

What is a California marine protected area (or “MPA”)?

An MPA is a type of managed area whose main purpose is to protect or conserve marine life and habitats in ocean or estuarine waters. California's MPA Network consists of 124 areas with varying levels of protection and 14 special closures, all designed to help safeguard the state's marine ecosystems. Special closures such as Steamboat Rock Special Closure are specifically designed to minimize human disturbance at significant marine mammal haulout sites and seabird rookeries by restricting boating and access, seasonally or year-round.

One goal for California's MPAs was to strategically place them near each other to form an interconnected network that would help to preserve the flow of life between marine ecosystems. Within that network each MPA has unique goals and regulations, and non-consumptive activities, permitted scientific research, monitoring, and educational pursuits may be allowed.

Why was this location chosen for a special closure?

One of the goals for Steamboat Rock Special Closure is to protect an important seabird rookery location. Steamboat Rock is a sea stack situated in shallow waters a few thousand feet from the mainland. The rock has a fairly horizontal, rough surface, ideal for nesting seabirds. Nearly 10,000 seabirds visit the rock annually, including Brandt's cormorants, common murrelets, pigeon guillemots, and western gulls. It is an important breeding location for Steller sea lions and harbor seals, as well. The shallow waters around Steamboat Rock provide habitat for lingcod, cabezon, surfperch, leopard shark, and California halibut, as well as invertebrates such as sea stars, sea urchins, and crabs.

Steamboat Rock Special Closure overlaps a portion of [South Cape Mendocino State Marine Reserve](#), along the reserve's southern border. Placing a special closure here provides very high levels of protection for seabirds, marine mammals, and the habitats they use.



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Quick Facts: Steamboat Rock Special Closure

- **Size:** 0.02 square miles
- **Depth range:** 0 to 22 feet
- **Habitat composition:**
Rock: 0.05 square miles



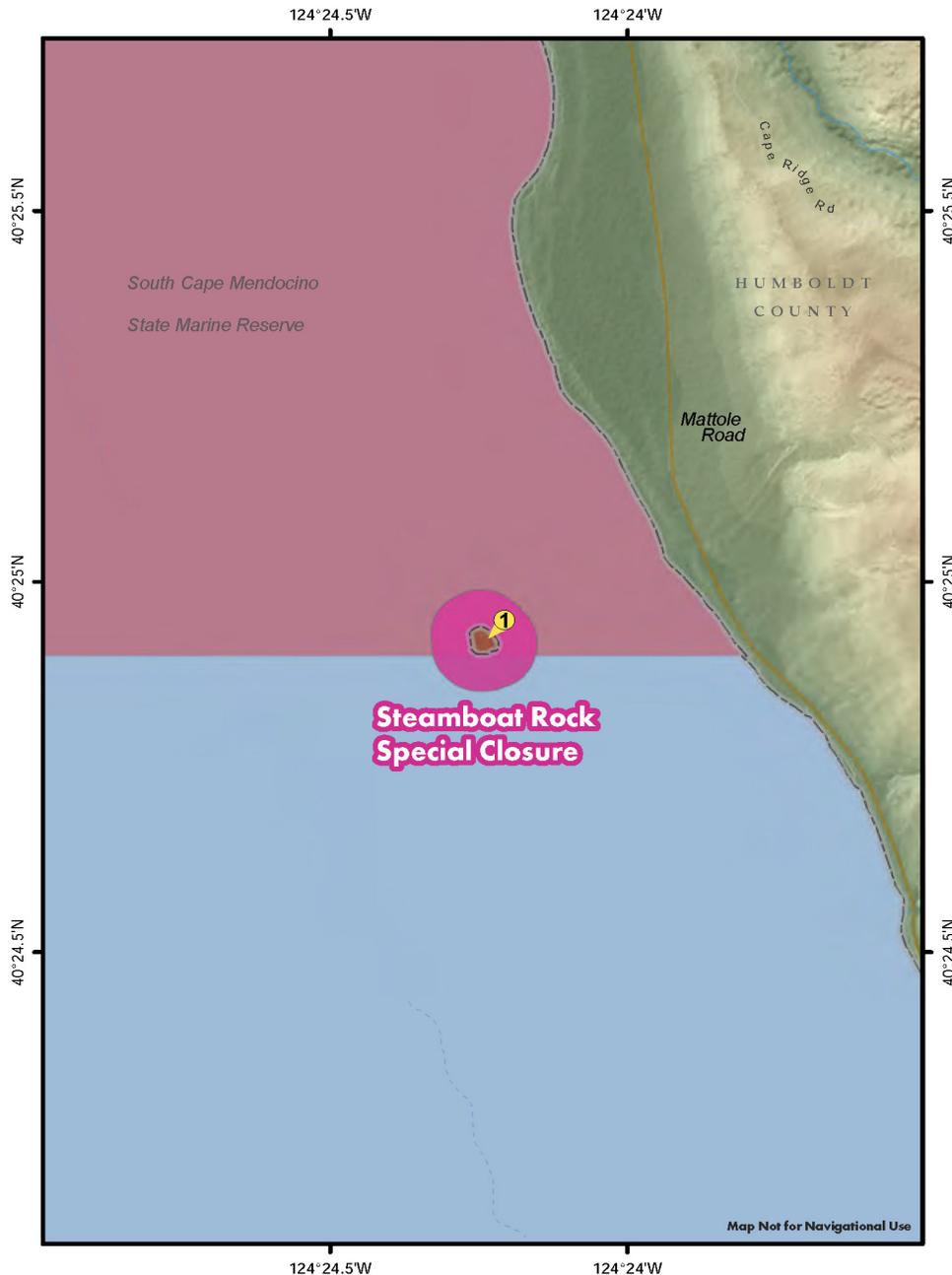
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[See Regulations On Back](#)

Further Information:

- MPA Website: www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs
- MPA and Sportfishing Interactive Map: www.wildlife.ca.gov/OceanSportfishMap
- Email: AskMarine@wildlife.ca.gov

Photos - Upper: Steamboat Rock at low tide. photo © A. Bond, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0
Lower right: Olympic gull near Steamboat Rock Special Closure. photo © J. Shank, CC BY-NC 2.0
Lower left: Steamboat Rock. photo © C. Allison, MPA Collaborative Network



Steamboat Rock Special Closure Boundary and Regulations from California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632

Special restrictions on boating and access apply to Steamboat Rock as follows.

1. A special closure is designated from the mean high tide line to a distance of 300 feet seaward of the mean lower low tide line of any shoreline of Steamboat Rock, located in the vicinity of 40° 24.919' N, lat. 124° 24.241' W, long. ① during the period of March 1 to August 31.
2. Except as permitted by federal law or emergency caused by hazardous weather, or as authorized by [3., below], no vessel shall be operated or anchored from the mean high tide line to a distance of 300 feet seaward of the mean lower low tide line of any shoreline of Steamboat Rock during the period of March 1 to August 31.
3. No person except Department employees or employees of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or United States Coast Guard, in performing their official duties, or unless permission is granted by the Department, shall enter the area defined in [2., above] during the period of March 1 to August 31.

Take may be authorized for research, restoration, and monitoring purposes under a scientific collecting permit. See California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632(a).

The information in this document does not replace the official regulatory language found in the California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632. View these regulations online at www.wildlife.ca.gov/CCR-T14-MPAs.