



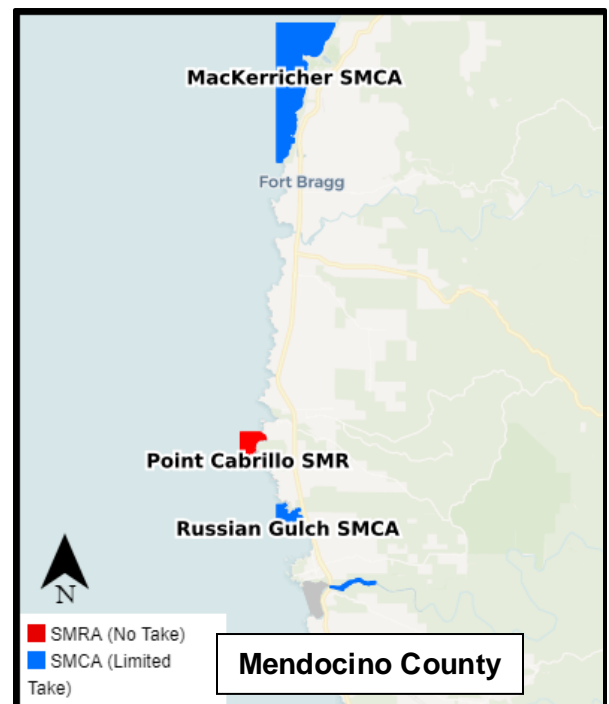
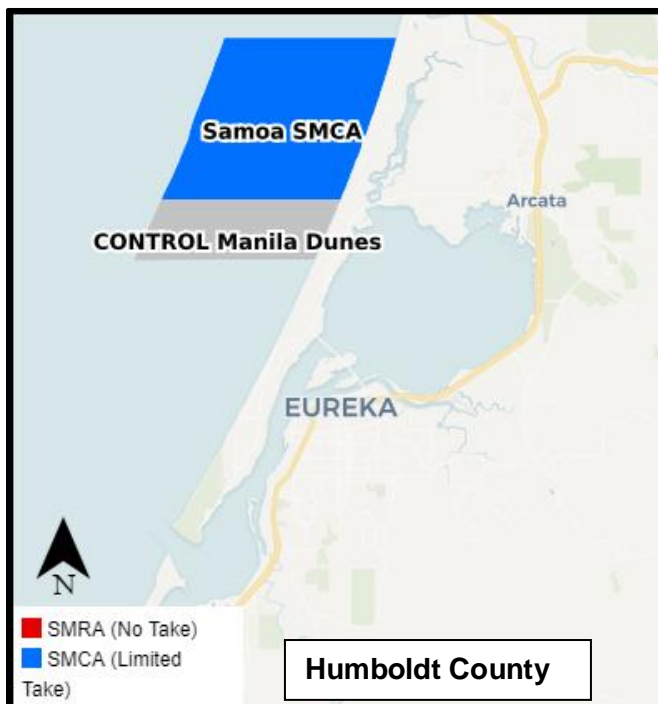
## Marine Protected Area (MPA) Watch Regional Report

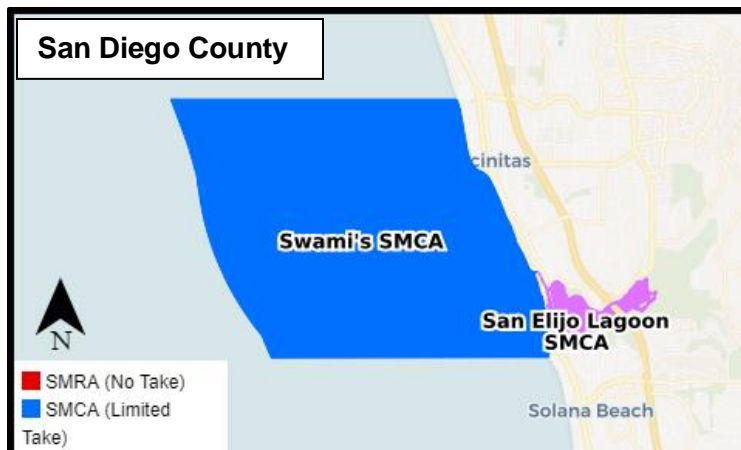
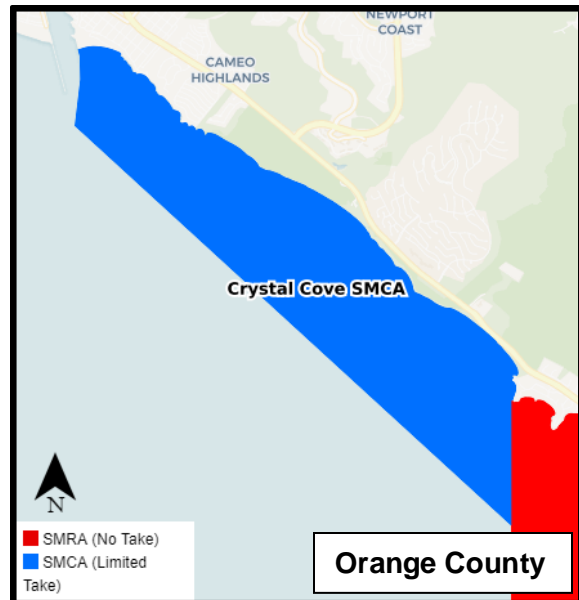
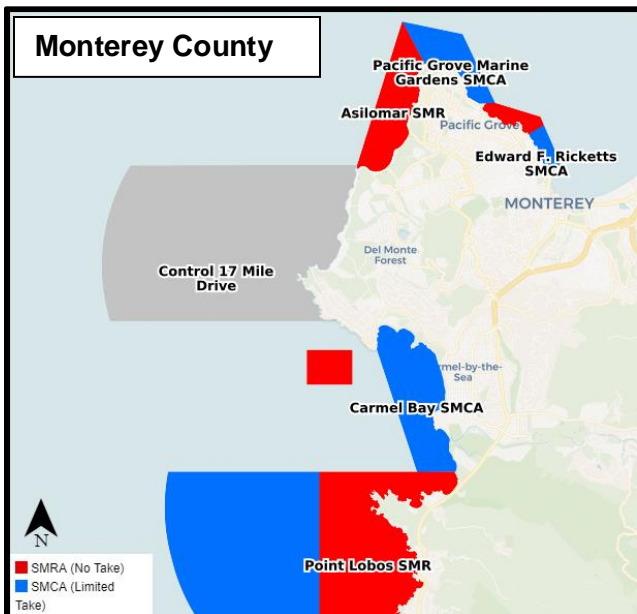
Humboldt, Mendocino, Santa Cruz, Monterey,  
Orange, and San Diego Counties  
January 1 – December 31, 2020

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 cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 also impacted ability to regularly conduct surveys.
- In summer of 2020, four MPA interpreters were trained survey protocol in Humboldt, Mendocino, and Monterey Counties
- 2 new transects were set up in Humboldt County, 7 in Mendocino County, and 2 in Monterey County
- 266 surveys were completed by the State Parks MPA team in 2020.



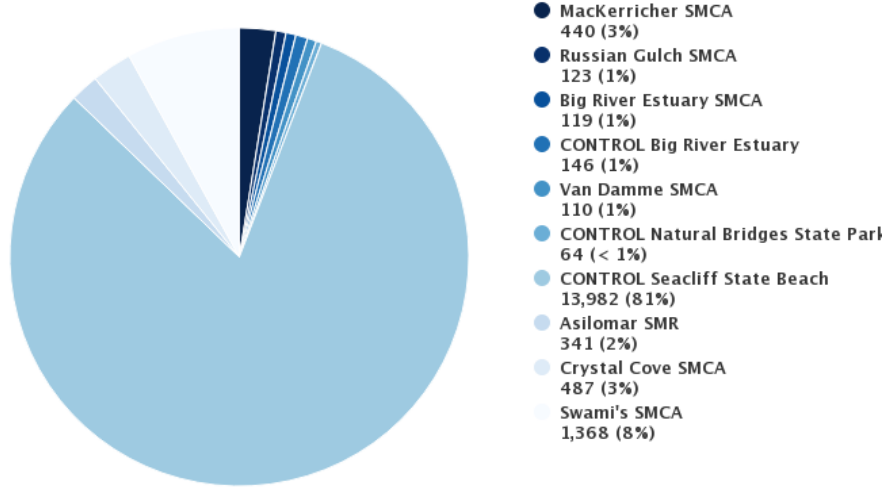


# Human Use of MPAs January – June 2020

## Overview

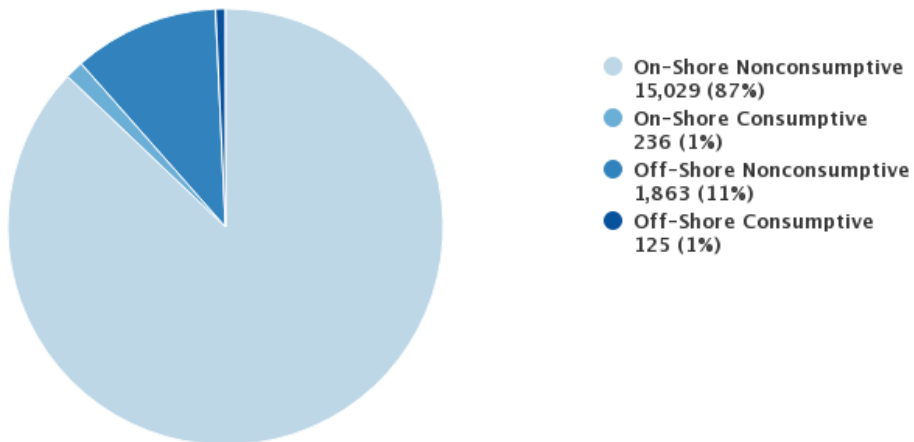
### Top 10 MPAs by All Activity

January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020  
17,180 total activity events



### All MPAs Combined

January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020  
17,253 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.

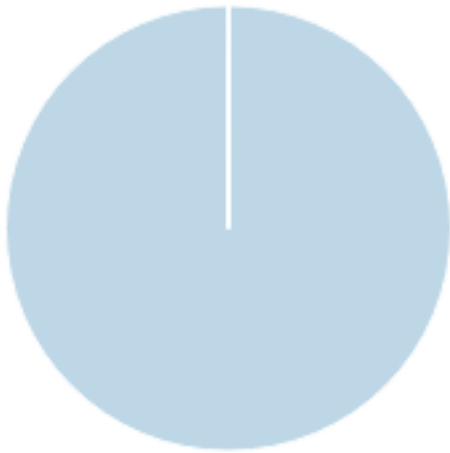


## Activity by MPA

### HUMBOLDT COUNTY

#### Samoa SMCA

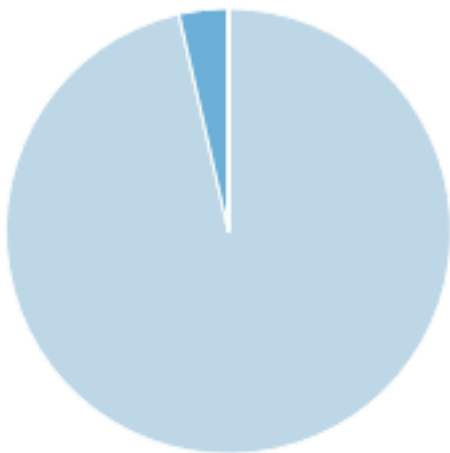
January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020  
10 activity events



- On-Shore Nonconsumptive  
10 (100%)
- On-Shore Consumptive  
0 (< 1%)
- Off-Shore Nonconsumptive  
0 (< 1%)
- Off-Shore Consumptive  
0 (< 1%)

#### CONTROL Manila Dunes

January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020  
28 activity events



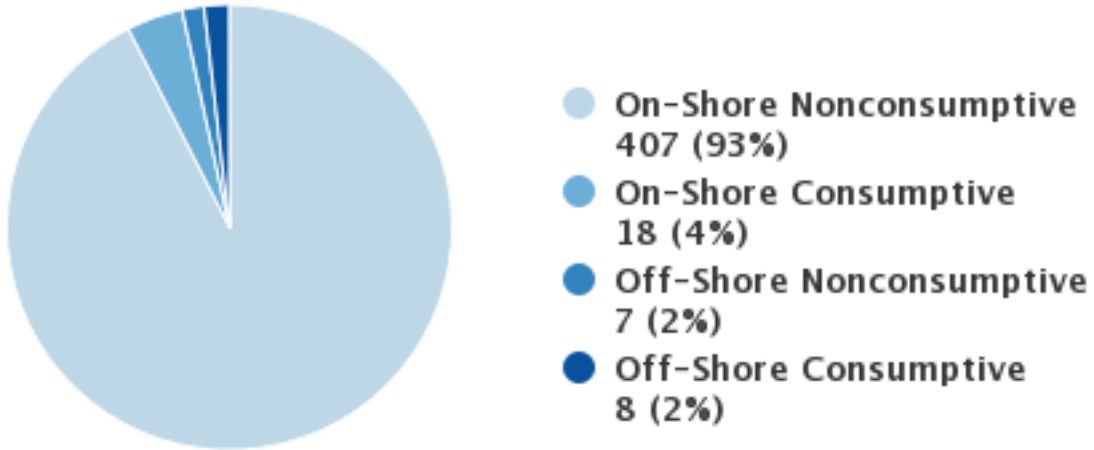
- On-Shore Nonconsumptive  
27 (96%)
- On-Shore Consumptive  
1 (4%)
- Off-Shore Nonconsumptive  
0 (< 1%)
- Off-Shore Consumptive  
0 (< 1%)



**MENDOCINO COUNTY**

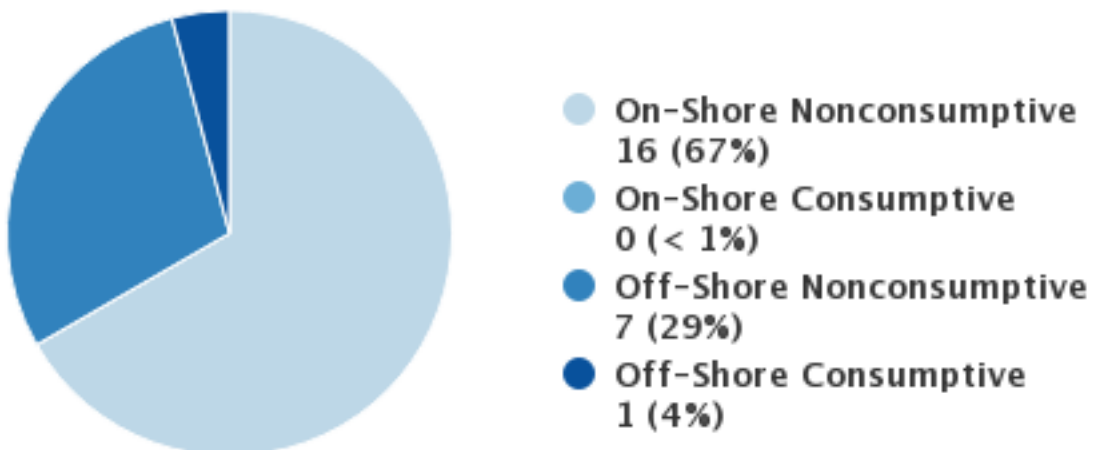
### MacKerricher SMCA

January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020  
440 activity events



### Point Cabrillo SMR

January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020  
24 activity events



**MENDOCINO COUNTY**

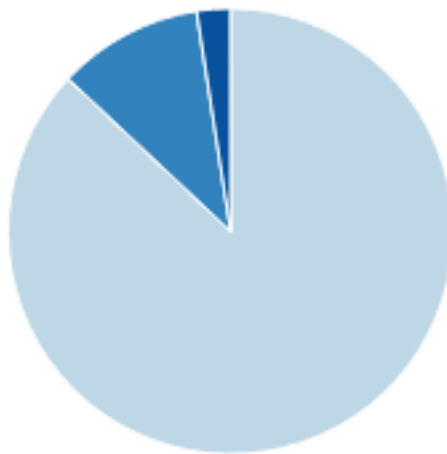


**MENDOCINO COUNTY CONT.**

## Russian Gulch SMCA

January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020

123 activity events

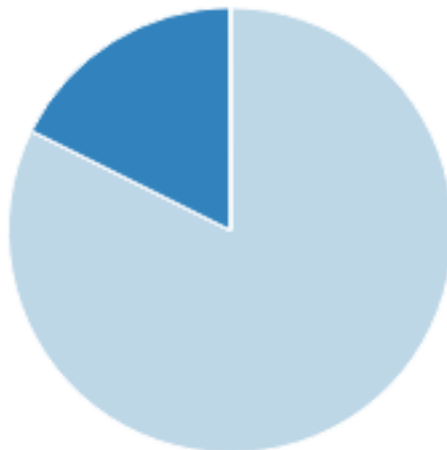


- On-Shore Nonconsumptive  
107 (87%)
- On-Shore Consumptive  
0 (< 1%)
- Off-Shore Nonconsumptive  
13 (11%)
- Off-Shore Consumptive  
3 (2%)

## Big River Estuary SMCA

January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020

119 activity events



- On-Shore Nonconsumptive  
98 (82%)
- On-Shore Consumptive  
0 (< 1%)
- Off-Shore Nonconsumptive  
21 (18%)
- Off-Shore Consumptive  
0 (< 1%)

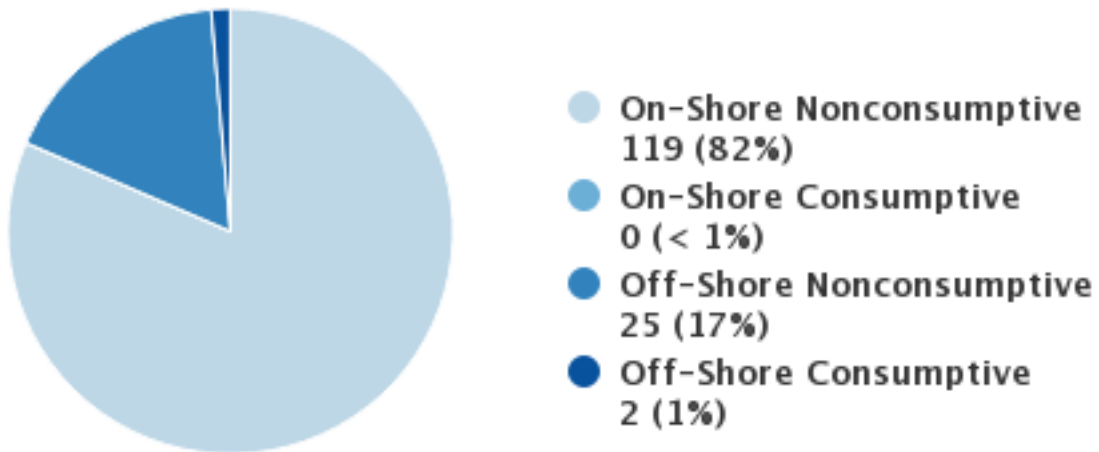


MENDOCINO COUNTY CONT.

## CONTROL Big River Estuary

January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020

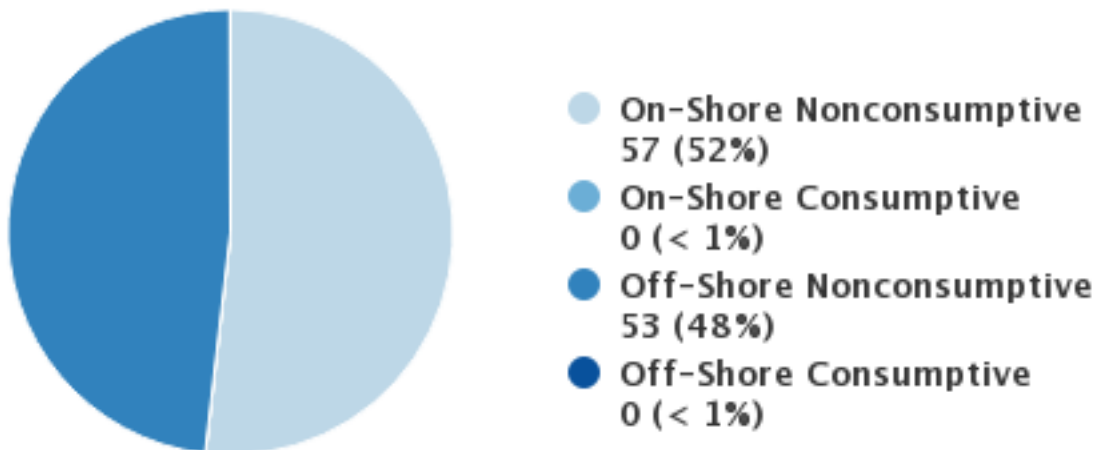
146 activity events



## Van Damme SMCA

January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020

110 activity events



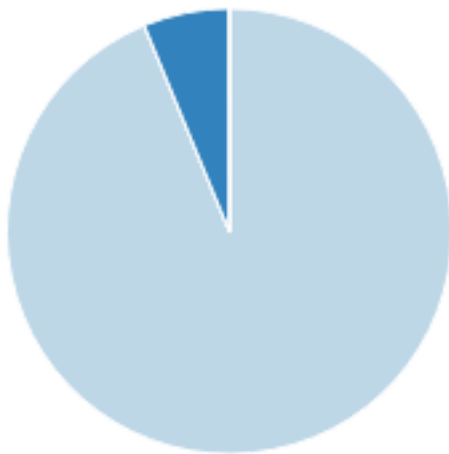


SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

## CONTROL Natural Bridges State Park

January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020

64 activity events

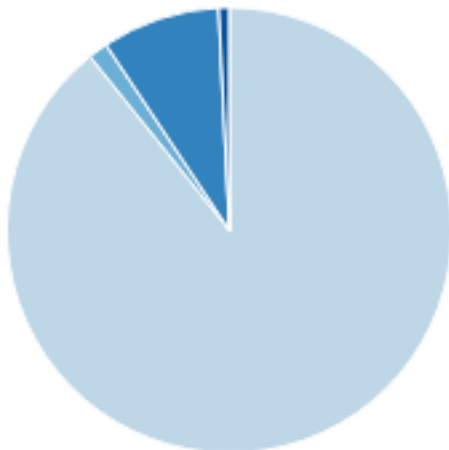


- On-Shore Nonconsumptive  
60 (94%)
- On-Shore Consumptive  
0 (< 1%)
- Off-Shore Nonconsumptive  
4 (6%)
- Off-Shore Consumptive  
0 (< 1%)

## CONTROL Seacliff State Beach

January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020

13,982 activity events



- On-Shore Nonconsumptive  
12,476 (89%)
- On-Shore Consumptive  
199 (1%)
- Off-Shore Nonconsumptive  
1,200 (9%)
- Off-Shore Consumptive  
107 (1%)

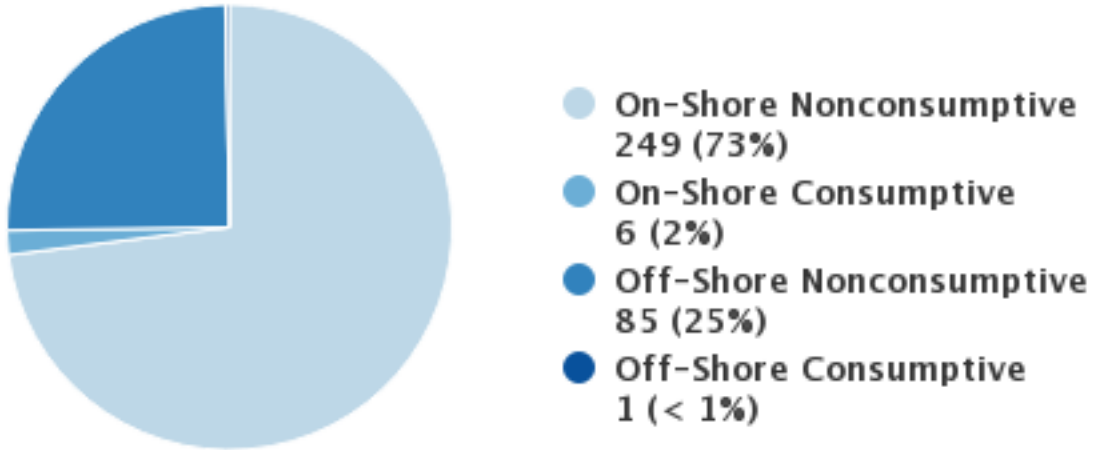




**MONTEREY COUNTY**

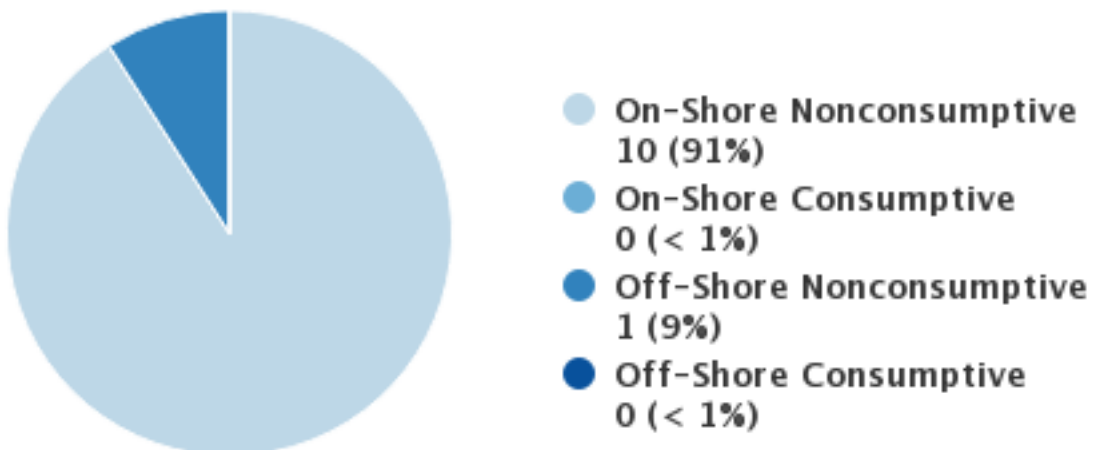
## Asilomar SMR

January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020  
341 activity events



## Point Lobos SMR

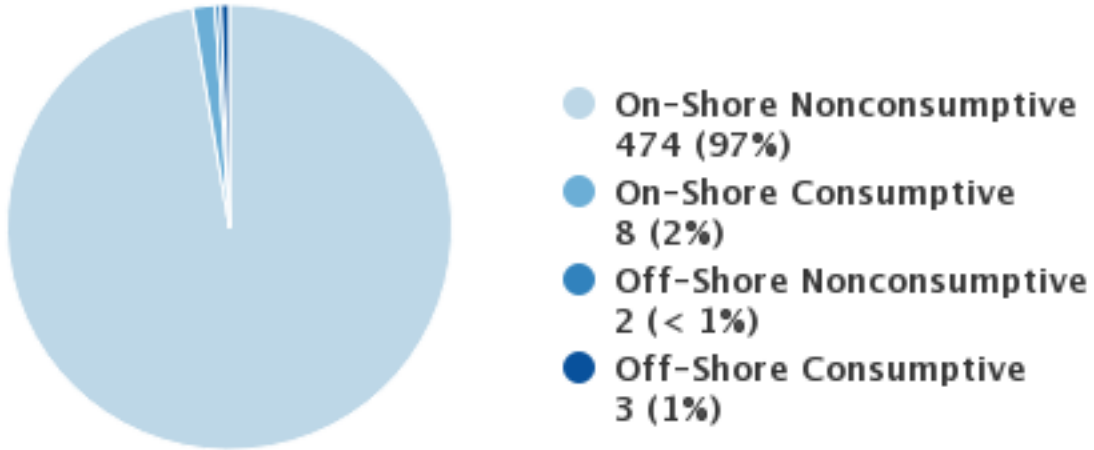
January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020  
11 activity events



**ORANGE COUNTY**

## Crystal Cove SMCA

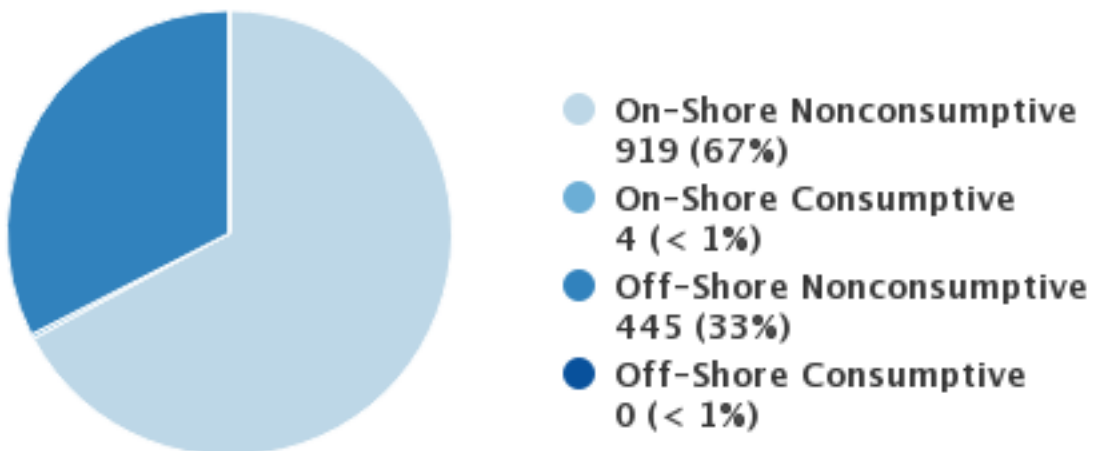
January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020  
487 activity events



**SAN DIEGO COUNTY**

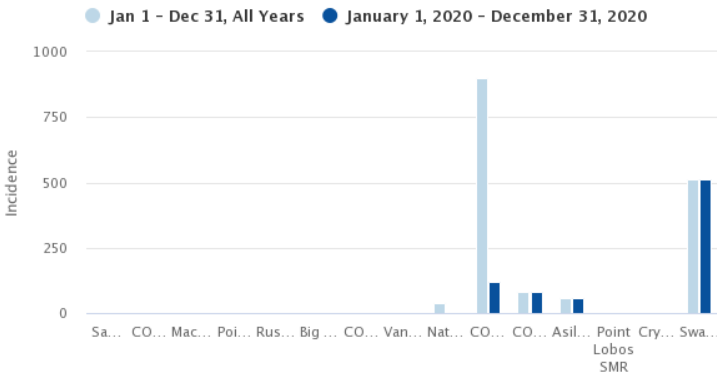
## Swami's SMCA

January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020  
1,368 activity events

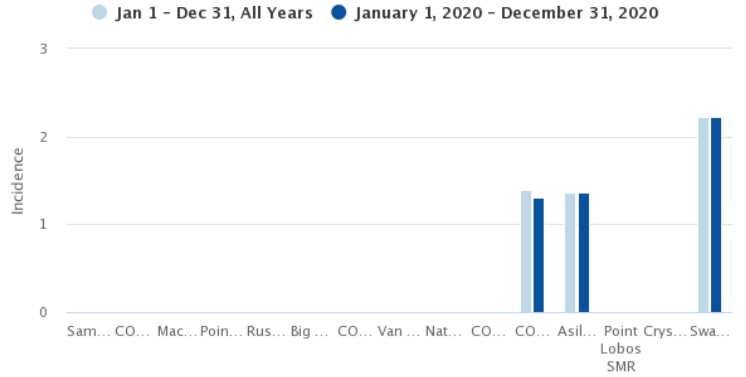


## Activity Incidence by MPA

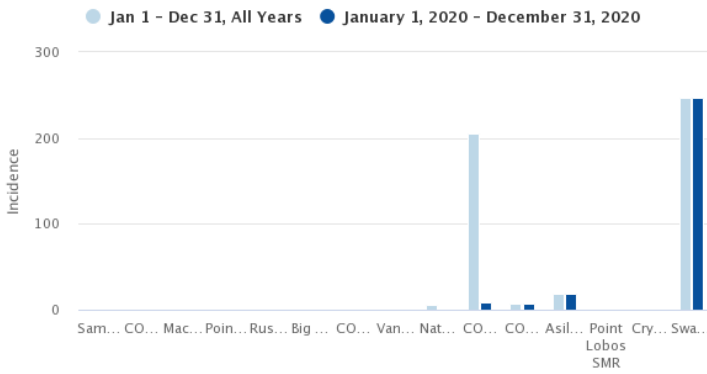
On-Shore, Non-Consumptive



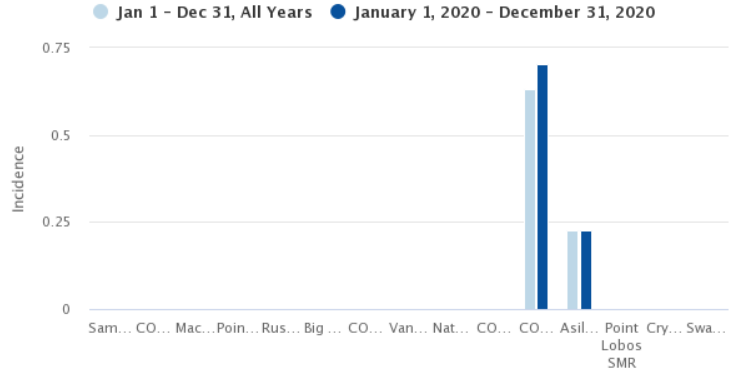
On-Shore, Consumptive



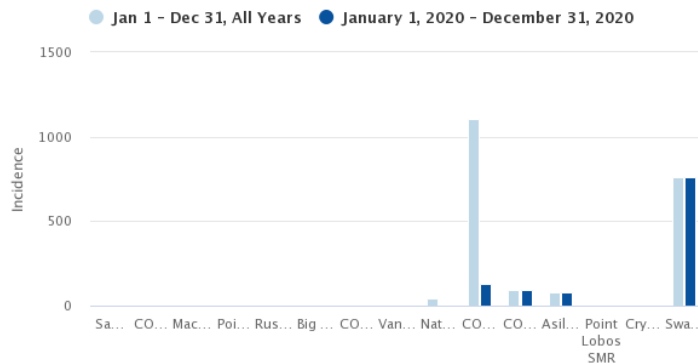
Off-Shore, Non-Consumptive



Off-Shore, Consumptive



All Activity



The above charts show incidence values for each MPA monitored by MPA Watch/CASP. Incidence is calculated as number of activities recorded divided by total survey-miles.

## Activity Incidence by MPA

MPA	On-Shore					MPA	Off-Shore				
	Non-Consumptive			Consumptive			Non-Consumptive			Consumptive	
	Jan 1 Dec 31 All Years	Jan 1, 2020 through Dec 31, 2020		Jan 1 Dec 31 All Years	Jan 1, 2020 through Dec 31, 2020		Jan 1 Dec 31 All Years	Jan 1, 2020 through Dec 31, 2020		Jan 1 Dec 31 All Years	Jan 1, 2020 through Dec 31, 2020
Samoa SMCA		inf	inf	nan	nan	Samoa SMCA		nan	nan	nan	nan
CONTROL Manila Dunes		inf	inf	inf	inf	CONTROL Manila Dunes		nan	nan	nan	nan
MacKerricher SMCA		inf	inf	inf	inf	MacKerricher SMCA		inf	inf	inf	inf
Point Cabrillo SMR		inf	inf	nan	nan	Point Cabrillo SMR		inf	inf	inf	inf
Russian Gulch SMCA		inf	inf	nan	nan	Russian Gulch SMCA		inf	inf	inf	inf
Big River Estuary SMCA		inf	inf	nan	nan	Big River Estuary SMCA		inf	inf	nan	nan
CONTROL Big River Estuary		inf	inf	nan	nan	CONTROL Big River Estuary		inf	inf	inf	inf
Van Damme SMCA		inf	inf	nan	nan	Van Damme SMCA		inf	inf	nan	nan
Natural Bridges SMR		38.9	nan	0.0	nan	Natural Bridges SMR		5.6	nan	0.0	nan
CONTROL Natural Bridges State Park		900.0	120.0	0.0	0.0	CONTROL Natural Bridges State Park		205.4	8.0	0.0	0.0
CONTROL Seacliff State Beach		81.9	81.9	1.4	1.3	CONTROL Seacliff State Beach		6.7	7.9	0.6	0.7
Asilomar SMR		56.6	56.6	1.4	1.4	Asilomar SMR		19.3	19.3	0.2	0.2
Point Lobos SMR		inf	inf	nan	nan	Point Lobos SMR		inf	inf	nan	nan
Crystal Cove SMCA		inf	inf	inf	inf	Crystal Cove SMCA		inf	inf	inf	inf
Swami's SMCA		510.6	510.6	2.2	2.2	Swami's SMCA		247.2	247.2	0.0	0.0
All MPAs Combined		91.0	94.5	1.3	1.5	All MPAs Combined		10.6	11.7	0.6	0.8

MPA	Total Combined	
	Jan 1 Dec 31 All Years	Jan 1, 2020 through Dec 31, 2020
	Samoa SMCA	inf
CONTROL Manila Dunes	inf	inf
MacKerricher SMCA	inf	inf
Point Cabrillo SMR	inf	inf
Russian Gulch SMCA	inf	inf
Big River Estuary SMCA	inf	inf
CONTROL Big River Estuary	inf	inf
Van Damme SMCA	inf	inf
Natural Bridges SMR	44.5	nan
CONTROL Natural Bridges State Park	1,105.4	128.0
CONTROL Seacliff State Beach	90.6	91.7
Asilomar SMR	77.5	77.5
Point Lobos SMR	inf	inf
Crystal Cove SMCA	inf	inf
Swami's SMCA	760.0	760.0
All MPAs Combined	103.6	108.4

The above table shows incidence values for each MPA monitored by MPA Watch/CASP.

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

\*Cells with no numbers were not surveyed during the reporting period. Most of these are new sites set up by CASP in 2020.

### 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

COVID-19 shelter-in-place orders impacted beaches and State Parks statewide, including the State Park and State Beach locations across all participating counties. The MPA Watch survey sites that were active at the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak were in the Santa Cruz County 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). 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.

In mid-summer and into fall, travel restrictions lifted and State Parks MPA interpreters were trained in Humboldt, Mendocino, and Monterey Counties and new transects were also set up in each county. Due to social distancing protocols, all trainings were conducted outside and masked. State Parks volunteers were not invited to participate and the trainings were hosted one-on-one with the trainer, project coordinator Erika Delemarre.

## **Breakdown by MPA**

### **Samoa SMCA**

This transect was established on July 21, 2020 and covers a beach that is popular for walkers. There has not been enough data collected from this site to draw any conclusions.

### **Manila Dunes Control Site**

This transect was established on July 21, 2020 and covers a beach that is popular for walkers. There has not been enough data collected from this site to draw any conclusions.

### **MacKerricher SMCA**

Two transects were established at MacKerricher State Park in mid-July 2020. These transects see a lot of human activity because they are near a popular State Parks camping area. Harbor seal watching (and disturbance) was frequently observed on the MacKerricher North transect. Tidepooling and wildlife watching was observed on the MacKerricher South transect. Illegal fishing and collecting is frequently observed at this site.

### **Point Cabrillo SMR**

This transect was established at Point Cabrillo Light Station State Historic Park in mid-July 2020. Though the shoreline is accessible, the waves can be rough and make it dangerous to approach the tidepools on foot or for vessels to approach the bluffs. Cormorants nest in the cliff faces and harbor seals rest below the bluffs, making the area popular for wildlife watching. There has not been enough data collected from this site to draw any conclusions.

### **Russian Gulch SMCA**

This transect was established at Russian Gulch State Park in mid-July 2020. It is a popular site for walkers and picnickers because a trail system winds along the bluffs. Kayakers frequent this area and there have been observations of kayakers fishing and dropping traps. There has not been enough data collected from this site to draw any conclusions.

### **Big River Estuary SMCA**

This transect was established at Mendocino Headlands State Park in mid-July 2020. This sandy beach along the estuary is popular for dog walkers, kayakers, and stand-up paddle boarders. Most of the violations recorded at this site are dogs off-leash. There has not been enough data collected from this site to draw any additional conclusions.

### **Big River Estuary Control Site**

This transect was established at Mendocino Headlands State Park in mid-July 2020. This wide, sandy beach outside the river mouth is popular amongst dog walkers, picnickers, and surfers. Many people with their dog's off-leash on this beach will walk under the bridge and don't realize they've crossed over into the Big River Estuary SMCA and are violating the rules. There has not been enough data collected from this site to draw any additional conclusions.

### **Van Damme SMCA**

This transect was established at Van Damme State Park in mid-July 2020. This site is popular for kayakers, beach recreators, and dog walkers. No violations of this SMCA have been observed.

### **Natural Bridges State Park Control Site**

This transect covers a popular beach for onshore recreation at Natural Bridges State Park. COVID-19 impacted the ability of staff and docents to regularly take surveys at this site during beginning in March 2020.

### **Seacliff State Beach Control Site**

COVID-19 impacted the ability of staff and docents to regularly take surveys at this site from late March through April 2020. Local wildfires impacted air quality and also briefly reduced the number of surveys in this area. 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.

### **Point Lobos SMR**

Two new transects were set up inside of Point Lobos State Natural Reserve in the fall of 2020. Anecdotally, the main violation observed on the Weston Beach transect is illegal hand collection of biota. At this time, there has not been enough data collected from this site to draw any conclusions. There are plans to train State Parks docents to begin completing regular surveys in 2021.



### **Crystal Cove SMCA**

This transect is on a popular beach in Crystal Cove State Park. The beach has tidepools that see high traffic and a lot of collection. State Parks staff and docents work to communicate the rules of the MPAs to visitors, but hand collection of biota still occurs on this transect.

### **Swami's SMCA**

This transect is on San Elijo State Beach which is popular for camping, onshore recreation, and surfing. Hand collection of biota is a violation that is observed at this site. There has not been enough data collected by State Parks at this site to draw any additional conclusions.

### **Potential Violations**

Statewide, the top violations are hand collection of biota and dogs off-leash. Wildlife disturbance was observed in several surveys. 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 and part of the summer, so unfortunately, we weren't able to capture any data on how this statewide trend may have affected many of our transect sites.

### **Next Steps**

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. Team members will soon be taught how to analyze their own data and summarize their findings.

## 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](http://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](http://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](mailto:erika.delemarre@parks.ca.gov) or at (916) 704-5042.