

Marine Protected Area Watch Regional Report

Los Angeles County Mainland
January 2025 – June 2025



Figure 1

Los Angeles Waterkeeper (LAW) has conducted boat-based surveys of our mainland LA County MPAs located at Point Dume in Malibu, and at Point Vicente & Abalone Cove in Palos Verdes on a consistent basis, 55-80 surveys yearly, since January 2012 when Southern California MPA regulations went into effect. Due to catastrophic events that have plagued LA in 2025 our current effort has been one of the most challenging and humbling of our program's 13-years of covering LA county line to county line.

LAW's MPA Watch boat-based survey program provides accurate research data of all boating, fishing and consumptive activity in and around our MPAs. In addition to providing live on the water observations to compliance agency officers.

LAW's protocol is being replicated in Santa Barbara and San Diego via Santa Barbara Channel Keeper and WILDCOAST. LAW gathers and provides data processing and mappings of all three boat-based programs' data collected. LAW provides data proofing and mappings included in 6- and 12-month reports in the format requested by CDFW since 2014. LAW's effort and the goal of the other MPA Watch boat-based survey efforts is to provide accurate documentation of all consumptive and non-consumptive boating activity, as well as all other consumptive activities observed taking place on or in the water, as well as all onshore fishing and consumptive activity occurring in and around our MPAs.



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LAW also serves as Los Angeles' "Watchdog on The Water" serving as LA's eyes on our coastal waterways providing MPA health and activity updates and collaborative water quality monitoring updates from county line to county line to Government Agencies, NGOs, and the public.

All boat-based surveys include collection of boat types and observed activity, onshore consumptive activity, recreational diving, and all other consumptive in-water activity. Data collected includes accurate GPS locations of all observations not only within MPAs but also in the control areas that extend two miles up and down shore of each MPA's boundary lines.

LAW's boat-based survey results are displayed in our snapshot heat maps of overall fishing efforts. These mappings allow CDFW and allied enforcement to identify hot spots of MPA fishing violations at a glance. Boat-based data collected by LAW continues to assist allied enforcement agency efforts to protect our mainland MPAs in LA County.

An active landslide and water and sewage discharge in the Pt Vicente- Abalone Cove MPA and the complete closure of the Abalone Cove MPA coastline access resulted in low observed fishing and recreational activity in that area.

A toxic harmful algal bloom and resulting domoic acid poisonings of sea life including whales, dolphins, sea lions, birds, bivalves occurred in late December 2024 and continued through May serving to further limit fishing efforts. LAW's monitoring continues.

In late January 2025, a catastrophic fire event in Malibu closed and then limited access to the PT Dume MPA and left behind a sea of toxic material floating offshore halting vessel access to the area through May. Ongoing concerns around continued water toxicity and the questionable health of fish caught in Santa Monica Bay must be considered as factors in ongoing low fishing efforts observed.

Recently, ICE raids on subsistence fishers appear to have influenced the low onshore turnout observed especially after the raids began in May. Ongoing, often contradictory water quality reports serve to dampen the efforts of boaters to get out on the water in general.

LAW navigated these challenges and conducted 18 Boat Based Surveys of LA County MPAs over the first six months of 2025.

Executive Summary

LAW's Marine Programs Director, Michael Quill, PhD., oversaw every LAW boat-based survey that he and members of LAW's MPA Watch Corps witnessed, recorded, and reported all potential violations observed occurring onshore and offshore within MPA boundaries to CalTip, CDFW Wardens, and Rancho Palos Verdes (RPV) and Point Dume Rangers and support staff with live on the water observation information.



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Potential MPA violations observed occurring onshore at the Point Vicente and Abalone Cove MPAs were reported to the RPV Rangers via text, to CalTip via phone call, and directly to CDFW Wardens as appropriate. All onshore Point Dume observed potential violations are reported to CalTip and local Point Dume Ranger support staff as appropriate.

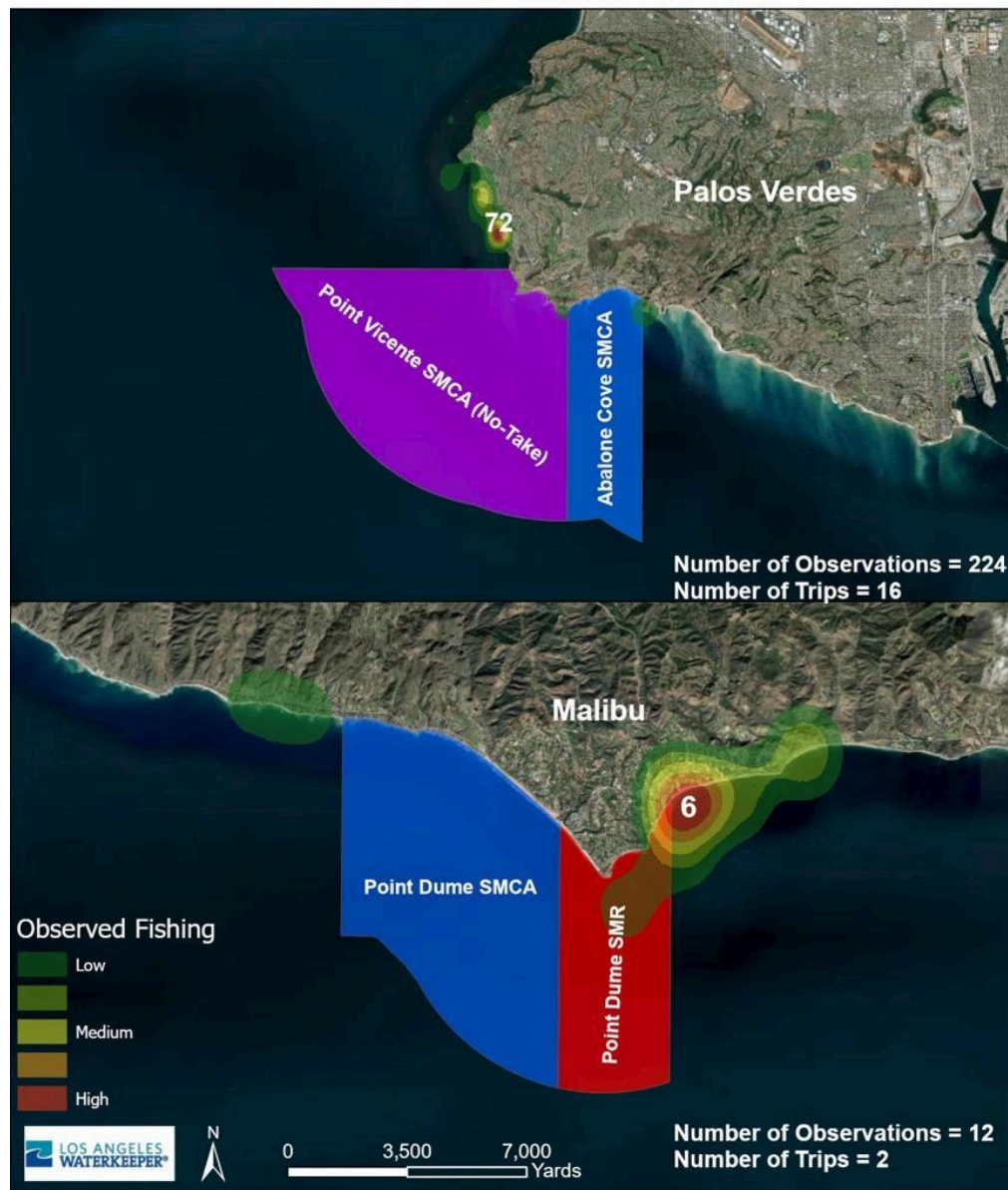
The LAW Watch Corps made up of 25-30 returning volunteers also reported any other observed potential violations to CDFW and the RPV Rangers as appropriate while in transit to our transect beginnings in control areas, though not included in official survey totals. Contact mquill@lawaterkeeper.org for volunteer information.

All on-the-water potential violations were reported to CDFW via CalTip or directly to CDFW Wardens as appropriate. Records of all LAW calls to and contact with RPV Rangers and CDFW Wardens made during LAW's surveys are submitted in this supplemental report: [LAW's 2025 Potential Violations Reported](#)

LA's two catastrophic events, the devastating wildfires in Malibu and the ongoing landslide in Palos Verdes have impacted fishing and recreational use of Santa Monica Bay. LAW's ability to physically cross Santa Monica Bay to safely monitor the Malibu MPAs was prohibited due to hazardous fire run off and debris strewn along the waters of the Malibu coast.

Out of 236 observed fishing data points, only 4 of the 236 were commercial fishing efforts. All activity, fishing and non-consumptive activities such as diving and mooring for pleasure was very low in comparison to the past 13 and a half years of MPA Watch boat-based surveys. As a result, data points were few and mappable images generated were minimal.

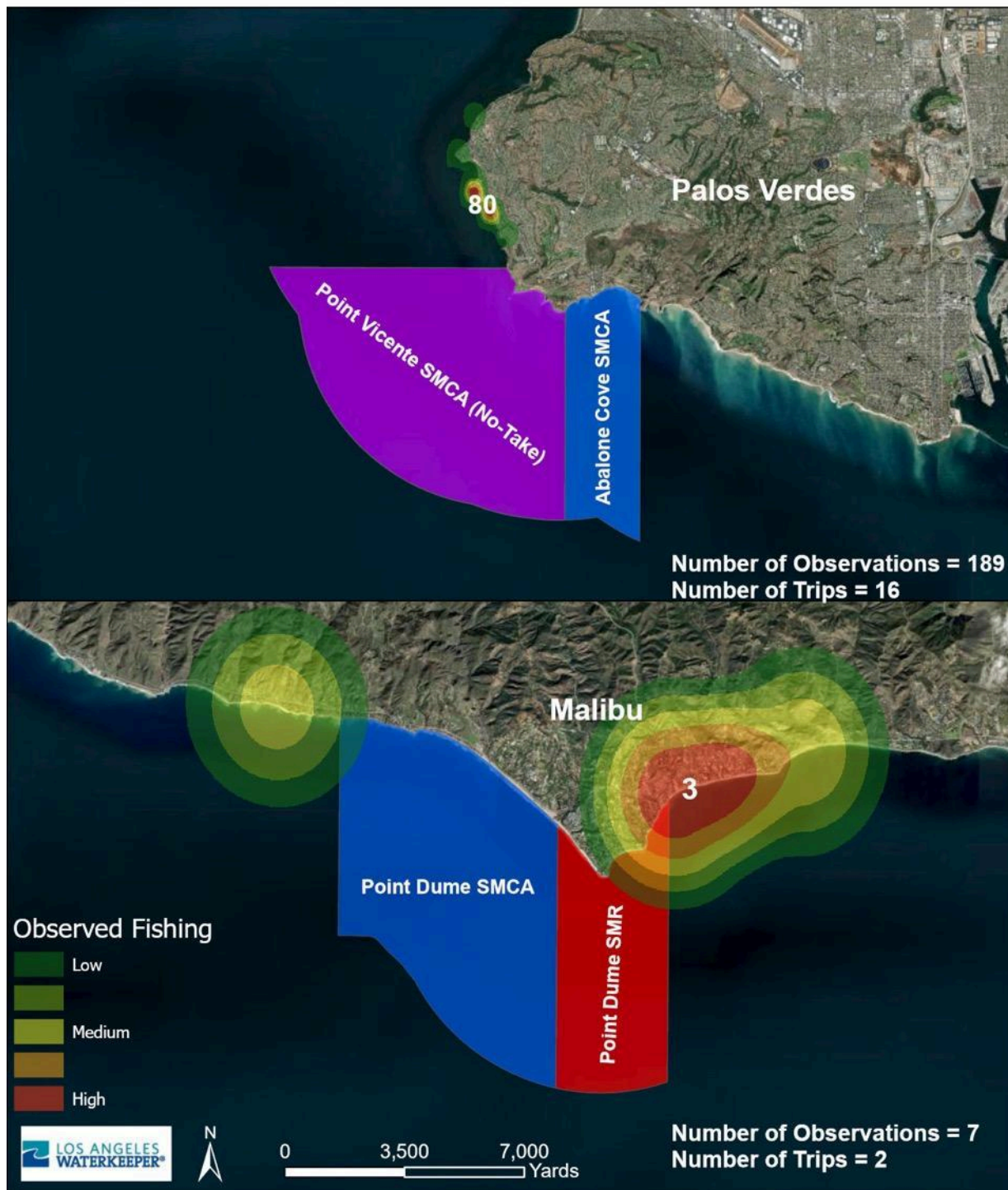
Jan - Jun 2025 All Fishing Activity Palos Verdes and Malibu



• Figure 2

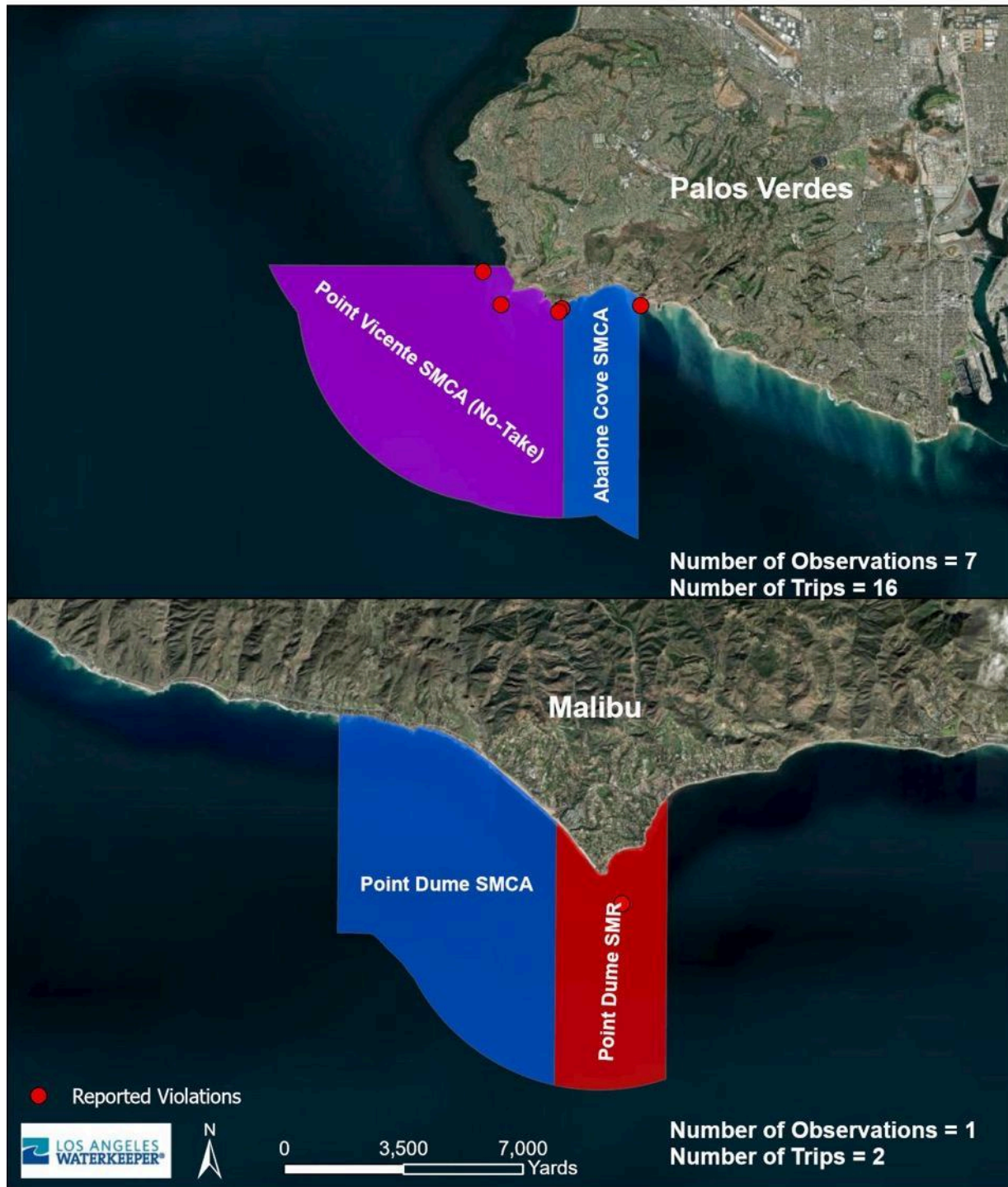
	Palos Verdes 16 Survey Days	Malibu 2 Survey Days
All Fishing	224	12
Recreational	221	11
Onshore	189	7
Commercial	3	1

Jan - Jun 2025 Onshore Fishing Palos Verdes and Malibu



• Figure 3

Jan - Jun 2025 Reported Violations Palos Verdes and Malibu



• Figure 4

Los Angeles Waterkeeper
MPA Community Compliance Liaison



- *Figure 5*

AKA - LA's Water Watchdog

LAW In Action



• *Figure 6*

Thanks Once Again, To Our CA State Park Sister Hannah For This Shot of The Waterkeeper Monitoring Pt Dume's State Marine Reserve



• *Figure 7*

Great to See Our Spearfishing Friends Out On The Water At Abalone Cove SMCA Off Of Terranea



- *Figure 8*

Abalone Cove MPA and Shoreline and Surrounding Areas Closed June 2024 – and Currently Remain Closed in 2025



- *Figure 9*

Ongoing Slides and Discharges Of Various “Liquids” Continue at Abalone Cove and Portuguese Bend

The Earth Is Still Moving –A New Substrait Continues To Emerge Off Shore



• *Figures 10 & 11*

The Conservation Corps of Long Beach

Joined LAW's MPA Volunteer Corps In 2025



• Figure 12

Yes, It Is A Long 4- 6 Hour Day On The Water,
Crew Napping On The Way Home Is Encouraged



• Figure 13

LAW Provides MPA Materials to Fuel Docks, Bait and Tackle Shops and Fishers – On-The-Water and Off-The-Water

For Waterkeeper MPA Corps Information Contact

Dr. Michael Quill, LAW Marine Programs Director
mquill@lawaterkeeper.org @ecopsychq @lawaterkeeper

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 **this link:** wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs. If you see an activity that violates MPA regulations, please call CalTip to report the potential violation at (888)-334-2258