



California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative South Coast Project (2008-2009)

What is the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative? A public-private partnership designed to help the State of California implement the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA), using the best readily available science as well as the advice and assistance of scientists, resource managers, experts, stakeholders and members of the public.

Why this project? The Marine Life Protection Act was signed into law in 1999 and directs the state to redesign California's system of marine protected areas to increase its coherence and effectiveness in protecting the state's marine life and habitats, marine ecosystems, and marine natural heritage, as well as to improve recreational, educational and study opportunities provided by marine ecosystems.

What are marine protected areas? Marine protected areas (MPAs) are named, discrete geographic marine or estuarine areas designed to protect or conserve marine life and habitat. Examples within California that you may be familiar with include Goleta Slough State Marine Park, Painted Cave State Marine Conservation Area, Crystal Cove State Marine Conservation Area and San Elijo Lagoon State Marine Park.

What can I do in a marine protected area? There are three types of MPAs: state marine reserve, state marine park, and state marine conservation area, each with different rules about what activities can or cannot be done within each. In general, marine reserves do not allow any type of extractive activities (including fishing or kelp harvesting), marine parks do not allow any commercial extraction, and marine conservation areas do not allow some combination of commercial and/or recreational extraction.

When and where did the MLPA Initiative start? Redesigning MPAs along California's 1,100 mile coastline is such a large task that a regional approach is being used to implement the MLPA. Implementation of the act is in five study regions: central coast (Pigeon Point to Point Conception), north central coast (Alder Creek near Point Arena to Pigeon Point, including the Farallon Islands), south coast (Point Conception to the California/Mexico border, including offshore islands), north coast (California/Oregon border to Alder Creek near Point Arena), and San Francisco Bay (waters within San Francisco Bay, from the Golden Gate Bridge northeast to the Carquinez Bridge). The Central Coast Study Region was the first where an MLPA planning and implementation process was completed. In April 2007, the California Fish and Game Commission adopted MPAs for the central coast that will function as part of a statewide network. The commission is now considering MPAs for the North Central Coast Study Region.

What are the basic steps in the MLPA Initiative process? An appointed regional stakeholder group makes proposals for MPAs with advice and guidance from other groups and the public; these proposals are reviewed by a science advisory team, and then by a policy level blue ribbon task force that makes recommendations to the California Fish and Game Commission, the decision-making body under MLPA.

When will the MLPA Initiative be in my area? Planning is underway in the MLPA South Coast Study Region, from Point Conception to the U.S./Mexico border. Following the south coast will be the North Coast Study Region and then San Francisco Bay Study Region.

How do I get involved in the process? The success of the MLPA Initiative is highly dependent upon the active involvement of stakeholders and the general public in a variety of ways, including a regional stakeholder group, workshops, public meetings, and providing input on documents and MPA proposals as they are developed. The MLPA South Coast Project will afford many opportunities for public involvement, which will begin with a series of workshops in the summer of 2008. For more information visit www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa.