

# Marine Life Protection Act Initiative



## The Marine Life Protection Act and MPA Planning in the North Coast Study Region

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# Overview

- Why the MLPA Initiative?
- An introduction to the Marine Life Protection Act and marine protected areas
- An introduction to the MLPA Initiative, a marine protected area planning process
- Planning and next steps in the MLPA North Coast Study Region
- Status of other study regions



# Why the MLPA Initiative?

- Different model than traditional decision-making
- Robust, transparent, adaptive process with multiple opportunities for participation
- Deliberative iterations where choices framed and interests expressed; stakeholders develop ideas, public is able to directly contribute, ideas refined
- Use of best, readily-available science to inform deliberations
- Significant data and information about proposals through various evaluations, analyses, and stakeholder-developed materials
- Strong foundation for recommendations



# Why a Blue Ribbon Task Force?

- MLPA offers six goals without any priority
- Stakeholders differ in emphasis they give goals, how they interpret goals, where to place MPAs to achieve goals, and how they assess possible future impacts
- MLPA goals do not give priority to socioeconomic, yet cannot be ignored
- Science evaluations provide informative and important metrics; lack application of values
- Differing impacts in the short- and long-term
- Different guidelines sometimes conflict
- In general, policy judgment required



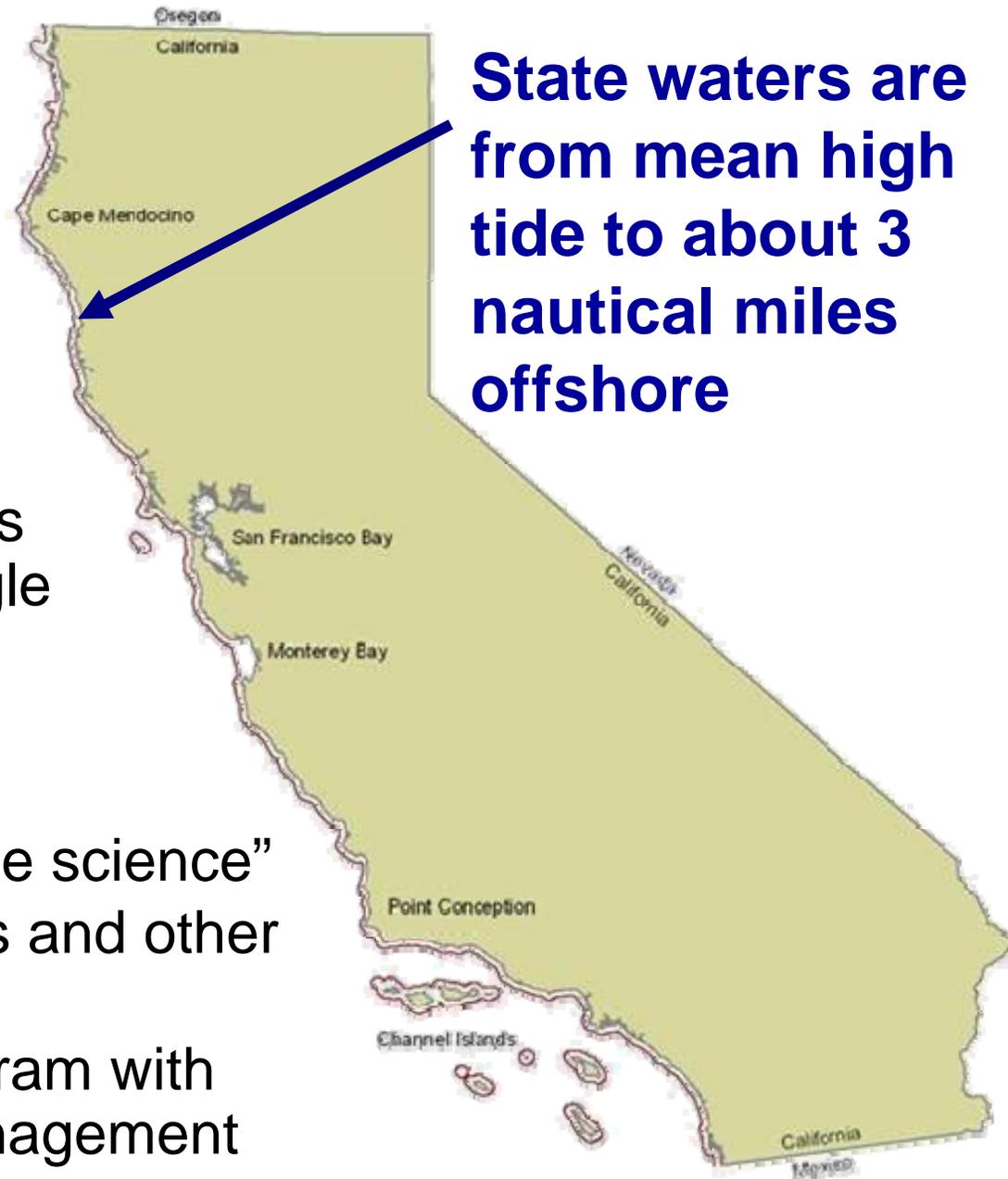
# Marine Life Protection Act

- **California law with mandate to:**

- Improve design and management of marine protected areas (MPAs) in state waters
- Focus on marine ecosystems and habitats rather than single species

- **Requires, in part:**

- Use of “best readily available science”
- Involvement of stakeholders and other interested parties
- Master plan for MPAs, program with six goals, and adaptive management



**State waters are from mean high tide to about 3 nautical miles offshore**



# Why the MLPA?

- California's MPAs created over decades without a coherent plan, scientific guidelines or overall goals; confusing system
- California's extraordinary marine biological diversity a vital asset
- Various human activities threaten the health of marine habitat and biological diversity
- Marine protected areas offer multiple benefits for sustaining ocean ecosystems





# Why Marine Protected Areas?

## **Marine protected areas (MPAs):**

- Protect habitat and ecosystems
- Conserve biological diversity
- Maintain culturally significant resources
- Enhance recreational and educational opportunities
- Provide research opportunities
- Complement fisheries management



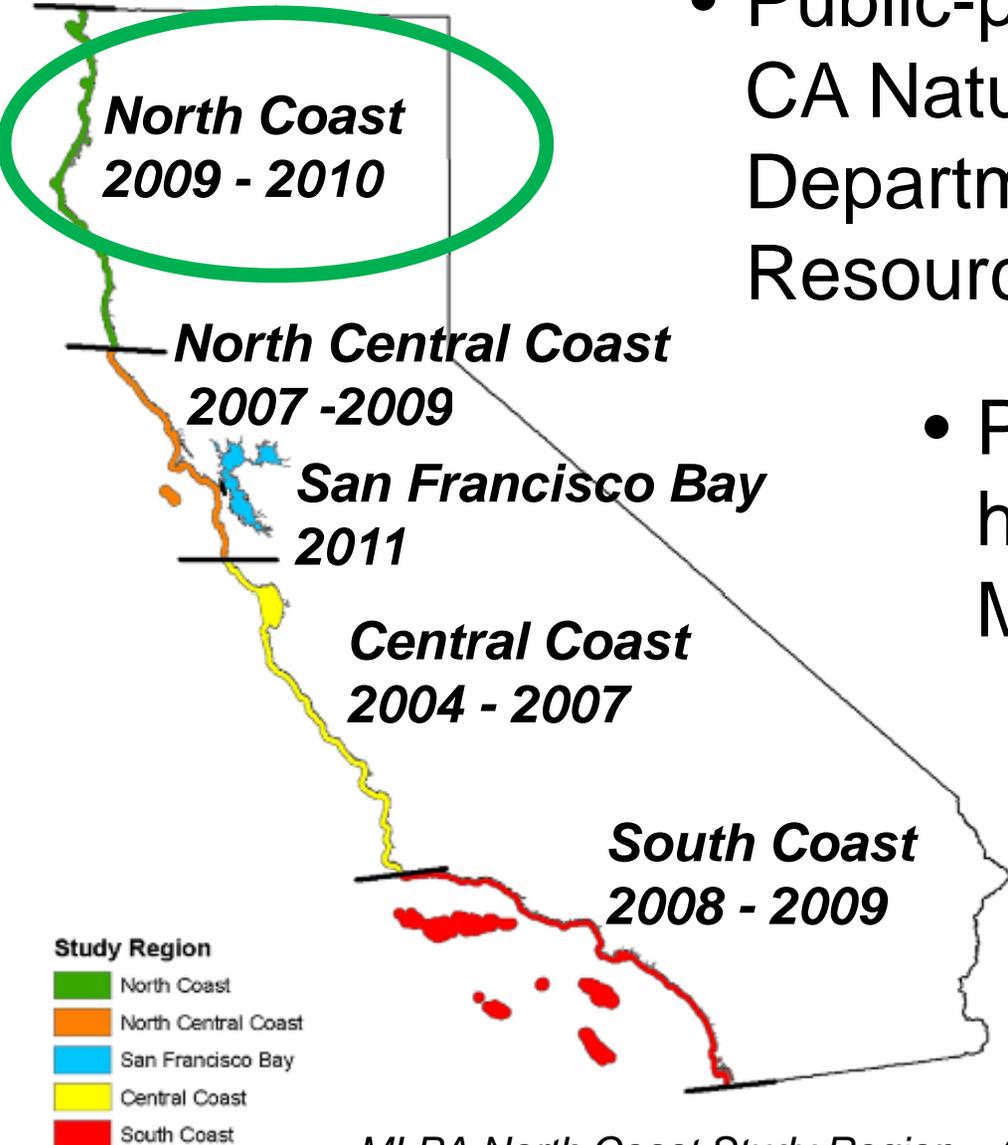


# Types of Marine Protected Areas

- **State marine conservation area (SMCA)**
  - Allows some recreational and/or commercial extractive activities
- **State marine park (SMP)**
  - Allows some recreational activities and prohibits all commercial extractive activities
- **State marine reserve (SMR)**
  - Prohibits all extractive activities



# California MLPA Initiative



- Public-private partnership among the CA Natural Resources Agency, CA Department of Fish and Game, and Resources Legacy Fund Foundation

- Planning process designed to help California implement the MLPA

- Citizen-based, adaptive, transparent process with public participation at every stage

*MLPA North Coast Study Region = California/Oregon border to Alder Creek near Point Arena*



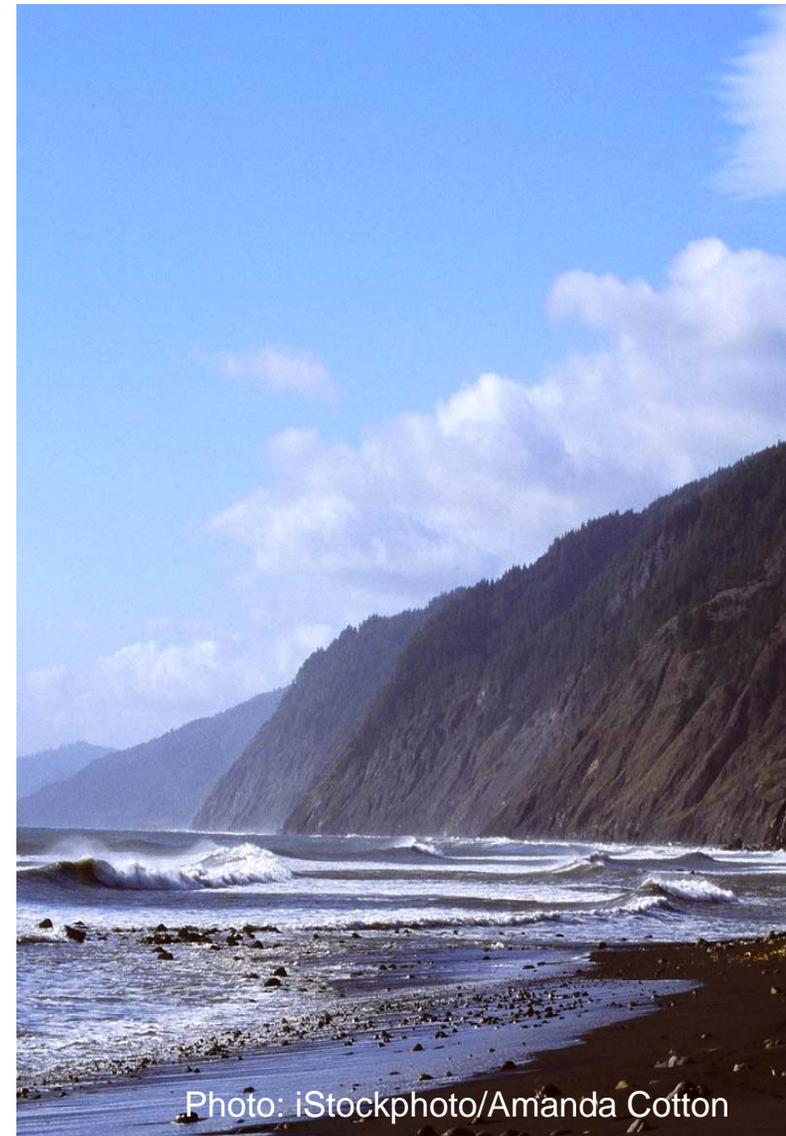
# MLPA Initiative Participants

- Institutional partners



RLFF

- MLPA Initiative groups
  - Blue ribbon task force
  - Science advisory team
  - Regional stakeholder group
  - Statewide Interests Group
  - Staff and contractors
- General public and interested parties





# Role of Science Advisory Team

- Apply science guidance from the master plan
- Assemble and review relevant data for MPA planning and evaluation
- Determine levels of protection achieved by allowing take of particular species with specific gear types in proposed MPAs
- Answer science related questions from BRTF, stakeholders and general public, including external array proponents
- Evaluate potential ecological and economic impacts of MPA proposals





# Role of Regional Stakeholder Group

- Contribute local expertise and knowledge for refining a regional profile and informing the MPA planning process
- Work collaboratively to develop MPA proposals that meet the requirements of the act
- Conduct outreach to constituent groups for broader involvement in the project
- Identify potential speakers to present recommendations and commentary at MLPA public meetings
- Strive for a high degree of cross-interest involvement and support in crafting MPA proposals



# North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group

- Ports and harbors
- Commercial fishing
- Sea vegetable harvesting
- Diving
- Bird watching
- Surfing
- Seafood processing
- Conservation
- Water quality
- Research
- Kayaking
- Recreational fishing
- Education and outreach
- Coastal consulting
- Tribes/tribal communities
- California Coastal Commission
- National Park Service
- Public-at-large



Photo: Gretchen Hofmann



# Iterative MPA Planning Process

- Three rounds of MPA planning
- Designed to gather information, test ideas, learn from evaluations and other feedback
- Feedback and input from:
  - MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT)
  - MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF)
  - California Department of Fish and Game (DFG)
  - California Department of Parks and Recreation (California State Parks)
  - MLPA Initiative staff (I-Team)
  - Interested public

# North Coast Planning Process

## Guidance

BRTF  
SAT  
DFG  
State Parks  
MLPA I-Team

## Round 1

External proposed  
MPA arrays from  
community groups

BRTF  
SAT  
DFG  
State Parks  
MLPA I-Team  
Review & Feedback

## Round 2

NCRSG develops its  
draft MPA proposals

BRTF  
SAT  
DFG  
State Parks  
MLPA I-Team  
Review & Feedback

## Round 3

NCRSG develops its  
final MPA proposals

BRTF develops final  
recommendations, including  
preferred alternative

California Fish and Game  
Commission makes final decision  
on MPAs for the study region

## Public Participation

*NCRSG = MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group*



# Public Outreach and Participation

- Outreach efforts: Website, list server, print mailing list, live webcasts, archived video/audio, open houses, workshops, electronic newsletter, Twitter, Facebook, individual and small group discussions
- Targeted outreach to tribes and tribal communities
- Opportunities for public participation: Develop MPA array in Round 1, communicate directly with an NCRSG member, submit ideas or suggestions in writing or during public comment at meetings, provide feedback on documents and MPA proposals, help educate other members of the community, field trips, “remote” public participation locations for meetings



# NCRSG Accomplishments

NCRSG accomplished all elements of its charge, and more:

- Considered extent to which existing marine protected areas (MPAs) contributed to goals of MLPA
- Contributed local knowledge
- Reached out to and involved broader communities
- Closely considered guidance from SAT, BRTF, DFG and California State Parks
- Developed a single “unified” Round 3 MPA proposal
- Recommended special closures for north coast
- Adopted motion supporting a tribal uses category within MPAs to allow traditional tribal uses



# BRTF North Coast Recommendations

In October the BRTF adopted seven motions, two related to MPAs and special closures:

- Revised Round 3 NCRSG MPA Proposal, with NCRSG recommendation to name the Ten Mile MPAs after Skip Wollenberg and staff recommended updates to the recreational take intended to accommodate tribal uses
- North Coast Enhanced Compliance Alternative MPA Proposal, that builds off the Revised Round 3 NCRSG MPA Proposal with modifications to improve compliance with science guidelines and DFG feasibility criteria
- North Coast Special Closures Recommendation, as developed by the NCRSG



# BRTF Recommendations (continued)

- Incorporate tribal uses in marine protected areas of the MLPA North Coast Study Region when the legal authority to do so is clarified and settled by the State of California and California tribes and tribal communities
- Co-management with tribes and tribal communities
- Add recreational take of Pacific lamprey and eulachon to appropriate estuarine MPAs
- Retain three existing north coast marine protected areas with modifications
- Change classification of two state marine recreational management areas (SMRMAs)



# North Coast MPA Proposals

	Acronym	Number of MPAs* (SMRs)	Percent of Study Region (SMRs)
Proposal 0 (existing MPAs)	P0	5 (1)	0.3% (0.2%)
Revised NCRSG MPA Proposal	RNCP	17 (6)	13.1% (5%)
North Coast Enhanced Compliance Alternative MPA Proposal	ECA	21 (6)	13.1% (5%)

\* Numbers include SMRMAs, a type of marine managed area



# Enhanced Compliance Alternative

The North Coast Enhanced Compliance Alternative MPA Proposal (ECA) consists of the Revised Round 3 NCRSG MPA Proposal (RNCP), modified as follows:

- Add nearshore “ribbon” SMCAs in Pyramid Point, Samoa, Big Flat and Vizcaino SMCAs with all recreational uses retained, including those intended to accommodate tribal uses
- Retain in the remaining offshore SMCAs at Pyramid Point, Samoa, Big Flat and Vizcaino only those uses at moderate-high or high levels of protection (LOPs)
- Retain in Reading Rock SMCA only proposed uses at moderate-high or high LOPs

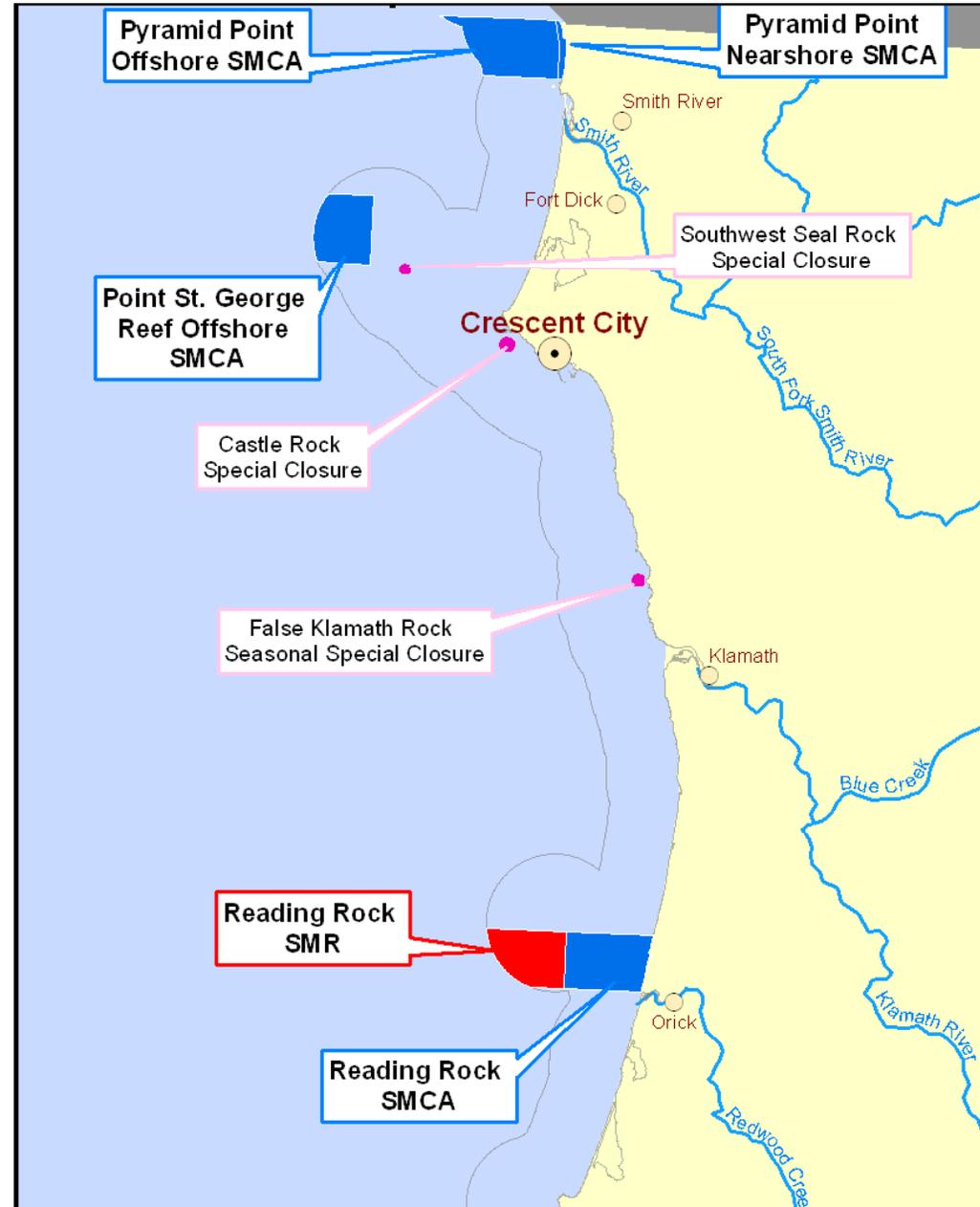
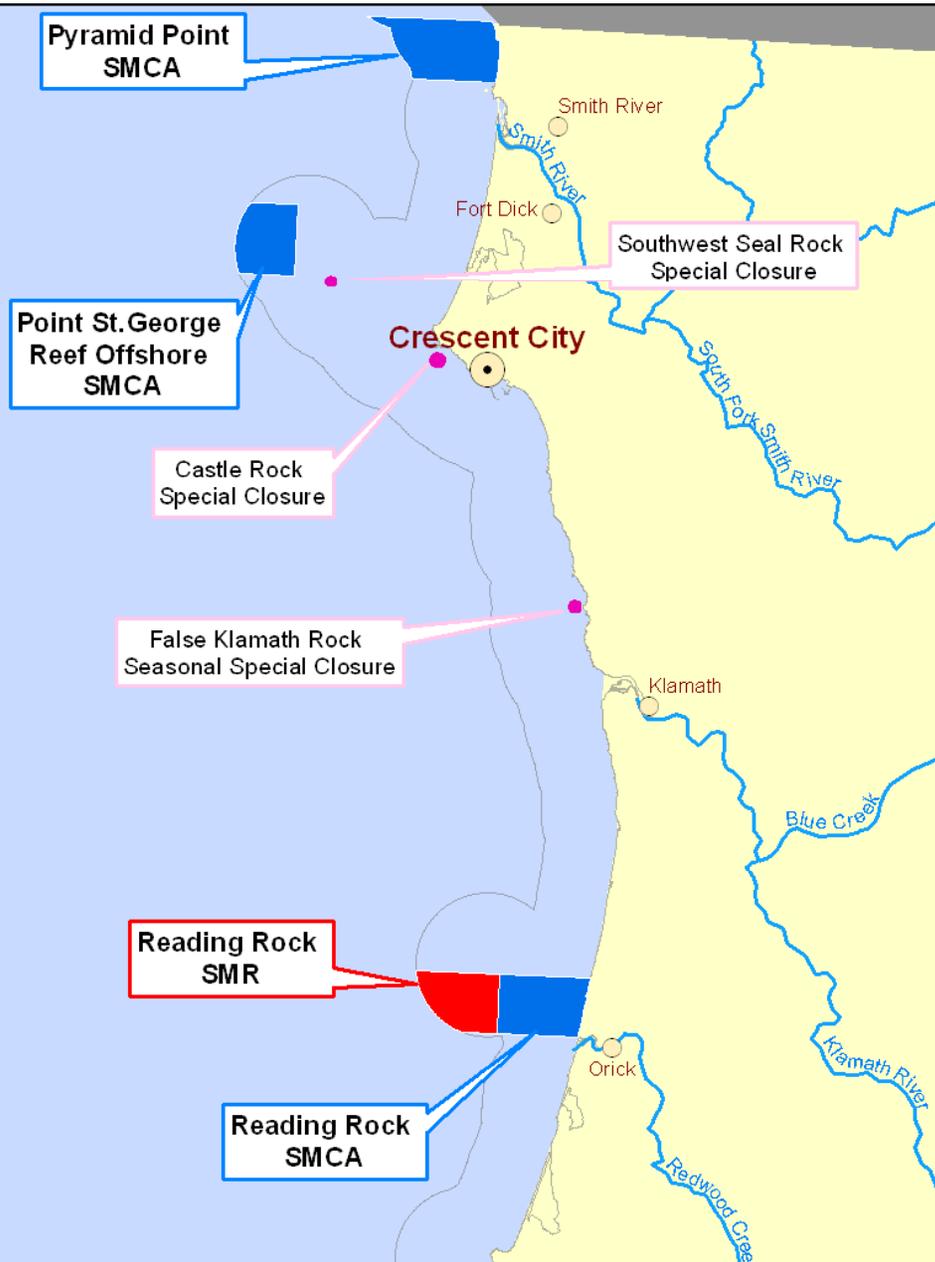


# Enhanced Compliance Alternative

## ECA modifications, continued:

- Retain at Skip Wollenberg/Ten Mile Beach SMCA all proposed uses at any LOP
- Retain in estuarine MPAs only those uses intended to accommodate tribal uses with a moderate-high or high LOP
- Add a statement regarding restricting proposed recreational uses intended to accommodate tribes and tribal communities to only tribes and tribal communities when appropriate administrative or legislative action is taken
- Add pelagic finfish (spearfishing) to proposed uses for all SMCAs

# Northern Bioregion Part 1



# Pyramid Point

Offshore/Nearshore Boundary\*



Pyramid Point Offshore SMCA

Pyramid Point Nearshore SMCA

ECA

- Offshore LOP = Moderate-high
- Nearshore LOP = Low
- Does not pick up additional habitats

Pyramid Point SMCA

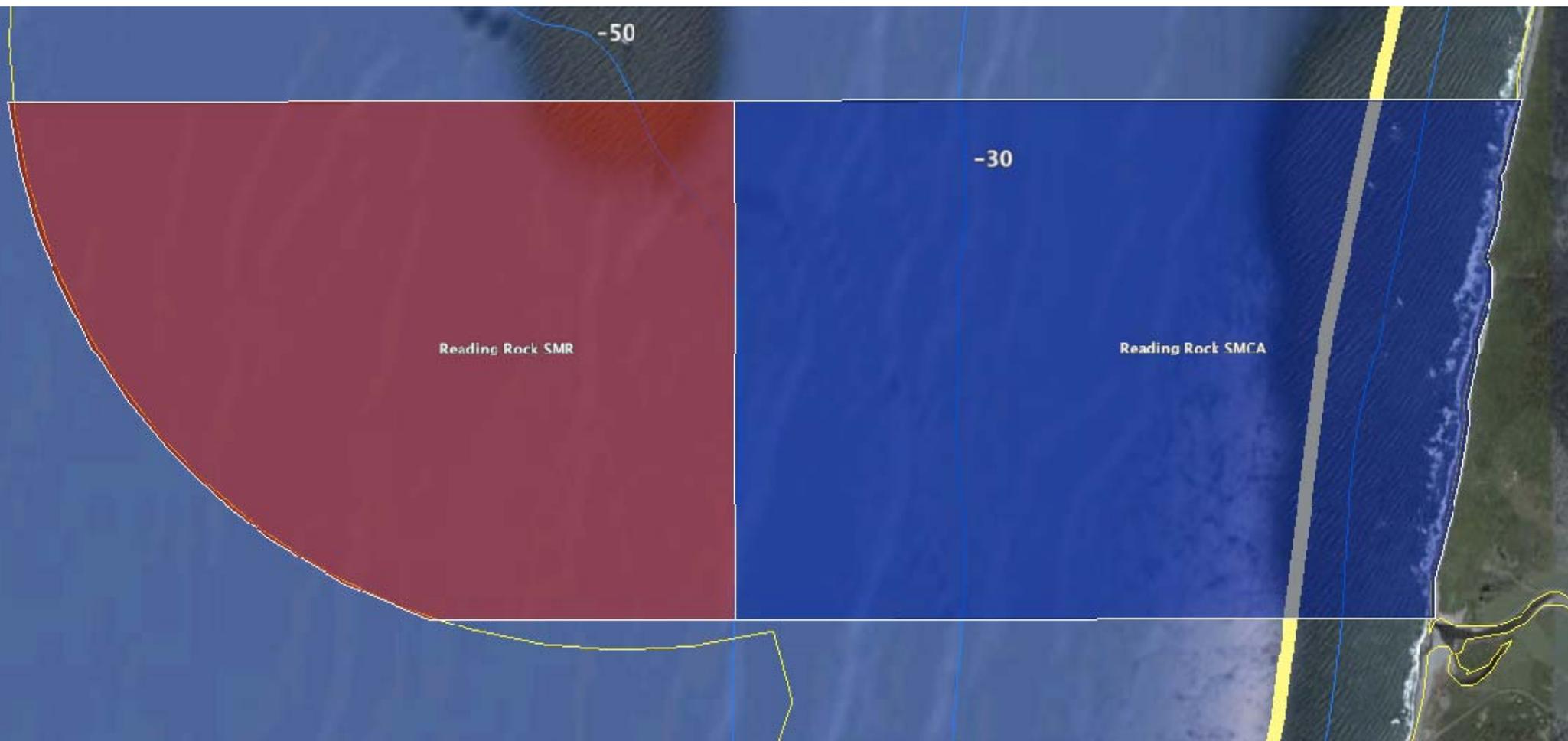
RNCP

- LOP = Low

\* Offshore/nearshore boundary approximates 1000' from the mean high tide line



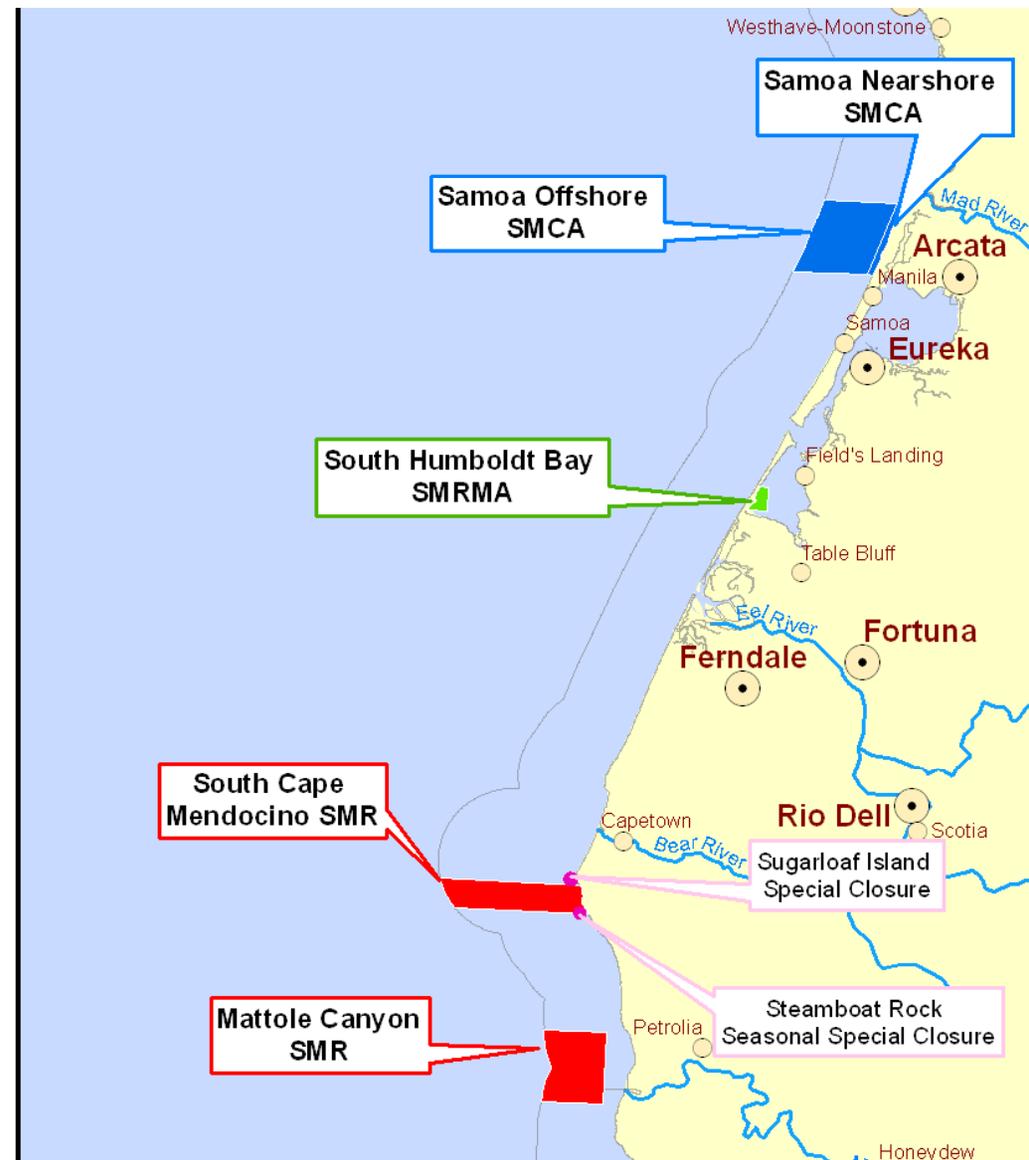
# Reading Rock



ECA: SMCA LOP – Moderate-high, picks up beaches, rocky shore and soft 0-30 meter habitats

RNCP: SMCA LOP = Low

# Northern Bioregion Part 2





# Samoa

Offshore/Nearshore Boundary



Samoa Offshore SMCA

Samoa Nearshore SMCA

-10

Samoa SMCA

-10

## ECA

- Offshore LOP = Moderate-high, picks up soft 30-100 meter habitat
- Nearshore LOP = Moderate-low

## RNCP

- LOP = Moderate-low

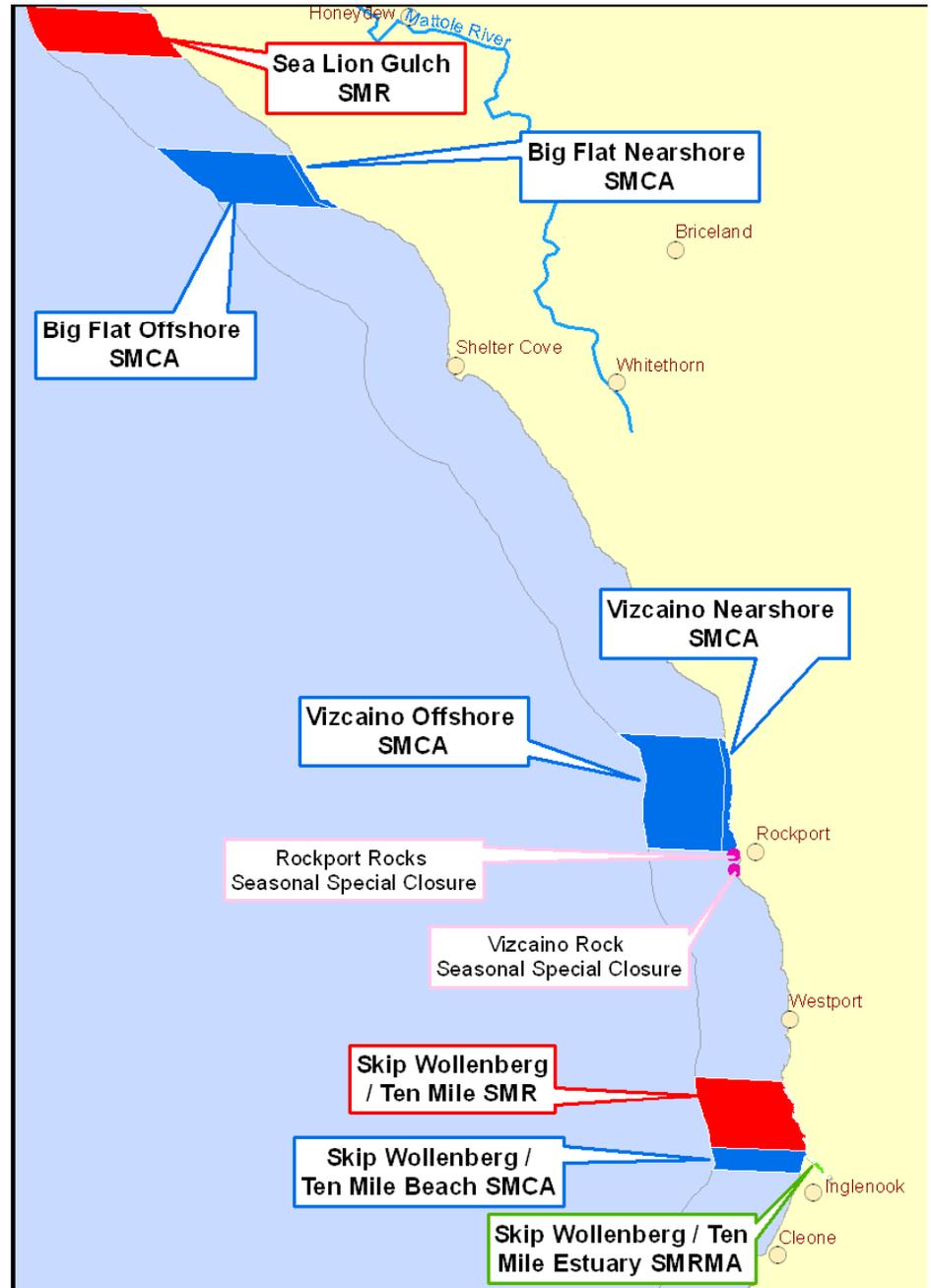
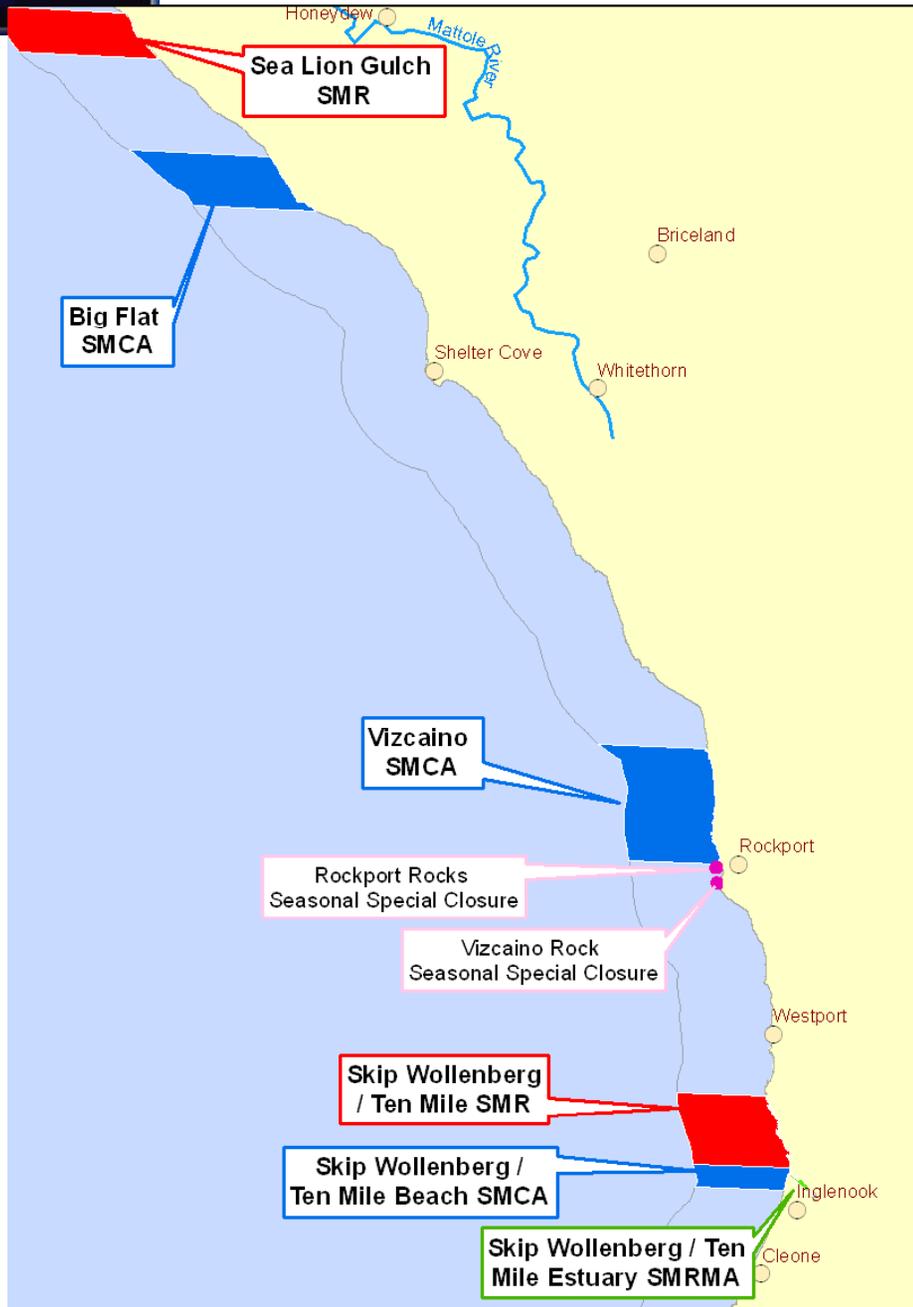
# South Humboldt Bay



ECA: LOP = Very High, picks up estuary, marsh and eelgrass

RNCP: LOP = Moderate-low

# Southern Bioregion Part 1





# Big Flat



ECA: Offshore SMCA LOP = Moderate-high, picks up soft 30-100 meter and 100-3000 meter habitats; Nearshore SMCA LOP = Low



RNCP: SMCA LOP = Low

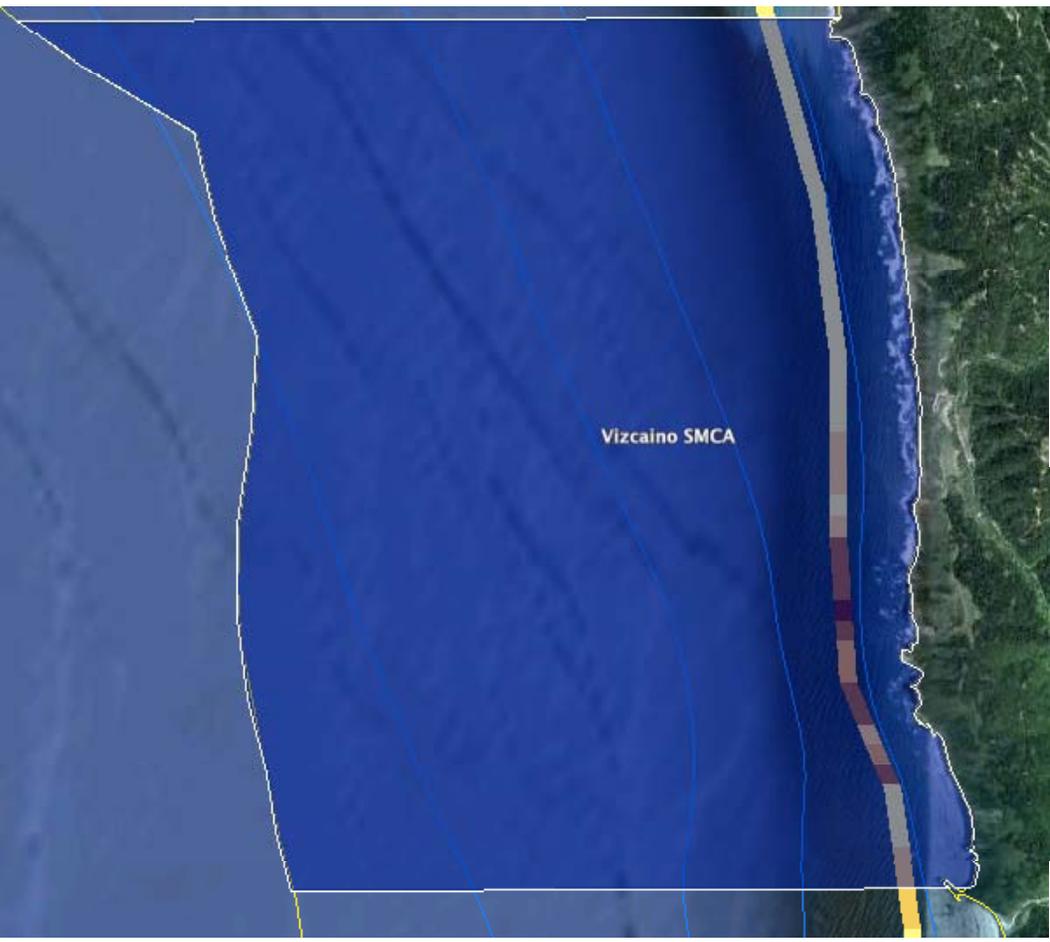


# Vizcaino



ECA

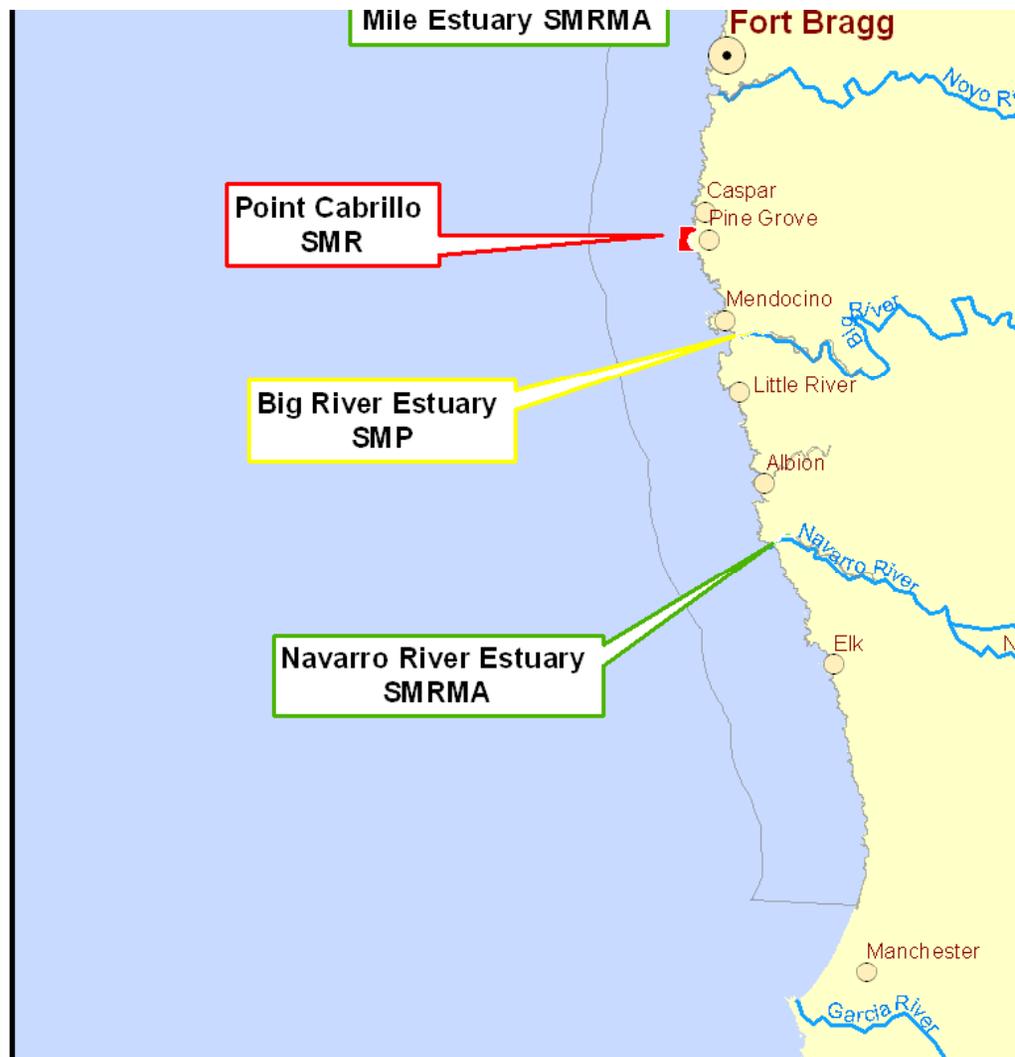
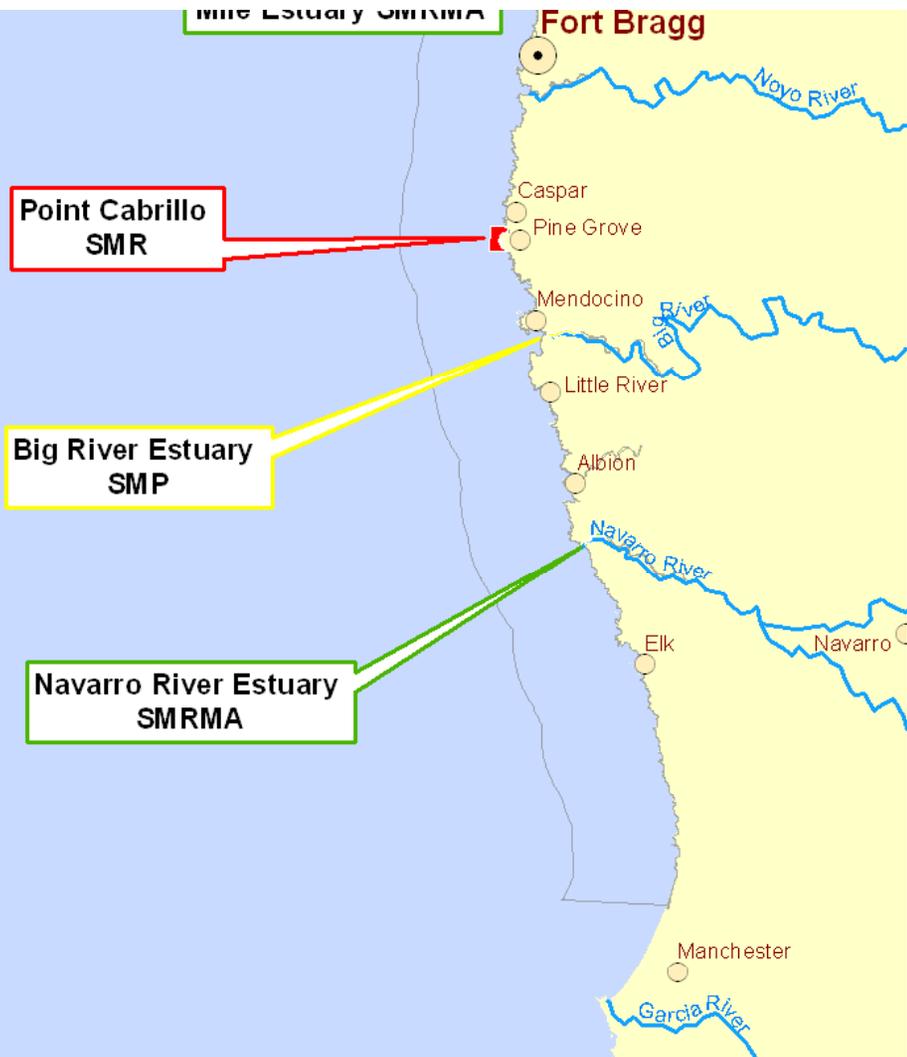
- Offshore LOP = Moderate-high, picks up soft 30-100m and soft 100-3000m habitats
- Nearshore LOP = Low



RNCP

- LOP = Low

# Southern Bioregion Part 2



# Big River and Navarro River



Big River Estuary SMP

ECA: LOP = Moderate

RNCP: LOP = Low

Navarro River  
Estuary SMRMA

ECA: LOP = Moderate

RNCP: LOP = Low



# Special Closures

- Seven special closure options
  - 2 focus on marine mammal protection
  - 5 focus on marine bird protection
- All special closures suggested as 300 foot no-entry zones
- 4 of the 7 special closures are seasonal closures, from March 1 - August 31
- Included proposal for an alternative to special closures at Green Rock and Flatiron Rock
- Included language regarding intention to allow access for traditional, non-commercial, tribal activities when it becomes possible within State of California authority



# Next Steps for North Coast

- Recommendations and evaluations to California Fish and Game Commission on February 2, 2011
- Additional feedback from the public
- Commission starts California Environmental Quality Act and regulatory rule-making processes (additional public input through both)
- Ongoing discussions with tribes and tribal communities by new administration to develop communication protocols, address need for continued tribal uses



# Central Coast Study Region

- **Implementation** – September 2007
- **Outreach** – Public information signs for Monterey to Santa Cruz area, online guide to central coast MPAs, investigating smartphone application
- **Management** – Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Sea Doc removing derelict fishing gear from MPAs
- **Monitoring** – Approximately \$4 million to support data collection for baseline characterization in 2007 and 2008 (five studies ranging from socioeconomic to ecological surveys across range of key habitats)



# North Central Coast Study Region

- **Implementation** – April 2010
- **Outreach** – Partnering with State Parks to develop signs; online and print guides to north central coast MPAs; informational flyer developed with stakeholders
- **Management** – Commission adopted emergency regulation changes to Stewarts Point SMR/SMCA and considering changes to SE Farallon Island Special Closure
- **Monitoring** – Plan approved by commission in April 2010. Approximately \$4 million to support data collection for baseline characterization 2010- 2012 (eleven studies ranging from socioeconomic to ecological surveys across range of key habitats)



# South Coast Study Region

- **Implementation** – Spring 2011, dependent upon Office of Administrative Law approval
- **Management** – Military closures in effect; Sea Doc Society removing derelict fishing gear and debris from MPAs and surrounding areas
- **Monitoring** – Workshops held in July and November to help develop plan; anticipate release in early 2011. Ongoing conversations with agency and academic scientists to identify and discuss metrics. Considering existing programs and Channel Islands monitoring. Approximately \$4 million to support data collection for baseline characterization; request for proposals in early 2011.



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