



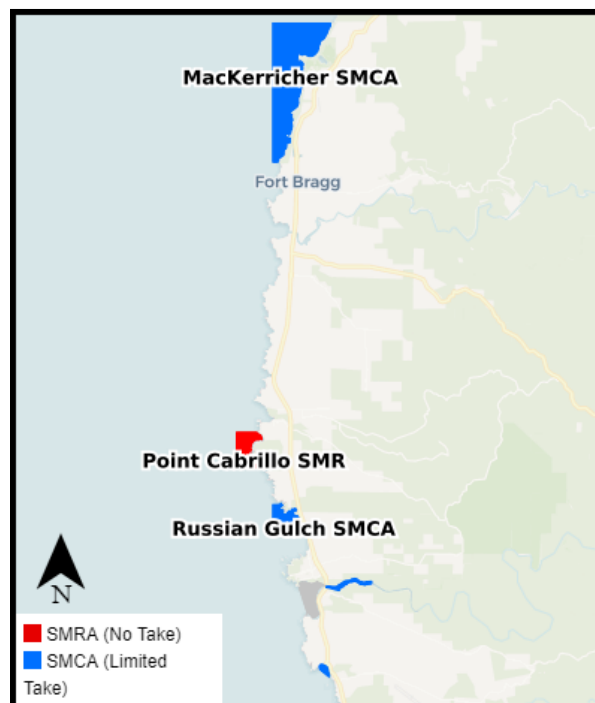
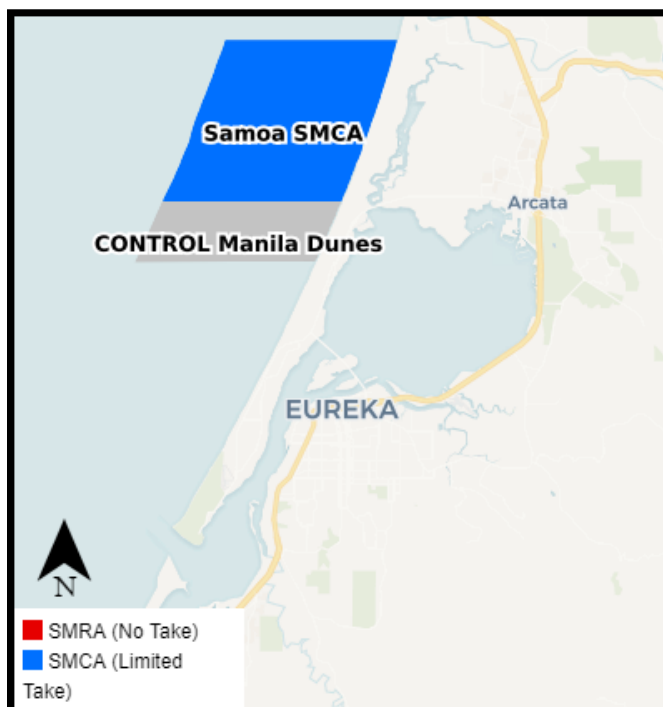
## Marine Protected Area (MPA) Watch Regional Report

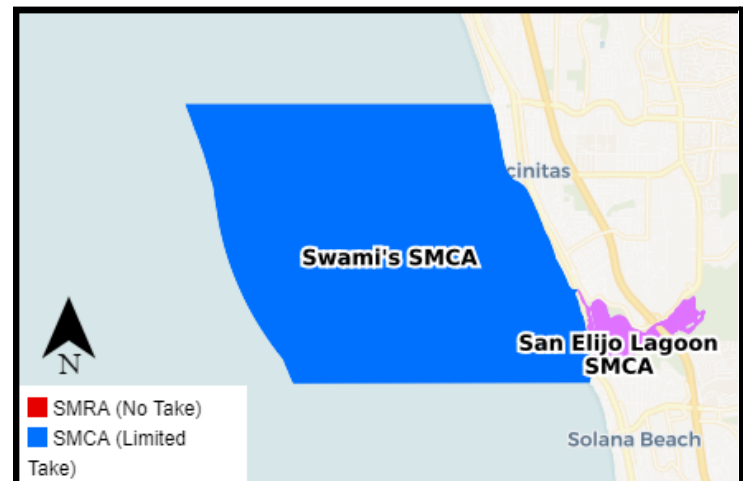
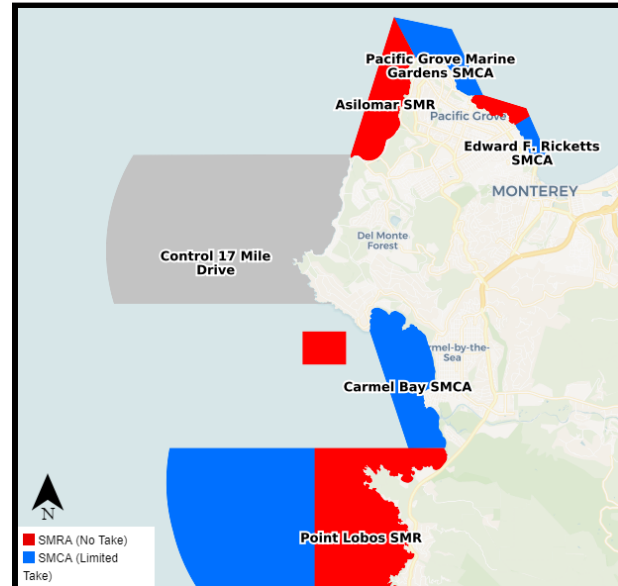
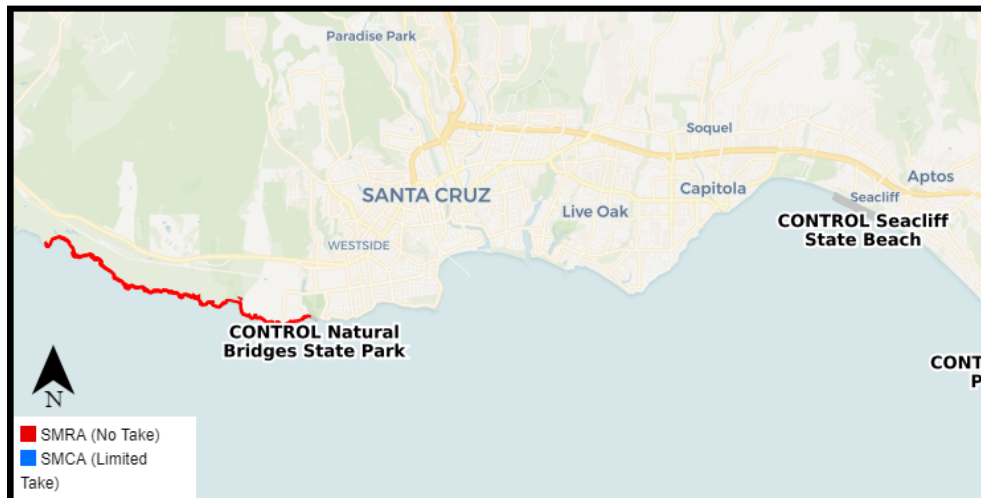
Humboldt, Mendocino, Santa Cruz, Monterey,  
San Luis Obispo, Orange, and San Diego Counties  
January 1 – June 30, 2021

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 protocol and data entry.

### Executive Summary

- In spring of 2021, one State Parks MPA interpreter, one State Parks Volunteer Coordinator, and 16 State Parks volunteer docents were trained in MPA Watch survey protocol and data entry.
- 2 new transects were set up in San Luis Obispo County at Morro Bay State Park
- 237 surveys were completed by the State Parks MPA team in the first six months of 2021
- Two in-person MPA Watch trainings are planned for Mendocino and Humboldt Counties in August 2021. Additional trainings will be offered in southern California later in the fall.



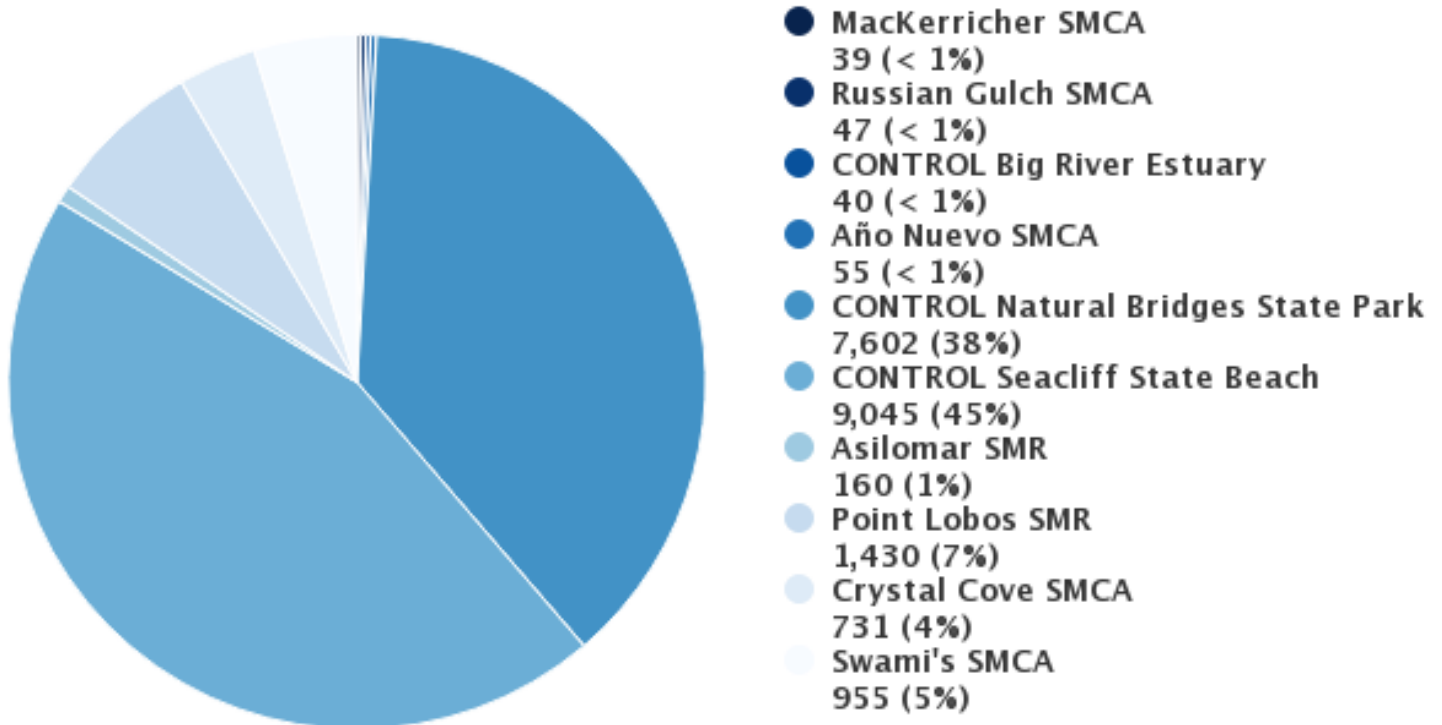


## Human Use of MPAs January – June 2021

### Overview

### Top 10 MPAs by All Activity

January 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021  
20,104 total 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.

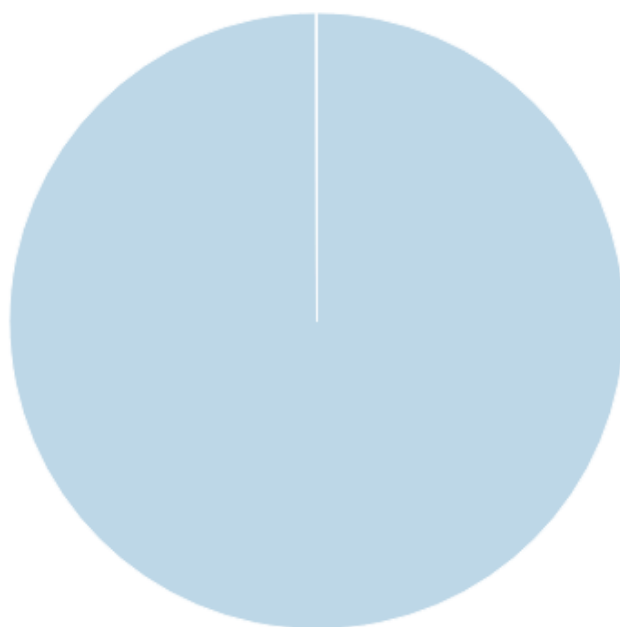
**Non-Consumptive** - An activity in which a natural resource is not collected.

## Activity by MPA

### HUMBOLDT COUNTY

#### Samoa SMCA

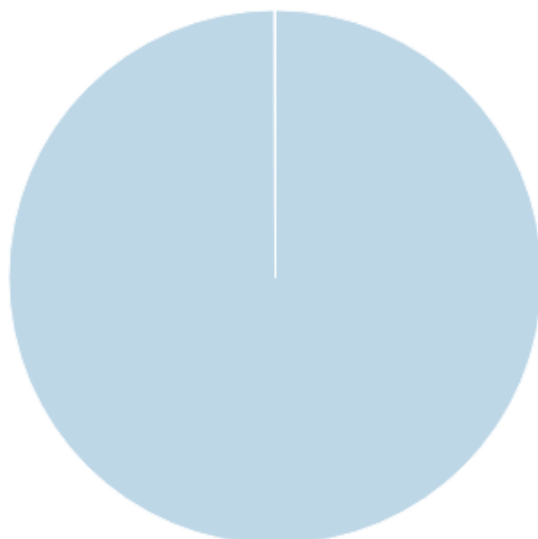
January 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021  
2 activity events



- On-Shore Nonconsumptive  
2 (100%)
- On-Shore Consumptive  
0 (< 1%)
- Off-Shore Nonconsumptive  
0 (< 1%)
- Off-Shore Consumptive  
0 (< 1%)

#### CONTROL Manila Dunes

January 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021  
10 activity events

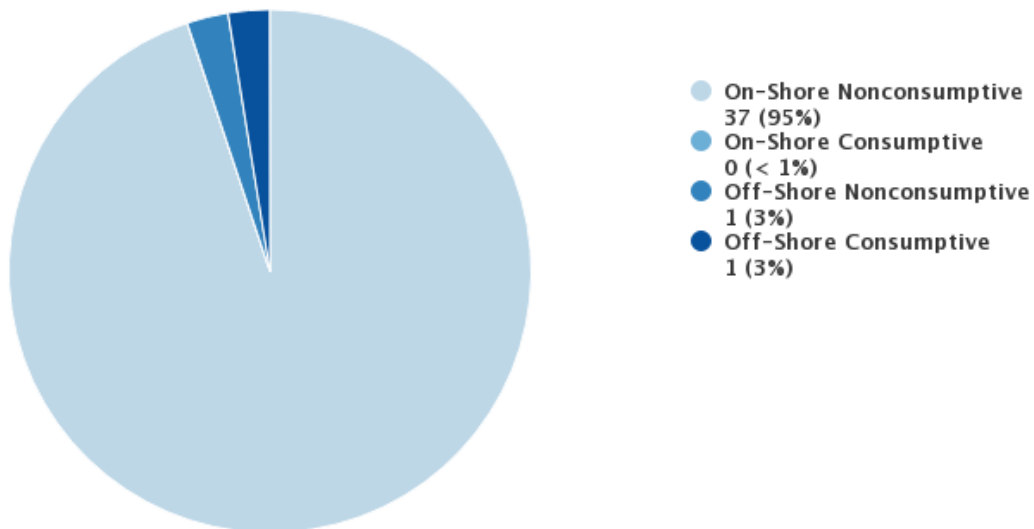


- On-Shore Nonconsumptive  
10 (100%)
- On-Shore Consumptive  
0 (< 1%)
- Off-Shore Nonconsumptive  
0 (< 1%)
- Off-Shore Consumptive  
0 (< 1%)

## MENDOCINO COUNTY

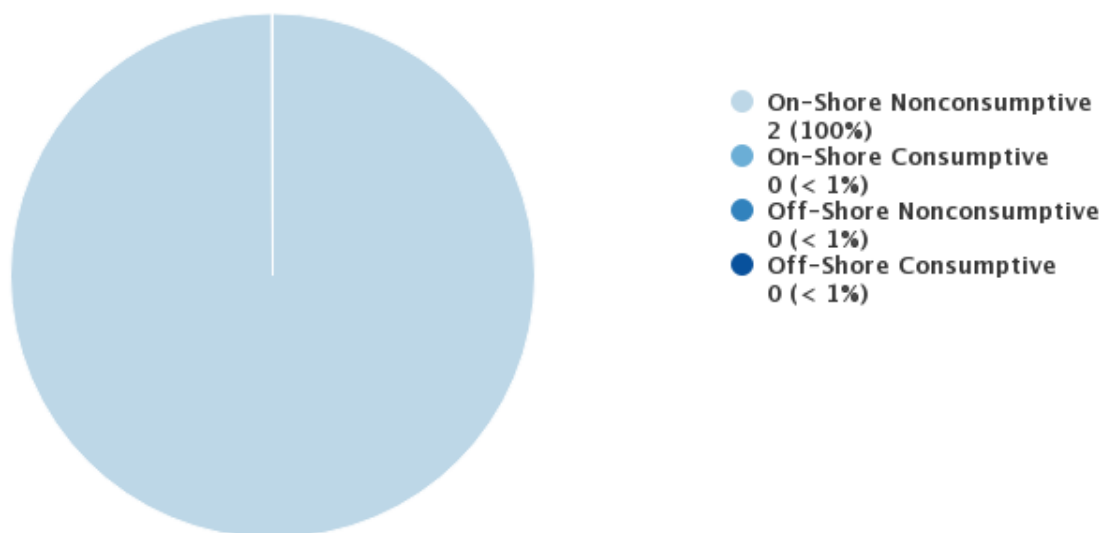
### MacKerricher SMCA

January 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021  
39 activity events



### Point Cabrillo SMR

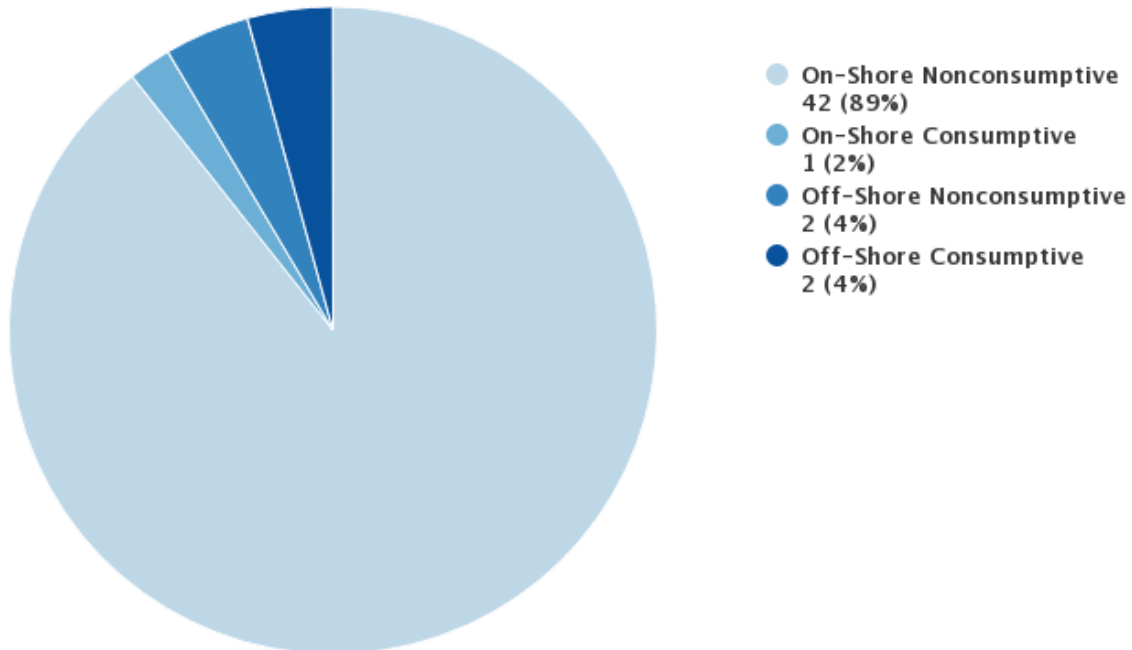
January 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021  
2 activity events



## MENDOCINO COUNTY CONTINUED

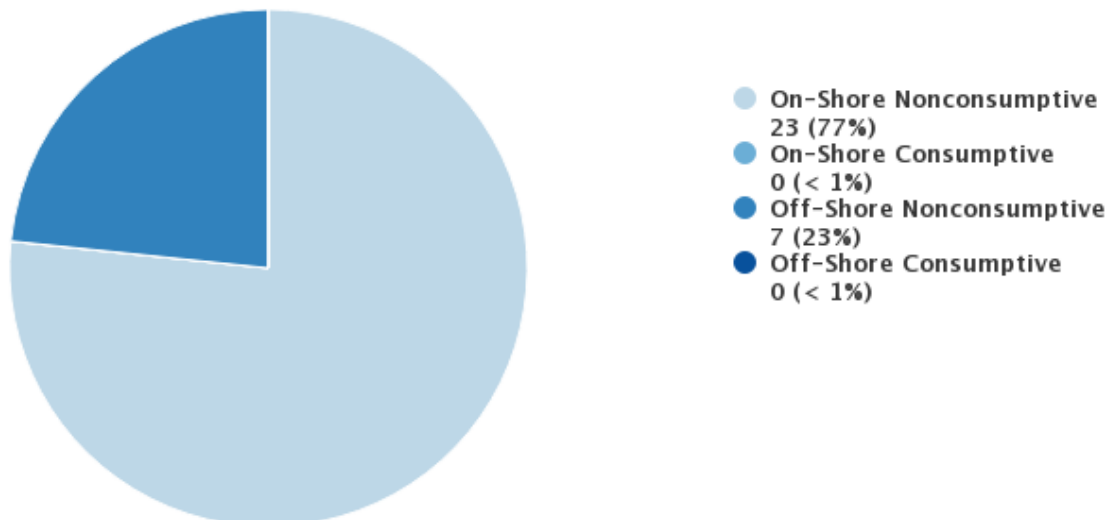
### Russian Gulch SMCA

January 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021  
47 activity events



### Big River Estuary SMCA

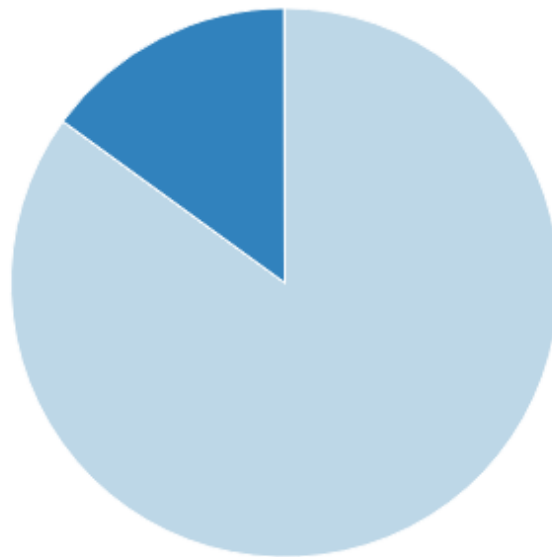
January 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021  
30 activity events



## MENDOCINO COUNTY CONTINUED

### CONTROL Big River Estuary

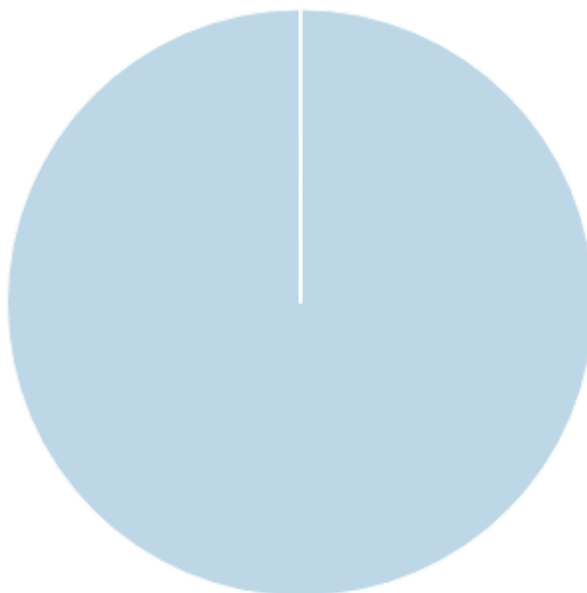
January 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021  
40 activity events



- On-Shore Nonconsumptive  
34 (85%)
- On-Shore Consumptive  
0 (< 1%)
- Off-Shore Nonconsumptive  
6 (15%)
- Off-Shore Consumptive  
0 (< 1%)

### Van Damme SMCA

January 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021  
9 activity events

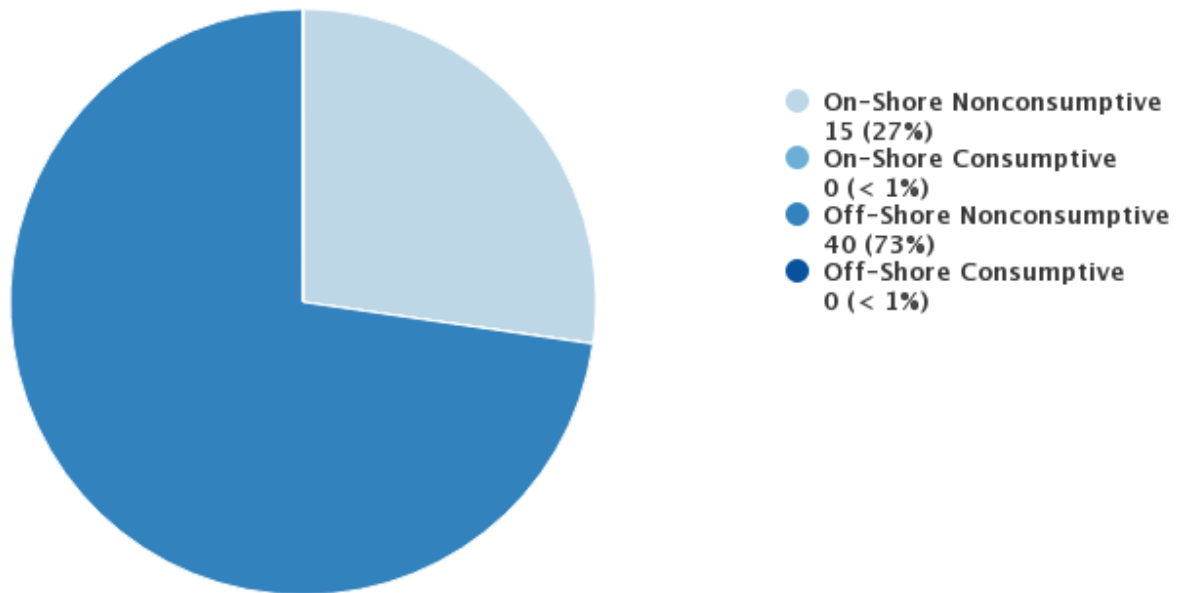


- On-Shore Nonconsumptive  
9 (100%)
- On-Shore Consumptive  
0 (< 1%)
- Off-Shore Nonconsumptive  
0 (< 1%)
- Off-Shore Consumptive  
0 (< 1%)

## SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

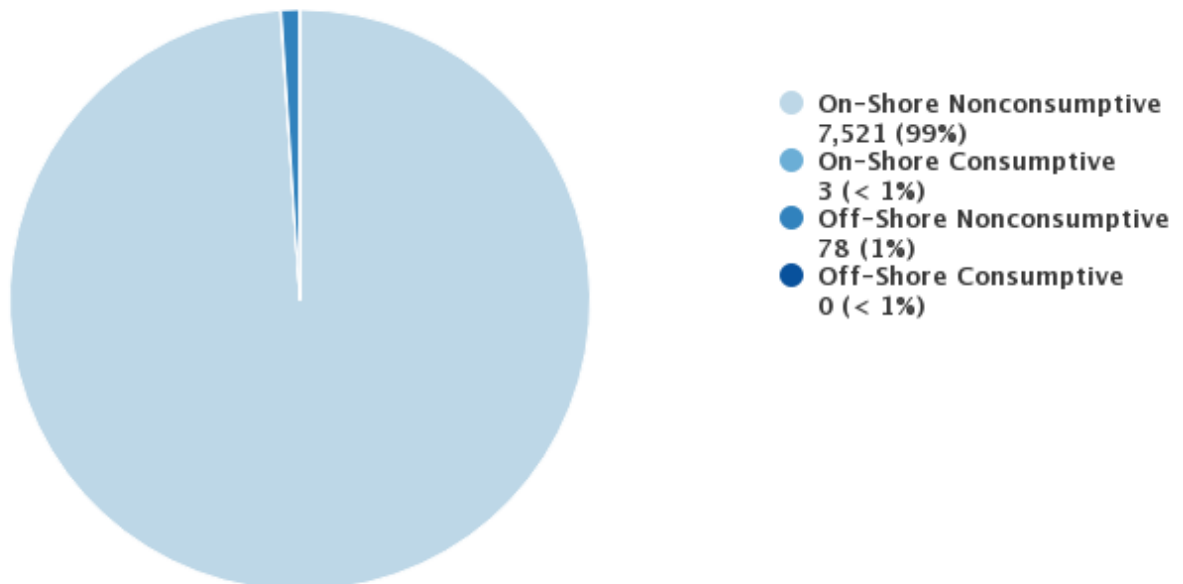
### Año Nuevo SMCA

January 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021  
55 activity events



### CONTROL Natural Bridges State Park

January 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021  
7,602 activity events

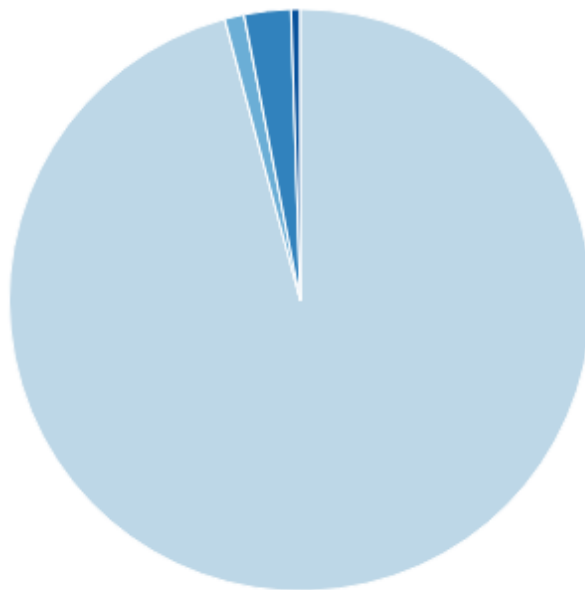




## SANTA CRUZ COUNTY CONTINUED

### CONTROL Seacliff State Beach

January 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021  
9,045 activity events

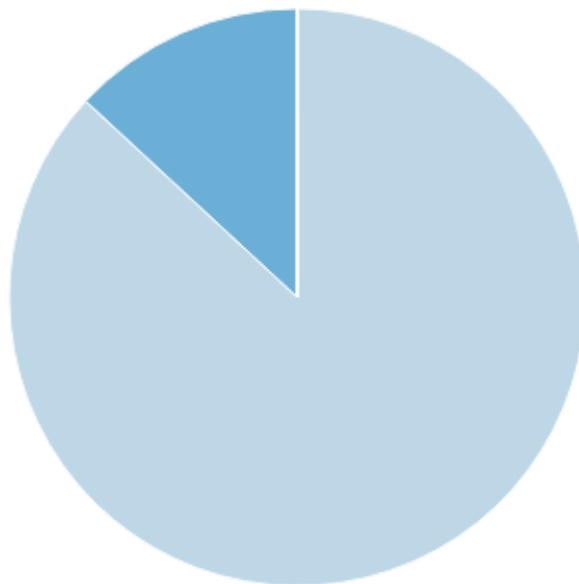


- On-Shore Nonconsumptive  
8,667 (96%)
- On-Shore Consumptive  
98 (1%)
- Off-Shore Nonconsumptive  
235 (3%)
- Off-Shore Consumptive  
45 (< 1%)

## MONTEREY COUNTY

### Asilomar SMR

January 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021  
160 activity events

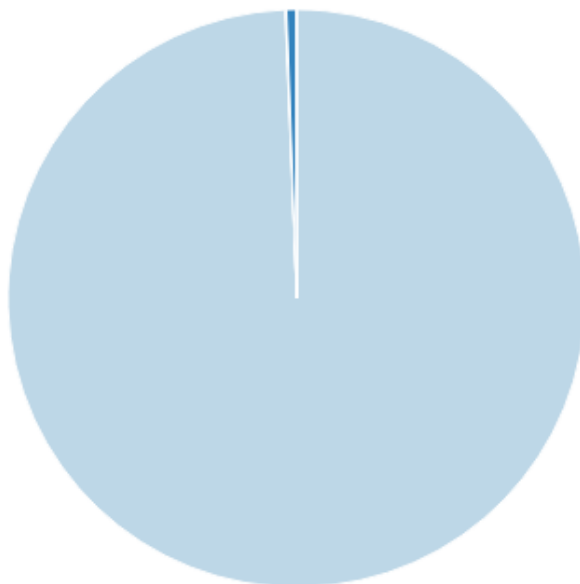


- On-Shore Nonconsumptive  
139 (87%)
- On-Shore Consumptive  
21 (13%)
- Off-Shore Nonconsumptive  
0 (< 1%)
- Off-Shore Consumptive  
0 (< 1%)

## MONTEREY COUNTY CONTINUED

### Point Lobos SMR

January 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021  
1,430 activity events

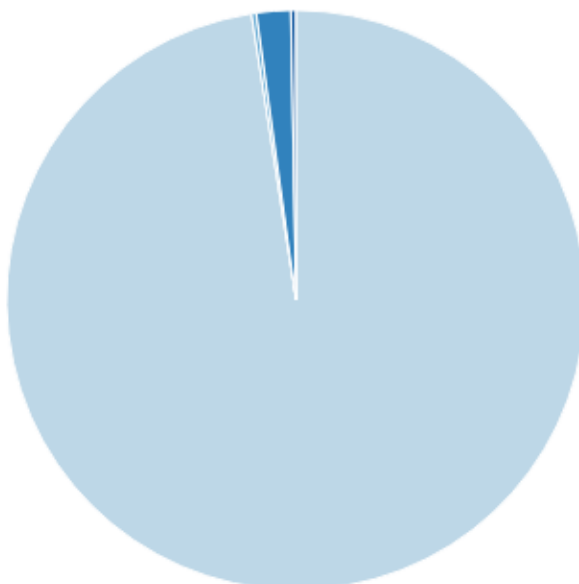


- On-Shore Nonconsumptive  
1,421 (99%)
- On-Shore Consumptive  
1 (< 1%)
- Off-Shore Nonconsumptive  
8 (1%)
- Off-Shore Consumptive  
0 (< 1%)

## ORANGE COUNTY

### Crystal Cove SMCA

January 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021  
731 activity events



- On-Shore Nonconsumptive  
713 (98%)
- On-Shore Consumptive  
2 (< 1%)
- Off-Shore Nonconsumptive  
14 (2%)
- Off-Shore Consumptive  
2 (< 1%)

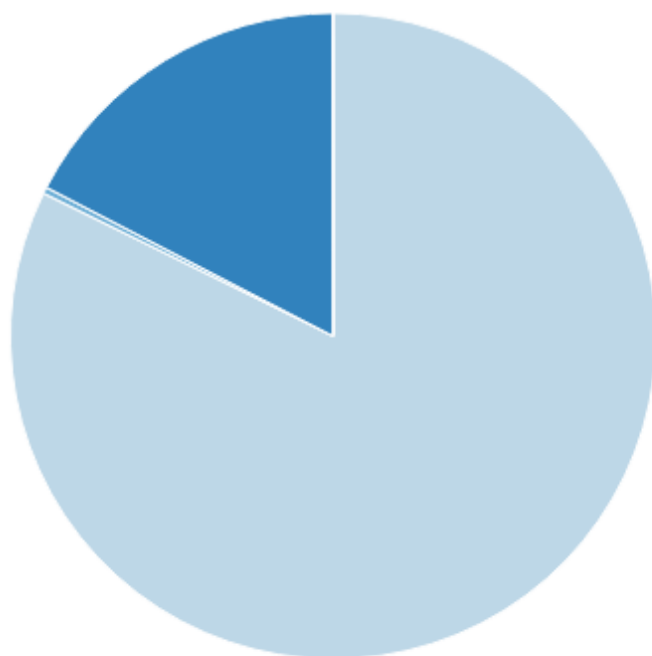


## SAN DIEGO COUNTY

### Swami's SMCA

January 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021

955 activity events

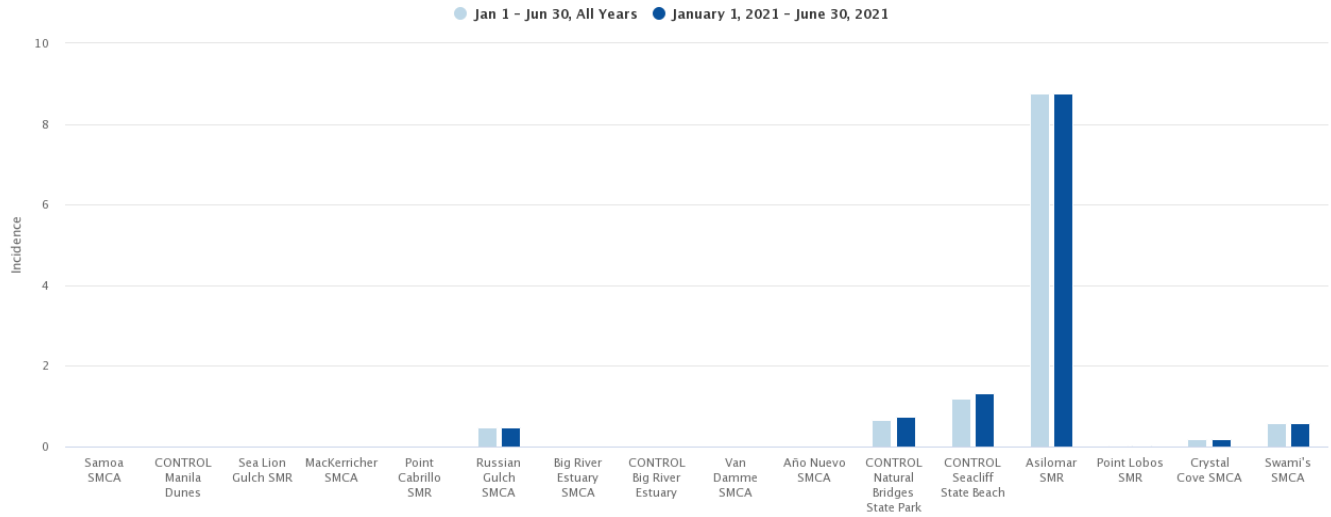


- On-Shore Nonconsumptive  
786 (82%)
- On-Shore Consumptive  
3 (< 1%)
- Off-Shore Nonconsumptive  
166 (17%)
- Off-Shore Consumptive  
0 (< 1%)

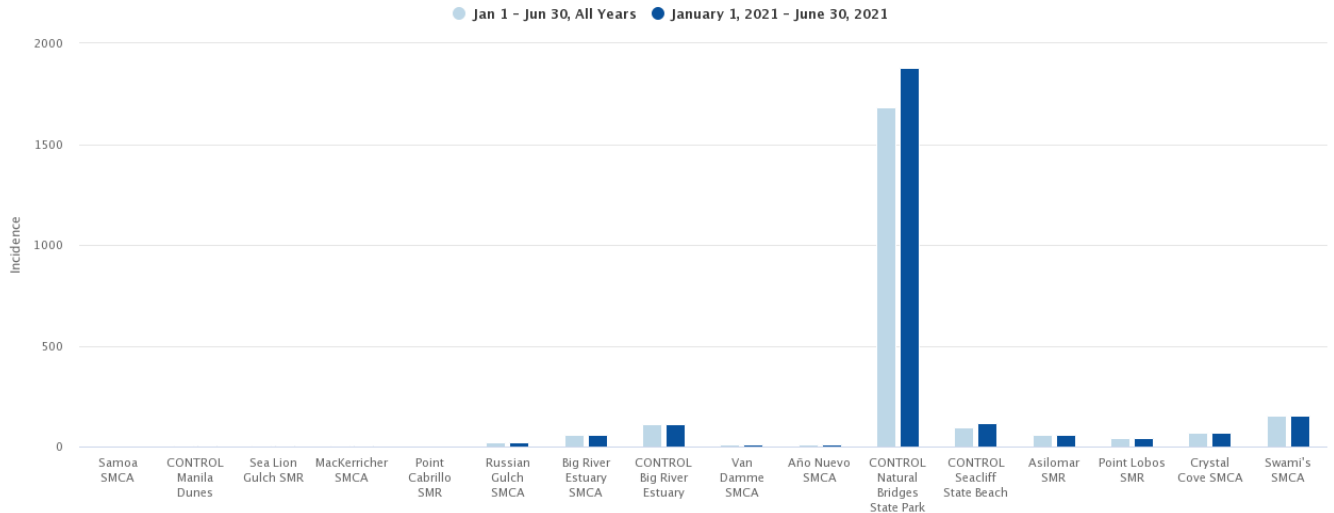
# Activity Incidence by MPA, Comparison Charts

## ON-SHORE

### On-Shore, Consumptive



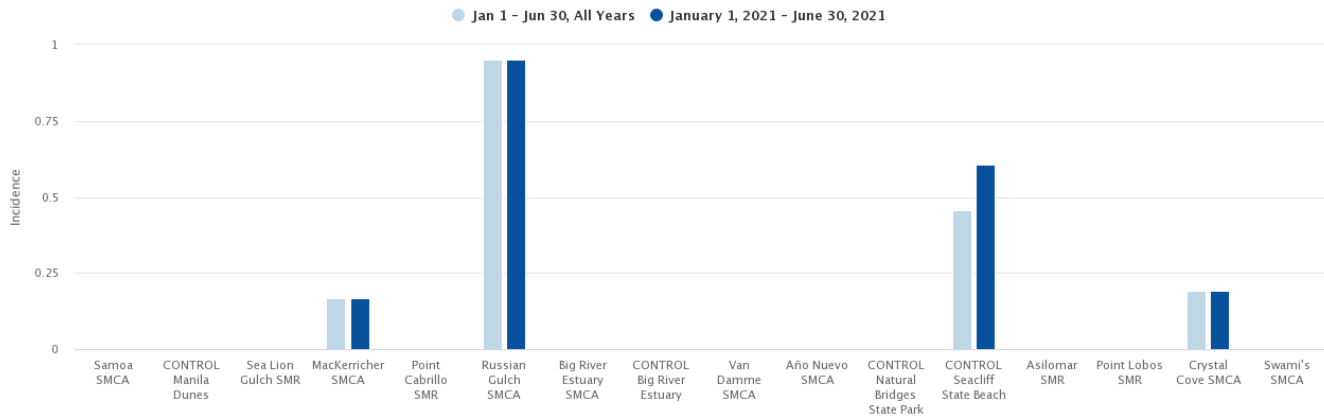
### On-Shore, Non-Consumptive



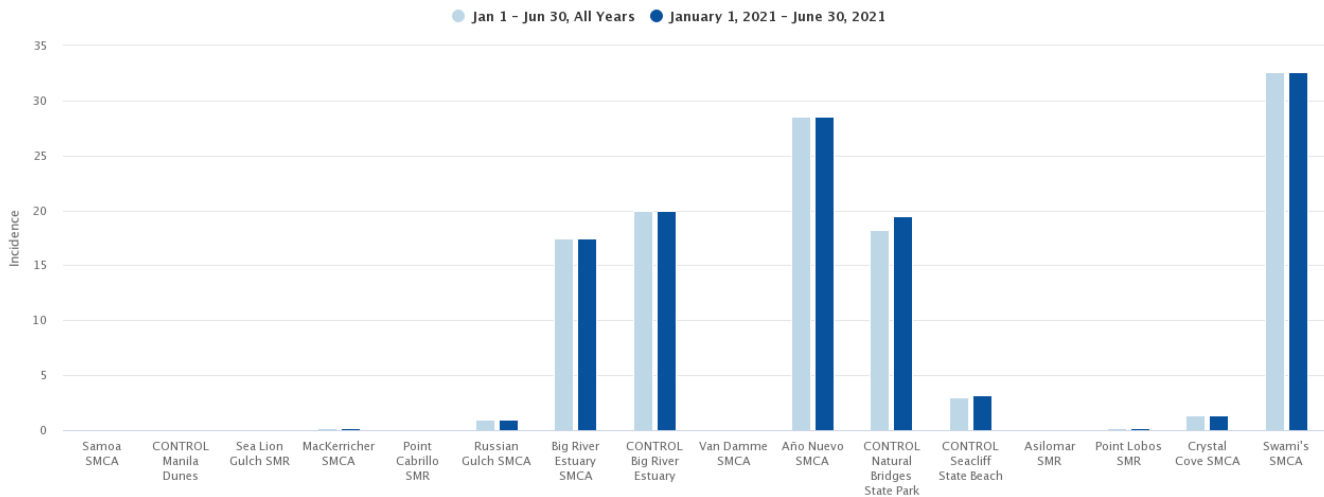
## Activity Incidence by MPA, Comparison Charts

### OFF-SHORE

Off-Shore, Consumptive



Off-Shore, Non-Consumptive



## COVID-19 Impacts

In the winter months of early 2021, there were still a mix of Covid-related park closures and work restrictions for State Parks staff and docents. Fortunately, a couple of trainings were offered for staff and docents at Point Lobos State Natural Reserve in a hybrid format where they received the initial presentation over Zoom, then met in small groups to practice the survey protocol in the field (outside and masked). Staff and volunteers were able to collect data in the spring working independently in the field to walk the survey transects.

## Breakdown by MPA/Control Site

### Samoa SMCA

In mid-June 2021, two new State Parks volunteers were trained in Humboldt County but they had not begun collecting regular surveys at this site yet for their data to appear in this report. This transect was established in July 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

In mid-June 2021, two new State Parks volunteers were trained in Humboldt County but they had not begun collecting regular surveys at this site yet for their data to appear in this report. This transect was established in July 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.

### *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.

### **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. In spring 2021, State Parks installed a large sign in a high traffic area to help visitors understand the boundaries and rules of this MPA. No violations have been observed during this reporting period. 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. In spring 2021, State Parks installed a large sign in a high traffic area to help visitors understand the boundaries and rules of the Big River Estuary SMCA. 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. There has not been enough data collected from this site to draw any additional conclusions.

### **Natural Bridges State Beach Control Site**

This transect covers a popular beach for onshore recreation at Natural Bridges State Beach. Once Covid restrictions were lifted, State Parks staff and volunteers began surveying this transect again. As with many State Parks and Beaches, visitation has seen a significant increase as locals look for recreational opportunities closer to home. The majority of activity here is purely non-consumptive recreation.

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

This State Beach is a popular destination for on-shore recreation and camping. Out of all of State Parks' MPA Watch transects, this transect is the most regularly surveyed by a small group of dedicated staff and volunteers. Both on-shore and off-shore fishing are legal in this park with the appropriate CDFW license and are regularly observed on this transect.

### **Asilomar SMR**

This State Beach is popular amongst locals and visitors alike and the transects cover sandy beaches and rocky shorelines. Illegal take/collection of biota is frequently observed here and from conversations with transgressors, it is understood that both locals and visitors alike are guilty of collecting shells from the pocket beaches between tidepool areas. Frequently, there are so many individuals and small groups collecting shells in bags and buckets that there isn't enough time to speak to each person while completing the transect.

### **Point Lobos SMR**

In April 2021, two State Parks staff members and 14 volunteer docents at Point Lobos State Natural Reserve were trained on MPA Watch survey protocol and data entry. The enthusiastic group began surveying the two new transects in May, collecting data on weekdays and weekends. It is expected that this volunteer force will likely provide enough data for future reports from this area to have scientific significance as they are completing surveys almost daily on these transects. From just a couple of months of data, we can infer that most visitors to Point Lobos SMR are following the rules and not collecting biota; however, anecdotally, many staff and volunteers report that collection is a big problem in the Weston Beach area.

### **Morro Bay SMRMA**

In May 2021, two new MPA Watch transects were set up in Morro Bay SMRMA. They are both inside Morro Bay State Park: One at Windy Cove and the other on the Marina Peninsula Trail. Several Morro Bay State Park staff and volunteers have been trained on protocol and we expect survey data to be included for these two transects in our next report.

### **Crystal Cove SMCA**

This transect is on a popular beach for on-shore recreation at Crystal Cove State Park. The beach has tidepools that see high traffic and anecdotally see 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. There have been several violations recorded during this reporting period, but the violation ratio is low compared to the number of visitors participating in non-consumptive activities.



## **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 have been several violations recorded during this reporting period, but the violation ratio is low compared to the number of visitors participating in non-consumptive activities.

## **Potential Violations**

Statewide, the top violations are hand collection of biota and dogs off-leash. Wildlife disturbance was observed in several surveys. Anecdotally, staff and volunteers continue to report of an increase in legal and illegal collection of biota along the California coast. These observations have not always occurred during MPA Watch surveys, so they are not included in the data presented in this report.

## **Next Steps**

In August and September 2021, the CA State Parks MPA Outreach and Education team will be trained or refreshed on their previous trainings. In-person trainings are scheduled for Humboldt and Mendocino Counties with 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](https://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](https://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.