Watch Out For Wildlife

You may encounter seabirds, sea turtles or marine mammals such as sea otters, seals, sea lions, whales or dolphins while riding in the Sanctuary. Many of these animals are threatened or endangered, and all are protected by federal law. Although it may be tempting to approach them for a closer look, please watch them from a distance. Avoid harassment (which is illegal) by staying at least 50 to 100 yards away. Harassment includes causing an animal to change its behavior. If you want to observe wildlife while riding, idle your speed to reduce wake and noise, and watch quietly from a non-threatening distance. Disturbing animals deprives them of needed rest, may interrupt or stop feeding, or force them to burn precious energy by fleeing. These impacts can weaken animals and lead to death by stress, starvation or disease.

Slow Your Speed

Speeding can be dangerous to marine life and people. Avoid areas concentrated with wildlife, such as large gatherings of seabirds resting on the water, or groups of marine mammals. Minimize disturbance by riding slowly near sensitive habitats such as kelp forests. Check with authorities for state and local speed restrictions.

Reduce Noise

Noise may disturb birds or marine mammals resting on the surface. If you encounter wildlife, slow or idle your speed to reduce noise and the chance of harassing any animals you see.

Prevent Pollution

The Sanctuary has some of the cleanest ocean waters in the world. To protect marine wildlife, it is illegal to discharge or dump materials into the Sanctuary. Please observe this rule and do your part to help keep the Sanctuary's waters clean.

Pick Up Plastic

Birds, fish, mammals and sea turtles can get entangled in plastic or mistake it for food, and die of starvation or poisoning from plastic in their stomachs. Plastic debris in the water can also foul propellers and clog or damage engine intake systems. Always stow your trash for disposal in port, and help remove plastics from the marine environment.

Spills Aren't Slick

Even small amounts of oil or gas can be deadly to marine wildlife. You can help protect wildlife by preventing fuel spills. Fill your tank slowly, don't overfill, and wipe up any accidental spills quickly with an absorbent pad. Report spills you see to 1-800 OILS-911 or the U.S. Coast Guard at 1-800-424-8802

For More Information:

Contact the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Office at 299 Foam Street, Suite D, Monterey, California 93940 (phone, 408-647-4201).

Additional sources of information:

Federal:

National Marine Fisheries Service:
Special Agent, Office of Enforcement, 408-647-4220
U.S. Coast Guard, Group Monterey
Officer of the Day, Operations Center, 408-647-7303

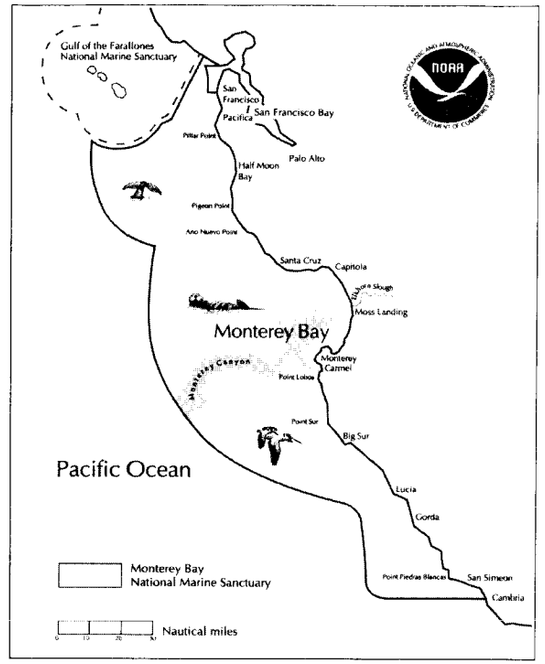
State:

California Department of Fish & Game
Patrol Captain, 408-649-2870
California Department of Parks & Recreation,
District Supervisors:
Bay Area (Pillar Point/Half Moon Bay): 415-726-8800
Santa Cruz: 408-429-2850
Monterey : 408-649-2836
San Simeon: 805-927-2020
California Department of Boating and Waterways, 916-445-2616

Local:

Harbormasters:
Pillar Point: 415-726-4382
Santa Cruz: 408-475-6161
Moss Landing: 408-633-2461
Monterey: 408-646-3950
Morro Bay: 805-772-6254

Save Our Shores' Sanctuary Watch Hotline:
1-800-9-SHORES



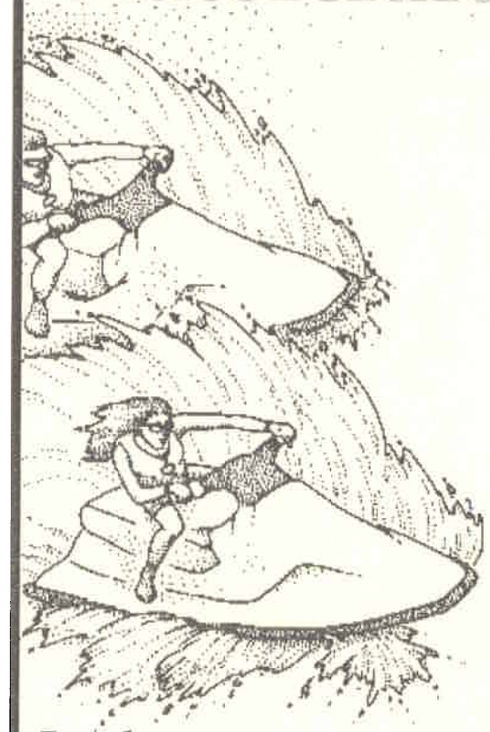
About The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, the nation's largest marine sanctuary, spans over 5,300 square miles of ocean waters off central California. The Sanctuary reaches along more than 350 miles of coastline, from Marin County near San Francisco southward to Cambria in San Luis Obispo County, and from the high tide line to an average of 35 miles offshore.

The Sanctuary protects many habitats, from rugged rocky shores and lush kelp forests to one of the deepest underwater canyons on the west coast. The Sanctuary's nutrient-rich waters provide a haven for squid, rockfish, seabirds, sea otters, whales and thousands of other species, some of which are threatened or endangered.

National Marine Sanctuaries

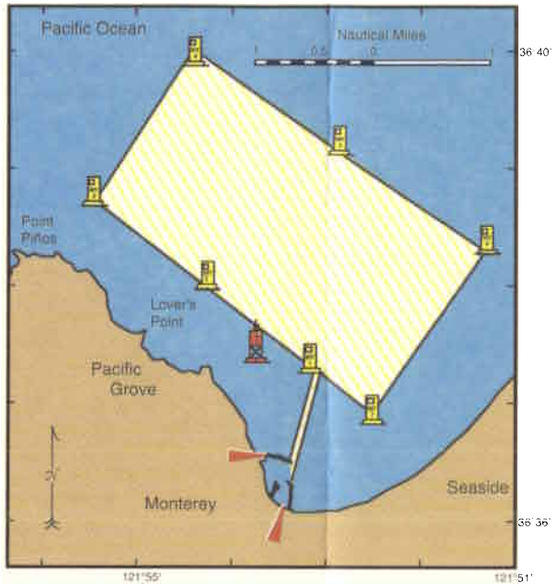
Motorized Personal Watercraft



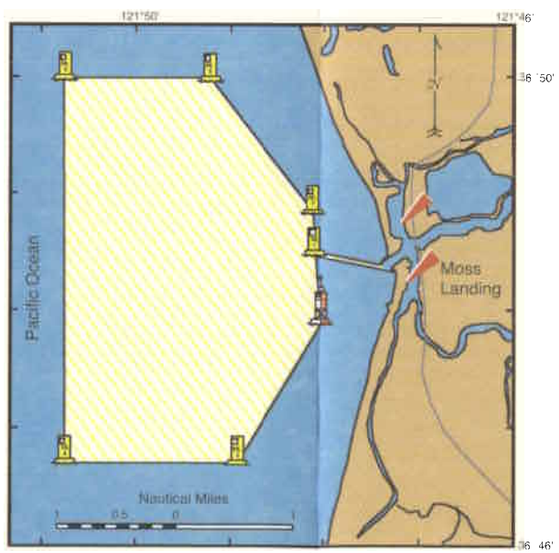
In the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

Including ocean waters adjacent to Marin, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Luis Obispo Counties, and the waters of Elkhorn Slough

Monterey Zone



Moss Landing Zone



Operating Zone
Access Route
Buoys
Public Launch Ramp

What is a Motorized Personal Watercraft?

"Motorized personal watercraft" means any motorized vessel that is less than fifteen feet in length as manufactured, is capable of exceeding a speed of fifteen knots (17.27 miles per hour), and has the capacity to carry not more than the operator and one other person while in operation. The term includes, but is not limited to, jet skis, wet bikes, surf jets, miniature speed boats, air boats and hovercraft.

As a personal watercraft rider you are also considered a boater. Personal watercraft are defined as Class A inboard boats by the U.S. Coast Guard and are required to follow most boating regulations. For more information, contact the U.S. Coast Guard or the California Department of Boating and Waterways.

Operating Zones

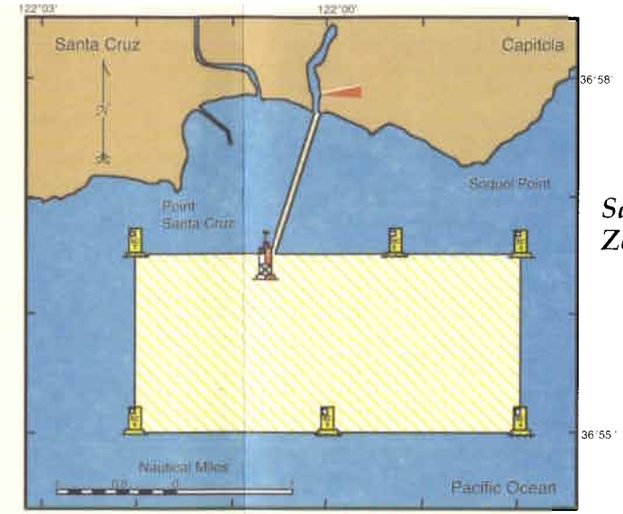
To help protect Sanctuary habitats and sensitive marine life, it is unlawful for any person to operate motorized personal watercraft except within four designated zones and access routes within the Sanctuary. These zones and access routes have been established by federal regulation (15 CFR Part 922, Subpart M, Appendix D). They are illustrated by the maps on this page, and posted on signs at each of the launch ramps. Motorized personal watercraft may launch only within the identified harbors and must proceed directly to the operating zone outside each harbor through the specified access route. Zone boundaries are marked by buoys and navigation aids.

Tips for Responsible Watercraft Use:

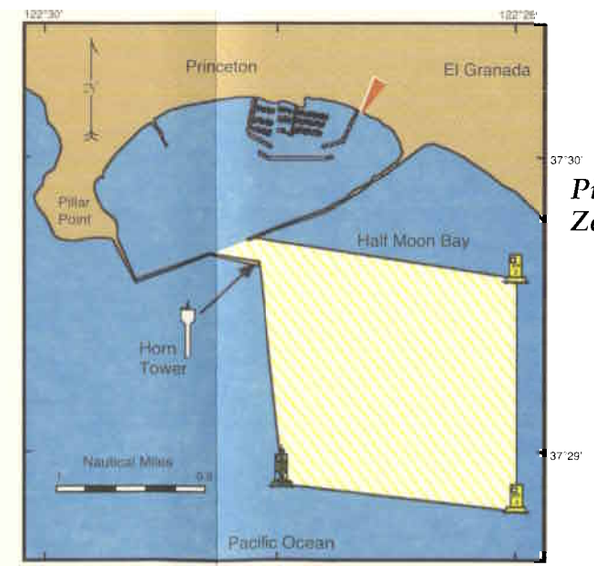
Help Protect Sensitive Shorelines

From wave-swept beaches and lush kelp forests to tranquil estuaries, the Sanctuary's near-shore habitats are fragile and full of life. The motorized personal watercraft operating zones are designed to provide special protection for these areas. Stay within the zones and access routes at all times, and launch and return to shore only within the designated harbors.

tips continued on reverse side



Santa Cruz Zone



Pillar Point Zone

Operating Zone
Access Route
Buoys
Public Launch Ramp