



## Marine Protected Areas Digest Volume VI: Eagerly Awaiting Opening Day!

After more than two years of planning, we are gearing up for the grand opening of southern California's [new underwater state parks](#)! Originally, the marine protected areas were scheduled to open on October 1. However, the State is still working to make sure the final rules match up to the plans proposed by our community and approved by the Fish and Game Commission. So, we will have to wait a few more weeks to celebrate.

While looking forward to the opening of protected areas at south La Jolla, Laguna, Point Dume, and Naples Reef, you can whet your appetite by exploring some of California's existing ocean parks. Check out these [3-D swim through videos](#) of Elkhorn Slough and Point Buchon on the central coast. Or watch a [live dive tour](#) of the Channel Islands marine reserve offshore from Santa Barbara.

Anyone that has experienced Anacapa Island's lush kelp forests knows the [Channel Islands marine reserves](#), created in 2002, have produced great results in just nine years: the protected areas are teeming with life. And that's just one success story among many! A [new study](#) from Scripps Institution of Oceanography documented record-breaking benefits from a Baja California marine reserve.

The [Scripps report](#) showed the number of fish in [Mexico's Cabo Pulmo marine reserve](#) soared 463 percent in a decade. This jewel of Baja was once depleted, but the local community banded together to secure its protection, and now both fishing and tourism are booming in the area. Marine ecologist Enric Sala said [in National Geographic](#), "[the study] shows that protecting an area brings the fish back, and creates jobs and increases economic revenue for the local communities. I have seen it with my own eyes and, believe me, it is like a miracle, only that it is not—it's just common business sense."

The Cabo Pulmo results are extraordinary, but Scripps fisheries ecologist Brad Erisman said [in the San Diego Union-Tribune](#) that a similar turnaround is possible in southern California.

We will let you know about the new opening date for southern California's marine protected areas as soon as the Commission announces it.

Wondering what you can do now to help make California's new ocean parks a success? Consider getting involved with a local [MPA Watch](#) program, or check out [these tips](#) from the Orange County Marine Protected Areas Council and [education materials](#) from Birch Aquarium.