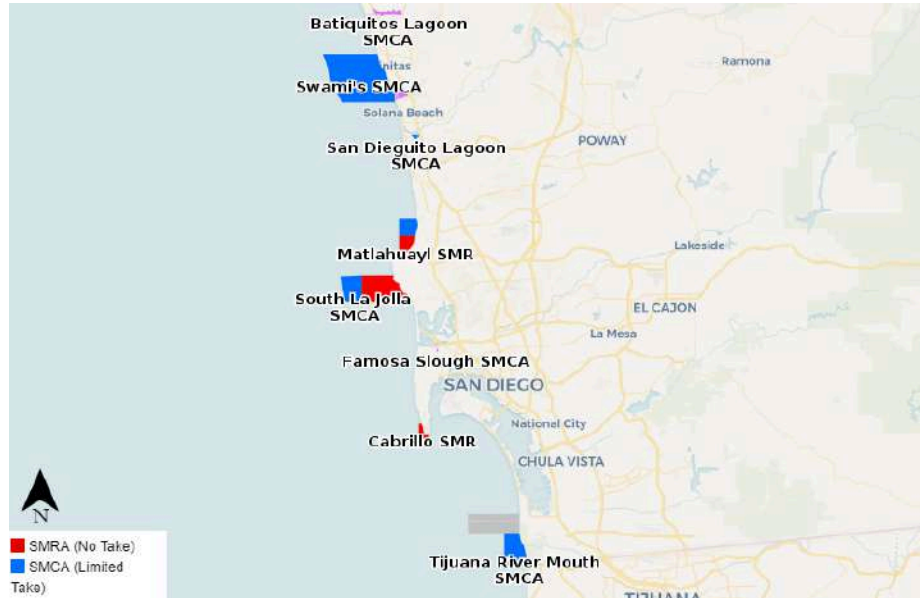




**Marine Protected Area (MPA)
Watch Regional Report
San Diego County
January 1, 2024 - June 30, 2024**



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 and CA State Parks in five MPAs in San Diego County, including Swami's SMCA, San Diego- Scripps Coastal SMCA, Matlahuayl SMR, South La Jolla SMR, and the Tijuana River Mouth SMCA.

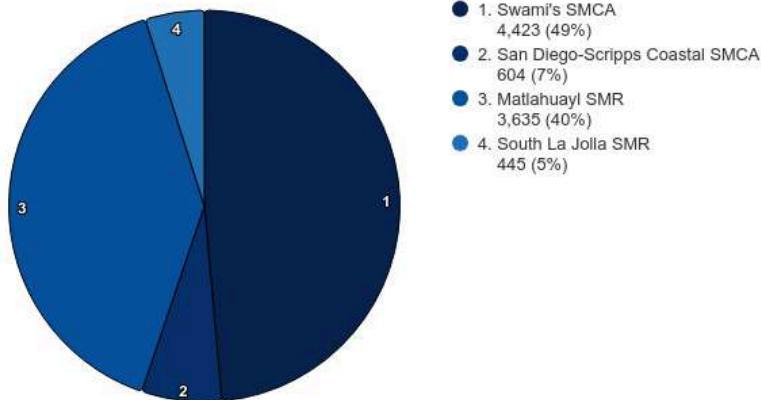
Executive Summary

- From January to June of 2024 in San Diego County, 93 land-based surveys were conducted by 10 volunteers with 9,107 activities observed, 30 of which were potential violations. Surveys were conducted in the Swami's SMCA, San Diego Scripps-Coastal SMCA, Matlahuayl SMR, and South La Jolla SMR.
- Non-consumptive activities (onshore and offshore) account for 99.3% (9050 / 9107) of observations in the 4 MPAs listed above.
- 29/30 potential violations recorded were the hand collection of biota.

HUMAN USE OF MPAS January 1, 2024 - June 30, 2024

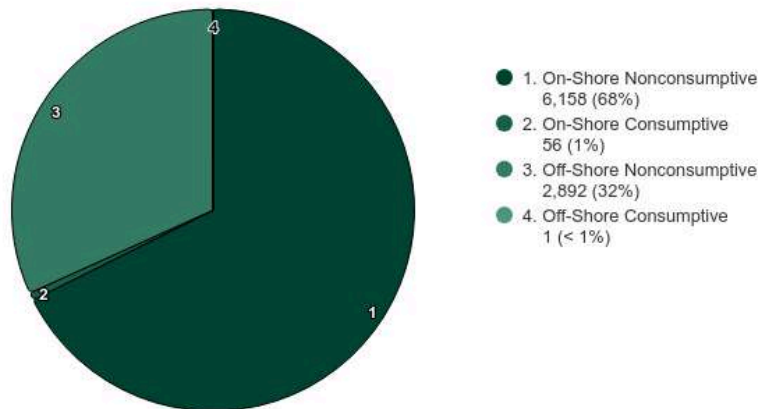
Top 4 MPAs by All Activity

January 1, 2024 - June 30, 2024
9,107 total activity events



All MPAs Combined

January 1, 2024 - June 30, 2024
9,107 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.

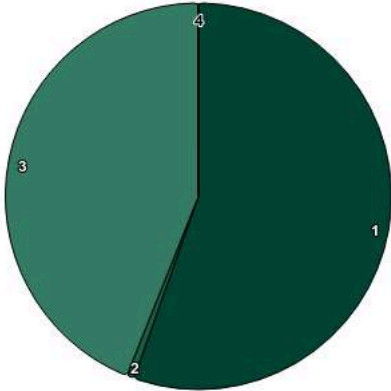
Non-Consumptive - An activity in which a natural resource is not collected.



ACTIVITY BY MPA

Swami's SMCA

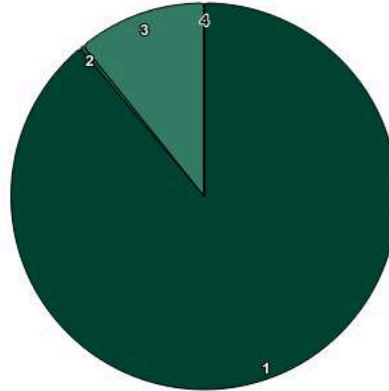
January 1, 2024 - June 30, 2024
4,423 activity events



- 1. On-Shore Nonconsumptive
2,452 (55%)
- 2. On-Shore Consumptive
27 (1%)
- 3. Off-Shore Nonconsumptive
1,944 (44%)
- 4. Off-Shore Consumptive
0 (< 1%)

San Diego-Scripps Coastal SMCA

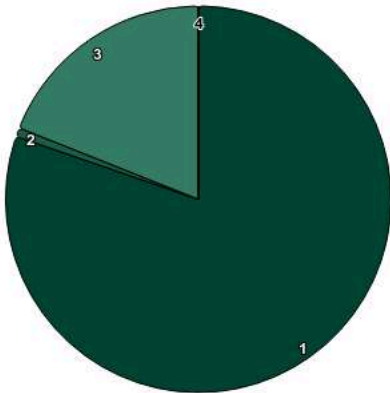
January 1, 2024 - June 30, 2024
604 activity events



- 1. On-Shore Nonconsumptive
537 (89%)
- 2. On-Shore Consumptive
2 (< 1%)
- 3. Off-Shore Nonconsumptive
65 (11%)
- 4. Off-Shore Consumptive
0 (< 1%)

Matlahuayl SMR

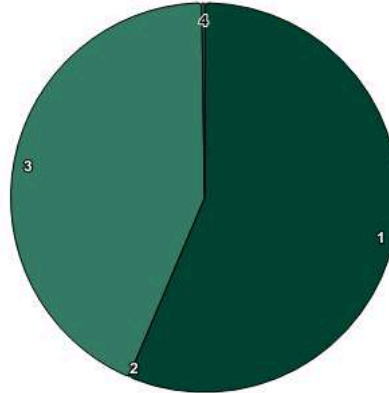
January 1, 2024 - June 30, 2024
3,635 activity events



- 1. On-Shore Nonconsumptive
2,918 (80%)
- 2. On-Shore Consumptive
27 (1%)
- 3. Off-Shore Nonconsumptive
690 (19%)
- 4. Off-Shore Consumptive
0 (< 1%)

South La Jolla SMR

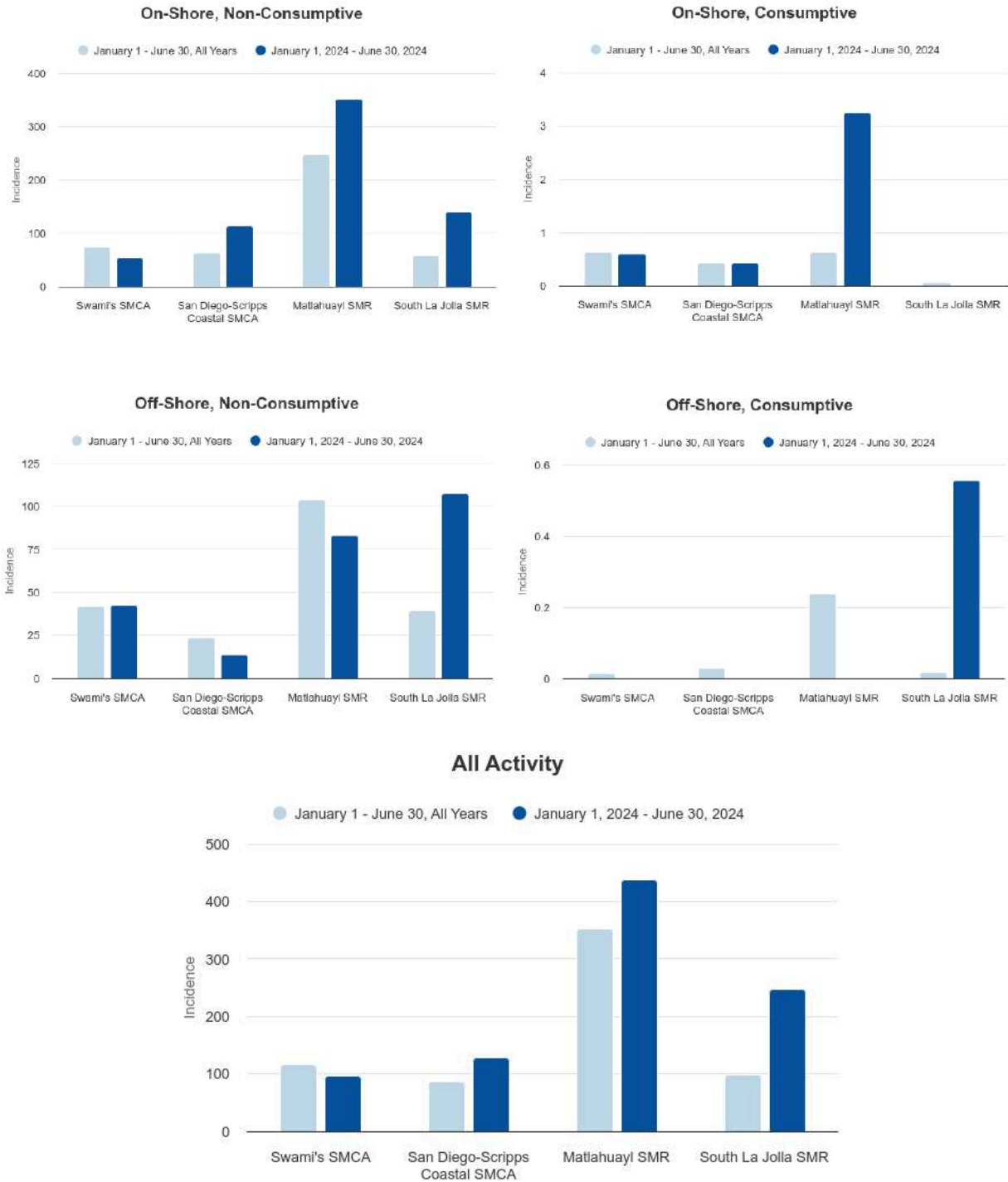
January 1, 2024 - June 30, 2024
445 activity events



- 1. On-Shore Nonconsumptive
251 (56%)
- 2. On-Shore Consumptive
0 (< 1%)
- 3. Off-Shore Nonconsumptive
193 (43%)
- 4. Off-Shore Consumptive
1 (< 1%)



ACTIVITY INCIDENCE BY MPA



The above charts show incidence values for each MPA monitored by MPA Watch in San Diego County. Incidence is calculated as number of activities recorded divided by total survey-miles.



ACTIVITY INCIDENCE BY MPA

MPA	On-Shore			
	Non-Consumptive		Consumptive	
	January 1 June 30 All Years	January 1, 2024 through June 30, 2024	January 1 June 30 All Years	January 1, 2024 through June 30, 2024
Swami's SMCA	73.9	53.4	0.6	0.6
San Diego-Scripps Coastal SMCA	62.3	114.3	0.4	0.4
Matlahuayl SMR	247.1	351.6	0.6	3.3
South La Jolla SMR	58.1	139.4	0.1	0.0
All MPAs Combined	70.3	101.4	1.1	0.9

MPA	Off-Shore			
	Non-Consumptive		Consumptive	
	January 1 June 30 All Years	January 1, 2024 through June 30, 2024	January 1 June 30 All Years	January 1, 2024 through June 30, 2024
Swami's SMCA	42.0	42.4	0.0	0.0
San Diego-Scripps Coastal SMCA	23.6	13.8	0.0	0.0
Matlahuayl SMR	103.8	83.1	0.2	0.0
South La Jolla SMR	39.3	107.2	0.0	0.6
All MPAs Combined	32.1	47.6	0.2	0.0

MPA	Total Combined	
	January 1 June 30 All Years	January 1, 2024 through June 30, 2024
Swami's SMCA	116.5	96.4
San Diego-Scripps Coastal SMCA	86.3	128.5
Matlahuayl SMR	351.7	438.0
South La Jolla SMR	97.4	247.2
All MPAs Combined	103.7	150.0

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

Note for all MPAs

Provided by Anita Balcar from CA State Parks: January and February 2024 brought storms with high waves. January 10-13, 2024 had extreme tides with high tide reaching over seven feet. February 8-10 high tides over seven feet occurred again.

Swami's State Marine Conservation Area

In the Swami's SMCA, it is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource for commercial and/or recreational purposes, with the following specified exceptions:

- a. Recreational take by hook-and-line from shore is allowed.*
- b. The recreational take by spearfishing of white seabass and pelagic finfish is allowed.*
- c. Take pursuant to beach nourishment and other sediment management activities and operation and maintenance of artificial structures inside the conservation area is allowed pursuant to any required federal, state and local permits, or as otherwise authorized by the Department.*

Between the months of January and June 2024

- 71 surveys collected
- 4,425 activity events recorded.
- 1 potential violation recorded (hand collection of biota)
- 96.4 total use count per total miles surveyed in the Swami's SMCA. This is a 17.17% 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 (99% of all 4,423 observations): both on-shore (55% of all 4,423 observations) and off-shore (44% of all 4,423 observations) including

- Beach recreation (46%), surfing (40%), tidepooling (5%), animals on leash, sandy, (3%), and offshore recreation (2%).

The remaining observations recorded were on-shore consumptive activities (1% of all 4,423 observations)

- Hook fishing, sandy, (1%), hand collection of biota, sandy, (1%- 1 potential violation), hook fishing, rocky, (1%)

Notes from State Parks:

- The transects of Swamis 3b and 4 had an usual disappearance of the sand all together exposing nothing but reef.
- The Cardiff State Beach day use lot was torn up from waves action and cobbles. The leading edge of Cardiff State Beach parking lot adjacent to the sand lost asphalt and the post that the gate should be secured to was gone. The parking lot was undercut very extensively at the South end of the lot and its existing riprap was removed altogether. An extensive amount of cobble stones covered the parking lot all the way to the bathrooms. Sea water also collected in the lot to

the bathrooms. The lot had to be closed for a couple of months before emergency repairs could begin in the spring.

- The living dunes stretch of beach on the transect of Swamis 4 was battered by waves removing large amounts of sand, destroying allocated walkways that lead from the street parking on Hwy 101 thru to the beach. Access to the beach was blocked as the sand level dropped too low, it became an easy six foot drop to get to the actual beach. The trailing edges of the wooden fencing had been destroyed as well.
- Waves at South Cardiff State Beach aka Seaside Beach breached the sidewalk all along the beach and water with an extensive amount of cobbles and sand made its way to the bathrooms at the far backside of the lot. A skip loader had to be used to clear the cobbles and sand from the lot. This procedure had to be repeated several times.
- After the dredging of the lagoon mouth and ¼ mile into the lagoon's waterway the beach was replenished and the San Elijo Lagoon waters were able to flow freely into the ocean by the end of March 2024. The sand was used to re-cover exposed rip rap that lay beneath the living dune on Swamis 4.
- For Swamis 3a, 3b, and 4 transects recreational surfing was commonly observed during surveys. Potential violations of dogs of leash were mostly seen by MPA Watchers on the Swamis 4 transect where they approached violators to leash their dogs and the individuals were compliant.
- The city of Solana Beach used a barge offshore and other equipment to suck up sand from offshore and replenish the beach near Pillbox at Lifeguard Headquarters. The City of Encinitas used the same equipment and procedure to replenish Moonlight Beach with sand from offshore. With that, Swamis 3a and 3b fill in with sand within two weeks covering the reef completely.

San Diego-Scripps Coastal State Marine Conservation Area

In the San Diego-Scripps SMCA, It is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource for commercial and/or recreational purposes, with the following specified exceptions:

- a. The recreational take of coastal pelagic species, except market squid, by hook-and-line is allowed.*
- b. Take pursuant to the operation and maintenance of artificial structures inside the conservation area is allowed pursuant to any required federal, state, and local permits, or as otherwise authorized by the Department.*
- c. Licensees of the Regents of the University of California and all officers, employees, and students of such university may take, for scientific purposes, invertebrates, fish, or specimens of marine plant or algae under the conditions prescribed in a scientific collecting permit issued by the Department.*

Between the months of January and June 2024

- 11 surveys collected
- 604 activity events recorded.

- 2 potential violations recorded (hand collection of biota)
- 128.5 total use count per total miles surveyed in the SD Scripps Coastal SMCA. This is a 48.90% 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 (97% of all 604 observation): both on-shore (55% of all 604 observations) and off-shore (44% of all 604 observations) including

- Beach recreation, sandy, (65%), tidepooling (18%), surfing (10%), beach recreation, rocky, (2%), and wildlife viewing (1%).

The remaining observations recorded were on-shore consumptive activities (1% of all 604 observations):

- Hand collection of biota, sandy, (1%- 2 potential violations)

Matlahuayl State Marine Reserve

In the Matlahuayl SMR, it is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource.

Between the months of January and June 2024

- 8 surveys collected
- 3,635 activity events recorded.
- 27 potential violations recorded (hand collection of biota)
- 438 total use count per total miles surveyed in the Matlahuayl SMR. This is a 24.54% 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 (99% of all 3,635 observation): both on-shore (80% of all 3,635 observations) and off-shore (19% of all 3,635 observations) including

- Beach recreation, sandy, (79%), surfing (9%), offshore recreation (6%), kayaking (3%), and driving (1%).

The remaining observations recorded were on-shore consumptive activities (1% of all 3,635 observations):

- Hand collection of biota, sandy, (1%- 27 potential violations)

South La Jolla State Marine Reserve

In the South La Jolla State Marine Reserve (SMR), it is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource.

Between the months of January and June 2024

- 3 surveys collected
- 445 activity events recorded.

- 1 potential violation recorded - (unknown fishing) (however, the M2 RADAR recorded 67 off-shore potential violations: showing the need for more surveys conducted at this site)
- 438 total use count per total miles surveyed in the South La Jolla SMR. This is a 24.54% 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 (99% of all 445 observation): both on-shore (56% of all 445 observations) and off-shore (43% of all 445 observations) including

- Beach recreation, sandy, (56%), surfing (29%), offshore recreation (7%), other board sports (6%), other boating (1%).

The remaining observations recorded were off-shore consumptive activities (1% of all 445 observations):

- Unknown fishing (<1% - 1 potential violation)

South La Jolla State Marine Conservation Area

In the South La Jolla State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA), it is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource for recreational and/or commercial purposes, with the following specified exceptions:

- a. The recreational take of pelagic finfish by hook-and-line only is allowed.*

This MPA is off shore of the South La Jolla SMR and therefore not connected to land.

Tijuana River Mouth State Marine Conservation Area

In the Tijuana River Mouth SMCA, it is unlawful to injure, damage, take, or possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource for recreational and/or commercial purposes, with the following specified exceptions:

- a. The recreational take of coastal pelagic species, except market squid, by hand-held dip net only and the commercial take of coastal pelagic species, except market squid, by round haul net only. finfish by hook-and-line only is allowed.*

Between the months of January and December 2023, there were no land-based surveys conducted by San Diego MPA Watch in the Tijuana River Mouth SMCA. There have been recurring issues with beach closures at the Tijuana River Mouth SMCA due to poor water quality resulting from sewage contamination.

San Diego County MPAs Boat-based Surveys **January – June 2024**

In addition to the shore-based MPA Watch surveys, WILDCOAST staff conducts offshore surveys from the Research Vessel *Under-See* of South La Jolla SMR, Matlahuayl SMR, and Scripps SMCA. Surveys are also conducted between the South La Jolla SMR and Matlahuayl SMCA. As conditions permit, surveys are also conducted at the Swami's SMCA.

During boat MPA Watch surveys WILDCOAST 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. WILDCOAST staff are present and conduct all surveys.

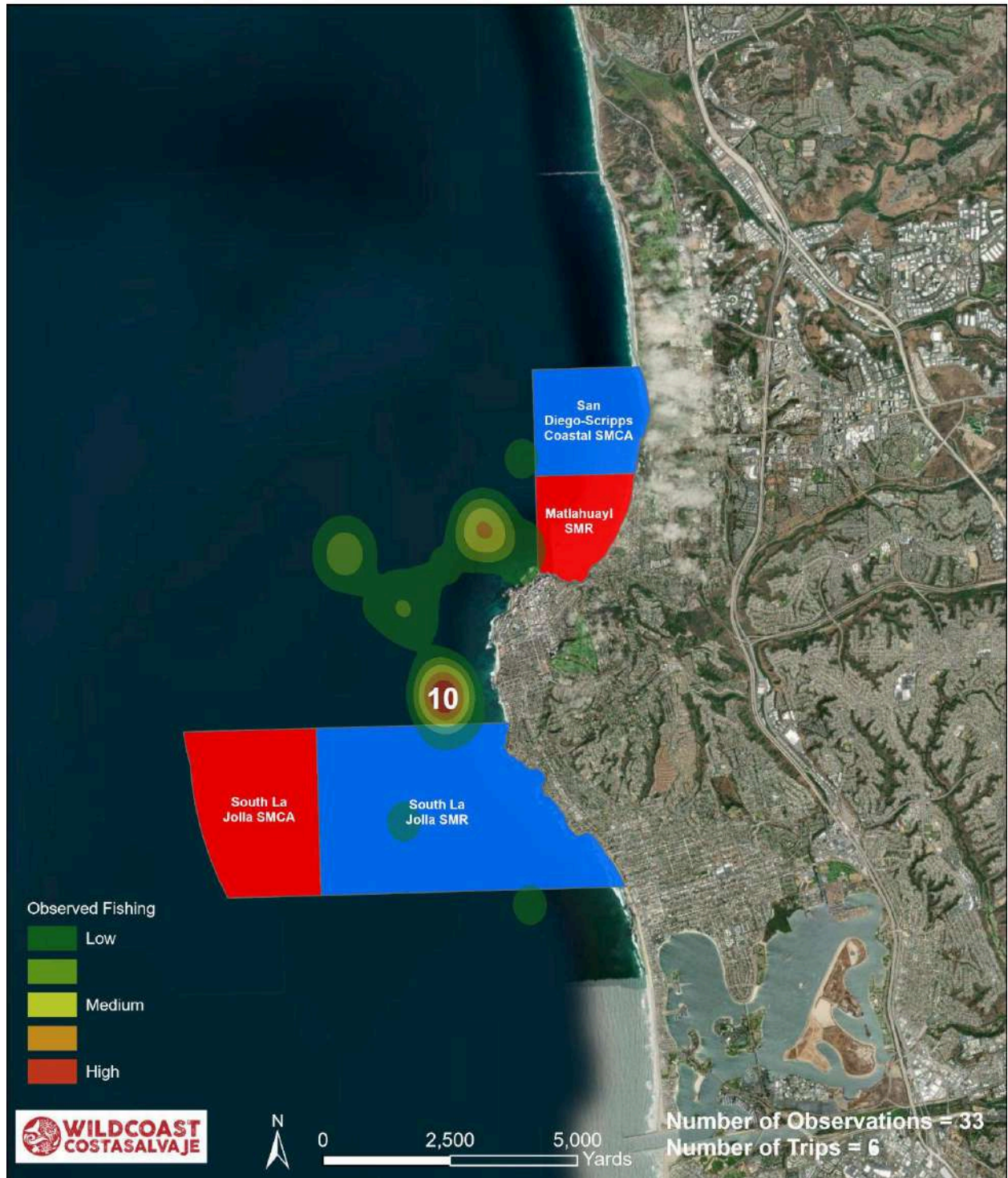
Due to regular boat maintenance that had the vessel out of the water for a period in the winter, as well as winter storms and typical windy and foggy conditions in the spring that resulted in numerous small craft advisories and gale warnings, fewer boat surveys were conducted than planned for during this time period. WILDCOAST completed 9 coastal boat MPA Watch surveys of South La Jolla SMR, Matlahuayl SMR, and Scripps SMCA.

There was one potential violation observed during the coastal boat-based surveys conducted during January to June 2024 time period. This potential violation occurred in the South La Jolla SMR on May 24, 2024 at 8:33am. There was an aluminum skiff fishing inside the SMR. The WILDCOAST team called the potential violation into CalTIP.

For the coastal boat-based surveys, recreational hook and line fishing off Point La Jolla/ just north of the South La Jolla SMR in the control area is the most observed activity (80% of vessels seen). The second most observed activity is commercial fishing off Point La Jolla in the control area (16% of vessels seen). The following heat map reflects fishing activity observed during coastal boat-based surveys for January to June 2024. The next heat map reflects the potential violation observed in the South La Jolla SMR.

It is important to note that San Diego has 3 Marine Monitor (M2) RADARs overlooking the South La Jolla SMR/SMCA, Matlahuayl SMR, Scripps SMCA, and Swami's SMCA. These RADARs show that the South La Jolla SMR is hit the hardest with potential violations, with numbers much greater than what has been recorded during MPA Watch surveys. The data from the RADARs suggest that weekends are the most common time to see potential violations, so WILDCOAST makes an effort to conduct surveys at this time. Please contact lillie@wildcoast.org with questions regarding these RADARs and the compliance issues they have recorded.

Jan - Jun 2024 All Fishing Activity San Diego



Jan - Jun 2024 Reported Violations San Diego



POTENTIAL VIOLATIONS

From shore-based surveys, 30 potential violations were observed. The majority of which were hand collection of biota.

- Swami's: 1 potential violation recorded (hand collection of biota)
- Scripps: 2 potential violations recorded (hand collection of biota)
- Matlahuayl: 27 potential violations recorded (hand collection of biota)
- South La Jolla: 1 potential violation recorded (unknown fishing)
 - However, as mentioned, the M2 RADAR recorded 67 off-shore potential violations from Jan - June: showing the need for more surveys conducted at this site)

NEXT STEPS

In San Diego County, WILD Coast is working with selected interns to conduct more frequent and accurate surveys. An effort will be made to conduct more surveys in South La Jolla as the M2 RADAR has shown a high number of potential violations so far this year, which is not reflected in on-shore MPA Watch data.

In addition, WILD Coast has begun conducting intercept surveys in partnership with UC Davis and OC Coastkeeper. The collection of surveys for this pilot project will be completed by the fall in order for data analysis to begin.

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.

MPA Watch intends to continue to collaborate with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to distribute MPA Watch reports to regional managers in order to improve the management and enforcement of MPAs. MPA Watch is also looking to expand its network of partner organizations to enhance the scale and scope of MPA monitoring across California. MPA Watch will be making our human use data available on our website to make it accessible to partners, resource agencies, municipalities, and other interested parties. One of the hopes of MPA Watch is that volunteers and community members help spread knowledge and awareness of MPAs to the communities that surround them, inspiring marine stewardship in our populations.

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 WILD COAST does to conserve California's MPAs and other conservation projects please visit wildcoast.org.

PHOTOS



Photos 1 and 2: Erosion and storm damage of Swamis 3b and 4. Showing lack of beach access in January and February. Provided by CA State Parks.



Photos 3 and 4: Erosion and storm damage of Cardiff State Beach with lot closures in January and February. Provided by CA State Parks.



Photo 5: High tide inundation of South Cardiff State beach aka Seaside beach in early 2024. Provided by CA State Parks.

