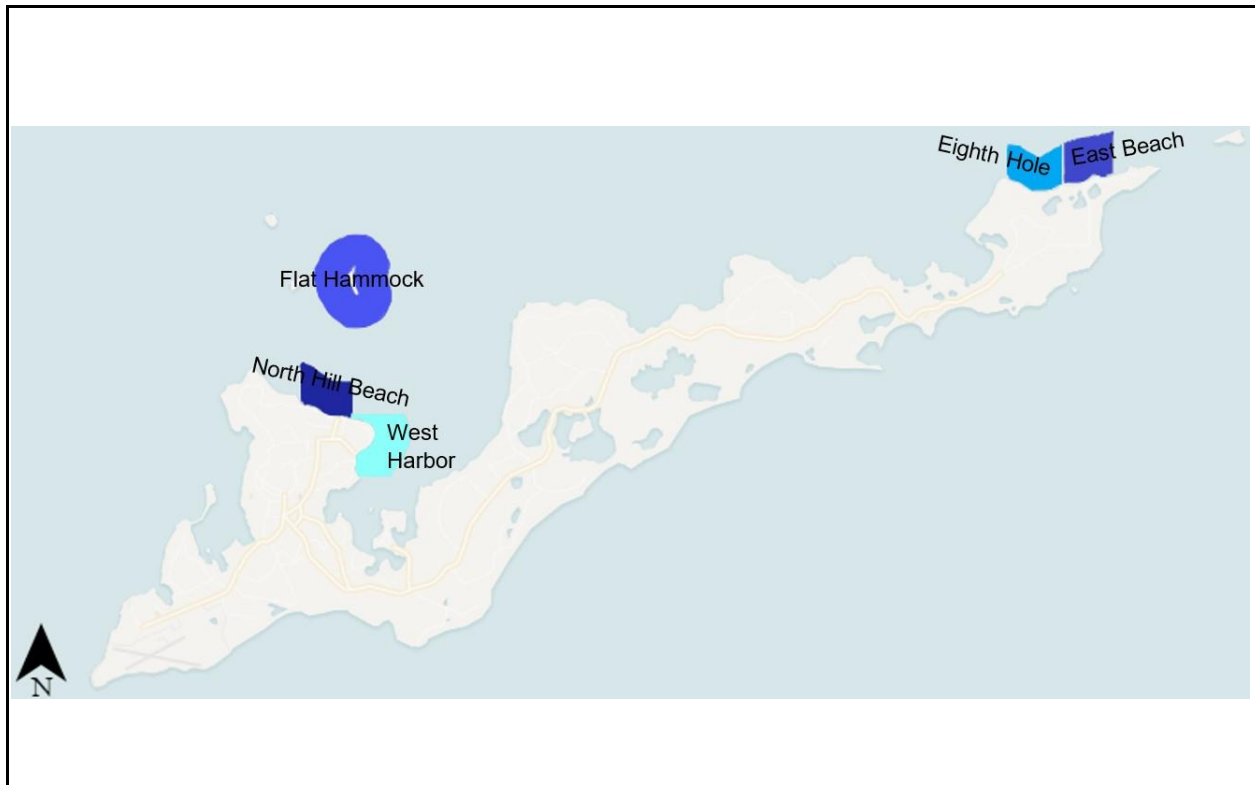




**Marine Protected Area (MPA) Watch Regional Report
Fishers Island, New York (Suffolk County)
January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020**



MPA Watch is a California-based collaborative effort to collect critical human use information to enhance the management and performance of marine protected areas (MPAs). MPA Watch data informs the management, enforcement, and science of California's MPAs and provides insights on how human uses are changing as a result of MPA implementation. By involving local communities in this important work, MPA Watch programs inspire and empower stewardship, and educate coastal communities about ocean ecosystems. MPA Watch trains volunteers to observe and collect unbiased data on coastal and marine resource use.

2020 was the second year of collaboration between MPA Watch and the Fishers Island Seagrass Management (FISM) Coalition. Fishers Island is the first site outside of California to use the MPA Watch protocol, demonstrating its versatility and ability to be implemented in other coastal regions. While there are no current MPAs around Fishers Island, the data collected will be used to support the development of a seagrass management plan for Fishers and the designation of seagrass management areas (SMAs) to protect this critical habitat. The FISM Coalition Project Coordinator manages five transects at three sites on Fishers Island: East Beach, Eighth Hole, and West Harbor to North Hill. The West Harbor to North Hill site contains the West Harbor, North Hill Beach, and Flat Hammock transects. These sites were identified by Coalition members as areas where human uses overlap with seagrass habitats.

Data is collected by volunteers who walk along designated transects at each site and record the human activity occurring both on- and offshore. The offshore edge of the transect varies from site to site based on the seagrass extent. At Flat Hammock, which is only accessible by boat, observations are made from the North Hill Beach transect on the North shore of Fishers Island. Activities are designated as consumptive (an activity in which a natural resource is removed from the environment, such as fishing) or non-consumptive (an activity where no natural resources are removed, such as swimming or surfing).

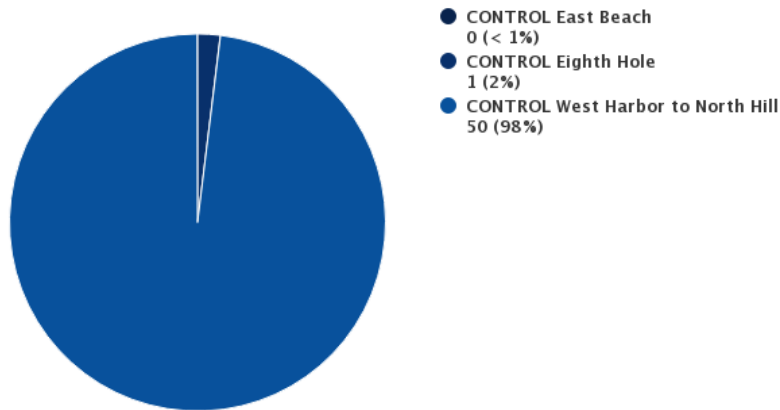
Executive Summary

- Following local, state and federal health guidelines regarding COVID-19, some of FISM's MPA Watch procedures were modified.
- Instead of in-person trainings for volunteers, the project coordinator conducted all trainings over Zoom.
- Survey kits were given to individual volunteers/households to keep for the entire season, this was an effort to cut down on the need for volunteers to exchange kits throughout the season and possibly transfer contaminated surfaces.
- There was anecdotal evidence from volunteers and island residents that the use of coast increased during the 2020 season, possibly due to the pandemic driving people to spend more time outside and on their boats.
- Key Findings: note, North Hill Beach and Flat Hammock were not monitored at all in 2020. This is in part due to the low number of volunteers and the Project Coordinator's inability to spend much time out on the island.

Human Use of MPAs Jan-Dec 2020

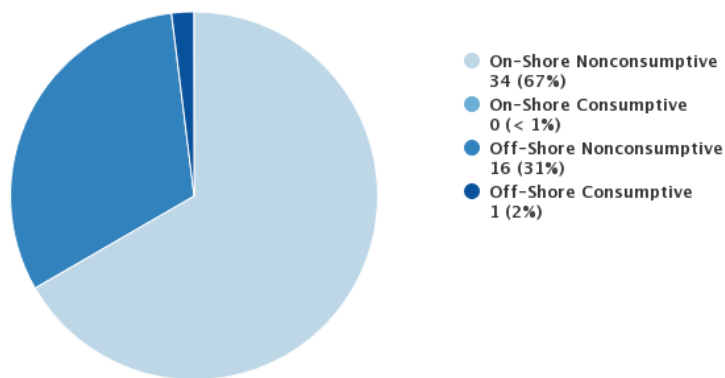
Top 3 MPAs by All Activity

January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020
51 total activity events



All MPAs Combined

January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020
51 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.

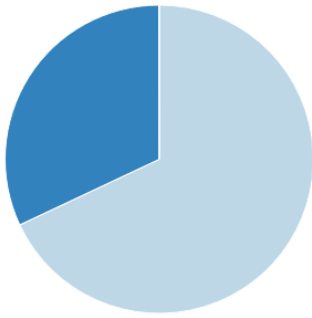
Consumptive - An activity in which a natural resource (i.e., fish, kelp, shells) is being collected.

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

Activity by MPA

CONTROL West Harbor to North Hill

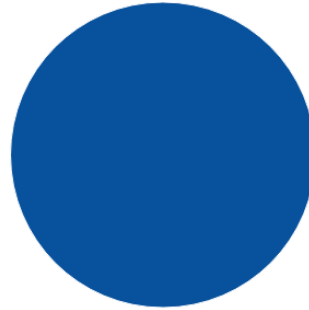
January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020
50 activity events



- On-Shore Nonconsumptive
34 (68%)
- On-Shore Consumptive
0 (< 1%)
- Off-Shore Nonconsumptive
16 (32%)
- Off-Shore Consumptive
0 (< 1%)

CONTROL Eighth Hole

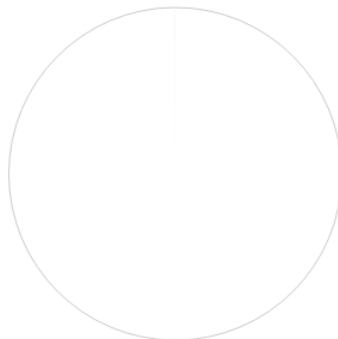
January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020
1 activity events



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

CONTROL East Beach

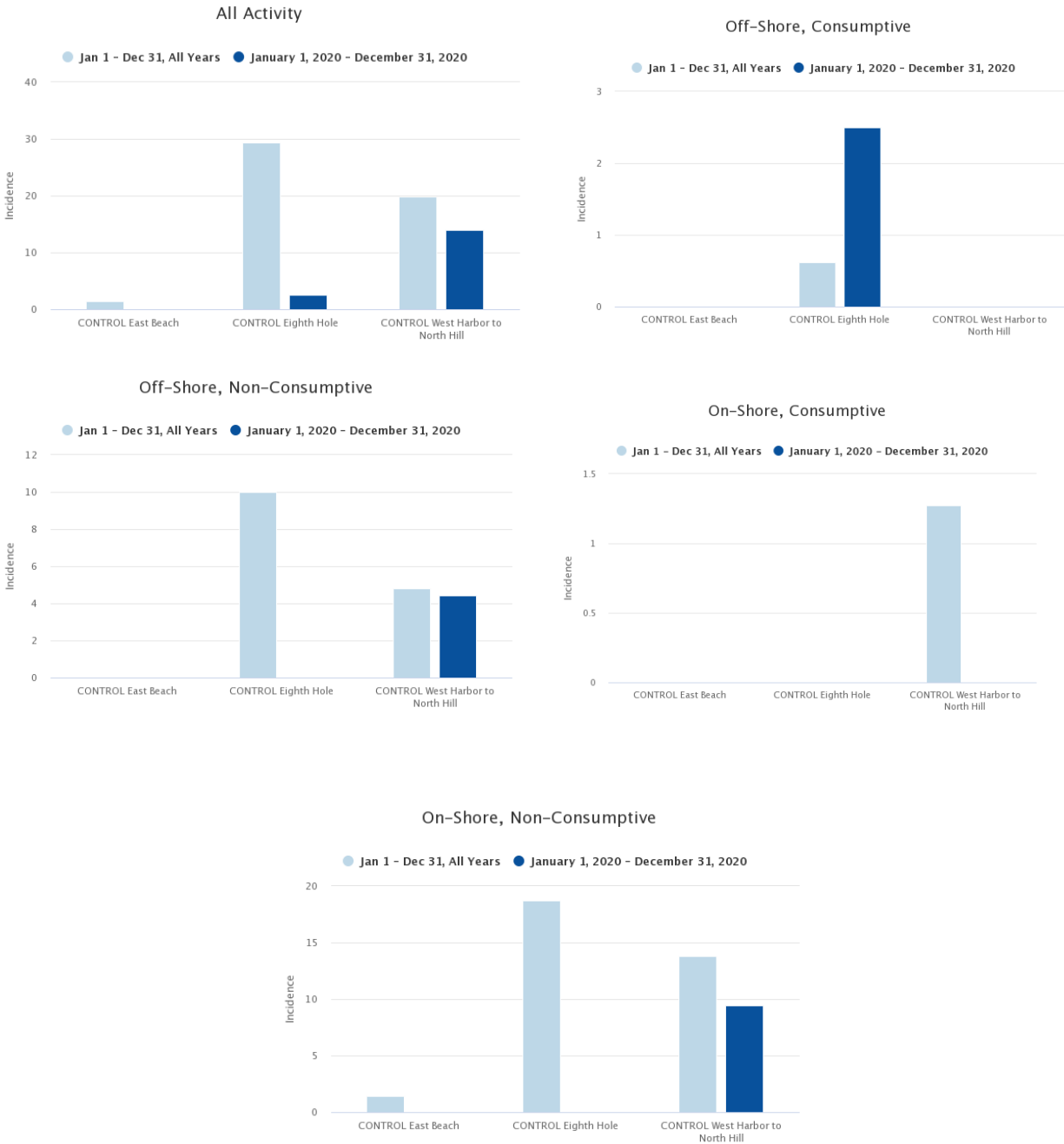
January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020
0 activity events



- On-Shore Nonconsumptive
0
- On-Shore Consumptive
0
- Off-Shore Nonconsumptive
0
- Off-Shore Consumptive
0



Activity Incidence by MPA



The above charts show incidence values for each area monitored by MPA Watch on Fishers Island. 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 Dec 31 All Years	Jan 1, 2020 through Dec 31, 2020	Jan 1, 2020 through Dec 31, 2020	Jan 1 Dec 31 All Years	Jan 1, 2020 through Dec 31, 2020
CONTROL East Beach		1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
CONTROL Eighth Hole		18.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
CONTROL West Harbor to North Hill		13.8	9.4	1.3	0.0
All MPAs Combined		12.6	7.9	1.0	0.0

MPA	Off-Shore				
	Non-Consumptive			Consumptive	
	▲	◆	◆	◆	◆
	Jan 1 Dec 31 All Years	Jan 1, 2020 through Dec 31, 2020	Jan 1, 2020 through Dec 31, 2020	Jan 1 Dec 31 All Years	Jan 1, 2020 through Dec 31, 2020
CONTROL East Beach		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
CONTROL Eighth Hole		10.0	0.0	0.6	2.5
CONTROL West Harbor to North Hill		4.8	4.4	0.0	0.0
All MPAs Combined		4.7	3.7	0.1	0.2

MPA	Total Combined			
	▲	◆	◆	◆
	Jan 1 Dec 31 All Years	Jan 1, 2020 through Dec 31, 2020	Jan 1, 2020 through Dec 31, 2020	Jan 1, 2020 through Dec 31, 2020
CONTROL East Beach		1.4	0.0	
CONTROL Eighth Hole		29.4	2.5	
CONTROL West Harbor to North Hill		19.9	13.9	
All MPAs Combined		18.4	11.9	

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

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was no in-person interaction between the project coordinator and MPA Watch volunteers. There was also a decrease in the number of volunteers conducting surveys (for safety reasons) and the overall number of surveys completed.

Breakdown by MPA

East Beach

- East Beach was surveyed once after the peak season (September 15th), a possible explanation for the absence of activity at this site.

Eight Hole

- Only surveyed twice this year (October and September), again after the peak season. During the summer months this location (and East Beach) are hotspots for boating activity.

West Harbor

- All activities recorded here for the nine completed surveys were non-consumptive in nature, with the majority of them (68%) taking place on-shore.
- This site is situated on the island's west side. The west side is more populated and easier to access for volunteers and users.

Potential Violations

No violations noted (important to note that MPAs/SMAs and associated regulations have not yet been established around the island).

Next Steps

FISM will be analyzing data from the 2019 and 2020 seasons to identify “hot-spots” and trends around the island. These data will then be incorporated into a Seagrass Management Plan for Fishers Island. Going into 2021, the Coalition will aim to recruit more volunteers and complete more surveys. Boat-based surveys will also be introduced to collect another form of data. Transects will be developed along the south shore of the island in 2021 (up until now, all control transects have been along the north shore) to account for potential SMAs created in areas of large seagrass beds.

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 on the Fishers Island Seagrass Management (FISM) Coalition, visit fiseagrass.org.