



FACT SHEET: MARINE RESERVES

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Marine reserves (areas that are closed to fishing) are used to address problems in the groundfish fishery. Due to fishing, ocean conditions, low stock productivity, and other causes, three groundfish stocks (yelloweye rockfish, Pacific ocean perch, and Cowcod) are currently designated as overfished. Rebuilding plans for these stocks are in place.

Marine reserves are used to control fishing mortality and can be a valuable management tool when the status of a fish stock is uncertain. In some cases, the best available scientific knowledge about stock status may not be very complete. Marine reserves offer protection for unassessed sedentary species (those that do not move around much relative to the size of the reserve); they are particularly helpful for sedentary species that produce more offspring as they get older. Traditional fisheries often remove these larger, more productive fish. More mobile species may benefit if marine reserves can be used to preserve habitat from damage by fishing gear and other human activities or to preserve ecosystems that are vital to fish survival.

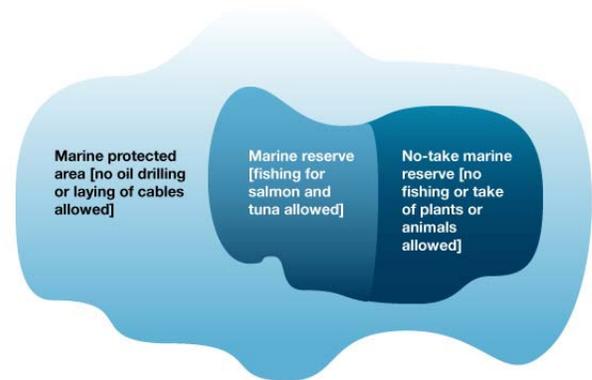
Marine reserves can also have educational and research value. To successfully manage these resources, managers need better knowledge of the biology, habits, and behaviors of fish stocks and the ecosystems that support them.

MARINE RESERVES VS. MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

“Marine reserves” and “marine protected areas” (MPAs) are similar but not identical. The Council uses the term “marine reserve” to mean an area where some or all fishing is prohibited for a lengthy period of time. This is similar to the definition of a “fishery reserve” created by the Ocean Studies Board of the National Research Council, which is defined as “Zoning that precludes fishing activity on some or all species to protect critical habitat, rebuild stocks (long term, but not necessarily permanent closure), provide insurance against overfishing, or enhance fishery yield.”

Marine reserves are *types* of “marine protected areas.” An MPA is a “geographic area with discrete boundaries [like the boundaries of a piece of real estate or a park] that has been designated to enhance the conservation of marine resources” (Ocean Studies Board). For example, an MPA might prohibit activities like oil and gas drilling, while allowing fishing. The Council’s focus on marine reserves as “no fishing” areas (or areas where only certain types of fishing are allowed) reflects its area of regulatory authority: fishing.

The diagram below shows a hypothetical example of an MPA, a marine reserve, and a no-take marine reserve. Regulations in brackets are examples only.



HOW DOES THE COUNCIL USE MARINE RESERVES?

The Council’s Strategic Plan for the groundfish fishery includes the following goal: To use marine reserves as a fishery management tool that contributes to groundfish conservation and management goals, has measurable effects, and is integrated with other fishery management approaches.

To date, the Council has established two de facto marine reserves off southern California to help rebuild cowcod. Since Cowcod was rebuilt in X, the two reserves are no longer in place. (Right?) They covered 4,700 square miles. In those areas, all fishing for federal groundfish species was prohibited, and the state prohibited prawn trawling and other recreational and commercial fishing except in shallow waters. The Council has also adopted several Rockfish Conservation Areas that function as de facto marine reserves and are still in place.

