

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. Most marine conservation areas such as Upper Newport Bay State Marine Conservation Area provide some opportunity for commercial and/or recreational take (species and gear exceptions vary by location - see reverse).

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 state marine conservation area?

One of the goals for Upper Newport Bay State Marine Conservation Area is to protect the largest remaining estuary in Southern California. The conservation area contains a mix of marshland and tidal flat habitats. A variety of marine fish species may be found in the estuary, including California halibut, spotted bay bass, and croaker, whose young use it as a nursery area. Invertebrates such as medusa worms and jackknife clams bury themselves in the mud, where they filter plankton from the silty water. Because of its large size and location, close to 30,000 birds at a time may use the conservation area during winter migration. The estuary also provides critical habitat and refuge for endangered bird species such as the California least tern.

Upper Newport Bay State Marine Conservation Area overlaps the slightly larger [Upper Newport Bay Ecological Reserve](#). Placing a state marine conservation area here provides moderately high levels of protection for marine life and the habitats they use.



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Quick Facts: Upper Newport Bay State Marine Conservation Area

- **MPA size:** 1.24 square miles
- **Habitat composition:**
 - Estuary: 1.20 square miles
 - Coastal marsh: 3.71 square miles



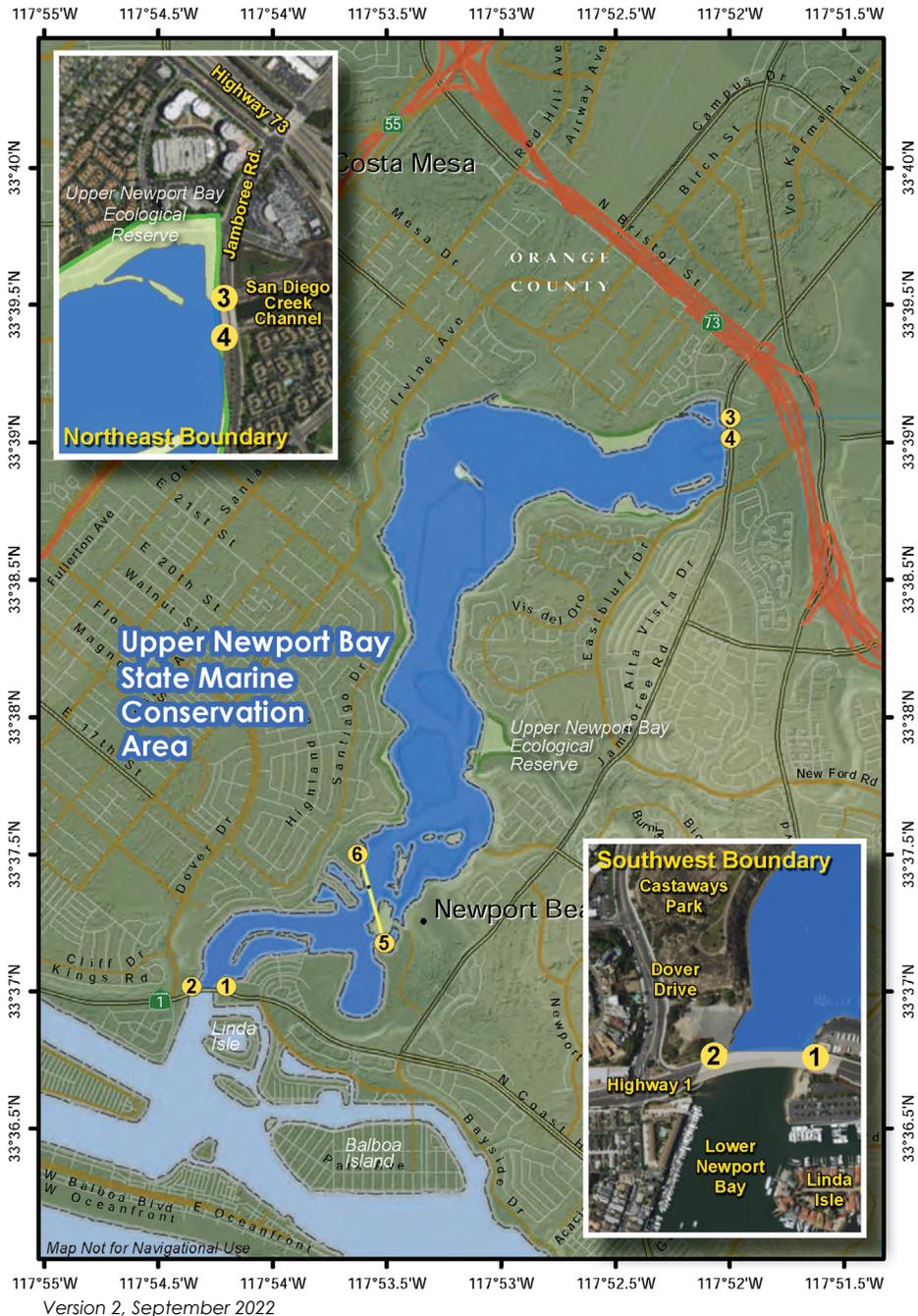
Entry, Fishing, Boating, and Swimming Restricted
See Regulations On Back

No Collecting

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: Upper Newport Bay State Marine Conservation Area. photo © Ken Lund, CC BY-SA 2.0
Lower right: Flatfish camouflaged in the sediments at Upper Newport Bay State Marine Conservation Area. photo © dwest, CC BY-NC 2.0
Lower left: Double-crested cormorant in the conservation area. photo © dwest, CC BY-NC 2.0



Upper Newport Bay State Marine Conservation Area Boundary and Regulations from California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 632

This area overlaps a portion of Upper Newport Bay Ecological Reserve. Ecological reserve rules are in effect as defined in CCR Title 14, Section 630 or as posted.

Boundary:

This area includes the waters below the mean high tide line within Upper Newport Bay northeastward of Pacific Coast Highway approximated by a line between the following two points:

- 33° 37.014' N. lat. 117° 54.237' W. long.①;
- 33° 37.014' N. lat. 117° 54.336' W. long.②; and southwestward of Jamboree Road approximated by a line between the following two points:
- 33° 39.071' N. lat. 117° 52.021' W. long.③; and
- 33° 39.027' N. lat. 117° 52.014' W. long.④

Permitted/Prohibited Uses:

1. It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource for commercial and/or recreational purposes, with the following specified exceptions:
 - a. The recreational take of finfish* by hook-and-line from shore only is allowed.
 - b. Take pursuant to maintenance dredging, habitat restoration, research and education programs, maintenance of artificial structures, and operation and maintenance of existing facilities inside the conservation area is allowed pursuant to any required federal, state and local permits, or activities pursuant to Section 630, or as otherwise authorized by the Department.
2. In waters below the mean high tide line inside the Upper Newport Bay Ecological Reserve, northeastward of a line connecting Shellmaker Island (33° 37.200' N. lat. 117° 53.510' W. long.⑤) and North Star Beach (33° 37.380' N. lat. 117° 53.600' W. long.⑥) the following restrictions apply:
 - a. Swimming is allowed only in the area between North Star Beach and mid-channel.
 - b. Boats are limited to speeds less than five miles per hour.
 - c. Shoreline access is limited to established trails, paths, or other designated areas.

* Finfish are defined here as any species of bony fish or cartilaginous fish (sharks, skates and rays). 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).

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.