

Pacific Grove

AREA OF SPECIAL BIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

HIGH LEVEL OF HIGH THREAT DISCHARGE

Area of Special Biological Significance = Zero Pollution Discharge

In the 1970s, to preserve biologically unique and sensitive marine ecosystems for future generations, California designated 34 regions along the coast as Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS). These areas support an unusual variety of aquatic life, and are important building blocks for a sustainable, resilient coastal environment and economy. Although the State Water Board's Ocean Plan prohibits all waste discharges into these areas, pollution continues to damage these important habitats.

With YOUR help, California Coastkeeper Alliance is working to ensure important marine ecosystems are protected from pollution.



Point Pinos, also known as the Great Tide Pool, is one of the richest tide pool habitats in the world. It was from these tide pools that the famous "Doc" (Ed) Ricketts of John Steinbeck fame fed his formaldehyde-filled jars in the early days of marine science. Visitors come to see the life teeming within these puddles, including sea stars, anemones, black turban snails, hermit crabs, chitons and limpids.

Pacific Grove ASBS skirts approximately three miles of Monterey County's coast near the city of Pacific Grove and Monterey Bay. With close to 500 ocean acres, this ASBS features a rich variety of marine life from the sea floor to the surface. Stony sea corals, giant green anemones and orange puffball sponges pepper the sea floor, as black perch and striped sea perch swim above. The killer whale, one of the ocean's most revered predators, stops by occasionally to scope out the neighborhood.

Pacific Grove ASBS overlaps with Pacific Grove Marine Gardens State Marine Conservation Area. This is a type of marine protected area (MPA) established by the Fish and Game Commission to protect and preserve aquatic life. Visit: http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/pdfs/ccmpas_guide.pdf for more information.



Waves crash along the coast of Pacific Grove.

Pollution

The State Water Board has determined that despite protection under California law, the Pacific Grove ASBS is contaminated with polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), copper, lead and zinc from urban runoff, urban development, road runoff and aquarium discharges. These contaminants threaten water quality and can harm fish and wildlife.

One Threat and Solution: Urban Runoff

One pollution source that particularly threatens the Pacific Grove ASBS is polluted stormwater that runs off city surfaces. In urban areas, rainwater washes over paved areas, such as streets, parking lots and roofs, picking up a potentially toxic mixture of oil, dirt, trash, metals and fertilizers. City storm drains funnel polluted stormwater directly to natural waterways, where it can cause beach closures and poison aquatic plants and animals, particularly in sensitive marine ecosystems like ASBSs.

By incorporating Low Impact Development (LID) techniques, many city surfaces such as rooftops, streetscapes, parking lots, sidewalks, and medians can work with nature to filter polluted stormwater. For example, streetscapes can be constructed to funnel stormwater into landscaped elements called bio-swales that capture and filter rainwater. Native plants in the bio-swales create habitat and naturally remove silt and pollution from stormwater before reaching the ocean.

Learn More

<http://www.cacoastkeeper.org/programs/clean-abundant/stormwater-runoff>
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/ocean/asbs_map.shtml
http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/toolbox/other/epa_nps_urban_facts.pdf

Pollution Threats At A Glance

- **Number of High Threat Discharges:** 246
- **State Board Identified Contaminants:** PAHs, Copper, Lead and Zinc
- **Pollution Sources:** Urban runoff, urban development, road runoff and aquarium discharges