

## 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 Vizcaino 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 Vizcaino Rock Special Closure is to shield nesting seabirds from human disturbance. The rocky cliffs and jagged overhangs of Vizcaino Rock provide ideal roosting habitat for approximately 8,800 seabirds every year. Breeding colonies of seabirds that visit the rock include Brandt's cormorant, common murre, pelagic cormorant, pigeon guillemot, rhinoceros auklet, and western gull. The waters around Vizcaino Rock are also home to Dungeness crab, salmon, lingcod, surf smelt, and California halibut. harbor seals, California sea lions, and Steller sea lions are often found feeding offshore or resting on rocky outcroppings near shore.

Placing a special closure here provides high levels of protection for breeding seabirds and the habitat they use.

## Quick Facts: Vizcaino Rock Special Closure

- **Size:** 0.02 square miles
- **Habitat composition:**
  - Rock: 0.02 square miles
  - Sand/mud: < 0.01 square miles



Restrictions on Entry, Anchoring, Non-Consumptive Activities, Fishing, and Collecting  
*See Regulations On Back*

## Further Information:

- MPA Website: [www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs)
- MPA and Sportfishing Interactive Map: [www.wildlife.ca.gov/OceanSportfishMap](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/OceanSportfishMap)
- Email: [AskMarine@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:AskMarine@wildlife.ca.gov)

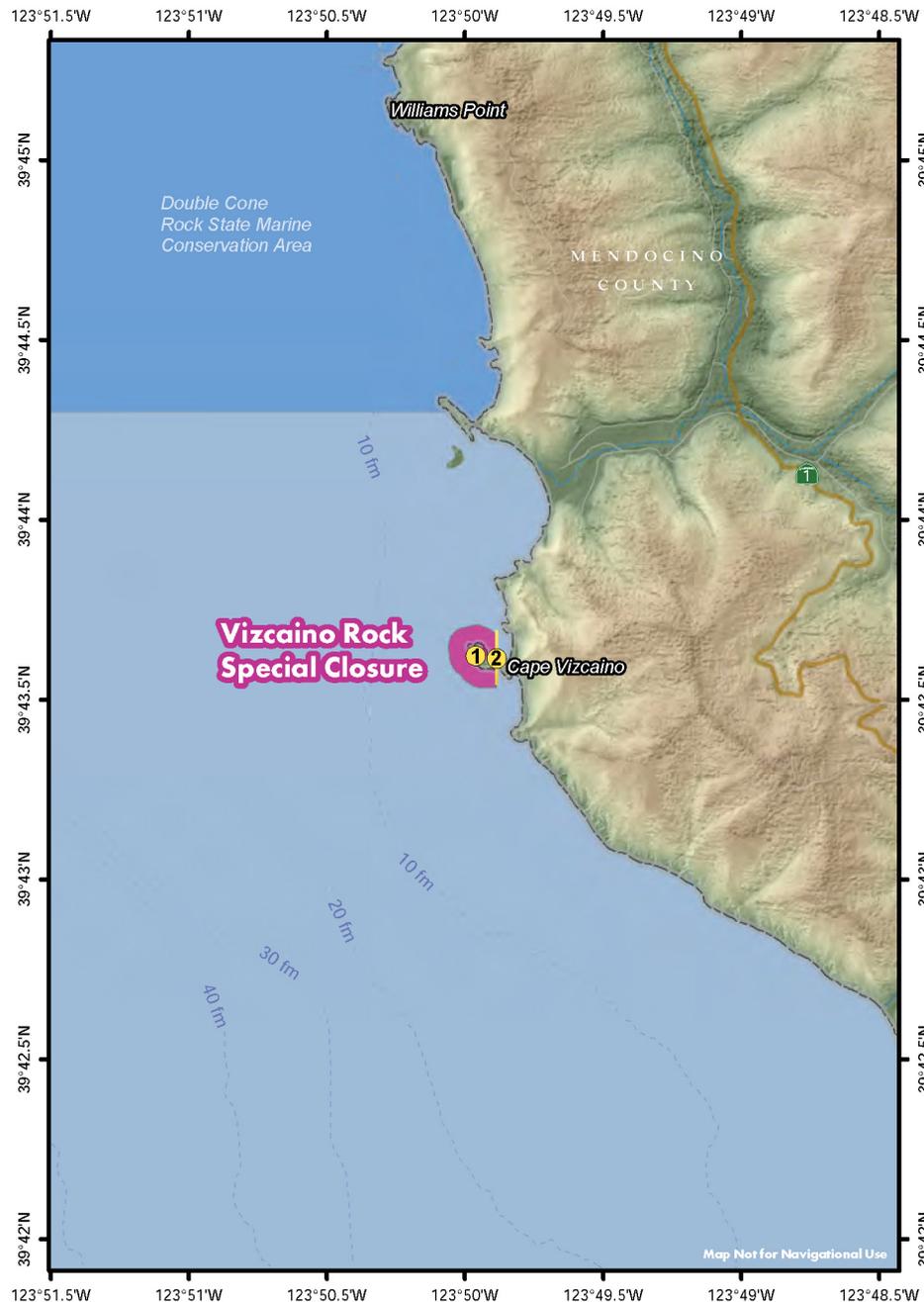
Photos - Upper: Aerial view of Vizcaino Rock. photo © Michael James, MPA Collaborative Network  
Lower right: Vizcaino Rock from shore. photo © Calla Allison, MPA Collaborative Network  
Lower left: Brandt's cormorants. photo © Micah Freedman, CC BY-NC 2.0



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

Special restrictions on boating and access apply to Vizcaino Rock located in the vicinity of 39° 43.618' N. lat. 123° 49.950' W. long. ① 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 of any shoreline of Vizcaino Rock westward of 123° 49.887' W. longitude ②, 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 Vizcaino Rock westward of 123° 49.887' W. longitude 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/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Network](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/Network).