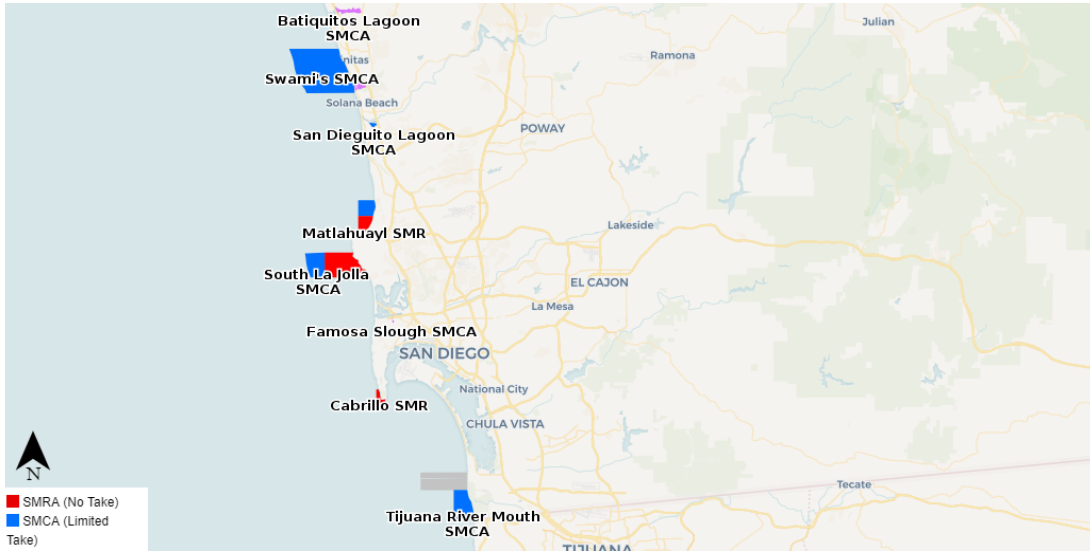




Marine Protected Area (MPA) Watch Regional Report San Diego County January 1, 2022 - June 30, 2022



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. The San Diego Marine Protected Area Watch Program, organized by WILD COAST, engages community scientists in five MPAs in San Diego County.

Executive Summary

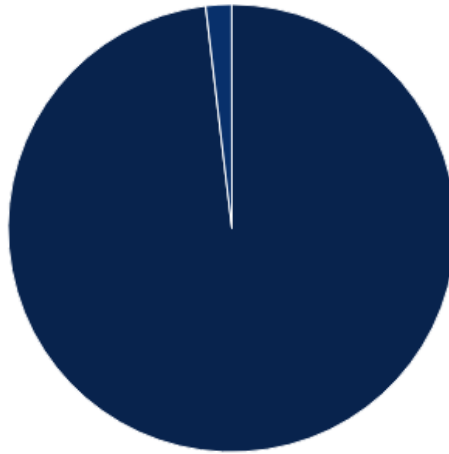
- In the wake of COVID-19 guidelines and restrictions impacting MPA Watch in 2020, there has been a return to regular operations in 2022.
- Compared to the year 2020, use of MPAs has largely stabilized to resemble levels that are consistent with the baseline rate of use, with the most significant exceptions being use rates at the San Diego-Scripps State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) and the Tijuana River Mouth SMCA.
- While over 99% of reported activities were non-consumptive, volunteers report potential poaching through hook and line fishing and hand collecting biota on-shore is still a problem.
- There have been recurring issues with beach closures at the Tijuana River Mouth SMCA due to poor water quality resulting from sewage contamination.

Human Use of MPAs January - June 2022

Overview

Top 2 MPAs by All Activity

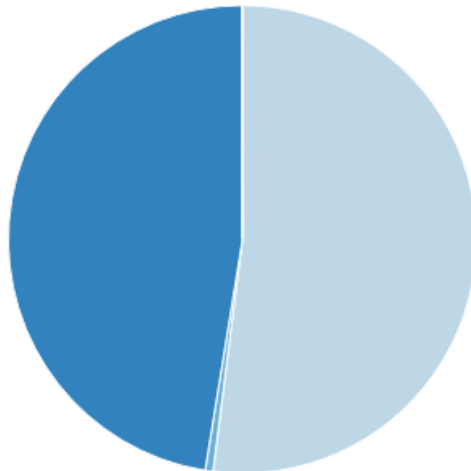
January 1, 2022 - June 30, 2022
2,721 total activity events



- Swami's SMCA
2,670 (98%)
- Tijuana River Mouth SMCA
51 (2%)

All MPAs Combined

January 1, 2022 - June 30, 2022
2,721 activity events



- On-Shore Nonconsumptive
1,415 (52%)
- On-Shore Consumptive
15 (1%)
- Off-Shore Nonconsumptive
1,291 (47%)
- Off-Shore Consumptive
0 (< 1%)

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.

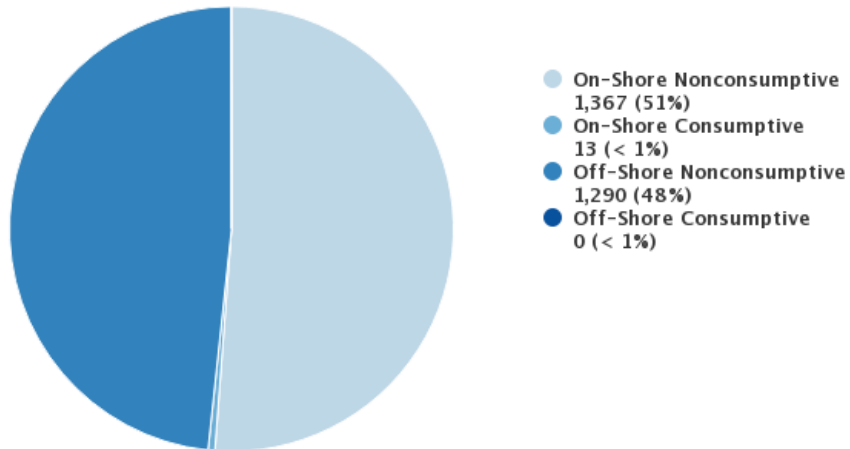
Consumptive - An activity in which a natural resource (i.e. fish, kelp, shells) is being collected.

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

Activity by MPA

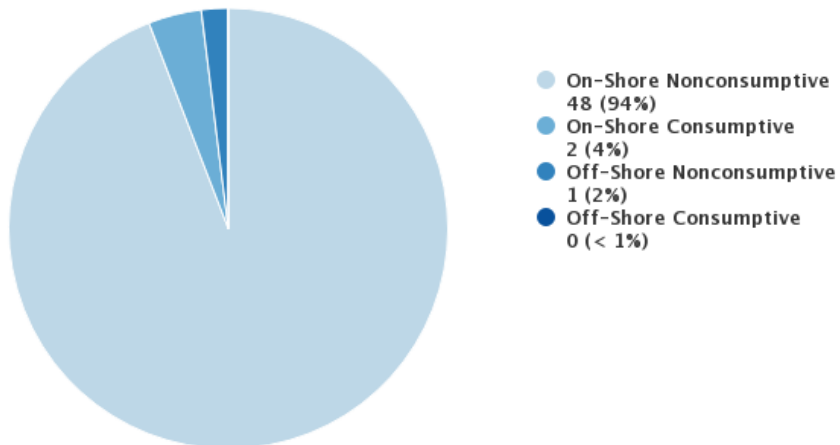
Swami's SMCA

January 1, 2022 – June 30, 2022
2,670 activity events



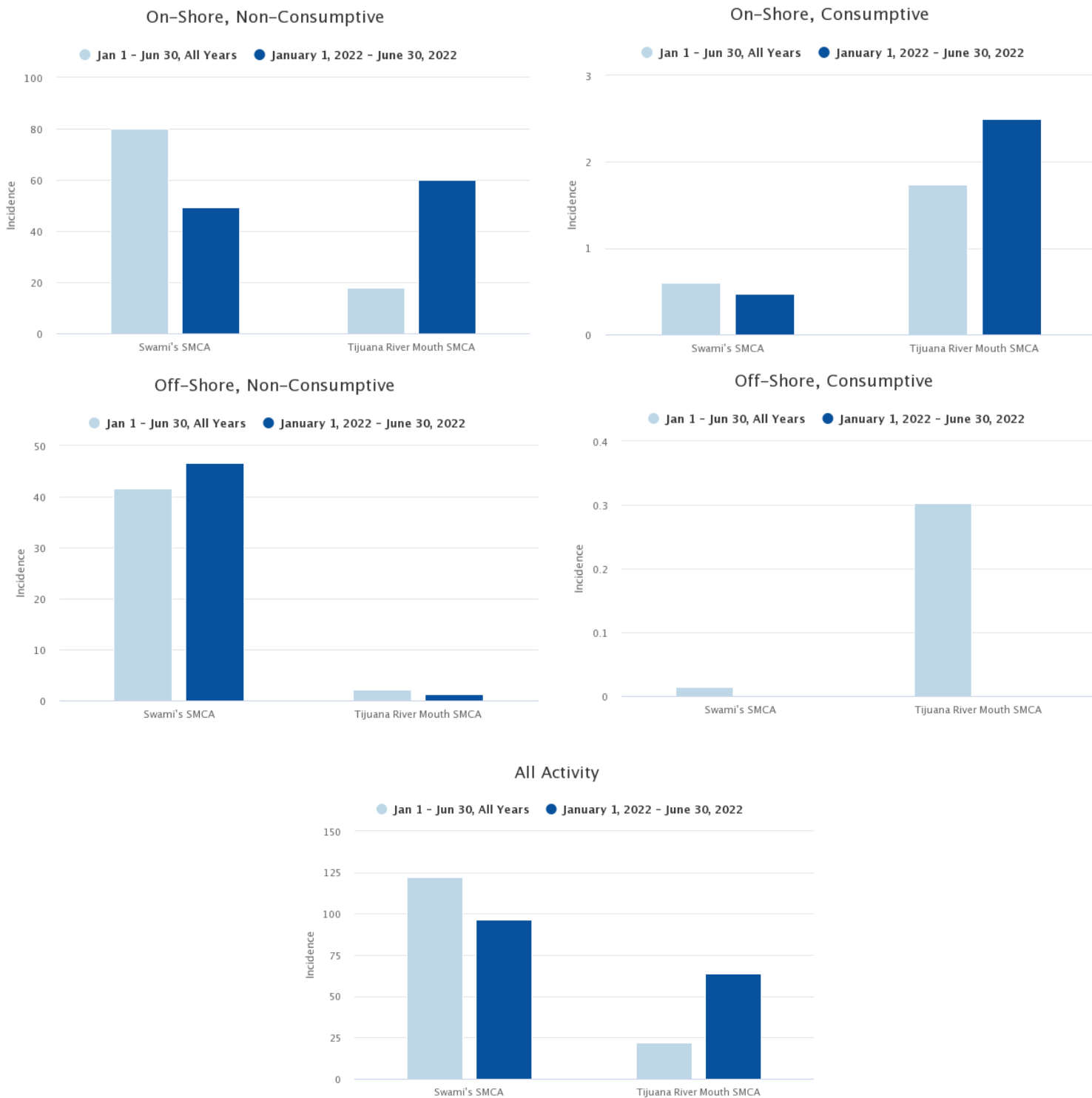
Tijuana River Mouth SMCA

January 1, 2022 – June 30, 2022
51 activity events



*The charts for Matlahuayl, South La Jolla SMCA, and San Diego Scripps Coastal SMCA have been excluded due to lack of surveys conducted at those locations.

Activity Incidence by MPA



The above charts show incidence values for some MPAs monitored by MPA Watch in San Diego County. The charts for Matlahuayl, South La Jolla SMCA, and San Diego Scripps Coastal SMCA have been excluded due to lack of surveys conducted.

Incidence is calculated as the 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, 2022 through Jun 30, 2022	Jan 1 Jun 30 All Years	Jan 1, 2022 through Jun 30, 2022
Swami's SMCA	80.1	49.4	0.6	0.5
Tijuana River Mouth SMCA	17.9	60.0	1.7	2.5
All MPAs Combined	65.3	49.6	0.9	0.5

MPA	Off-Shore			
	Non-Consumptive		Consumptive	
	Jan 1 Jun 30 All Years	Jan 1, 2022 through Jun 30, 2022	Jan 1 Jun 30 All Years	Jan 1, 2022 through Jun 30, 2022
Swami's SMCA	41.6	46.6	0.0	0.0
Tijuana River Mouth SMCA	2.2	1.3	0.3	0.0
All MPAs Combined	30.8	45.3	0.1	0.0

MPA	Total Combined	
	Jan 1 Jun 30 All Years	Jan 1, 2022 through Jun 30, 2022
	Swami's SMCA	122.4
Tijuana River Mouth SMCA	22.2	63.8
All MPAs Combined	97.1	95.5

The above table shows incidence values for some MPAs monitored by MPA Watch in San Diego County. The charts for Matlahuayl, South La Jolla SMCA, and San Diego Scripps Coastal SMCA have been excluded due to lack of surveys conducted.

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

Following the disruption to MPA Watch surveys and trainings last year due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and ensuing restrictions that were present for much of 2020, in 2022 there has been a gradual return to normalcy. With beaches open and left without restrictions, volunteers are free to conduct surveys as they had in the past.

Breakdown by MPA

Swami's State Marine Conservation Area

Between the months of January and June 2022, San Diego MPA Watch data shows a rate of 96.4 total use count per total miles surveyed in the Swami's State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA). This is a 21.24% decrease compared to the rate calculated from the data collected by MPA Watch volunteers January - June in previous years.

People observed in the MPA were primarily taking part in non-consumptive activities both on and off-shore, like beach and ocean recreation. This accounted for 99% of the activities logged in MPA Watch surveys. The remaining 1% of human use consisted of onshore consumptive activities. According to volunteers, there were recurring issues with potentially illegal hook and line fishing from shore.

San Diego-Scripps State Marine Conservation Area

Between the months of January and June of 2022, there were no surveys conducted by San Diego MPA Watch in the San Diego-Scripps SMCA.

Matlahuayl State Marine Reserve

Between the months of January and June of 2022, there were no surveys conducted by San Diego MPA Watch in the Matlahuayl SMR.

South La Jolla State Marine Reserve

Between the months of January and June of 2022, there were no surveys conducted by San Diego MPA Watch in the South La Jolla SMR.

Tijuana River Mouth State Marine Conservation Area

Between the months of January and June 2022, San Diego MPA Watch data shows a rate of 63.8 total use count per total miles surveyed in the Swami's State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA). This is a 187.39% increase compared to the rate calculated from the data collected by MPA Watch volunteers January - June in previous years.

People observed in the MPA were primarily taking part in non-consumptive activities both on and off-shore, like beach and ocean recreation. This accounted for 98% of the activities logged in MPA Watch surveys. The remaining 2% of human use consisted of onshore consumptive activities. According to volunteers, there were recurring issues with hand collecting biota on the sandy beach.

Potential Violations

Rate of consumptive activities observed remains relatively low in all MPAs surveyed, accounting for 1% of all observations recorded. According to volunteers, potentially illegal hook and line fishing from shore is commonly observed in Swami's SMCA. In addition, hand collection of biota was observed on the shore of the Tijuana River Mouth SMCA. Also, while current MPA Watch data does not show many potential violations in recent months, WILD COAST staff has seen illegal fishing activity (aka poaching) in the South La Jolla SMR and Swami's SMCA. Even if the noncompliance rate is low, it is important to note that any illegal take from MPAs jeopardizes the success of the MPA and health of the ecosystems which they protect.

Next Steps

MPA Watch has submitted reports for use in the 2022 decadal management review of MPAs. This review will determine the effectiveness of MPAs as conservation tools. MPA Watch data will be critical in displaying how MPAs are being used and where more enforcement may be needed to ensure MPAs are achieving their conservation goals.

WILD COAST's next steps are to include boat based MPA Watch surveys into data reporting. This will follow specific boat based data collection protocols for tracking offshore use.

In San Diego County WILD COAST is working to increase outreach for MPA Watch and increase the number of volunteers we have collecting human use data within our local MPAs, specifically through the help of interns.

WILD COAST has been conducting public outreach to spread awareness surrounding tide pools that fall under MPA protections. These efforts are focused primarily on the tide pools located within MPA boundaries located at San Diego-Scripps SMCA and Swami's SMCA.

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 about the work WILDCOAST does to conserve California's MPAs and other conservation projects please visit wildcoast.org.