

MPA Watch is a statewide collaborative effort to collect critical human use data to enhance the management and conservation of marine protected areas (MPAs). MPA Watch data informs the management, enforcement, and science of California's MPAs and allows us insight 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 California communities about ocean ecosystems. MPA Watch trains volunteers to observe and collect unbiased data on coastal and marine resource use. MPA Watch in Monterey County is implemented through a joint effort among WILD COAST, The Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History, and California State Parks.

Executive Summary

- In 2020, the vast majority of recorded activities in our MPA's have been non-consumptive with 1% of recorded activities being consumptive. However, this data is skewed due to low survey samples, as a result of COVID-19. In 2020, volunteers recorded 569 activities, a 47% decrease from 2019's total of 1,057.
- Following local, state, and federal health guidelines regarding COVID-19, Monterey County's MPA Watch program suspended data collection from *March 16, 2020 - April 27, 2020*. In-person trainings for new volunteers were suspended starting *March 16, 2020* to adhere to physical distancing guidelines.

- The Pacific Grove Museum is planning to hold a virtual MPA Watch Training in the Spring of 2021 to increase MPA Watch volunteers and data collection.
- A substantial decrease in use was reported across all MPAs, most likely due to low sample sizes as a result of COVID-19.



*Photo taken pre-COVID

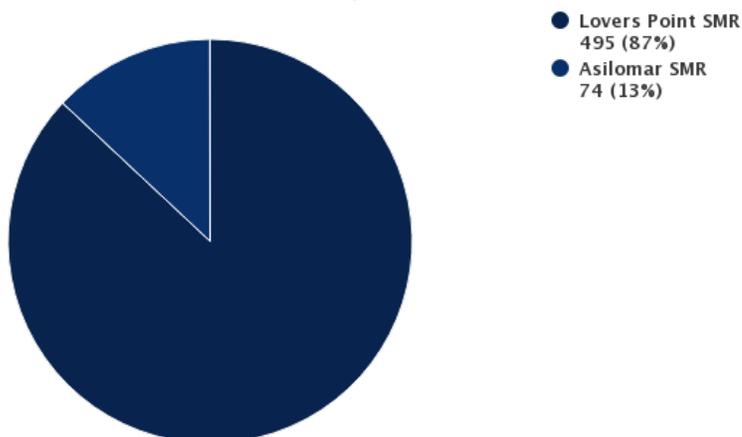


Human Use of MPAs January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020

Overview

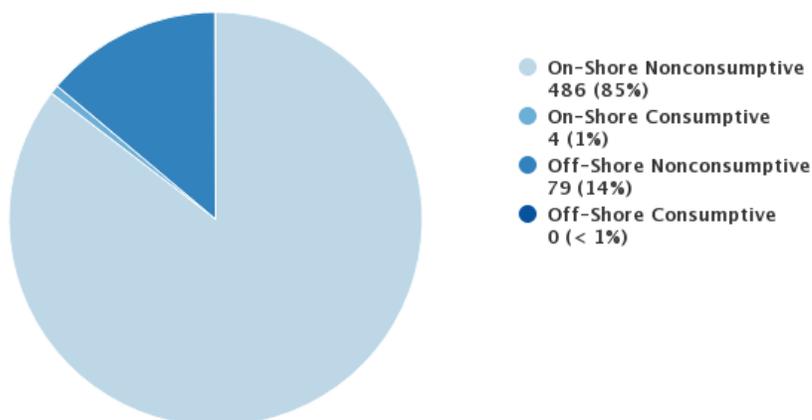
Top 2 MPAs by All Activity

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



All MPAs Combined

January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020
569 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.

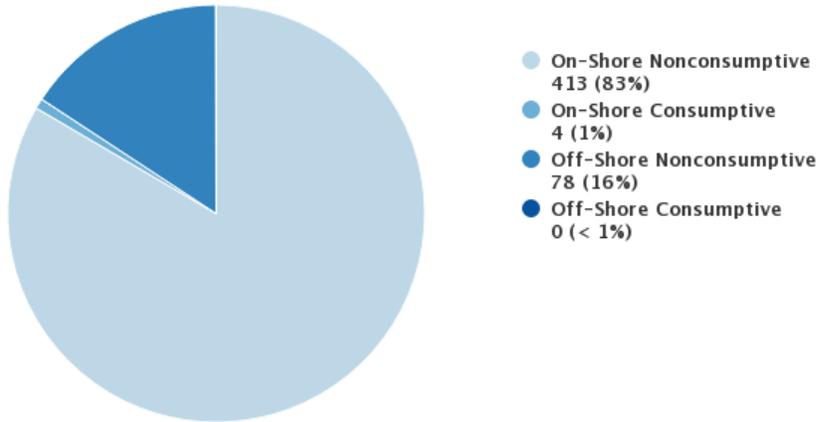
Consumptive - An activity in which a natural resource (i.e. fish, kelp, shells) is being collected.

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

Activity by MPA

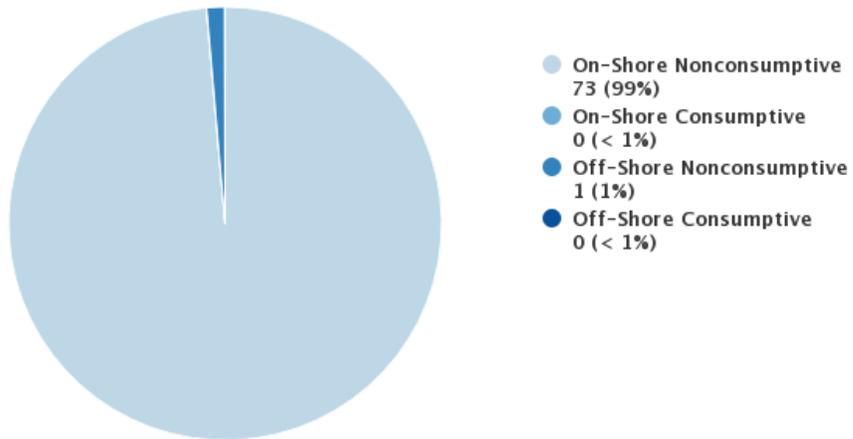
Lovers Point SMR

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

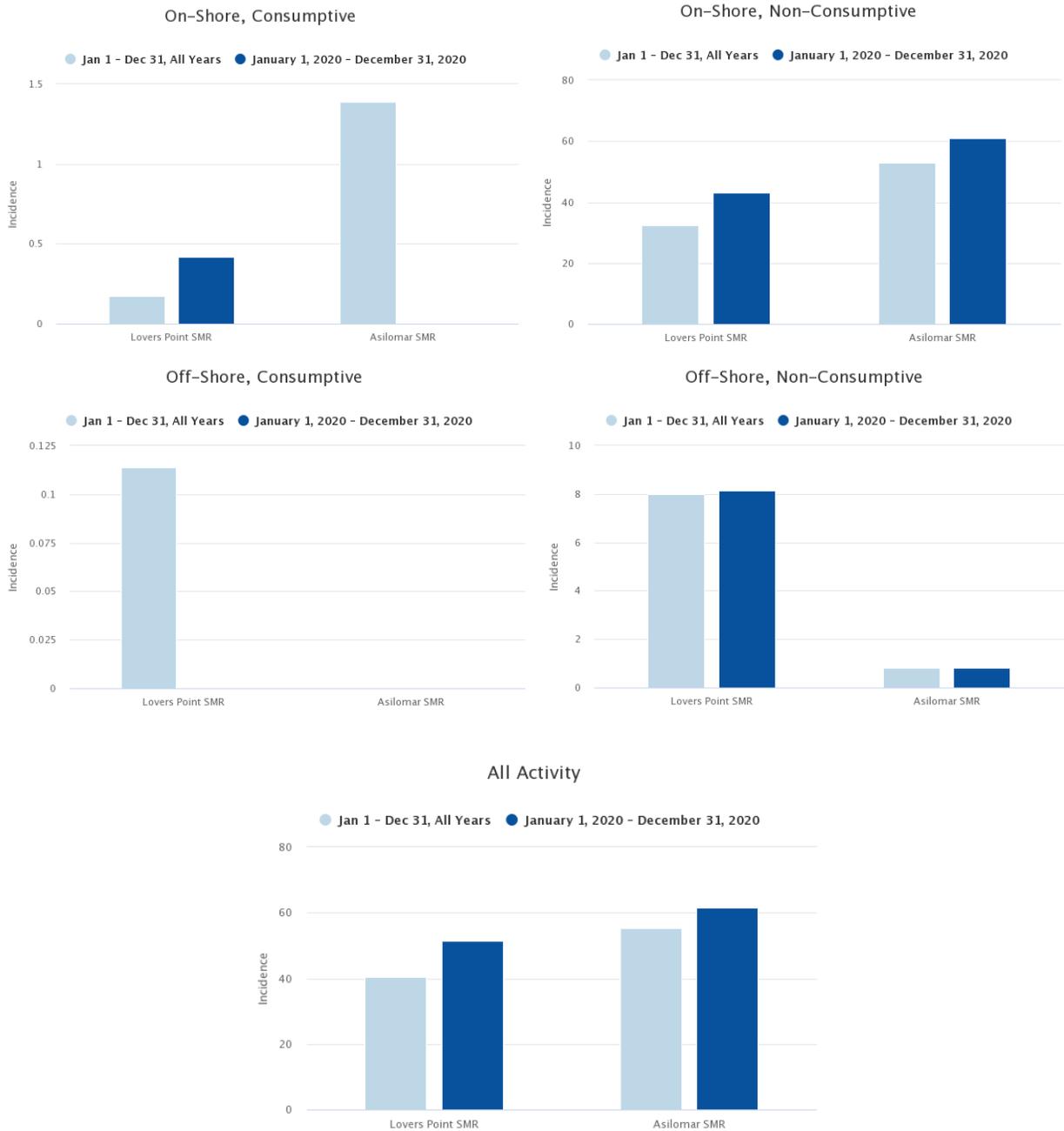


Asilomar SMR

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



Activity Incidence by MPA



The above charts show incidence values for each MPA monitored by MPA Watch in Monterey County. 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 Dec 31 All Years | Jan 1, 2020 through Dec 31, 2020 |
| Lovers Point SMR | 32.3 | 43.0 | 0.2 | 0.4 |
| Asilomar SMR | 53.1 | 60.8 | 1.4 | 0.0 |
| All MPAs Combined | 34.2 | 45.0 | 0.3 | 0.4 |

| MPA | Off-Shore | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|
| | 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 |
| Lovers Point SMR | 8.0 | 8.1 | 0.1 | 0.0 |
| Asilomar SMR | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| All MPAs Combined | 7.3 | 7.3 | 0.1 | 0.0 |

| MPA | Total Combined | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|--|
| | Jan 1 Dec 31 All Years | Jan 1, 2020 through Dec 31, 2020 |
| | Lovers Point SMR | 40.5 |
| Asilomar SMR | 55.3 | 61.7 |
| All MPAs Combined | 41.9 | 52.7 |

The above table shows incidence values for each MPA monitored by MPA Watch in Monterey County. **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

Monterey County Beach Closures due to COVID-19 (some local variations may occur):

April 3, 2020 Beaches limit number of entrants and may have closed parking areas

May 22, 2020 Beach is open for active recreation with social distancing. Limited beach access.

May 26, 2020 Lovers Point Beach open for water activities. No beach use

June 12, 2020 Charter boat operations begin opening

July 3, 2020 Beaches close for Fourth of July weekend. Swimming, surfing, and other water activities are still allowed. No sitting or BBQing.

July 6, 2020 Beaches reopen, social distance guidelines in order

Following local, state, and federal health guidelines regarding COVID-19, Monterey County's MPA Watch program suspended data collection from *March 16, 2020 - April 27, 2020*. In-person trainings for new volunteers were suspended starting *March 16, 2020* to adhere to physical distancing guidelines.

Due to the COVID-19 stay-at-home order, all sites showed lower sampling rates than previous years, possibility resulting in error in the calculation of incidence rates due to low sample size.

Breakdown by MPA

Lovers Point State Marine Reserve

Between the months of January and December 2020, Lovers Point SMR data shows 495 total activity events recorded by MPA Watch volunteers. These activities make up 87% of all MPA Watch data collected by our volunteers. Out of these activities, 491 (99%) were non-consumptive and 4 (1%) were consumptive. At Lovers Point SMR volunteers reported potential violations mainly related to shore-based fishing and shore-based hand collecting of biota. Common non-consumptive activities included shore-based recreation (sandy and rocky) and offshore recreation such as swimming, surfing and SCUBA/snorkeling.

Asilomar State Marine Reserve

Between the months of January and December 2020, Asilomar SMR data shows 74 total activity events recorded by MPA Watch volunteers. These activities make up 13% of all MPA Watch data collected by our volunteers. Out of these reported activities, 74 (100%) were non-consumptive and 0 were consumptive. This number is most likely skewed due to low sample size as a result of COVID-19. Common non-consumptive activities at Asilomar SMR included stand-up paddleboarding, domestic animals off and on leash and shore-based recreation (rocky and sandy).

Potential Violations

Both Lovers Point SMR and Asilomar SMR have reported very low numbers of consumptive activity between the months of January and December of 2020. Out of 569 reported activities, only 4 were reported as consumptive, making up 1% of all activities. Consumptive behavior included shore-based hook and line fishing (rocky), shore-based hand collecting of biota (sandy and rocky). There is no take allowed in either Lovers Point or Asilomar SMRs

Next Steps

The Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History aims to increase the number of volunteers conducting human use data collection in Monterey County's Marine Protected Areas. While much of our volunteering has been on hold due to Covid-19, we are planning a virtual MPA Watch training on Zoom this Spring for our new and current volunteers so that they are able to get involved and collect data without having to meet in person or shadow other volunteers, which is how we have trained volunteers in the past. We would be able to offer volunteers opportunities while increasing the amount of MPA Watch volunteers at the museum.

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 more information regarding the MPA Watch program at the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History, visit pgmuseum.org or email Julia Madden-Fulk at maddenfulk@pgmuseum.org. Connect with PGMNH on social media @pgmuseum!