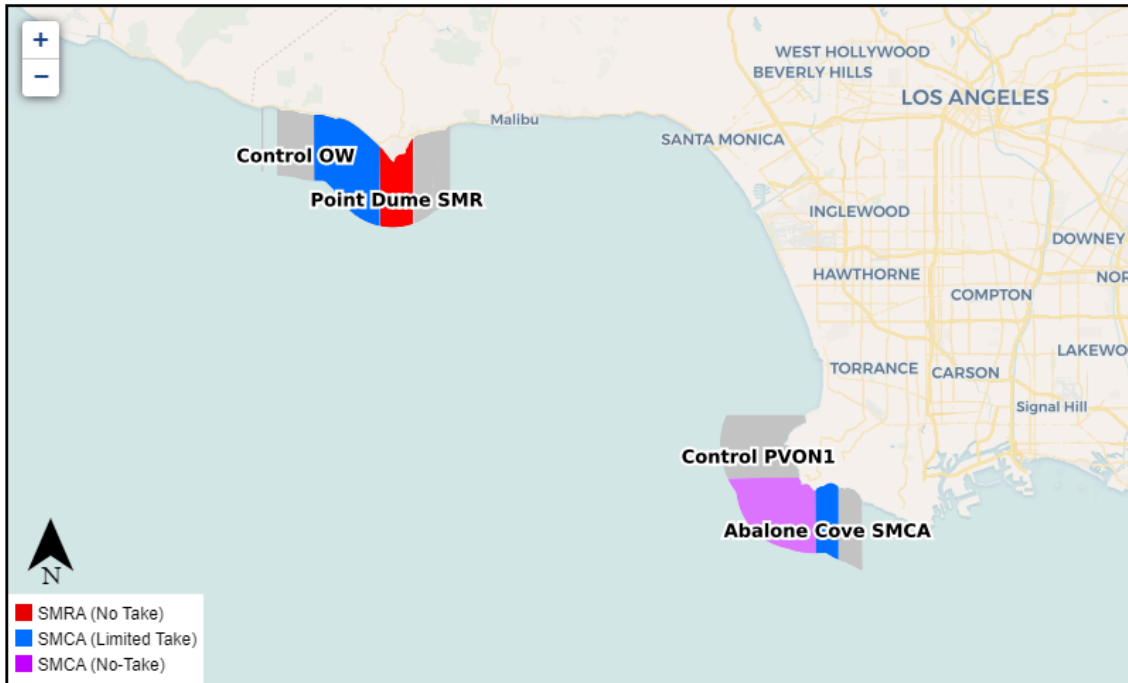




# Marine Protected Area (MPA) Watch Regional Report LA County (Land Based) January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023



California’s network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) was established by the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) of 1999 to safeguard our marine resources and ecosystems. To ensure success and to inform adaptive management, long-term monitoring of these protected areas must be conducted. Developed in 2011, MPA Watch was designed as a community science program to collect data on the human use of MPAs. In Los Angeles County, the non-profit organization Heal the Bay manages MPA Watch shore-based data collection. Heal the Bay volunteers monitor four MPAs: Abalone Cove State Marine Conservation Area, Point Vicente No-Take State Marine Conservation Area, Point Dume State Marine Conservation Area, and Point Dume State Marine Reserve.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In 2023, 54 MPA Watch surveyors conducted a total of 578 surveys across 373 total survey miles and recorded a total of 19,999 activities. Total survey count in 2023 is the highest it has been since 2016 in LA County.
- Consumptive activity continues to decrease in multiple MPAs in LA County as compared to 2021 and 2020 observed activities.
- Many observed consumptive activities fell under the category of “unknown fishing” this year, possibly skewing potential violation counts and highlighting the need for accurate documentation of consumptive activities, particularly in no-take reserves, to effectively monitor compliance and inform enforcement.

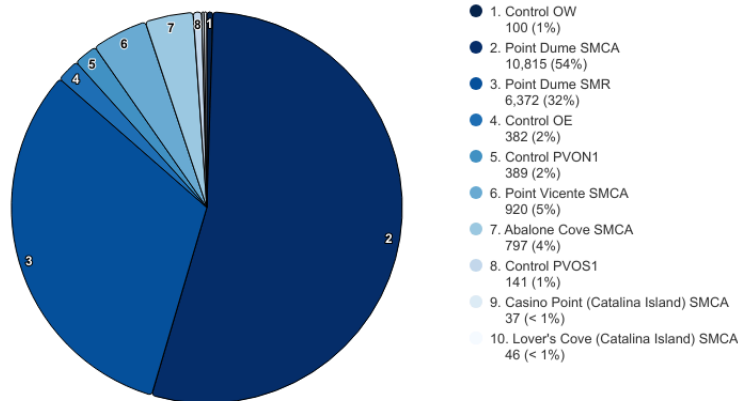
## HUMAN USE OF MPAS

January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023

### OVERVIEW

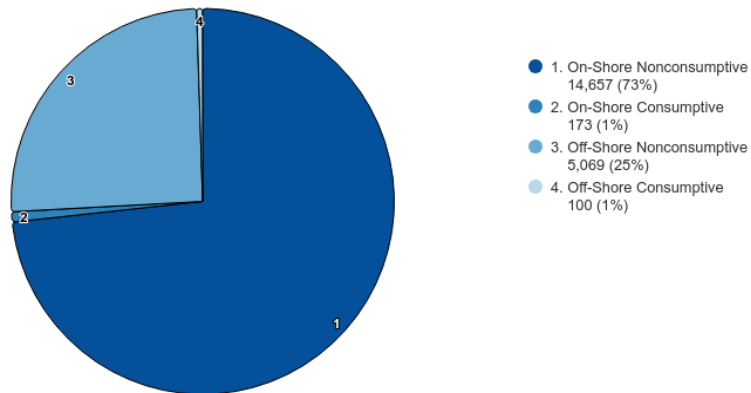
#### Top 10 MPAs by All Activity

January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023  
19,999 total activity events



#### All MPAs Combined

January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023  
19,999 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.

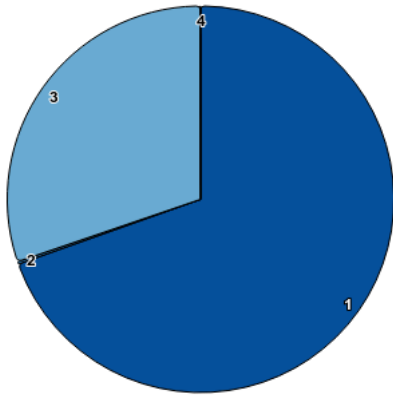
**Consumptive** - An activity in which a natural resource (i.e. fish, kelp, shells) is being collected.

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

## ACTIVITY BY MPA

### Point Dume SMCA

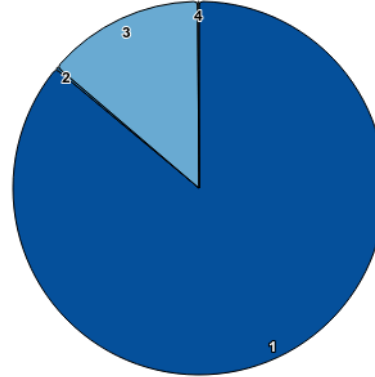
January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023  
10,815 activity events



- 1. On-Shore Nonconsumptive  
7,523 (70%)
- 2. On-Shore Consumptive  
22 (< 1%)
- 3. Off-Shore Nonconsumptive  
3,269 (30%)
- 4. Off-Shore Consumptive  
1 (< 1%)

### Point Dume SMR

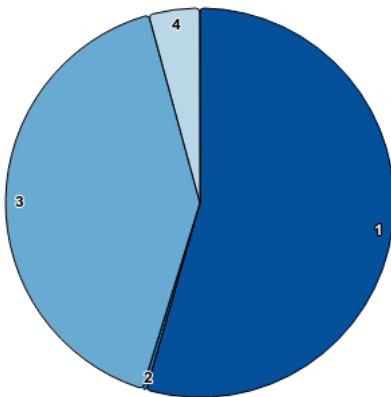
January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023  
6,372 activity events



- 1. On-Shore Nonconsumptive  
5,482 (86%)
- 2. On-Shore Consumptive  
13 (< 1%)
- 3. Off-Shore Nonconsumptive  
869 (14%)
- 4. Off-Shore Consumptive  
8 (< 1%)

### Point Vicente SMCA

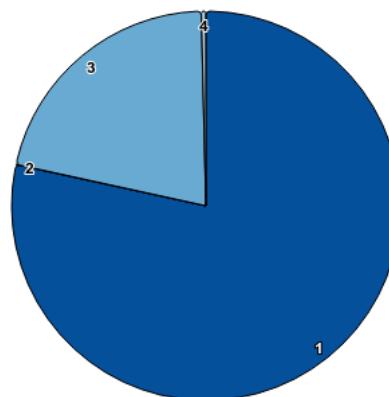
January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023  
920 activity events



- 1. On-Shore Nonconsumptive  
501 (54%)
- 2. On-Shore Consumptive  
3 (< 1%)
- 3. Off-Shore Nonconsumptive  
377 (41%)
- 4. Off-Shore Consumptive  
39 (4%)

### Abalone Cove SMCA

January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023  
797 activity events

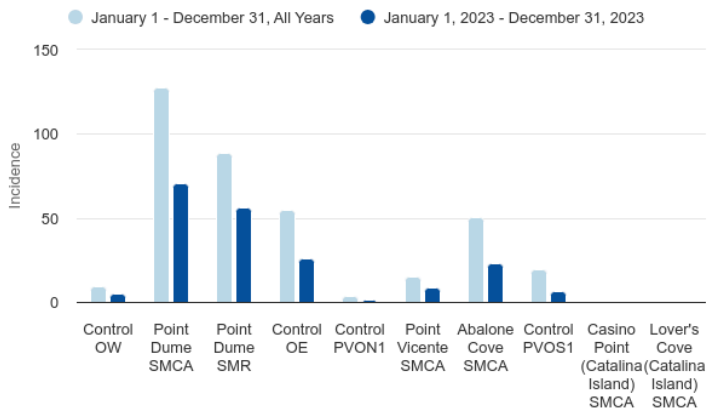


- 1. On-Shore Nonconsumptive  
625 (78%)
- 2. On-Shore Consumptive  
0 (< 1%)
- 3. Off-Shore Nonconsumptive  
169 (21%)
- 4. Off-Shore Consumptive  
3 (< 1%)

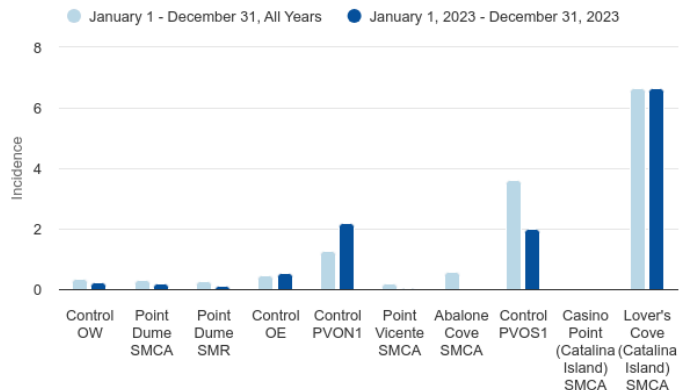
## ACTIVITY INCIDENCE BY MPA

### INCIDENCE BAR CHARTS

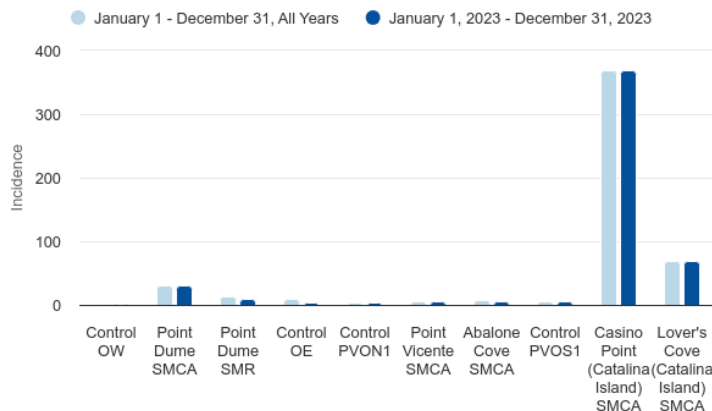
**On-Shore, Non-Consumptive**



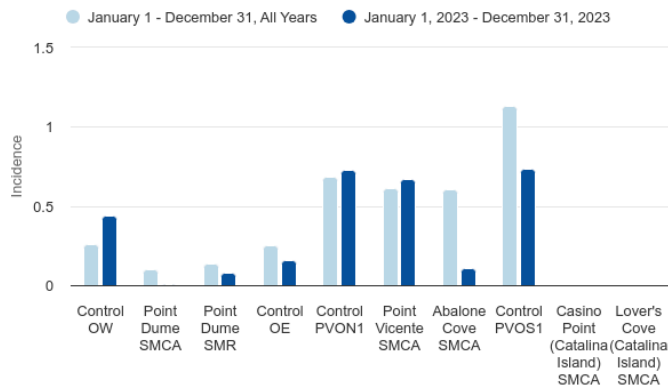
**On-Shore, Consumptive**



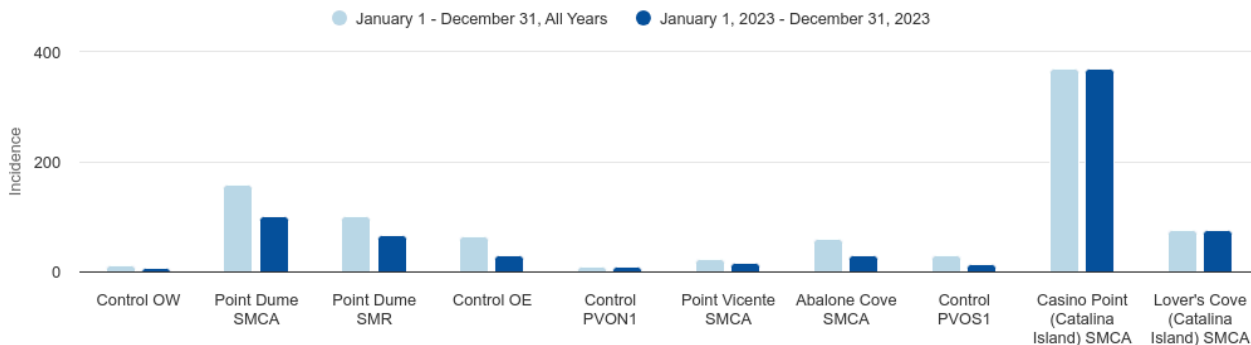
**Off-Shore, Non-Consumptive**



**Off-Shore, Consumptive**



**All Activity**



**NOTE:** Catalina Island MPAs are included in these charts but were not included in overall analysis. See Catalina Island MPAs section below for details.

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

## INCIDENCE TABLES

MPA	On-Shore			
	Non-Consumptive		Consumptive	
	January 1 December 31 All Years	January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023	January 1 December 31 All Years	January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023
Control OW	9.2	5.3	0.4	0.2
Point Dume SMCA	127.4	70.8	0.3	0.2
Point Dume SMR	88.4	56.6	0.3	0.1
Control OE	55.1	25.9	0.5	0.5
Control PVON1	3.9	1.2	1.3	2.2
Point Vicente SMCA	15.4	8.6	0.2	0.1
Abalone Cove SMCA	50.2	22.8	0.6	0.0
Control PVOS1	19.3	6.7	3.6	2.0
Casino Point (Catalina Island) SMCA	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Lover's Cove (Catalina Island) SMCA	0.0	0.0	6.7	6.7
All MPAs Combined	66.1	39.3	0.5	0.5

MPA	Off-Shore			
	Non-Consumptive		Consumptive	
	January 1 December 31 All Years	January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023	January 1 December 31 All Years	January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023
Control OW	1.4	1.3	0.3	0.4
Point Dume SMCA	30.2	30.8	0.1	0.0
Point Dume SMR	12.9	9.0	0.1	0.1
Control OE	8.7	3.3	0.3	0.2
Control PVON1	3.8	4.2	0.7	0.7
Point Vicente SMCA	6.3	6.5	0.6	0.7
Abalone Cove SMCA	7.4	6.2	0.6	0.1
Control PVOS1	6.3	5.3	1.1	0.7
Casino Point (Catalina Island) SMCA	370.0	370.0	0.0	0.0
Lover's Cove (Catalina Island) SMCA	70.0	70.0	0.0	0.0
All MPAs Combined	13.4	13.6	0.3	0.3

MPA	Total	
	Combined	
	January 1 December 31 All Years	January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023
Control OW	11.2	7.3
Point Dume SMCA	158.0	101.9
Point Dume SMR	101.7	65.8
Control OE	64.5	29.8
Control PVON1	9.7	8.3
Point Vicente SMCA	22.4	15.8
Abalone Cove SMCA	58.8	29.1
Control PVOS1	30.3	14.7
Casino Point (Catalina Island) SMCA	370.0	370.0
Lover's Cove (Catalina Island) SMCA	76.7	76.7
All MPAs Combined	80.3	53.7

*NOTE: Catalina Island MPAs are included in Tables 1-3 but were not included in overall analysis. See Catalina Island MPAs section below for details.*

## 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 MPAs 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 MPAs 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.

## BREAKDOWN BY MPA

### Point Dume State Marine Reserve

Point Dume became a State Marine Reserve (SMR) in 2012 as part of the third phase of the California Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA). Point Dume SMR is located at Point Dume in Malibu, California, and encompasses a total of 7.53 square miles. Classified as an SMR, all take is strictly prohibited in this MPA. With panoramic views and miles of visibility down the Malibu coast, Point Dume is known today as an ideal location for hiking, rock climbing, and beach recreation.

Centuries before the settlement of Spanish missionaries in the area, the Indigenous Chumash tribe inhabited Point Dume. Living closely in relation to their natural environment, the Chumash treated Point Dume as a sacred place and a sun shrine. Point Dume's significance relates directly to its position, as it juts out into the Pacific Ocean. Chumash people used the top of Point Dume as a lookout to observe seasonal migrations of marine mammals, schools of fish, and movements of people along the coastline.<sup>1</sup>

After seeing an all-around increase in activity incidence in 2022 across all MPAs, including in the Point Dume SMR, activity incidence dropped back down to rates similar to earlier years in 2023 (Table 3). Activity incidence across all types in this MPA decreased by 45% from 2022 to 2023 (Tables 1&2). Both offshore and onshore consumptive activity remained very low at 0.1 incidences per survey mile, the same as 2022 (Tables 1&2). Consumptive activities, while only making up 0.3% of all activity in this MPA, included sandy beach hand collection of biota, sandy and rocky beach hook and line fishing, commercial line fishing from a boat, and unknown fishing. The most common activities in this MPA in 2023 were sandy beach recreation (75%), surfing (8%), rocky beach recreation (6%), offshore recreation (2%), and animals off leash on a sandy beach (2%).

As reported mid-way through 2023, tidepooling was more common here than in any other MPA surveyed this past year, a departure from previous years' trends where Abalone Cove SMCA had the highest numbers of observed tidepoolers. These changes are most likely due to the reopening of transect SMR2a, which has allowed for surveying Dume Cove for the first time in two years. This transect accounted for 67 of the 189 total observations of tidepooling in this MPA during the survey period. In years past, surveying in this MPA was difficult due to multiple transect closures caused by barriers to access from construction and beach loss from rising sea levels and beach erosion. Those transects remained open though the duration of 2023, greatly increasing our team's ability to survey this MPA. In 2023, 128 surveys were conducted in Point Dume SMR, an impressive 85% increase from 2022 and a continuing upward trend from years prior. As we have seen and reported before, this increase is most likely due to increased access with the reopening of the Point Dume trails/Dume Cove and Westward Beach transects, and is a true testament to how important coastal access is for MPA monitoring success and the need for immediate sea level rise mitigation in the Malibu area and beyond.

### **Point Dume State Marine Conservation Area**

Located adjacent to the Point Dume State Marine Reserve, Point Dume SMCA encompasses 15.92 square miles and runs along Zuma and El Matador beaches in Malibu, CA to the northwest of Point Dume. Adopted in 2012 along with Point Dume SMR during phase three of the MLPA adoption process, this MPA was chosen as the location for an SMCA due to diverse habitats, high species diversity, and monitoring & research opportunities. Similar to the Point

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<sup>1</sup> Robinson, T., Draft Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration - Point Dume Natural Preserve (2003). Retrieved from [https://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/980/files/Point Dume MND\\_ Draft2.pdf](https://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/980/files/Point_Dume_MND_Draft2.pdf)

Dume SMR, this site plays a significant role in Chumash maritime culture and is well suited for tribal co-management, maritime cultural preservation, and education and outreach.

As a conservation area, Point Dume SMCA does allow for some consumptive activity. The recreational take by spearfishing of white seabass and pelagic finfish is permitted, along with the commercial take of swordfish by harpoon and coastal pelagic species by round haul net, brail gear, and light boat. There is an incidental take limit of no more than 5% by commercial fishing activity, and take pursuant to beach nourishment and sediment management practices is also permissible.

In keeping with previous years and the all-year trend, Point Dume SMCA had the most recorded activity of all survey sites in LA County in 2023 with 54% of recorded activities (Figure 1a). Also similar to previous years and the all-year average, in 2023 this MPA had the highest activity incidence rate across all activities (101.9 activities observed per mile surveyed) of all four MPAs and control sites, indicating it is the most heavily trafficked site (Table 3). While we observed a large increase in activity incidence in 2022, that incidence rate has dropped back down in 2023 by 24% (Table 3). This same trend remains true for onshore non-consumptive activity incidence rate which also decreased from 2022 rates of 100.9 to 70.8 activities observed per survey mile in 2023 (Table 1). Offshore non-consumptive activity incidence remained relatively unchanged (Table 2). Onshore consumptive activity incidence increased slightly from 0.1 to 0.2 observations per survey mile (Table 1) while offshore consumptive activity incidence remained at zero (Table 2).

Consumptive activity remains very low in this MPA and accounted for only 0.2% of all recorded activities in 2023 (Figure 2a). These consumptive activities included sandy beach hand collection of biota, sandy and rocky beach hook and line fishing, and recreational line fishing from a boat. The most common activities in this MPA in 2023 were largely unchanged from previous years and included sandy beach recreation (68%), surfing (17%), offshore recreation (9%), other board sports (3%) and animals on leash (1%). As with Point Dume SMR, the number of surveys conducted in this MPA increased again this year with 120 total surveys conducted.

### **Point Vicente No-Take State Marine Conservation Area**

Point Vicente State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) is a no-take MPA established in 2012. This MPA protects key habitats and covers fifteen square miles. Home to the Point Vicente Lighthouse and 3.7 miles of scenic shoreline, Point Vicente attracts many tourists. Beach access in this MPA is limited which makes beach recreation and other activities less common, however, tourists can still enjoy the views and occasional wildlife viewing from the bluff trails. As a no-take SMCA, no recreational or commercial take is permitted within its boundaries. Specially permitted incidental take for infrastructure maintenance is legally permissible.



As with the last few years, volunteers surveyed Point Vicente SMCA the most out of all the MPAs in 2023 with a total of 161 surveys, making up 28% of the total number of surveys conducted, but only 5% of the total activities observed (Figure 1a). Consistent with trends from recent years and the all-year totals, Point Vicente SMCA had more observed offshore activity than any other LA MPA in 2023, making up 45% of the total observed activity, up from 34% in 2022 (Figure 2c). Consistent with 2021 and 2022, consumptive activity accounted for a total of 5% of the activities observed in 2023, remaining the highest percentage of consumptive activity of all LA County MPAs both this year and across all years (Figure 2c). Total activity incidence decreased slightly in this MPA from 17.2 observations per survey mile in 2022 to 15.9 observations per survey mile in 2023 (Table 3).

Onshore consumptive activity increased slightly from zero to 0.1 activities observed per survey mile (Table 1). Offshore consumptive activity also increased slightly from 0.6 activities per survey mile in 2022 to 0.7 activities per survey mile in 2023 (Table 2). This is consistently the highest offshore consumptive activity rate of all the MPAs in the LA region. The vast majority of the consumptive activity recorded in this MPA was unknown fishing (4% of total activity) with a few counts of rocky beach hook and line fishing. Because most of these consumptive activities were reported as unknown fishing, they were not recorded as potential violations, an important caveat to the further information provided in the “Potential Violations” section on page 10. Across all activity types, the most common activities remain relatively unchanged in this MPA and included rocky beach recreation (34%), power boating (11%), other boating (10%), sailing (7%), and wildlife viewing (7%).

### **Abalone Cove State Marine Conservation Area**

Located adjacent to Point Vicente SMCA, Abalone Cove SMCA spans just 1.2 miles of shoreline and encompasses only 4.7 square miles. The smallest of the MPAs in LA County, this protected area is located south of the Palos Verdes Peninsula. It was adopted in 2012 and along with Point Vicente SMCA, includes the only south-facing headland in the entire region. The shoreline of this MPA is known for its rocky intertidal habitat. As an SMCA, Abalone Cove SMCA does allow some take of marine organisms. Within the MPA boundaries, the recreational take by spearfishing of white seabass and pelagic finfish; and market squid by hand-held dip net is permitted. The commercial take of swordfish by harpoon; and coastal pelagic species and Pacific bonito by round haul net, brail gear, and light boat are also permitted. Additionally, like Point Vicente SMCA, Abalone Cove SMCA partially contains a superfund site, and therefore take pursuant to the mitigation actions of the superfund site is permitted.

In 2023, consumptive activity continued to further decrease in Abalone Cove SMCA, a repeating trend since 2020. Consumptive activity made up only 0.3% of all observations in 2023, down from 1% of observations in 2022, 2% in 2021 and 4% in 2020 (Figure 2d). Onshore consumptive activity dropped from 0.1 observations per survey mile in 2022 to zero observations in 2023 (Table 1) with no tidepool collection activities being observed for a second year in a row. Offshore consumptive activity dropped from 0.3 observations per survey mile in 2022 to only 0.1 observations per survey mile in 2023 (Table 2). Total activity in this MPA is

below the all-year average across all activity types (down to 29.1 from 58.8 observations per survey mile) and decreased from last year by 25% (Table 3). The limited consumptive activity in this MPA included unknown fishing and offshore spearfishing, which is permitted in this MPA, meaning no potential violations were recorded for this MPA. The most common activities observed in Abalone Cove in 2023 were rocky and sandy beach recreation (44% and 22% respectively), tidepooling (7%), kayaking (7%), and power boating (5%).

### **Catalina Island: Lover's Cove SMCA and Casino Point No-Take SMCA**

Catalina Island hosts nine of the state's MPAs protecting around 22 square miles of coastal and marine habitat. At this time, select Heal the Bay volunteers and interns have access to four MPA Watch transects on Catalina: Blue Cavern, Cat Harbor, Lover's Cove, and Casino Point. Casino Point, the state's smallest MPA at just 0.01 square miles, is located in Avalon. This MPA is a "no-take" state marine conservation area or SMCA and does not allow for any take of any kind, including all fishing activities. This MPA does allow, however, the feeding of fish, an included regulation unique to the island. Lover's Cove SMCA, also located in Avalon, is also a small MPA at only 0.06 square miles. This SMCA prohibits all take except for recreational hook and line fishing from Cabrillo Mole. Feeding of fish for marine life viewing, similarly to Casino Point, is allowed.

Each of these MPAs contains one MPA Watch transect and, over the course of this program, have only been surveyed a couple of times. Therefore, we have elected not to include any summary of this data as there is insufficient data to analyze. We hope to include analyses of this data in future reports.

## **POTENTIAL VIOLATIONS**

While some consumptive activities are permitted in LA County MPAs, this metric is a good place to start when looking at compliance and possible violations in MPAs, particularly state marine reserves and no-take state marine conservation areas. The rate of consumptive activities across all LA MPAs surveyed by MPA Watch remains relatively low in LA County main-shore MPAs, consistent with previous reporting. Consumptive activities accounted for only 1% of total activities in these MPAs in 2023, equivalent to 2022 and down from 2% in both 2021 and 2020. The highest rates of consumptive activity in mainland LA County occurred at control site PVON1 and PVOS1, located at the northern boundary of Point Vicente SMCA and the southern boundary of Abalone Cove SMCA respectively.

Other than Point Vicente SMCA, consumptive activity incidence rates were below 0.2 observations per survey mile both onshore and offshore in LA County MPAs, a good indication of compliance in our protected areas. This reporting does not include the activity rates for the Catalina MPAs of Casino Point SMCA and Lover's Cove SMCA. Due to new surveying in Catalina from MPA Watch interns over the summer of 2023, our program's data shows a high incidence rate of onshore consumptive activity for the Lover's Cove SMCA, with a rate of 6.7 incidences per survey mile of onshore consumptive activity. As noted in previous reports, this

data came from a single survey taken at this site and should not be considered on its own as evidence of abnormally high consumptive activity in this area and is being otherwise excluded from the analysis in this report. Observations consisted of hook and line fishing, a permitted activity in parts of this MPA and not a recorded potential violation.

MPA	January 1 December 31 All Years	January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023
Control OW	0	0
Point Dume SMCA	428	23
Point Dume SMR	571	16
Control OE	0	0
Control PVON1	0	0
Point Vicente SMCA	384	5
Abalone Cove SMCA	319	0
Control PVOS1	0	0
Casino Point (Catalina Island) SMCA	0	0
Lover's Cove (Catalina Island) SMCA	0	0
All MPAs Combined	1,724	44

*Table 4: Raw counts of observed potential violations by MPA Watch volunteers for all years of MPA Watch compared to 2023. These do NOT include observed “unknown fishing” as these cannot be deemed potential violations without further information.*

Of the observed consumptive activities across all LA County MPAs, 44 observations were deemed violations, or about 0.2% of total observations, the same percentage as 2022. Violations were observed in 3 of the 4 mainland MPAs monitored by MPA Watch in LA County (Table 4). Observations were made across 21 surveys, accounting for 4% of total surveys conducted, slightly up from 3% of surveys in 2022 but down from violations observed in 6% of total surveys in 2021 and 8.5% of surveys in 2020.

It is important to note that this count of violations excludes nearly all of the consumptive activity observed in the Point Vicente no-take SMCA as most of these observations were marked as “unknown fishing” and not included in the total potential violation count due to lack of further information. This may be an underestimate of the total observations of violations as, in that MPA, absolutely no take is allowed and therefore even unknown fishing could be a violation. If unknown fishing counts are added back into the totals for the no-take MPAs in LA County (Point Vicente SMCA and Point Dume SMR), then the total counts become 42 observations for Point Vicente SMCA and 20 observations for Point Dume SMR, making the new total count of possible violations 85 observations, or 0.4% of all activities observed. This is an important distinction, and the high counts of unknown fishing reported this year from volunteers indicate a possible need for better boat identification skills to ensure as much information as possible about potential noncompliance in our MPAs is being collected.

Of the potential violation observations made in 2023, only one was formally reported and that was a CalTIP call made by an MPA Watch intern. This is a large drop in violations reported and

a bit concerning for our leadership team. We have implemented multiple measures in an effort to increase CalTIP reports for observed violations by our volunteers, including practice calls during trainings and sample call scripts for volunteers. Despite these efforts, our CalTIP calls remain low. We hope to brainstorm with the broader MPA Watch community to develop additional tools and are beginning to experiment with direct outreach to volunteers who observe but do not report violations to better understand why the calls are not being made and offer resources to encourage the additional reporting.

## **PROGRAM STATUS AND UPDATES**

Heal the Bay's MPA Watch Program had a very successful year in 2023. Our hybrid training program remains effective. Heal the Bay has surpassed 1100 volunteers trained over the past twelve years and successfully used this system to train 45 new volunteers this year. Although the number of newly trained volunteers and active volunteers was lower than last year, our volunteers submitted 576 surveys this year, the most since 2016. Our survey rates (surveys conducted per volunteer) were the highest since 2015. Our new volunteer email protocol for our quality assurance procedure has drastically increased volunteer email response rate and subsequent surveys submitted for approval. We successfully increased survey rates and number of surveys submitted, showcasing the importance of time spent engaging volunteers we have already trained to build a strong and dedicated volunteer base, rather than focusing solely on high recruitment rates.

We started using a Discord server as a volunteer communication tool, where we provide program announcements and encourage community building and connection across our program. Nearly half of our active volunteer base (21 volunteers) uses this program to communicate and engage with our team and each other. We also continue to send out monthly MPA Watch newsletters, check-in with registered new volunteers on training prerequisites, and encourage volunteers to start surveying if they have not completed a survey within the last 3-5 months. We also successfully relaunched our partnership with the Eagle Lab at UCLA this year to collect sea water samples in Malibu MPAs for environmental DNA (eDNA) scientific testing. We began hosting monthly eDNA water sampling events in April of 2023, where we trained community scientists on sample collection protocols that will be used to analyze the quantification of biodiversity in a standardized way within a marine ecosystem. This has further increased stewardship of our Marine Protected Areas and we have noticed increased interest in our MPA Watch program from eDNA event participants. We had 50 volunteers participate at our eDNA sampling events in 2023. Our UCLA team partners are finalizing the analysis of the data from our first 2-year study and results will be available soon.

Heal the Bay's MPA Watch program is currently participating in an intercept survey working group with other MPA Watch Statewide Network members to contribute to the understanding of human dimensions within and around MPAs. This new survey has the potential to complement and enhance our existing human use data beyond observational surveys. We have met monthly

starting in June of 2023 and are about to finalize the survey. We believe our MPA Watch Internship program will be integral in piloting the intercept survey. Heal the Bay's MPA Watch Internship continued this year with 3 successful cohorts of 7 interns total.

Our team continues to track sea level rise around LA County MPAs through anecdotal observations and we participated in the City of Malibu's Coastal Risk Assessment workshop, using our field observations from our MPA Watch surveys to provide useful information on the shoreline's changes. We are currently working on updating the MPA Watch Field Guide to make sure field conditions are up to date and consistent with shoreline changes. For more information on these future projects, please see the "Next Steps" section, below.

### NEXT STEPS

Looking forward to 2024, Heal the Bay's MPA Watch team will host 4 public training sessions using our permanently-adopted hybrid training model. We plan to strategize methods and tools to make volunteers more prepared to report observed violations, as noted above, to increase our CalTIP call rates.

Our team plans to take what we learned this year and continue to focus a good amount of energy on strengthening our volunteer relationships, engagement and retention. We will continue to use our Discord server as a communication tool and provide our volunteers with more opportunities to engage. We will continue our MPA Watch internship program this year and utilize interns to pilot the new intercept survey. We plan to continue to promote our MPA Watch program to more inland and diverse communities and not just coastal neighborhoods by working with clubs at different high schools and community colleges to provide them with research and field opportunities.

As sea level rise changes our coastline, we plan to update our field guide annually. Rising seas present a unique challenge to monitoring MPAs from the shore and we will need to regularly update our training information to ensure accuracy and volunteer safety. We will be releasing an updated manual in February 2024 that will contain transect specific updates, including updated photos, transect directions, accessibility ratings, and more. We will continue to share our observations with the Malibu Coastal Vulnerability project team to ensure that sea level rise mitigation is made a priority and that community science and MPA monitoring impacts are considered along with broader impact analysis.

Additionally, we will be partnering with the Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples (SPI), an Indigenous-led, community-based organization located in the ancestral homelands of the Tongva People in Los Angeles and a participant in multiple statewide MPA management pillars. We will be working with SPI to complete an "Indigenization" of our MPA Watch program, including our training materials and public communication. We are looking forward to the final products of this partnership, including an updated manual that will contain information on the

Indigenous nations whose land and coastal waters we survey, updated training slides, and other new inclusions to our overall program to be finalized in 2025.

Finally, we look forward to continuing our second year collaborating with UCLA to monitor the biodiversity of our Malibu MPAs. We plan to continue our monthly environmental DNA (eDNA) events with PhD candidate Moriah Byrd. We hope to publish some preliminary results that we will share widely with the public, MPA managers, and partner organizations.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

LA County MPA Watch is part of a larger statewide MPA Watch effort. For more information about this program, please visit [www.mpawatch.org](http://www.mpawatch.org). If you are interested in joining the Heal the Bay MPA Watch volunteer team, please attend one of our volunteer orientations for more information. Volunteer orientations are held bimonthly, and are a prerequisite to attending one of our quarterly MPA Watch trainings.

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.

To learn more about Heal the Bay's MPA Watch Program and to register for an orientation or training, please visit [healthebay.org/mpa](http://healthebay.org/mpa). For information on California's network of marine protected areas, please visit [californiampas.org](http://californiampas.org). For details on the rules, regulations, and management of California's MPAs, please visit [wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs](http://wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs).

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**MPA Watch Volunteer Trainings:** Left - Terranea, June 2023; Middle - Point Dume, May 2022; Right – Westward Beach, November 2023

