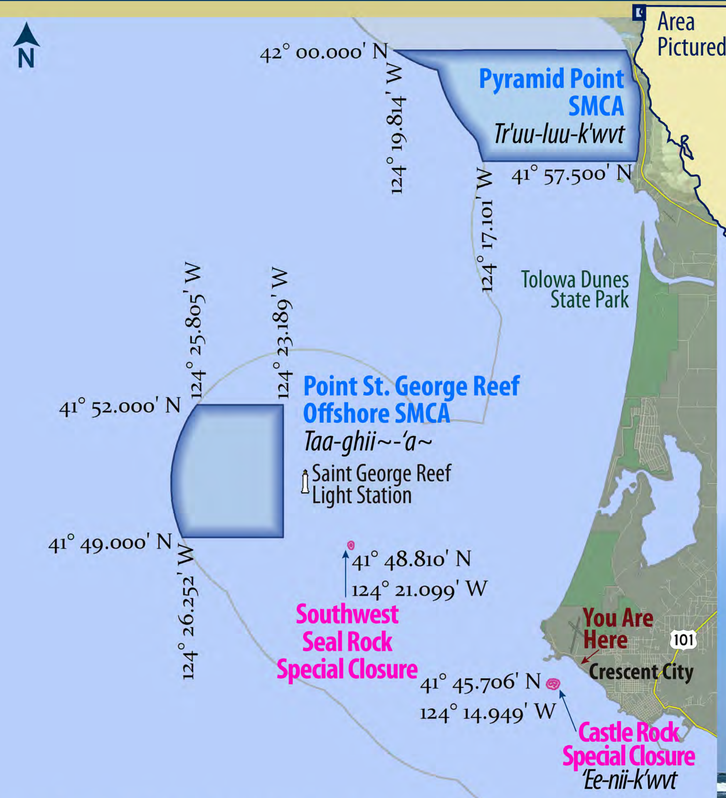
Conserving California's Coastal Treasures

CALIFORNIA MARINE PROTECTED AREAS



Pyramid Point State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource, except recreational take of surf smelt by dip net or Hawaiian-type throw net is allowed. Includes take exemptions for Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation.

Point St. George Reef Offshore State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource, except recreational and commercial take of salmon by trolling or troll fishing gear, and Dungeness crab by trap is allowed. Includes take exemptions for Elk Valley Rancheria and Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation.

Southwest Seal Rock and Castle Rock Special Closures Prohibits access or restricts boating activities year round in waters adjacent to seabird nesting and rookery sites, and marine mammal haul-out sites.

Marine Protected Areas Safeguard Our Ocean's Bounty

A statewide network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) safeguards California's rich coastal resources. Today these waters have several layers of protection to ensure that the abundance of marine life continues to provide a way of life for communities nearby. Castle Rock, which you can see from here, is the most structurally diverse nearshore island in California, providing habitat to over 100,000 breeding seabirds that belong to 11 species.



Photo by Jenna Bader

Castle Rock Special Closure is within the ancestral waters of the Elk Valley Rancheria and the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation.

Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation

'Ee-nii-k'wvt is the name given to Castle Rock by the Native Americans of the region, the Tolowa Dee-ni', and translates to "ground-there-upon". Tolowa Dee-ni' have a subsistence relationship with 'Ee-nii-k'wvt but were not known to ever reside on the island. During the 1800's the Tolowa Dee-ni' occupied a large village site on the headland adjacent to 'Ee-nii-k'wvt at Taa-ghii~-'a~ (Point St. George). The intertidal regions surrounding the point were used by the Tolowa Dee-ni' for gathering food and also engaging in sea lion hunting expeditions offshore. Dugout canoes, 30-40 feet long, were used for regular trips to the Saint George Reef and 'Ee-nii-k'wvt. Included in the Tolowa diet were/are tee-la~ (whale), taa-nin'-sree-ni (sea otter), sri'-sree-nvsh (seal), ch'an'-t'i~ (sea lion), dee-lhat (mussel), t'uu-she (clam), lat (seaweed), lhvmsr (smelt), and ch'ee-yash (bird). To this day, 'Ee-nii-k'wvt (Castle Rock) and Taa-ghii~-'a~ (Point St. George) remain culturally important places to the Tolowa Dee-ni'.

For MPA boundaries, maps, coordinates, and allowed uses, go to: www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs

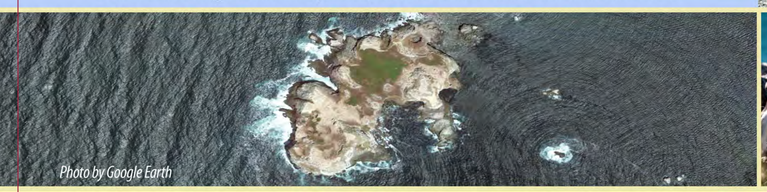


Photo by Google Earth

Castle Rock is the most structurally diverse nearshore island in California. There are many types of habitat located on and around Castle Rock, including cliff-forming volcanic rock, rocky reef, pebble beaches, sheer rock cliffs, vegetated terraces, talus slopes, and sea caves formed by powerful crashing waves.



Photo by Sara K. Schoen

One of the largest colonies of common murres on the Pacific Coast gather at Castle Rock each year.



Photo by Alex Wiles

On a clear day, birds such as the cormorant can be seen exhibiting their unique behaviors from shore through binoculars.



Photo by Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation

Lat (seaweed) is among the foods included in the Tolowa Dee-ni' diet.

MPA Mobile Website

MPAs - Good for the Ocean; Good for You!