

CREATE YOUR OWN MARINE PROTECTED AREA

The ocean is full of different zones, all home to unique sea creatures! How do scientists and policy makers know what to protect?

What is a Marine Protected Area?

A Marine Protected Area is an underwater national park! In a national park, we have to be extra careful about what we touch and where we go. This helps the animals and plants stay safe and happy!

Why are Marine Protected Areas important?

1. It allows a safe place for animals to grow up without being fished.
2. It's good for people too! If animal populations increase in Marine Protected Areas, then fisheries can fish sustainably without depleting populations.
3. Marine Protected Areas still allow people to go swimming, so you can snorkel and SCUBA dive to see the diversity of wildlife and habitats
4. Marine Protected Areas can help keep habitats from getting overfished or damaged from boats or nets.

You'll get to choose which parts of the shoreline you think are the most diverse and need protecting!

Kelp Forest

Do a lot of animals live in the rainforest? Kelp Forests are the rainforests of the sea. They provide shelter for animals of all shapes and sizes. Many fish like to hide in the blades of kelp, protecting themselves from predators. Animals like eels like to wrap their bodies around the kelp to keep from floating away. A lot of baby animals will use the holdfast of kelp (where it attaches to a rock) as a nursery. This means that animals like octopus, crabs, sea slugs, and snails will live inside the kelp to protect themselves. Kelp forests are home to many animals, big and small, young and old.



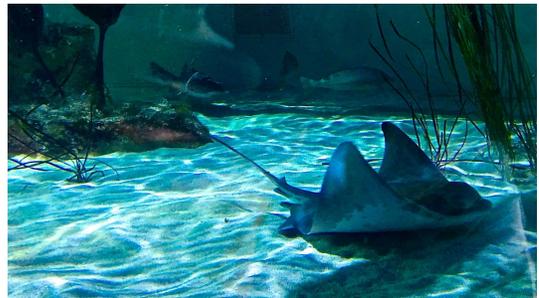
Rocky Tidepools

The rocky intertidal is one of the most extreme habitats in the ocean. In low tide, tidepools are uncovered with the sun warming up the water. Animals that live here have to be able to handle a big range of conditions. There are a lot of areas for animals to hide from predators in tidepools, like under rocks.



Sandy Shore

The sandy seafloor may not look like much, but that's because the animals that can live here are able to hide in plain sight. Animals like halibut and stingrays have very flat bodies and can bury themselves underneath the sand, to blend in and avoid predators. Other animals like crabs will camouflage into the rocks to stay safe.



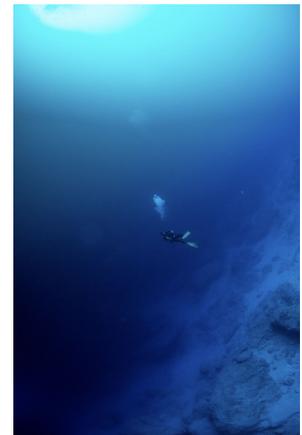
Open Ocean

The open ocean is a large part of the ocean and home to lots of animals. The animals that live in this zone may never go down to the seafloor or even explore a different habitat. Oftentimes, we can find sharks, jellies, and big fish like tuna swimming around in the open ocean.



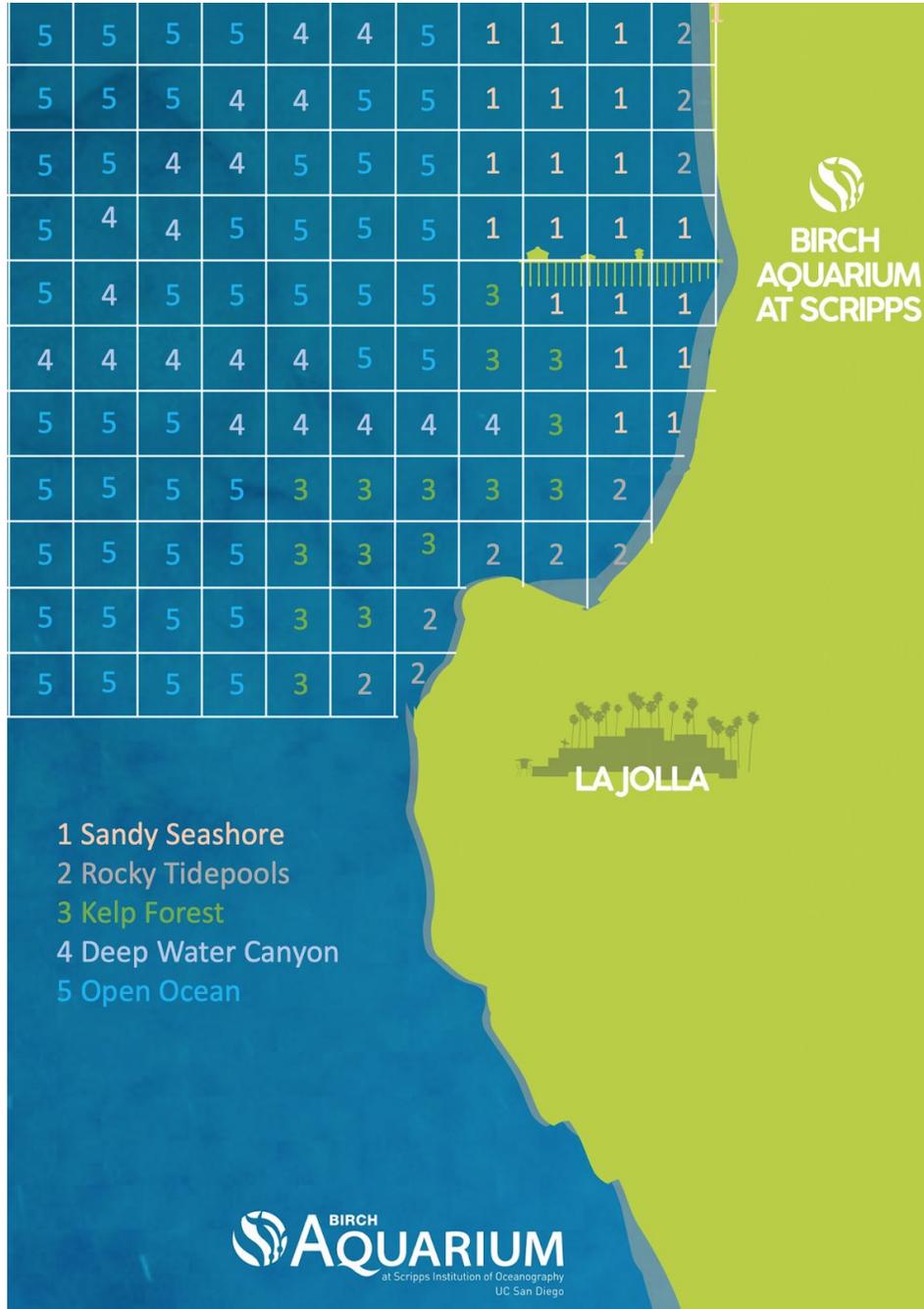
Deepwater Canyon

A deepwater canyon is an interesting place to live. Vertical rocks stretch deep below the surface, which seems like a hard environment to live in. However, animals have found a way to survive there. The rocks create shelves for fish to hide underneath, and for sea snails and urchins to live on top of. This is a very diverse habitat full of many types of life.



Create your own MPA:

Let's use our scientific brain to make a marine protected area! Here is a picture of our coastline, with numbers representing the different habitats. Choose 20 squares of habitat to protect. Keep in mind the diversity of life or maybe choose your favorite habitat(s)!



What squares of habitat did you choose to protect and why?

How diverse are the habitats in your marine protected area?

Learn more about marine protected areas and how you can take action to protect our ocean!
<https://mpawatch.org/>