

# Loreto Bay National Park and its Marine Protected Areas





# Marine Zoning of the Park

In order to protect its ecosystems, the marine portion of the Park was divided into different zones. Please respect each zone's restrictions and report illegal activities to Park authorities.

## PROTECTION ZONE

Ecosystems and habitats that have not been heavily impacted, that contain high biodiversity or have a high probability of recovery are included within this zone. **Commercial and sport fishing is banned year-round in this zone**, which encompasses two seamounts, **Bajo del Murciélago** and **Bajo del Cochi**. In addition, this zone includes the wetlands and mangrove areas along the coastline.

Currently, Comunidad y Biodiversidad, A. C. and the Park are conducting long-term studies to determine how species recover in these seamounts and other areas, and how the designation of these closed areas is benefiting or affecting neighboring fishing communities.

## RESTRICTED USE ZONE

The purpose of this zone is to maintain and enhance the current state of ecosystems and to foster more responsible use of the area by imposing strict control measures. This zone is divided into four types:

### Restricted Use Zone I

#### *Includes:*

- The waters within 300 m of the coastline of Carmen, Montserrat and Catalana Islands.
- The waters within 100 m of the coastline of Danzante Island and La Mestiza, Blancos, Las Islitas, Los Candeleros, Las Tijeras and Pardo Islets.
- The waters within 300 m of the coastline of Coronados Island and contained within the 50 m isobath between Punta Lobos and Los Metates.

### Restricted Use Zone II

Includes the waters within 300 m of the peninsula coastline, except for wetlands and mangroves that are included under the Protection Zone.



## Introduction

Located halfway down the coast of Baja California Sur, the **Loreto Bay National Park** is a spectacular place, boasting of crystal clear waters and lush desert. The majestic La Giganta mountain range is the backdrop for this natural wonder that encompasses five important islands: Coronados, Carmen, Danzante, Montserrat and Catalana.

The historic town of **Loreto**, a Jesuit mission founded in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, is located along the coastline of the park. Early settlers made a living fishing and harvesting salt and whale oil. Nowadays, the economy of this coastal community is based on commercial fishing, sport fishing and tourism.

**The Park** is renowned for the diversity of marine life that inhabits its waters, including species of commercial value such as snappers, groupers, and parrotfish, as well as species important for nature-based tourism such as sea turtles, whales, dolphins and sea lions.

Residents of **Loreto**, neighboring fishing communities and local non-governmental organizations recognized the importance of protecting these vital natural resources and, together with local authorities declared this area a **National Park** in 1996.



## How can we recover our depleted seas?

Over the last few decades, we have witnessed a major decline in global fisheries that has challenged our early perceptions of the sea as an inexhaustible fountain of resources. Fishers claims are the same around the world: *"Every trip we catch fewer and smaller fish", "We have to go farther offshore to land a good catch", "We are investing more time and money in fishing and making less."*

Can we recover depleted populations that were once abundant? Will new generations of fishers be able to continue fishing in the places their parents and grandparents once did? Can we recover traditional fishing grounds that have been overexploited?

One way to achieve these goals is to collaborate with local stakeholders to create **Marine Reserves** that contain certain areas where no fishing activities are allowed, called **Fully Protected Marine Areas**, or **No-take Areas**. This strategy has been implemented in different countries and has proven successful in recovering fish populations. **The key to its success has been banning fishing activity in certain areas, allowing the continual 'export' of species to areas where fishing is permitted.**

By creating **No-takes Areas**, we are protecting a proportion of many species that play a vital role in maintaining the integrity and health of marine ecosystems.

In the **Loreto Bay National Park**, two seamounts known for their rich biological diversity, **Bajo del Murciélago** and **Bajo del Cochi**, were designated as **No-Take Areas** with the help of local fishers and **Park** authorities.



# Loreto Bay National Park

## Restricted Use Zone III

Includes the waters north of Monserrat Island.

Vertex 1: 25°42'23.20"N, 111°03'34.20"W  
(Punta Roja Northwest of Montserrat Island).

Vertex 2: 25°46'26.20"N, 111°03'33.70"W  
(7.5 Km N-Northwest of vertex 1 following a 340° course).

Vertex 3: 25°45'53.60"N, 111°00'59.50"W  
(4.85 Km East of vertex 2, following a 93° course).

Vertex 4: 25°41'35.90"N, 111°00'59.30"W  
(Punta Larga Northeast of Montserrat Island  
7.79 Km S-Southeast of vertex 3 following a 163° course).

## Restricted Use Zone IV

Includes Punta Baja seamount, south of Carmen Island.

Vertex 1: 25°47'58.92"N, 111°12'36.00"W.

Vertex 2: 25°48'13.68"N, 111°11'45.60"W.

Vertex 3: 25°47'53.88"N, 111°11'24.00"W.

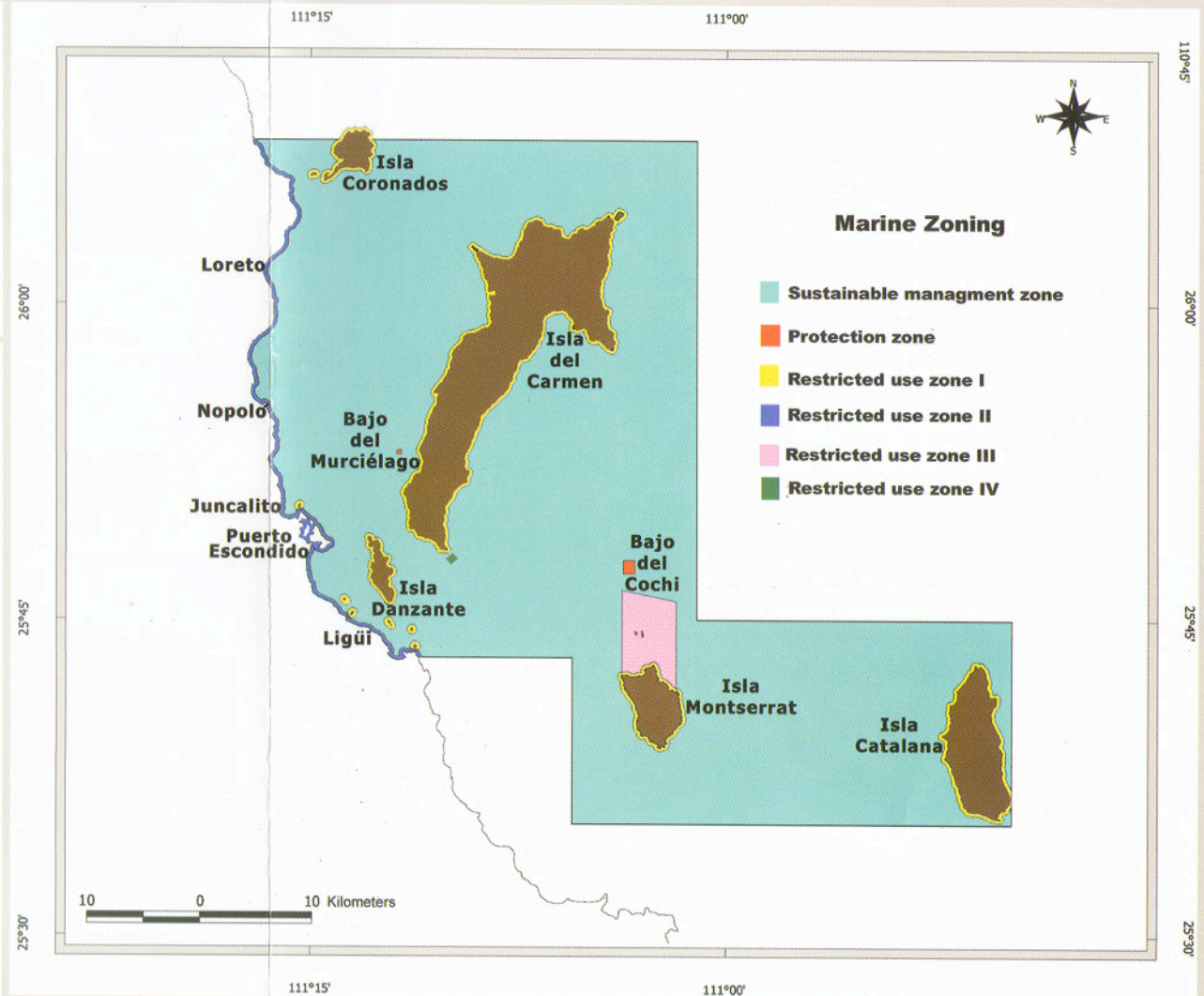
Vertex 4: 25°47'39.12"N, 111°11'42.00"W.

## NATURAL RESOURCES SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT ZONE

This is the Park's largest zone and includes the open sea, deep waters and the seafloor that were not included under the categories mentioned above.



Projection: UTM 12  
Datum horizontal: NAD 1927  
Spheroid: Clarke, 1866



The Loreto Bay National Park  
Fully Protected Marine Areas are:

### Bajo del Murciélago

Vertex 1: 25°52'52.60"N, 111°14'19.50"W  
Vertex 2: 25°53'04.40"N, 111°14'19.50"W  
Vertex 3: 25°53'04.40"N, 111°14'04.50"W  
Vertex 4: 25°52'52.60"N, 111°14'04.50"W

### Bajo del Cochi

Vertex 1: 25°47'14.80"N, 111°03'30.00"W  
Vertex 2: 25°47'48.20"N, 111°03'30.00"W  
Vertex 3: 25°47'48.20"N, 111°02'57.00"W  
Vertex 4: 25°47'14.80"N, 111°02'57.00"W



## How can we help?

As fishers, we can help protect the Park's marine areas by complying with the following restrictions of fishing activities:

### PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

#### Protection Zone

All commercial and sport fishing.

#### Restricted Use Zones I, II, and III

- Sport fishing with a spear gun.
- Sport fishing at less than 250 m from commercial fishing vessels.
- Commercial fishing with a spear gun, night diving and the use of large-scale commercial fishing vessels.

#### Restricted Use Zone I

- Commercial fishing using nets and/or long lines in rocky bottoms.
- Commercial fishing using nets in Coronados Island (except for in November and December over sandy bottoms).
- Commercial fishing using nets in waters adjacent to Carmen Island from April to August.
- Commercial fishing using any type of net in the South, East, and North parts of the area next to Montserrat Island from April 1<sup>st</sup> through August 30<sup>th</sup>.

#### Restricted Use Zone II

- Commercial fin-fishing using nets from April through August every year.
- Commercial fishing using long lines.

#### Restricted Use Zone III

- Commercial fishing using nets and/or long lines.

#### Restricted Use Zone IV

- Sport fishing and commercial fishing, excluding bait collection.

#### Natural Resource Sustainable Management Zone

- Sport fishing at less than 250 m from commercial fishing vessels.
- Commercial high impact trawling for shrimp and fish.
- Commercial night diving.
- Operations with the following types of large-scale commercial vessels: trawlers, purse-seiners, sargassum and squid boats, and long liners.



### Did you know?

Predators like sharks and large groupers help to control the abundance of their prey.

## Why are fully protected marine areas beneficial to fishers?

By restricting fishing in a certain area, we help to replenish depleted populations by allowing fish to grow larger and increase spawning.

When protected species are allowed to increase in number and size, they migrate to areas where fishing is allowed.

They provide a refuge for long-lived species that are very vulnerable to fishing activities such as snappers and groupers.

They protect a proportion of every marine species that naturally occurs in the area so those species can continue to perform their role in maintaining a healthy ecosystem.



### Did you know?

One 24 inch 27.5 pound female red snapper produces the same quantity of eggs as 212 female red snappers that are each 16.8 inches long and weigh 2.2 pounds.





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NW



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