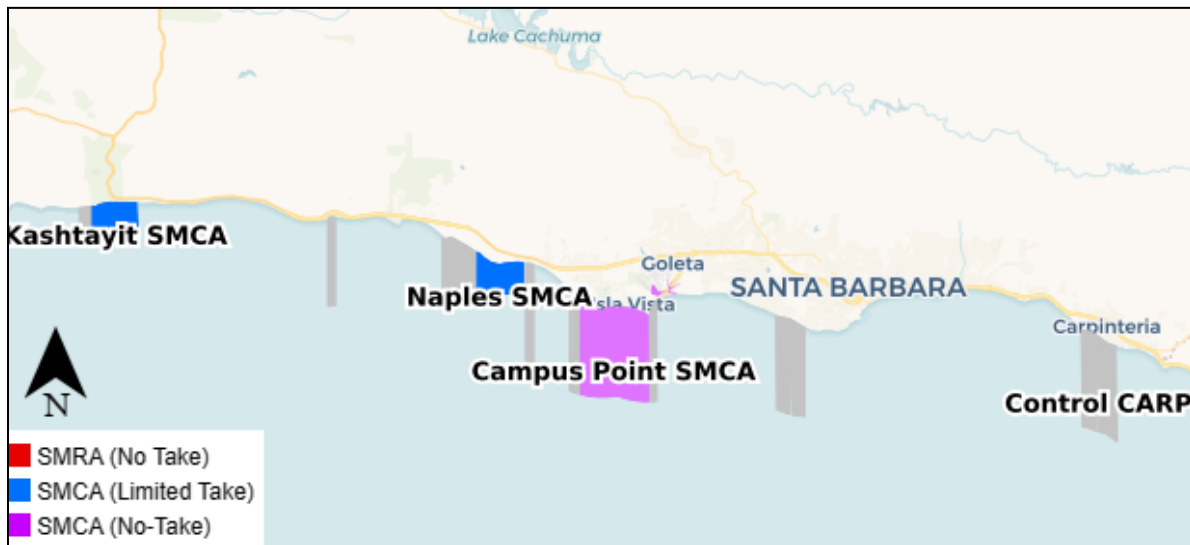




## Marine Protected Area (MPA) Watch Regional Report

Santa Barbara County - Chumash Lands  
January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023



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 Santa Barbara Marine Protected Area (MPA) Watch Program, organized by Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, engages community scientists in conducting surveys in three MPAs in southern Santa Barbara County—Campus Point State Marine Conservation Area, Naples State Marine Conservation Area, and Kashtayit State Marine Conservation Area. Additional MPA Watch surveys are also conducted by California State Parks staff at Kashtayit State Marine Conservation Area (Gaviota State Beach).

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Non-consumptive activities (onshore and offshore) account for 98.27% of observations in the Campus Point, Naples, and Kashtayit MPAs.
- While most of the reported activities were non-consumptive, volunteers report potential poaching is still a problem, especially shore-based hook and line fishing in the western portion of Campus Point SMCA near the Ellwood Bluffs and take of mussels and scallops at Kashtayit SMCA.
- Channelkeeper trained 60 community members about MPAs and MPA Watch during the January to December 2023 time period.

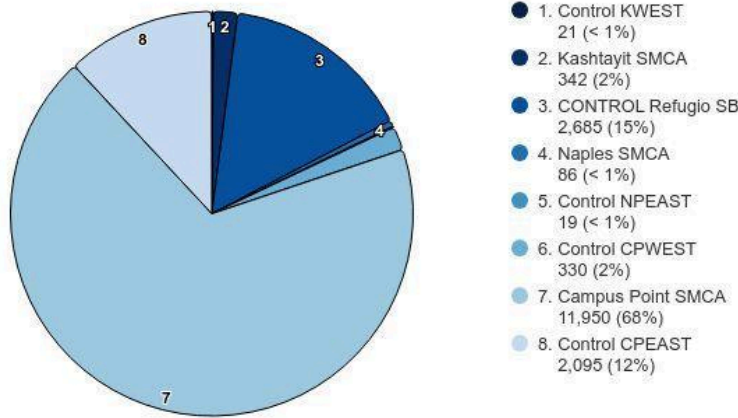
## HUMAN USE OF MPAS

January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023

### OVERVIEW

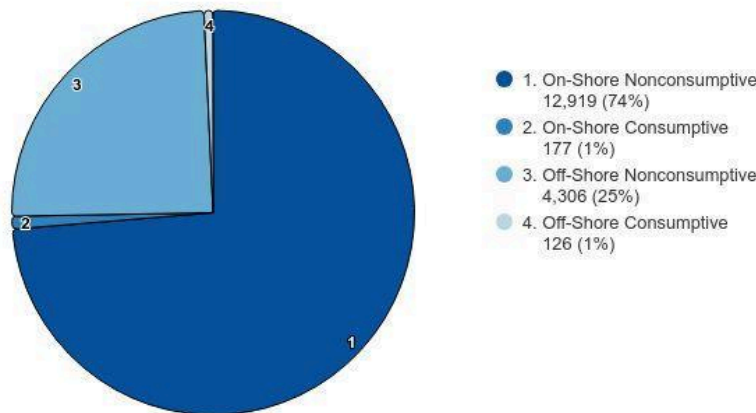
#### Top 8 MPAs by All Activity

January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023  
17,528 total activity events



#### All MPAs Combined

January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023  
17,528 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.

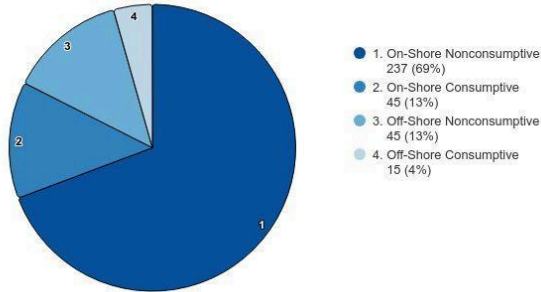
**Consumptive** - An activity in which a natural resource (i.e. fish, kelp, shells) is being collected.

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

## ACTIVITY BY MPA

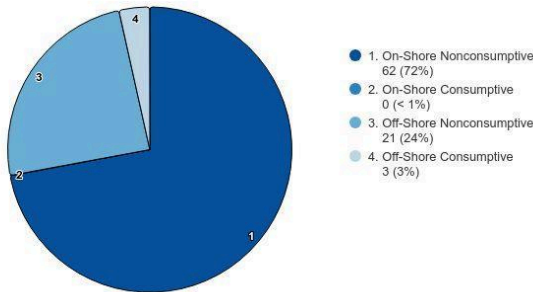
### Kashtayit SMCA

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



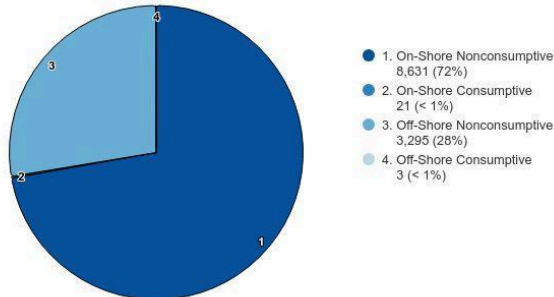
### Naples SMCA

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



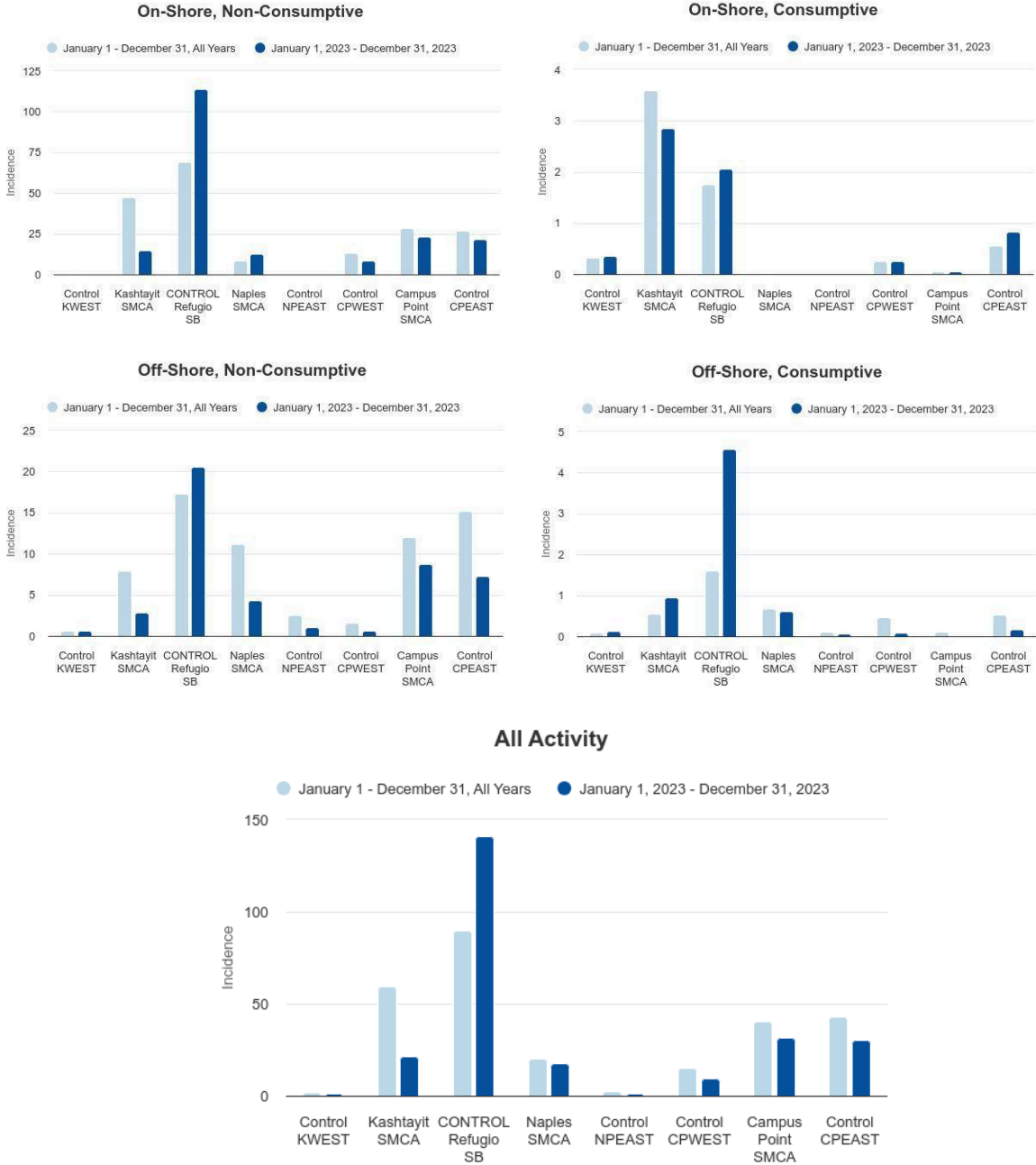
### Campus Point SMCA

January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023  
11,950 activity events



## ACTIVITY INCIDENCE BY MPA

### INCIDENCE BAR CHARTS



The above charts show incidence values for each MPA monitored by MPA Watch in Santa Barbara County. Incidence is calculated as 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 KWEST	0.6	0.2	0.3
Kashtayit SMCA	47.7	15.0	3.6	2.8
CONTROL Refugio SB	69.3	114.2	1.8	2.1
Naples SMCA	8.6	12.7	0.0	0.0
Control NPEAST	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Control CPWEST	13.2	8.5	0.3	0.3
Campus Point SMCA	28.5	23.0	0.1	0.1
Control CPEAST	27.0	21.8	0.6	0.8
All MPAs Combined	30.9	23.3	0.4	0.3

MPA	Off-Shore			
	Non-Consumptive		Consumptive	
	January 1 June 30 All Years	January 1, 2023 through June 30, 2023	January 1 June 30 All Years	January 1, 2023 through June 30, 2023
	Control KWEST	0.5	0.7	0.0
Kashtayit SMCA	4.2	1.0	0.2	0.0
Naples SMCA	10.6	1.3	0.5	0.0
Control NPEAST	2.4	0.7	0.0	0.0
Control CPWEST	1.1	0.4	0.3	0.2
Campus Point SMCA	10.4	8.1	0.1	0.0
Control CPEAST	13.3	6.8	0.3	0.1
All MPAs Combined	9.4	6.7	0.1	0.0

MPA	Total Combined	
	January 1 December 31 All Years	January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023
	Control KWEST	1.7
Kashtayit SMCA	59.7	21.6
CONTROL Refugio SB	89.9	141.3
Naples SMCA	20.4	17.6
Control NPEAST	2.8	1.1
Control CPWEST	15.5	9.5
Campus Point SMCA	40.7	31.8
Control CPEAST	43.2	30.1
All MPAs Combined	42.6	31.6

### 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**

### **Kashtayit SMCA**

During the January- December 2023 time period, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper Marine Protected Area (SB MPA) Watch volunteers and State Park volunteers conducted 79 surveys within the SMCA. In the first part of the year, there were limited surveys of the Kashtayit MPA as the Gaviota State Park beach, which one of the surveys falls into, was closed for several months due to damage from the January 2023 winter storms. The road that accesses the western portion of the MPA was also closed for a period of time due to storm damage.

Overall, the total use rate at Kashtayit SMCA was 21.6 for 2023, which is significantly lower than the average of previous years (59.7). This is likely a result of the State Park beach being closed for the first 6 months of the year. Sandy beach recreation accounted for 67% of all observations, followed by onshore hook and line fishing at 13% of observations. Kashtayit SMCA allows for the recreational take of most species except for mussels and scallops.

State Parks also shared this update from their staff conducting surveys at Kashtayit:

Recreational activities are the main observations at Kashtayit SMCA. Individuals use the MPA as an access point for recreational fishing and surfing at locations along Hollister Ranch and towards Point Conception. Recreational boaters and jet ski will launch from the shore. Increased surf activity will typically result in an increase in boating activity. Kayaking is another popular recreational activity, where most individuals launch from Gaviota to go fishing within MPA boundaries. Visitation for beach recreation is low in winter months as the campground is closed and access to the beach is limited. Collection of mussels(not allowed in the MPA) are observed and have been recorded.

### **Naples SMCA**

In January- December 2023, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper Marine Protected Area (SB MPA) Watch volunteers conducted 49 surveys within the Naples State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) and 43 surveys outside of the MPA on the eastern border.

During 2023, MPA Watch surveys from Naples MPA observed lower levels of activity, both onshore and offshore, than the previous few years which saw an increased total use count. The total use count per mile for this time period was 17.6 while in comparison it was 38.2 for 2022. Part of this decrease in observed activity could also be due to the winter storms, which limited access to the beach at Naples MPA. There was one observation of active kelp harvesting by a kelp harvesting boat, which is allowed in the MPA.

### **Campus Point SMCA**

In January- December 2023, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper Marine Protected Area (SB MPA) Watch volunteers conducted 575 land-based surveys within the Campus Point State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) and 174 surveys outside of the MPA on the eastern and western borders.



Between January and December 2023, Santa Barbara MPA Watch data shows a rate of 31.8 total use count per total miles surveyed in the Campus Point SMCA. This rate of total use is lower than the average over all years (average 40.7 total users per miles surveyed). Nonconsumptive onshore activities (primarily beach recreation on sandy substrate) accounted for 72% of all observations in 2023. Offshore nonconsumptive activities accounted for 28% of all observations with surfing at 21% of all observations. There were also 1,309 observations of tidepooling (1% of all observations). Potential violations observed include 17 counts of hand collection of biota throughout the MPA and four observations of shore-based recreational hook and line fishing in the western portion of the MPA.

## **SANTA BARBARA COUNTY MPAs BOAT-BASED SURVEYS**

January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023

In addition to the shore-based MPA Watch surveys, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper staff conduct offshore surveys from the Research Vessel *Channelkeeper* of Campus Point and Naples MPAs. Surveys are also conducted at control sites for two miles on the eastern and western areas adjacent to the Campus Point and Naples MPAs. Channelkeeper has conducted boat-based surveys of these two coastal MPAs since 2013.

As conditions permit, surveys are also conducted at the northern Channel Islands including Anacapa, Santa Cruz, and Santa Rosa Islands in the following MPAs: Anacapa SMCA, Anacapa SMR, Painted Cave SMCA, Carrington Point SMR, Skunk Point SMR, Gull Island SMR, Footprint SMR, and Scorpion SMR. Control surveys are conducted for two miles on either side of the MPAs at the Channel Islands as well. Channelkeeper began conducting surveys at the Northern Channel Islands in 2019.

During boat MPA Watch surveys SBCK documents all consumptive and non-consumptive boating activity, as well as all fishing and other consumptive activities observed taking place on or in the water, as well as all onshore fishing and any other consumptive activity occurring in and around the MPA's, including control areas. Channelkeeper staff are present and conduct all surveys.

Due to an exceptionally stormy winter and typical windy and foggy conditions in the spring resulting in numerous small craft advisories and gale warnings, fewer boat surveys were conducted than planned for during this time period. Channelkeeper completed 13 coastal boat MPA Watch surveys of Campus Point and Naples SMCAs and two Channel Island survey trip during 2023 (Scorpion SMR, Footprint SMR, Anacapa SMCA, Anacapa SMR).

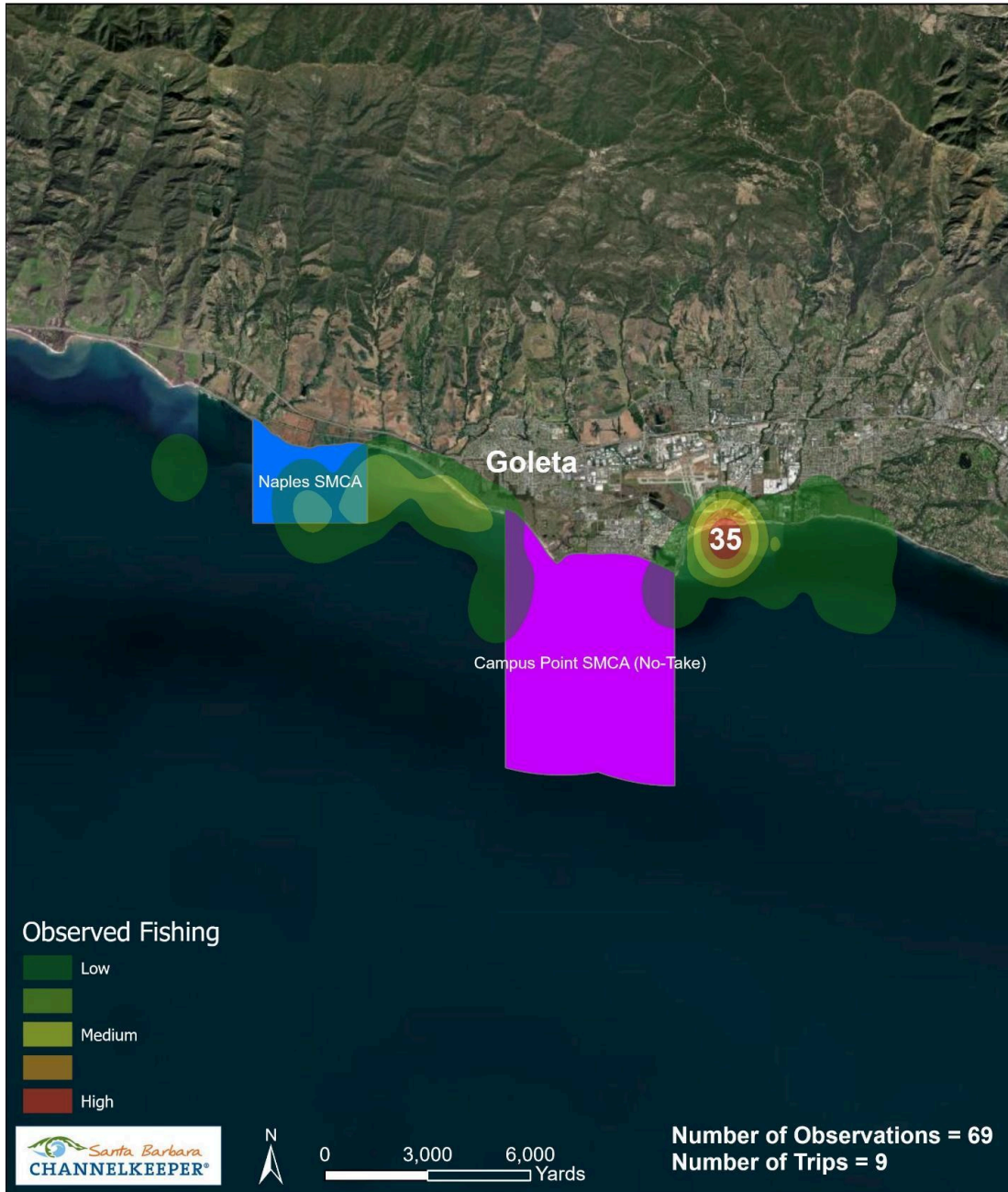
One potential violation was observed during the boat-based surveys conducted during 2023 at the Naples SMCA. A jet ski was observed with two people on it hook and line fishing just inside of the eastern border of the MPA. The potential violation was reported from the water to CalTIP.

For the coastal boat-based surveys of Campus Point and Naples MPAs, recreational hook and line fishing from the Goleta Pier in the control survey is the most observed activity and most recent surveys documented recreational hook and line boats fishing just offshore of the pier as well.

At the Northern Channel Islands, the most observed activity was recreational kayaking inside the Scorpion MPA at Santa Cruz Island followed by fishing (hook and line) in the Anacapa Gap area outside of the Footprint MPA and east of the Scorpion MPA.

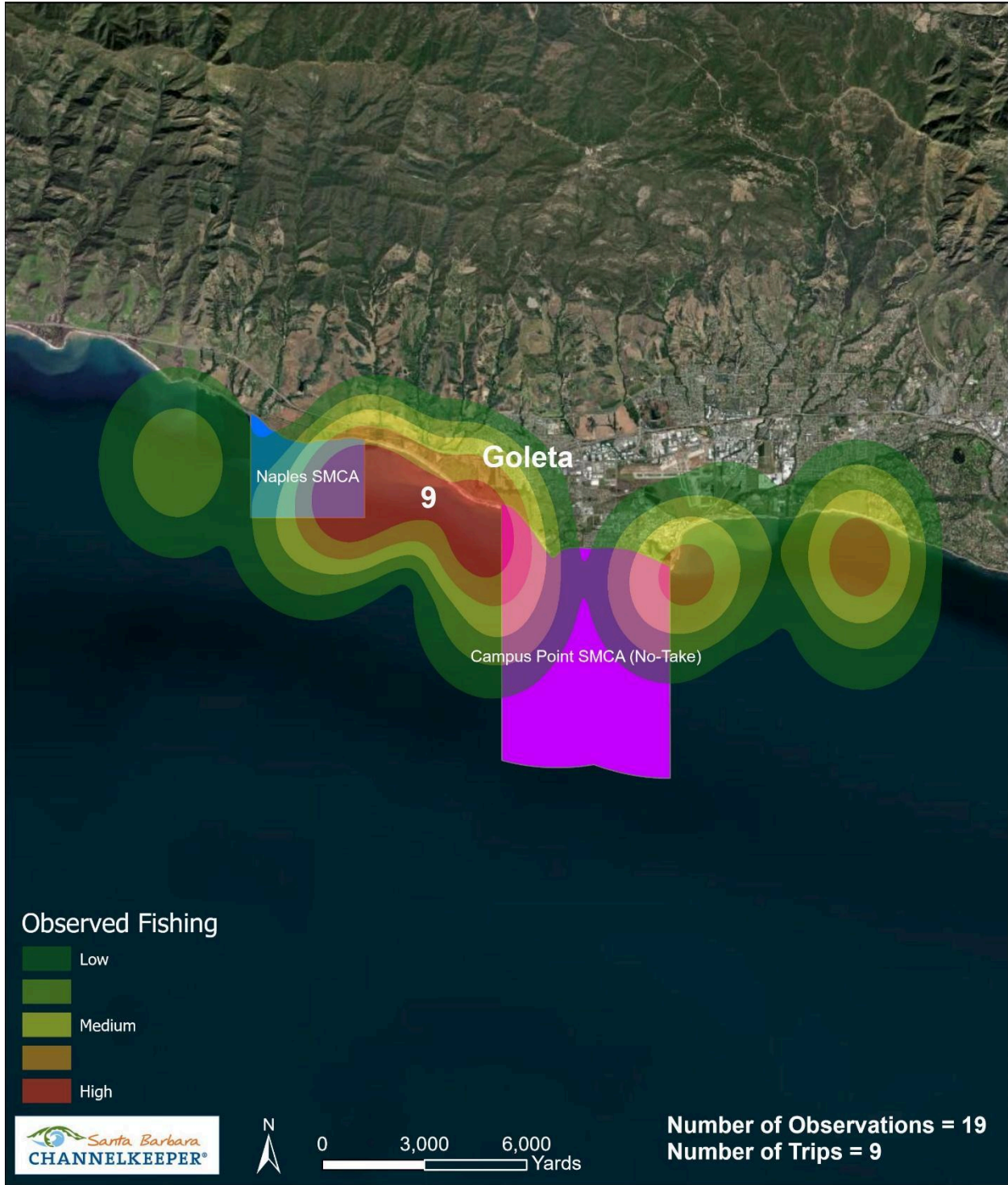
The following heat maps reflect the boating activity observed during coastal boat-based surveys for July – December 2023.

## Jul - Dec 2023 All Fishing Activity Santa Barbara

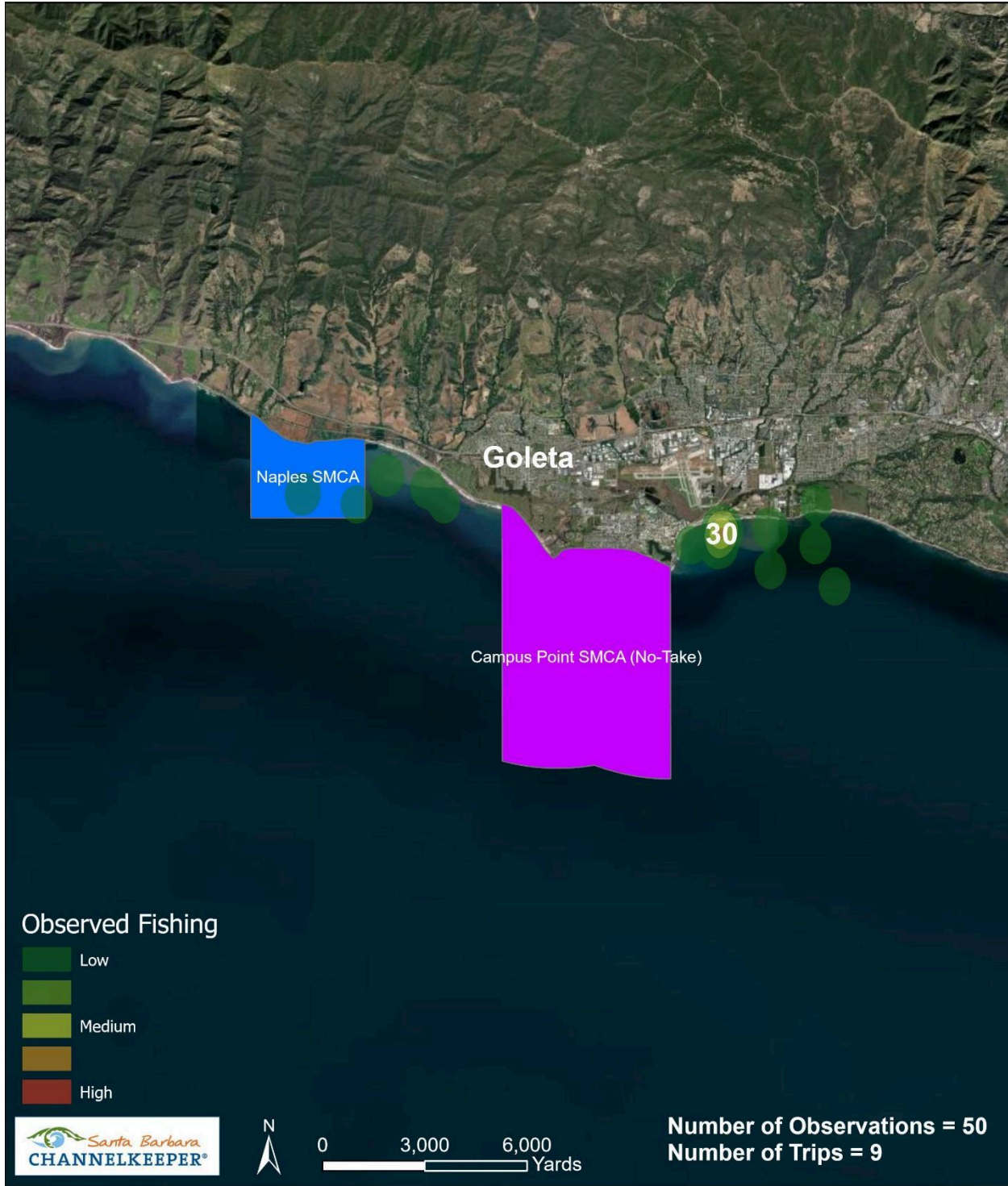




# Jul - Dec 2023 Commercial Fishing Activity Santa Barbara



# Jul - Dec 2023 Recreational Fishing Activity Santa Barbara





## POTENTIAL VIOLATIONS

Rate of consumptive activities observed in Kashtayit, Naples, and Campus Point MPAs remains relatively low accounting for less than 1.73% of all observations recorded by shore-based surveys. In the Campus Point (No-Take) SMCA, shore-based MPA Watch volunteers observed four potential violations of shore-based hook and line fishing activity in the western portion of the MPA and seventeen observations of hand collection of biota.

State Parks staff reported that take of mussels and rock scallops are observed regularly at different locations within the Kashtayit MPA. Take of these species is prohibited at Kashtayit. These potential violations are not documented in MPA Watch surveys but do regularly occur at varying access points. The locations have been questionable as they are “on the line” of the MPA. Individuals use Kashtayit SMCA as an access point for fishing further up the coast towards Point Conception. Dogs off-leash and on the beach are another violation (of State Beach regulations) at Kashtayit and occur frequently.

One potential violation was observed during the boat-based MPA Watch surveys conducted on the Channelkeeper vessel at MPAs along the coast; no potential violations were observed at the Northern Channel Islands during this time period. The potential violation along the coast, observed at the Naples SMCA, was a jet ski with two people hook and line fishing inside the eastern side of the MPA. This observation was reported to CalTIP.

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

Channelkeeper will continue to educate and train new MPA Watch volunteers to conduct shore-based surveys at the three coastal MPAs in southern Santa Barbara County. As conditions and weather permits, we will also conduct boat-based surveys of the coastal MPAs at Campus Point and Naples SMCAs and at MPAs in the Northern Channel Islands (Footprint SMR, Anacapa Island SMR and SMCA, and Scorpion SMR).

State Parks plans to continue to train hosts (who are interested) to conduct MPA Watch surveys at the Kashtayit SMCA. Hosts change regularly (3-4 months), so they will continue to support on-going efforts to collect more data. In addition, State Parks plans to incorporate MPA Watch into more of their field trip programs to allow students to help collect data (one survey is collected). They are also currently working on a curriculum that incorporates more community science data and looks toward involving students in the data collection.

## 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](http://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](http://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 Santa Barbara Channelkeeper does to protect and restore the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds, including to monitor and build support for local MPAs, please visit [sbck.org](http://sbck.org).