Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge (Florida)

Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge (Florida)

Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge (Virginia, Maryland)

Conscience Point National Wildlife Refuge (New York)

Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge (Florida)

Cross Island National Wildlife Refuge (Maine)

Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge (Florida)

Currituck National Wildlife Refuge (North Carolina)

Delta National Wildlife Refuge (Louisiana)

Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge (California)

Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge (Washington)

Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge (Maryland)

Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge (Virginia)

Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge (New Jersey)

Featherstone National Wildlife Refuge (Virginia)

Fisherman Island National Wildlife Refuge (Virginia)

Grand Bay National Wildlife Refuge (Mississippi, Alabama)

Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge (Washington)

Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge (New Hampshire)

Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge (Florida)

Guam National Wildlife Refuge (Guam)

Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge (Georgia)

Howland Island National Wildlife Refuge (Pacific Islands)

Huron National Wildlife Refuge (Michigan)

Island Bay National Wildlife Refuge (Florida)

J.N. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge (Florida)

Jarvis Island National Wildlife Refuge (Pacific Islands)

John H. Chafee National Wildlife Refuge (Rhode Island)

Johnston Island National Wildlife Refuge (Pacific Islands, Hawaii)

Key West National Wildlife Refuge (Florida)

Kingman Reef National Wildlife Refuge (Pacific Islands)

Lewis and Clark National Wildlife Refuge (Washington, Oregon)

Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge (Florida)

Mackay Island National Wildlife Refuge (Virginia, North Carolina)

Marin Islands National Wildlife Refuge (California)

Martin National Wildlife Refuge (Maryland)

Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge (Massachusetts)

Matlacha Pass National Wildlife Refuge (Florida)

Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge (Florida)

Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge (Hawaii)

Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge (Massachusetts)

National Key Deer Refuge (Florida)

Nestucca Bay National Wildlife Refuge (Oregon)

Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge (Rhode Island)

Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge (Washington)

Nomans Land Island National Wildlife Refuge (Massachusetts)

Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge (Virginia)

Oyster Bay National Wildlife Refuge (New York)

Palmyra Atoll National Wildlife Refuge (Pacific Islands)

Parker River National Wildlife Refuge (Massachusetts)

Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge (North Carolina)

Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge (Florida)

Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge (South Carolina)

Pine Island National Wildlife Refuge (Florida)

Pinellas National Wildlife Refuge (Florida)

Plum Tree Island National Wildlife Refuge (Virginia)

Pond Island National Wildlife Refuge (Maine)

Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge (Delaware)

Protection Island National Wildlife Refuge (Washington)

Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge (Maine)

Rose Atoll National Wildlife Refuge (Pacific Islands)

Sabine National Wildlife Refuge (Louisiana)

Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge (Rhode Island)

San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge (Texas)

San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge (California)

Seatuck National Wildlife Refuge (New York)

Shell Keys National Wildlife Refuge (Louisiana)

Siletz Bay National Wildlife Refuge (Oregon)

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge (Florida)

St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge (Florida)

## FEDERAL / STATE PARTNERSHIP MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

### National Estuarine Research Reserves

Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve (Florida)

Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve (New Jersey)

Jobs Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (Puerto Rico)

Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (Florida)

Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (Massachusetts)

## STATE & TERRITORIAL MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

### American Samoa

[Alofau Village Marine Protected Area](#)

[Amata & Auto Village Marine Protected Area](#)

[Aua](#)

[Fagamalo Village Marine Protected Area](#)

[Masausi Village Marine Protected Area](#)

[Matu'u & Faganeanea Village Marine Protected Area](#)

[Poloa Village Marine Protected Area](#)

[Vatia Village Marine Protected Area](#)

## California

Ano Nuevo Area of Special Biological Significance  
Ano Nuevo State Marine Conservation Area  
Asilomar State Marine Reserve  
Big Creek State Marine Conservation Area  
Big Creek State Marine Reserve  
Bird Rock Area of Special Biological Significance  
Bodega Area of Special Biological Significance  
[Bodega Head State Marine Conservation Area](#)  
[Bodega Head State Marine Reserve](#)  
Cambria State Marine Conservation Area  
Carmel Bay Area of Special Biological Significance  
Carmel Bay State Marine Conservation Area  
Carmel Pinnacles State Marine Reserve  
Del Mar Area of Special Biological Significance  
[Del Mar Landing State Marine Reserve](#)  
Double Point Area of Special Biological Significance  
[Double Point/Stormy Stack Special Closure](#)  
[Drakes Estero State Marine Conservation Area](#)  
Duxbury Reef Area of Special Biological Significance  
[Duxbury State Marine Conservation Area](#)  
Edward F. Ricketts State Marine Conservation Area  
[Egg \(Devil's Slide\) Rock to Devil's Slide Special Closure](#)  
Elkhorn Slough State Marine Conservation Area  
Elkhorn Slough State Marine Reserve  
[Estero Americano State Marine Recreational Management Area](#)  
[Estero de Limantour State Marine Reserve](#)  
[Estero de San Antonio State Marine Recreational Management Area](#)  
Farallon Islands Area of Special Biological Significance  
Farnsworth Bank Area of Special Biological Significance  
Gerstle Cove Area of Special Biological Significance  
[Gerstle Cove State Marine Reserve](#)  
Greyhound Rock State Marine Conservation Area  
Heisler Park Area of Special Biological Significance  
Irvine Coast Area of Special Biological Significance  
James V. Fitzgerald Area of Special Biological Significance  
Jughandle Cove Area of Special Biological Significance  
Julia Pfeiffer Burns Area of Special Biological Significance  
King Range Area of Special Biological Significance  
La Jolla Area of Special Biological Significance  
Laguna Point to Latiga Point Area of Special Biological Significance  
Lovers Point State Marine Reserve  
Moro Cojo Slough State Marine Reserve  
Morro Bay State Marine Recreational Management Area  
Morro Bay State Marine Reserve  
[Montara State Marine Reserve](#)  
Natural Bridges State Marine Reserve  
Northwest Santa Catalina Area of Special Biological Significance  
[North Farallon Islands & Isle of St. James Special Closure](#)  
[North Farallon Islands State Marine Reserve](#)  
Pacific Grove Area of Special Biological Significance  
Pacific Grove Marine Gardens State Marine Conservation Area  
Piedras Blancas State Marine Conservation Area  
Piedras Blancas State Marine Reserve  
[Pillar Point State Marine Conservation Area](#)  
[Point Arena State Marine Conservation Area](#)  
[Point Arena State Marine Reserve](#)  
Point Buchon State Marine Conservation Area  
Point Buchon State Marine Reserve  
Point Lobos Area of Special Biological Significance  
Point Lobos State Marine Conservation Area  
Point Lobos State Marine Reserve  
Point Reyes Headlands Area of Special Biological Significance  
[Point Resistance Special Closure](#)  
[Point Reyes Special Closure](#)  
[Point Reyes State Marine Conservation Area](#)  
[Point Reyes State Marine Reserve](#)  
Point Sur State Marine Conservation Area  
Point Sur State Marine Reserve  
Portuguese Ledge State Marine Conservation Area  
Redwoods National Park Area of Special Biological Significance  
Robert E. Badham Area of Special Biological Significance  
[Russian River State Marine Conservation Area](#)  
[Russian River State Marine Recreational Management Area](#)  
Salmon Creek Coast Area of Special Biological Significance  
[Salt Point State Marine Conservation Area](#)  
San Clemente Area of Special Biological Significance  
San Diego Scripps Area of Special Biological Significance  
San Nicolas Island & Begg Rock Area of Special Biological Significance  
Santa Barbara & Anacapa Island Area of Special Biological Significance  
Santa Rosa & Santa Cruz Island Area of Special Biological Significance  
Saunders Reef Area of Special Biological Significance  
[Saunders Reef State Marine Conservation Area](#)  
[Sea Lion Cove State Marine Conservation Area](#)  
Soquel Canyon State Marine Reserve  
[Southeast Farallon Island State Marine Conservation Area](#)

[Southeast Farallon Island State Marine Reserve](#)  
[Southeast Farallon Special Closure A](#)  
[Southeast Farallon Special Closure B](#)  
Southeast Santa Catalina Area of Special Biological Significance  
[Stewarts Point State Marine Conservation Area](#)  
[Stewarts Point State Marine Reserve](#)  
Trinidad Head Area of Special Biological Significance  
Vandenberg State Marine Reserve  
Western Santa Catalina Area of Special Biological Significance  
White Rock(Cambria) State Marine Conservation Area

## Florida

See National Estuarine Research Reserves, above

## Hawaii

Ahihi Kina'u Natural Area Reserve  
Hanauma Bay Marine Life Conservation District, Oahu  
Kaho'olawe Island Reserve  
Kealahou Bay Marine Life Conservation District  
Molokini Shoal Marine Life Conservation District  
Pupukea Marine Life Conservation District, Oahu  
West Hawaii Regional Fisheries Management Area

## Maryland

U-1105 Black Panther Historic Shipwreck Preserve

## Massachusetts

See National Estuarine Research Reserves, above

## New Jersey

See National Estuarine Research Reserves, above

## Virgin Islands

East End Marine Park

## Virginia

Bethel Beach Natural Area Preserve  
Blue Crab Sanctuary  
Dameron Marsh Natural Area Preserve  
False Cape State Park  
Hughlett Point Natural Area Preserve  
Kiptopeke State Park  
Savage Neck Dunes Natural Area Preserve

## Washington

Admiralty Head Preserve  
Argyle Lagoon San Juan Islands Marine Preserve  
Blake Island Underwater Park  
Brackett's Landing Shoreline Sanctuary Conservation Area  
Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve  
Cypress Island Aquatic Reserve  
Deception Pass Underwater Park  
False Bay San Juan Islands Marine Preserve  
Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve  
Friday Harbor San Juan Islands Marine Preserve  
Haro Strait Special Management Fishery Area  
Maury Island Aquatic Reserve  
San Juan Channel & Upright Channel Special Management Fishery Area  
San Juan County/Cypress Island Marine Biological Preserve  
Orchard Rocks Conservation Area  
Shaw Island San Juan Islands Marine Preserve  
South Puget Sound Wildlife Area  
Sund Rock Conservation Area  
Yellow and Low Islands San Juan Islands Marine Preserve  
Zelia Schultz/Protection Island Marine Preserve