

James V. Fitzgerald

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.



Outstanding tide pools are one of the reasons James V. Fitzgerald receives more than 135,000 visitors annually. Extensive shale reefs are home to a wide variety of marine life, such as giant green anemones (above), limpets, purple sea urchins, crabs, and snails.

James V. Fitzgerald ASBS in San Mateo County skirts 5.5 miles of coastline south of San Francisco. The reserve encompasses 518 acres of prized ocean habitat, featuring shale reefs enveloped by phenomenal tide pools. Since this site became an ASBS, 25 new species have been discovered there, indicating its impressive and distinctive biological diversity. Black crested gobies, red abalone and five species of rockfish, among other creatures, make the ASBS home. Nearby is a harbor seal rookery, important to the health of California's marine mammal population.

James V. Fitzgerald ASBS overlaps with Pillar Point 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/northcentralhome.asp> for more information.

Pollution

The State Water Board has determined that despite protection under California law, James V. Fitzgerald ASBS is contaminated with mercury, zinc, lead, copper, nickel, selenium, coliform and bacteria. Contaminants come from a variety of sources, including agricultural runoff, residential runoff, highway runoff, stormwater runoff and a sewage collection and pumping facility. These contaminants threaten water quality and can harm fish and wildlife.

One Threat and Solution: Agricultural Runoff

One pollution source that particularly threatens the James V. Fitzgerald ASBS is agricultural runoff. Rainwater washing off confined animal facilities and farmland picks up a potentially toxic mixture of excess nutrients, pesticides and salts. When polluted stormwater flows into natural waterways it can poison aquatic plants and animals, particularly in sensitive marine ecosystems like ASBSs.

Farmers can reduce the amount of toxic runoff by using the smallest and most effective amounts of fertilizer and pesticides and by avoiding applications during heavy rains when it will immediately wash off. Also, all animal waste should be stored in high-capacity structures with impermeable linings to prevent seepage into local waterways.

Learn More

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/ocean/asbs_map.shtml

http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/Ag_Runoff_Fact_Sheet.pdf



There is also a harbor seal rookery in the State Park. Twenty-five new species have been discovered here since it became an ASBS.

Pollution Threats At A Glance

- Number of High Threat Discharges: 28
- State Board Identified Contaminants: Mercury, Zinc, Lead, Copper, Nickel, Selenium, Coliform and Bacteria
- Pollution Sources: Agricultural runoff, residential runoff, highway runoff, stormwater runoff and a sewage collection and pumping facility