

BENEFICIAL USE DEFINITIONS

The following definitions for beneficial uses are applicable statewide (in alphabetical order by abbreviation). If a Regional Water Board has a region-specific variation on a statewide beneficial use, the region-specific definition is also defined. Additional beneficial use definitions adopted by individual Regional Water Boards, for which there is no equivalent statewide beneficial use, are listed on page 5.

Agricultural Supply (AGR) - Uses of water for farming, horticulture or ranching including, but not limited to, irrigation, stock watering, or support of vegetation for range grazing.

Variation:

R5: **Agricultural Supply (AGR)** - Uses of water for farming, horticulture, or ranching including, but not limited to, irrigation (including leaching of salts), stock watering, or support of vegetation for range grazing.

Aquaculture (AQUA) - Uses of water for aquaculture or mariculture operations including, but not limited to, propagation, cultivation, maintenance, or harvesting of aquatic plants and animals for human consumption or bait purposes.

Preservation of Biological Habitats of Special Significance (BIOL) - Uses of water that support designated areas or habitats, such as established refuges, parks, sanctuaries, ecological reserves, or Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS), where the preservation or enhancement of natural resources requires special protection.

Variations:

R1: **Preservation of Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS)** - Includes marine life refuges, ecological reserves and designated areas of special biological significance, such as areas where kelp propagation and maintenance are features of the marine environment requiring special protection.

R2: **Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS)** - Areas designated by the State Water Board. These include marine life refuges, ecological reserves, and designated areas where the preservation and enhancement of natural resources requires special protection. In these areas, alteration of natural water quality is undesirable. The areas that have been designated as ASBS in this Region are Bird Rock, Point Reyes Headland Reserve and Extension, Double Point, Duxbury Reef Reserve and Extension, Farallon Islands, and James V. Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, depicted in Figure 2-1. The California Ocean Plan prohibits waste discharges into, and requires wastes to be discharged at a sufficient distance from, these areas to assure maintenance of natural water quality conditions. These areas have been designated as a subset of State Water Quality Protection Areas as per the Public Resources Code.

R3: **Areas of Biological Significance (ASBS)** – Are those areas designated by the State Water Resources Control Board as requiring protection of species or biological communities to the extent that alteration of natural water quality is undesirable.

Cold Freshwater Habitat (COLD) - Uses of water that support cold water ecosystems including, but not limited to, preservation or enhancement of aquatic habitats, vegetation, fish, or wildlife, including invertebrates.

Commercial and Sport Fishing (COMM) - Uses of water for commercial or recreational collection of fish and shellfish, or other organisms including, but not limited to, uses involving organisms intended for human consumption or bait purposes.

Variation:

R6: **Commercial and Sport Fishing (COMM)** - Beneficial uses of waters used for commercial or recreational collection of fish or other organisms including, but not limited to, uses involving organisms intended for human consumption.

Estuarine Habitat (EST) - Uses of water that support estuarine ecosystems including, but not limited to, preservation or enhancement of estuarine habitats, vegetation, fish, shellfish, or wildlife (e.g., estuarine mammals, waterfowl, shorebirds).

Variation:

R2: **Estuarine Habitat (EST)** - Uses of water that support estuarine ecosystems, including, but not limited to, preservation or enhancement of estuarine habitats, vegetation, fish, shellfish, or wildlife (e.g., estuarine mammals, waterfowl, shorebirds), and the propagation, sustenance, and migration of estuarine organisms.

Freshwater Replenishment (FRSH) - Uses of water for natural or artificial maintenance of surface water quantity or quality (e.g., salinity).

Variation:

R3: **Freshwater Replenishment (FRSH)** - Uses of water for natural or artificial maintenance of surface water quantity or quality (e.g., salinity) which includes a water body that supplies water to a different type of water body, such as, streams that supply reservoirs and lakes, or estuaries; or reservoirs and lakes that supply streams. This includes only immediate upstream water bodies and not their tributaries.

Ground Water Recharge (GWR) - Uses of water for natural or artificial recharge of ground water for purposes of future extraction, maintenance of water quality, or halting saltwater intrusion into freshwater aquifers.

Variation:

R3: **Ground Water Recharge (GWR)** – Uses of water for natural or artificial recharge of ground water for purposes of future extraction, maintenance of water quality, or halting of saltwater intrusion into freshwater aquifers. Ground water recharge includes recharge of surface water underflow.

Industrial Service Supply (IND) - Uses of water for industrial activities that do not depend primarily on water quality, including, but not limited to, mining, cooling water supply, hydraulic conveyance, gravel washing, fire protection, or oil well repressurization.

Variation:

R6: **Industrial Service Supply (IND)** - Beneficial uses of waters used for industrial activities that do not depend primarily on water quality including, but not limited to, mining, cooling water supply, geothermal energy production, hydraulic conveyance, gravel washing, fire protection, and oil well repressurization.

Marine Habitat (MAR) - Uses of water that support marine ecosystems including, but not limited to, preservation or enhancement of marine habitats, vegetation such as kelp, fish, shellfish, or wildlife (e.g., marine mammals, shorebirds).

Migration of Aquatic Organisms (MIGR) - Uses of water that support habitats necessary for migration or other temporary activities by aquatic organisms, such as anadromous fish.

Variations:

R2: **Fish Migration (MIGR)** - Uses of water that support habitats necessary for migration, acclimatization between fresh water and salt water, and protection of aquatic organisms that are temporary inhabitants of waters within the region.

R4 & R6: **Migration of Aquatic Organisms (MIGR)** - Uses of water that support habitats necessary for migration, acclimatization between fresh and salt water, or other temporary activities by aquatic organisms, such as anadromous fish.

Municipal and Domestic Supply (MUN) - Uses of water for community, military, or individual water supply systems including, but not limited to, drinking water.

Navigation (NAV) - Uses of water for shipping, travel, or other transportation by private, military, or commercial vessels.

Hydropower Generation (POW) - Uses of water for hydropower generation.

Industrial Process Supply (PRO) - Uses of water for industrial activities that depend primarily on water quality.

Variations:

R2, R3, R4, R9: **Industrial Service Supply (PROC)** - Uses of water for industrial activities that depend primarily on water quality.

R8: **Industrial Process Supply (PROC)** - waters are used for industrial activities that depend primarily on water quality. These uses may include, but are not limited to, process water supply and all uses of water related to product manufacture or food preparation

Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species (RARE) - Uses of water that support habitats necessary, at least in part, for the survival and successful maintenance of plant or animal species established under state or federal law as rare, threatened or endangered.

Water Contact Recreation (REC-1) - Uses of water for recreational activities involving body contact with water, where ingestion of water is reasonably possible. These uses include, but are not limited to, swimming, wading, water-skiing, skin and scuba diving, surfing, white water activities, fishing, or use of natural hot springs.

Non-Contact Water Recreation (REC-2) - Uses of water for recreational activities involving proximity to water, but not normally involving body contact with water, where ingestion of water is reasonably possible. These uses include, but are not limited to, picnicking, sunbathing, hiking, beachcombing, camping, boating, tidepool and marine life study, hunting, sightseeing, or aesthetic enjoyment in conjunction with the above activities.

Inland Saline Water Habitat (SAL) - Uses of water that support inland saline water ecosystems including, but not limited to, preservation or enhancement of aquatic saline habitats, vegetation, fish, or wildlife, including invertebrates.

Shellfish Harvesting (SHELL) - Uses of water that support habitats suitable for the collection of filter-feeding shellfish (e.g., clams, oysters and mussels) for human consumption, commercial or sport purposes.

Spawning, Reproduction, and/or Early Development (SPWN) - Uses of water that support high quality aquatic habitats suitable for reproduction and early development of fish.

Variation:

R5: **Spawning, Reproduction, and/or Early Development (SPWN)** - Uses of water that support high quality aquatic habitats suitable for reproduction and early development of fish. SPWN shall be limited to cold water fisheries.

Warm Freshwater Habitat (WARM) - Uses of water that support warm water ecosystems including, but not limited to, preservation or enhancement of aquatic habitats, vegetation, fish, or wildlife, including invertebrates.

Variation:

R5: **Warm Freshwater Habitat (WARM)** - Uses of water that support warm water ecosystems, including, but not limited to, preservation or enhancement of aquatic habitats, vegetation, fish, or wildlife, including invertebrates. WARM includes support for reproduction and early development of warm water fish.

Wildlife Habitat (WILD) - Uses of water that support terrestrial ecosystems including, but not limited to, preservation and enhancement of terrestrial habitats, vegetation, wildlife (e.g., mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates), or wildlife water and food sources.

Variations:

R5: **Wildlife Habitat (WILD)** - Uses of water that support terrestrial or wetland ecosystems including, but not limited to, preservation and enhancement of terrestrial habitats or wetlands, vegetation, wildlife (e.g., mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates), or wildlife water and food sources.

R6: **Wildlife Habitat (WILD)** - Beneficial uses of waters that support wildlife habitats including, but not limited to, the preservation and enhancement of vegetation and prey species used by wildlife, such as waterfowl.

**Additional Beneficial Use Definitions Adopted By Individual Regional Water Boards and
Approved By the State Water Board**

Native American Culture (CUL) Uses of water that support the cultural and/or traditional rights of indigenous people such as subsistence fishing and shellfish gathering, basket weaving and jewelry material collection, navigation to traditional ceremonial locations, and ceremonial uses. North Coast Regional Board (Region 1)

Subsistence Fishing (FISH) Uses of water that support subsistence fishing. North Coast Regional Board (Region 1)

Flood Peak Attenuation/Flood Water Storage (FLD) - Beneficial uses of riparian wetlands in flood plain areas and other wetlands that receive natural surface drainage and buffer its passage to receiving waters. Lahontan Regional Board & North Coast Regional Board (Regions 6 & 1):

Limited Water Contact Recreation (LREC-1): Uses of water for recreational activities involving body contact with water, where full REC-1 use is limited by physical conditions such as very shallow water depth and restricted access and, as a result, ingestion of water is incidental and infrequent. Los Angeles Regional Board (Region 4):

Limited Warm Freshwater Habitat (LWRM) - Waters support warm water ecosystems which are severely limited in diversity and abundance as the result of concrete-lined watercourses and low, shallow dry weather flows which result in extreme temperature, pH, and/or dissolved oxygen conditions. Naturally reproducing finfish populations are not expected to occur in LWRM waters. Santa Ana Regional Board (Region 8):

Shellfish Harvesting (SHELL) - Uses of water that support habitats suitable for the collection of filter feeding shellfish (e.g., clams, oysters, and mussels) for human consumption, commercial, or sport purposes. This includes waters that have in the past, or may in the future, contain significant shellfisheries. Central Coast Regional Board (Region 3)

Wetland Habitat (WET) Uses of water that support natural and man-made wetland ecosystems, including, but not limited to, preservation or enhancement of unique wetland functions, vegetation, fish, shellfish, invertebrates, insects, and wildlife habitat. North Coast Regional Board (Region 1)

Wetland Habitat (WET) - Uses of water that support wetland ecosystems, including, but not limited to, preservation or enhancement of wetland habitats, vegetation, fish, shellfish, or wildlife, and other unique wetland functions which enhance water quality, such as providing flood and erosion control, stream bank stabilization, and filtration and purification of naturally occurring contaminants. Los Angeles Regional Board (Region 4)

Water Quality Enhancement (WQE) Uses of waters, including wetlands and other waterbodies, that support natural enhancement or improvement of water quality in or downstream of a waterbody including, but not limited to, erosion control, filtration and purification of naturally occurring water pollutants, stream bank stabilization, maintenance of channel integrity, and siltation control. North Coast Regional Board (Region 1)

Water Quality Enhancement (WQE) - Beneficial uses of waters that support natural enhancement or improvement of water quality in or downstream of a water body including, but not limited to, erosion control, filtration and purification of naturally occurring water pollutants, stream bank stabilization, maintenance of channel integrity, and siltation control. Lahontan Regional Board (Regions 6)