

## HOW CAN WE HELP OCEAN ECOSYSTEMS?

- The ocean has the ability to recover if we act now
- We have effective tools that protect entire marine ecosystems rather than just a single species
- California is leading the way by creating a network of marine protected areas (MPAs)

*"The ocean is a global highway, a self-fulfilling pantry, and the Earth's lungs. Its influence rises far above high tide, washing into the lives of every human—even those with homes in communities far inland."*

*Dr. Stephen R. Palumbi,  
Professor, Stanford University*

Photo Credit: DEREK TARR wildoceanphoto.com

Marine protected areas (MPAs) have resulted in an increase in both numbers and size of many popularly fished species. For example, MPAs in New Zealand have supplied surrounding waters with larger and more lobster. In many places, this has led to what fishermen refer to as "fishing the line": the best fishing usually occurs just outside the MPA border. This phenomenon has been observed elsewhere worldwide including the Gulf of Maine, Florida, and Australia.

## SOURCES

MLPA news, activism, and info: [www.caloceans.org](http://www.caloceans.org)

MLPA Initiative Homepage: <http://dfg.ca.gov/mlpa>

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Garibaldi and Anemone – JESSIE ALSTATT, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper

## MARINE PROTECTED AREAS



## PROTECTING OUR OCEAN LEGACY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

## OUR OCEAN: TROUBLE BENEATH THE WAVES

The ocean is not a limitless resource as we once imagined. According to scientific studies and personal accounts, marine life populations are declining and we are losing spectacular and ecologically important habitat:



- Fishermen are now catching less than half of what they did in 1990 and the fish they do catch are 45 percent smaller
- Almost 70 percent of giant kelp forests, key habitats for healthy fish populations, have vanished
- Some fish populations off California have been depleted to 10 percent of historic levels, and may take 50-80 years to recover to healthy, sustainable levels; if current conditions don't improve, some never will

*Marine life is in danger. If we want to ensure that fishing, diving and wildlife watching can continue for generations to come, we must act now to protect the habitats of these fragile creatures.*



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sfmphotog.com



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## WHAT IS AN MPA?

## PROTECTING CALIFORNIA'S OCEAN THROUGH MPAs

## SIGNS OF SUCCESS— FIVE YEARS OF PROTECTED AREAS AT THE CHANNEL ISLANDS

## WAYS TO GET INVOLVED



Photo Credit: JESSIE ALSTATT, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper

Marine protected areas (MPAs) are areas of coastal ocean set aside to protect all or parts of its habitat and wildlife by preventing extractive uses while allowing for research and recreation. MPAs allow ocean ecosystems to recover and thrive, ensuring that future generations will be able to enjoy the natural heritage of California's coastal waters. The types of MPAs include:

- **MARINE PARKS** – some recreational fishing is allowed
- **MARINE RESERVES** – fish, wildlife and habitat are protected from all fishing and resource extraction
- **MARINE CONSERVATION AREAS**—some consumptive recreational and commercial activities are allowed

In 1999, California adopted the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA), the first state law in the nation requiring a comprehensive, science-based network of marine protected areas. The MLPA is being implemented in phases and planning for Southern California MPAs is now underway. MPAs will be designed with direct influence from divers, fishermen, conservationists and citizens. The proposed protected areas will be reviewed by scientists and economic experts to ensure that MPAs protect key habitats and ocean life while leaving most of the coast open to existing uses. MPAs are managed by the California Department of Fish and Game.

Photo Credit: JESSIE ALSTATT, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper



California created 12 MPAs at the Channel Islands in 2003 at the request of a group of sport fishermen, who had noticed a significant drop in the number of large fish living in the area. The protected areas now cover 142 square nautical miles and include 10 fully protected marine reserves. Rapid positive responses to these marine reserves include:

- Density of fish is 1.5 times higher inside reserves than outside the reserves; on average, fish are also larger inside reserves
- Kelp forests have increased resulting in more and larger fish, such as the California sheephead, that are important to maintaining healthy marine habitat
- No significant economic losses have been experienced despite initial predictions saying otherwise
- Increased sportfishing and commercial catch (including squid, urchin, lobster, and crab fisheries) in Channel Island waters since the establishment of MPAs

This is just one local example of how MPAs can benefit both our environment and our economy.



- For more information on the MLPA, MPAs, and the implementation process, please visit [dfg.ca.gov/mlpa](http://dfg.ca.gov/mlpa)
- Stay informed by attending a public meeting, hearing, or workshop—visit [dfg.ca.gov/mlpa](http://dfg.ca.gov/mlpa) to voice your opinion and provide input on the MPA implementation process
- Send an email to show your support for ocean protection at [www.caloceans.org](http://www.caloceans.org)



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