Marine Protected Area Long-term Monitoring Program

Condition Assessment & Monitoring of Estuaries

across California's MPA Network

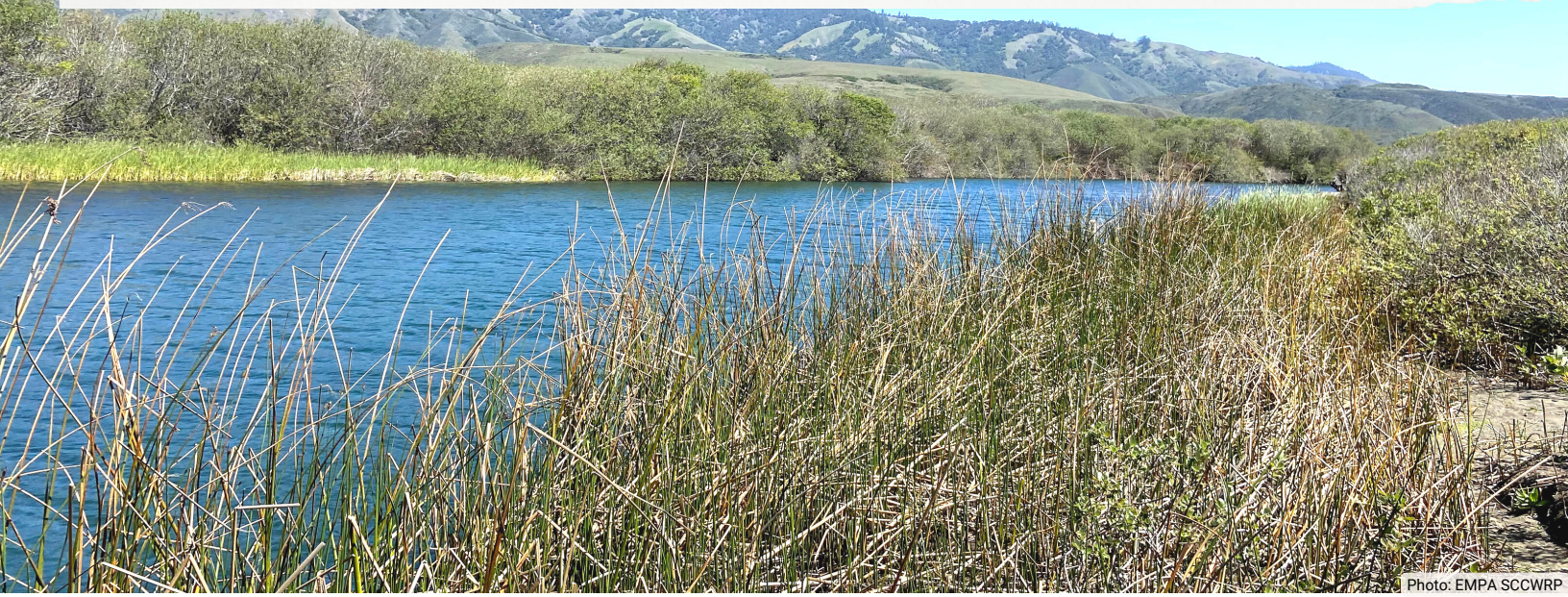

Photo: EMPA SCCWRP

MPA Monitoring

California's Marine Protected Area (MPA) Network is approaching its first-ever 10-year review. California will lean heavily on its MPA monitoring program to show progress towards meeting the goals of the Marine Life Protection Act, the founding legislation of the MPA Network. Researchers and community scientists have been tracking California's marine ecosystems since MPA implementation, in some cases as far back as 2007. Learn more about this MPA monitoring program below and read more on the program website.

Program Overview

This project developed the first coordinated statewide estuarine monitoring program. Advised by a Management Advisory Committee (MAC), the project team first created a monitoring framework and identified gaps in datasets that existed at the time. The team then used the newly developed protocols in estuaries statewide to collect the baseline data needed to answer MPA management questions. Results will inform the upcoming decadal management review of the MPA Network and statewide MPA estuary monitoring into the future.

Partner Institutions

Central Coast Wetlands Group at Moss Landing Marine Laboratories, CSU Long Beach, Sonoma State University, UC Davis Bodega Marine Lab, UC Los Angeles, Southern California Coastal Water Research Project, Bay Area Regional Water Quality Control Board

Access all of California's MPA data: California MPA Monitoring Portal

Sandra Fogg

Program Highlights

7
partner organizations developed the estuary work plan

14
standard operating procedures developed

15
statewide MPA and reference sampling sites in 2021

11
priority estuarine ecological functions assessed

CALIFORNIA MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

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Key Findings from MPA Monitoring

Condition Assessment & Monitoring of Estuaries

1 Statewide Framework

Under the guidance of a Management Advisory Committee, the project team is currently creating a structure and approach for ongoing coordination of MPA monitoring (Estuarine Monitoring Blueprint) that will guide agencies and organizations on how to implement the monitoring framework developed through this project.

EMPA, SCCWRP

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2 Key Indicators

The project team convened a Management Advisory Committee to develop a consistent approach for assessing estuary condition using standardized indicators, metrics, and sampling protocols. These indicators were tested at a subset of estuaries to demonstrate how they can be applied and how the resultant data can be used to meet MPA objectives. Monitoring protocols can be found on the project website.

3 Baseline Monitoring

The project team conducted the first-ever statewide estuarine data collection effort in the MPA Network, which included an assessment of both estuarine MPA and reference sites throughout 2021. Researchers are currently analyzing the monitoring data and a final technical report will be available in early 2023.

EMPA SCCWRP

For more information about MPA long-term monitoring and the Decadal Management Review, please visit:

- Condition Assessment & Monitoring of Estuaries project website
- California Sea Grant website to access all 7 MPA long-term technical reports
- CDFW's MPA Decadal Management Review webpage