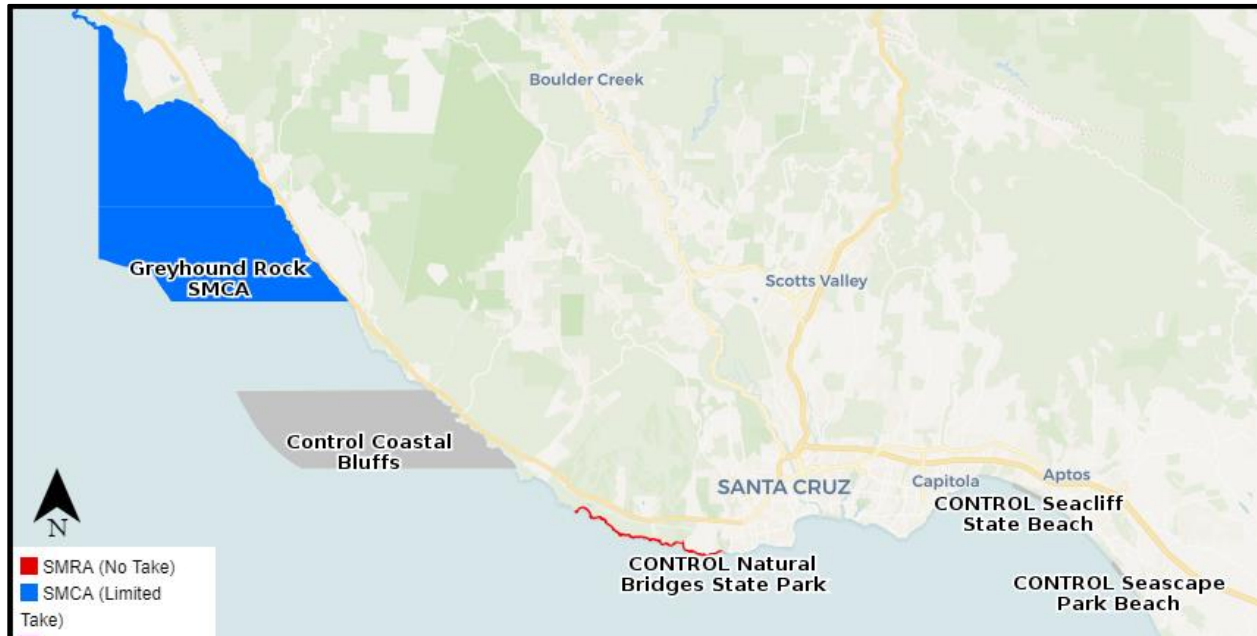




**Marine Protected Area (MPA) Watch
Regional Report
Santa Cruz, CA
January 1 – June 30, 2020**



California State Parks has received Once-Through Cooling funding from the Ocean Protection Council to support a team of MPA interpreters and an MPA Outreach and Education Project Coordinator in eight state parks districts along the California coast. One of the grant deliverables includes training these specialized MPA interpreters as well as additional State Parks staff and docents in MPA Watch survey protocol and data entry.

Executive Summary

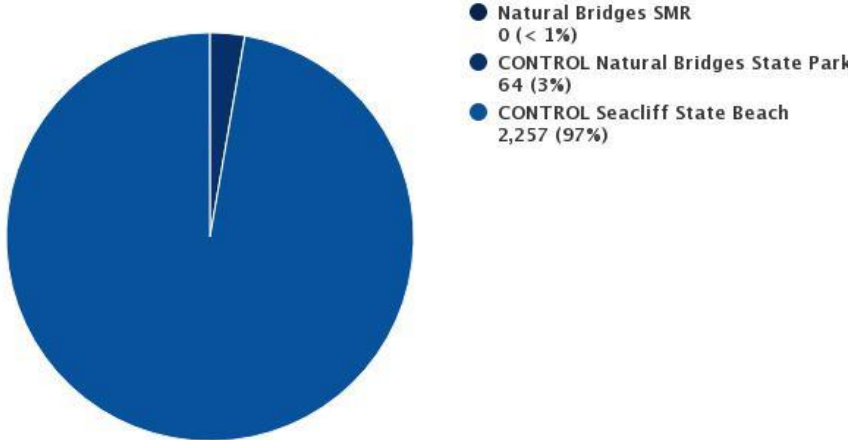
- In March of 2020, a virtual MPA Watch training/refresher was hosted on Zoom for the statewide team of State Parks MPA interpreters.
- In-person MPA Watch trainings planned for State Parks staff in San Diego, Mendocino, and Humboldt Counties were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- COVID-19 impacted ability to regularly conduct surveys March and April of 2020
- 63 surveys were recorded in Santa Cruz District between two transects.

Human Use of MPAs January – June 2020

Overview

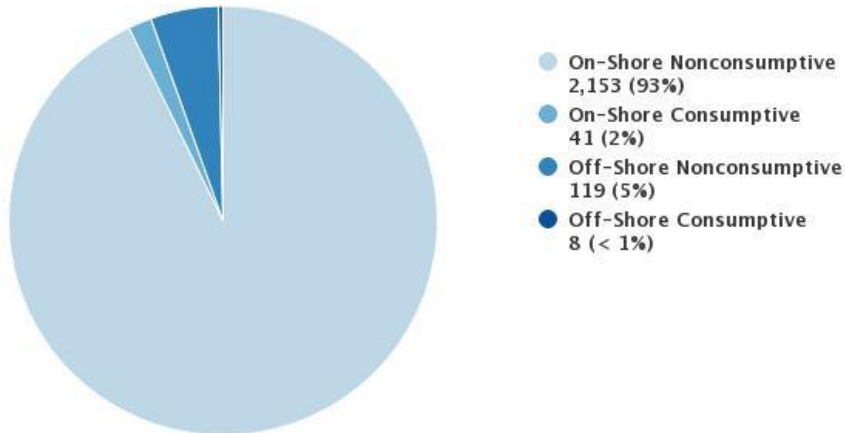
Top 3 MPAs by All Activity

January 1, 2020 – June 30, 2020
2,321 total activity events



All MPAs Combined

January 1, 2020 – June 30, 2020
2,321 activity events



Activity Classifications

On-Shore - Activities that take place on a sandy or rocky beach. Excludes bluffs, trails, sea walls, parking lots, or other man-made structures. Includes recreation, tidepooling, shore-based fishing, etc.

Off-Shore - Activities that take place offshore, typically in knee-deep water or deeper. Includes surfing, SCUBA diving, kayaking, boat fishing, etc.

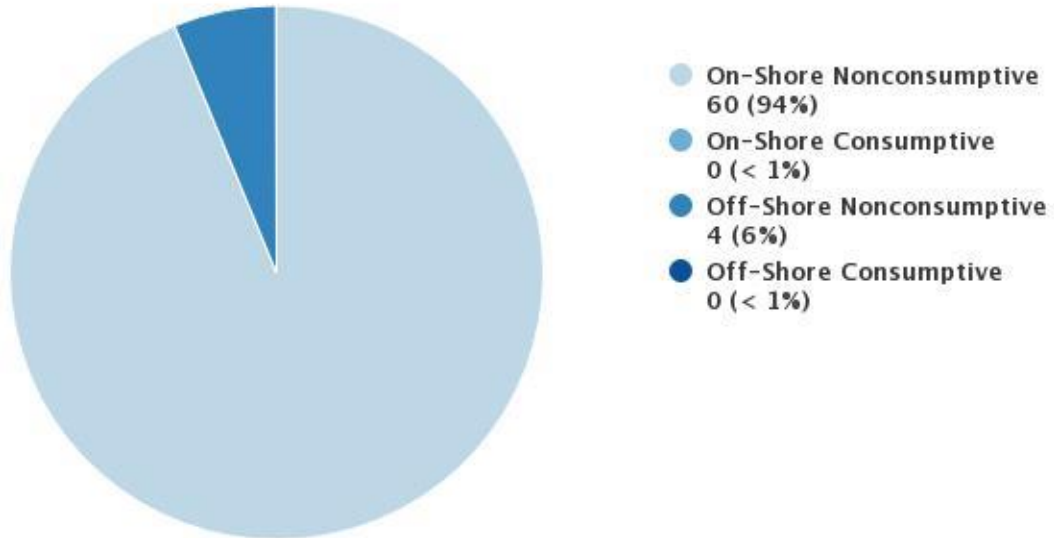
Consumptive - An activity in which a natural resource (i.e. fish, kelp, shells) is being collected.

Non-Consumptive - An activity in which a natural resource is not collected.

Activity by MPA

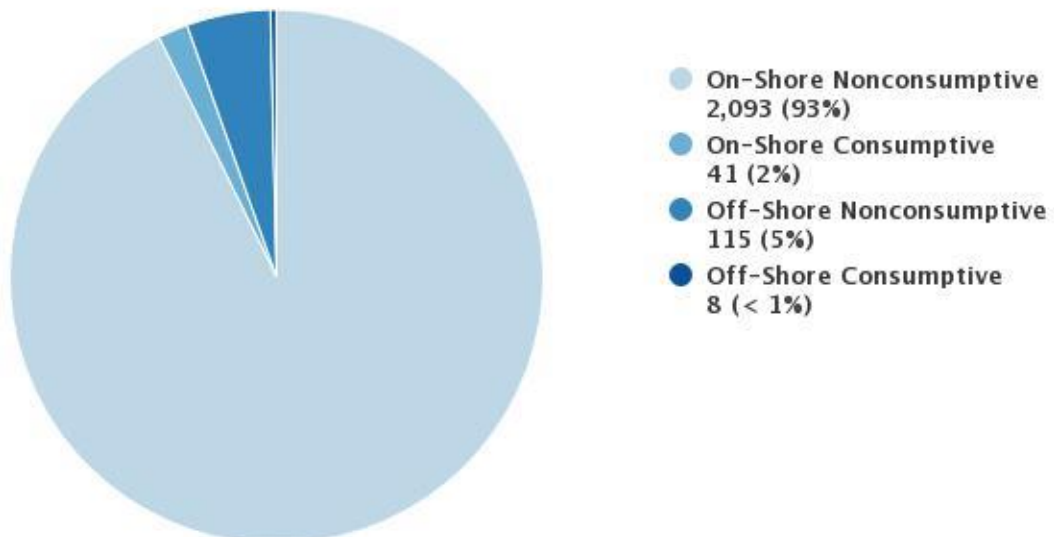
CONTROL Natural Bridges State Park

January 1, 2020 – June 30, 2020
64 activity events

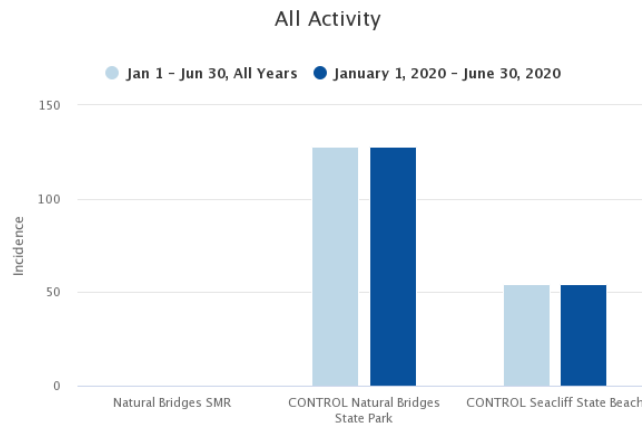
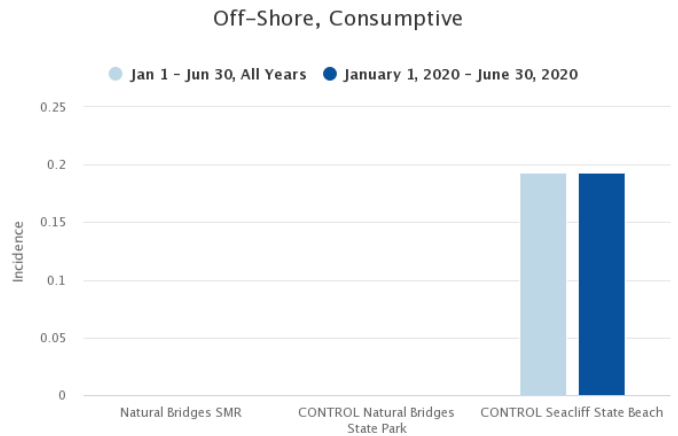
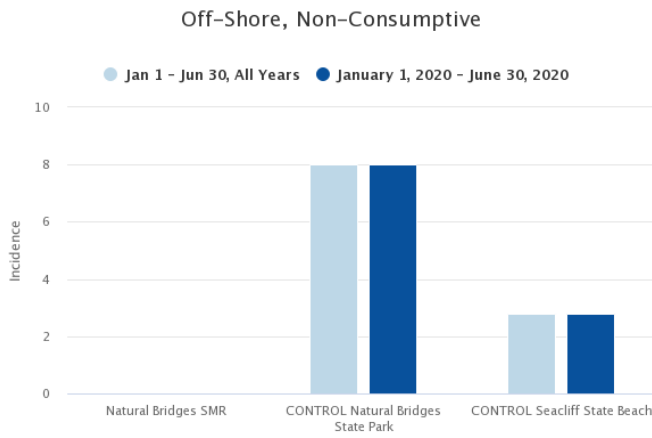
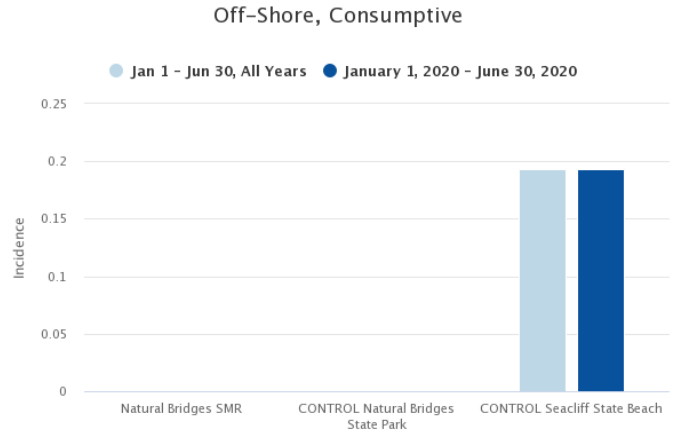
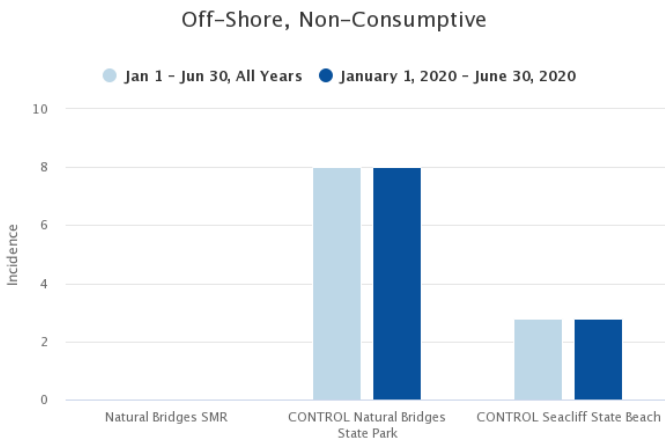


CONTROL Seacliff State Beach

January 1, 2020 – June 30, 2020
2,257 activity events



Activity Incidence by MPA



The above charts show incidence values for each MPA monitored by CA State Parks MPA Watch. Note: The CA State Parks MPA Watch program was started in 2019, so baseline data are still being established.

Incidence is calculated as number of activities recorded divided by total survey-miles.

Activity Incidence by MPA

MPA	On-Shore				
	Non-Consumptive			Consumptive	
	Jan 1 Jun 30 All Years	Jan 1, 2020 through Jun 30, 2020	Jan 1 Jun 30 All Years	Jan 1, 2020 through Jun 30, 2020	
Natural Bridges SMR	nan	nan	nan	nan	
CONTROL Natural Bridges State Park	120.0	120.0	0.0	0.0	
CONTROL Seacliff State Beach	50.6	50.6	1.0	1.0	
All MPAs Combined	51.4	51.4	1.0	1.0	

MPA	Off-Shore				
	Non-Consumptive			Consumptive	
	Jan 1 Jun 30 All Years	Jan 1, 2020 through Jun 30, 2020	Jan 1 Jun 30 All Years	Jan 1, 2020 through Jun 30, 2020	
Natural Bridges SMR	nan	nan	nan	nan	
CONTROL Natural Bridges State Park	8.0	8.0	0.0	0.0	
CONTROL Seacliff State Beach	2.8	2.8	0.2	0.2	
All MPAs Combined	2.8	2.8	0.2	0.2	

MPA	Total			
	Combined			
	Jan 1 Jun 30 All Years	Jan 1, 2020 through Jun 30, 2020	Jan 1 Jun 30 All Years	Jan 1, 2020 through Jun 30, 2020
Natural Bridges SMR	nan	nan	nan	nan
CONTROL Natural Bridges State Park	128.0	128.0	128.0	128.0
CONTROL Seacliff State Beach	54.5	54.5	54.5	54.5
All MPAs Combined	55.4	55.4	55.4	55.4

The above table shows incidence values for each MPA monitored by CA State Parks MPA Watch.

Note: The CA State Parks MPA Watch program was started in 2019, so baseline data are still being established.

Incidence is calculated as number of activities recorded divided by total survey-miles

Notes on Calculating Incidence

The baseline rate for the reporting period was calculated by summing the total use count for each category during the same period from each previous year and dividing this value by the transect miles surveyed at each site. The miles surveyed were calculated by first identifying the length of each transect for all the MPA's in question and multiplying the length of the transect by the number of surveys that had been taken along that transect during the same time period. For MPA's with multiple transects, the total distance traveled for each transect within the MPA were summed together to get the total miles surveyed within that MPA.

COVID-19 Impacts

COVID-19 shelter-in-place orders impacted beaches and State Parks statewide, including the State Park and State Beach locations in Santa Cruz County. The two active MPA Watch survey sites in the Santa Cruz District are on Natural Bridges State Beach and Seacliff State Beach. Between April 9 and the first week of June, State Beaches in Santa Cruz District were closed between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. with only water sports/offshore recreation allowed during those times. In the mornings and evenings (before 11 a.m. and after 5 p.m.), physical activities/onshore recreation was allowed but sitting, picnicking, or congregating in groups was not permitted on the beach at any point throughout the day from early April through early June. Additionally, the State Beaches in this district were completely closed to all activities at all times during the week of Easter (April 12-18, 2020). In respect of these closures, MPA Watch surveys were primarily conducted during the times that the beaches were open for recreation. Furthermore, during the closures, State Parks staff time was dedicated to enforcing the closures and did not allow for surveys. Anecdotally, State Parks staff observed many people ignoring closure announcements and signage and going to the beaches anyway.

Breakdown by MPA/Control Site

Natural Bridges State Park Control Site

The Natural Bridges State Park control site is unique because it sits right outside the southwestern edge of Natural Bridges State Marine Reserve. When this reserve was created, the person who was sent out to capture the GPS points for the SMR boundary set their instruments on the west (wrong) end of the beach instead of the east (correct) end of the beach. Therefore, the main beach at Natural Bridges State Park lies just *outside* the SMR instead of *within* it, as was originally intended by planners. Though no consumptive activity was recorded by MPA Watch surveys on this transect during this reporting period, State Parks rangers and docents have reported seeing shore-based fishing occurring on the beach and near the bridge rock at the east end of the beach on many occasions. It is also worth noting that during this reporting period, COVID-19 impacted the ability of staff and docents to regularly take surveys at this site.

Sea Cliff State Beach Control Site

Despite the significant impacts of COVID-19 closing the beach, one State Parks staff member and one volunteer continued to do periodic surveys in March, one in April, and then resumed regular weekly surveys in May and June. In early summer, an email was sent to local State Parks docents trained in MPA Watch to re-engage them following the closures.

It is expected that MPA Watch volunteers surveying this transect would observe consumptive use at this control site as both on-shore and off-shore fishing are legal in this park with the appropriate CDFW license.

Potential Violations

As these two sites are control sites, the violations recorded do not pertain to an MPA. For instance, one of the violations reported to State Parks at the Natural Bridges control site was reporting the illegal use of a drone within the boundaries of the park. Anecdotally, there have been many reports of an increase in legal and illegal collection of biota along the California coast due to the economic downturn and the increased popularity of the “urban foraging movement” caused by COVID-19. The pandemic impacted the ability for staff and docents to complete surveys during much of the spring, so unfortunately, we weren’t able to capture any data on how this statewide trend may have affected these two transect sites.

Next Steps

In July, State Parks MPA Outreach & Education Project Coordinator, Erika Delemarre will travel to North Coast Redwoods District and Mendocino-Sonoma Coast District to train three MPA interpreters on MPA Watch protocol and data entry. New survey sites will be set up on State Beaches in the Mendocino, Fort Bragg, and Eureka areas with the expectation data from those locations will be inputted during the next reporting period. Once COVID-19 has subsided and it is safe for trainers to travel the state, the full CA State Parks MPA Outreach and Education team will be trained or refreshed on their previous trainings. Monthly statewide team check-ins include reminders to complete surveys and input data.

Additional Information

For additional information on MPA Watch, including survey sites, participating organizations, protocols and datasheets, media kit, and how to get involved, please visit mpawatch.org. Connect with MPA Watch on social media @MPAWatchOrg.

For additional information regarding MPAs and regulations specific to the various classifications of MPAs please visit wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs. If you see an activity that violates MPA regulations, please call CalTip to report the violation at (888)-334-2258.

For additional information about California State Parks Marine Protected Area Outreach and Education Program, please contact Erika Delemarre at erika.delemarre@parks.ca.gov or at (916) 704-5042.