

Marine Protected Area (MPA) Watch Regional Report

Marin County

January 1, 2026 - June 30, 2026

Map of Region's MPAs



MPA Watch is a statewide collaborative effort to collect critical human use data to enhance the management and conservation of California's marine protected areas (MPAs). MPA Watch collects data inside and outside of MPAs along California's coast and data is compiled in a statewide database that allows us insight on how human uses change over time. MPA Watch trains volunteers to observe and collect unbiased data on coastal and marine resource use through standardized survey techniques. By involving local communities in this important work, MPA Watch programs inspire and empower stewardship, educate California communities about ocean ecosystems, and increase awareness of marine conservation.

Executive Summary

- This document shows data from all of Marin County, including Environmental Action Committee Marin, State Parks, and Beach Watch project, a joint program of the Greater Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries and Greater Farallones Association. This report highlights those sites that are surveyed by Marin MPA Watch, Environmental Action Committee's MPA Watch program.
- In Estero de Limantour, visitation remains low, but a small number of consumptive activities were recorded, which is unusual for this site and not allowed in the SMR.

Marin County MPA Watch Report

January 1, 2026 - June 30, 2026



- No activities (incidence rate of 0) were observed in Point Reyes SMR.
- In Control Point Reyes South (Limantour Beach), the most common activity (rate 14.64) was Sandy Beach Recreation, which was almost double the rate from 2025.
- Duxbury Reef, had the highest portion of activities (68%) within Marin MPA Watch survey locations. Tidepooling was the highest activity rate (14.91), though it was less than last year's tidepooling rate (22.08). Onshore, non-consumptive uses comprised 96% of activities. There were 19 observations of hand collection of biota which is not allowed in the SMCA.
- At Corte Madera Marsh, recreation held the highest incidence (5.26 per survey mile) at this site, then driving (biking) was 2.37, animals (dogs) on-leash (1.05) and other boating (ferry) was 0.53.

HUMAN USE OF MPAS, January 1, 2026 - June 30, 2026

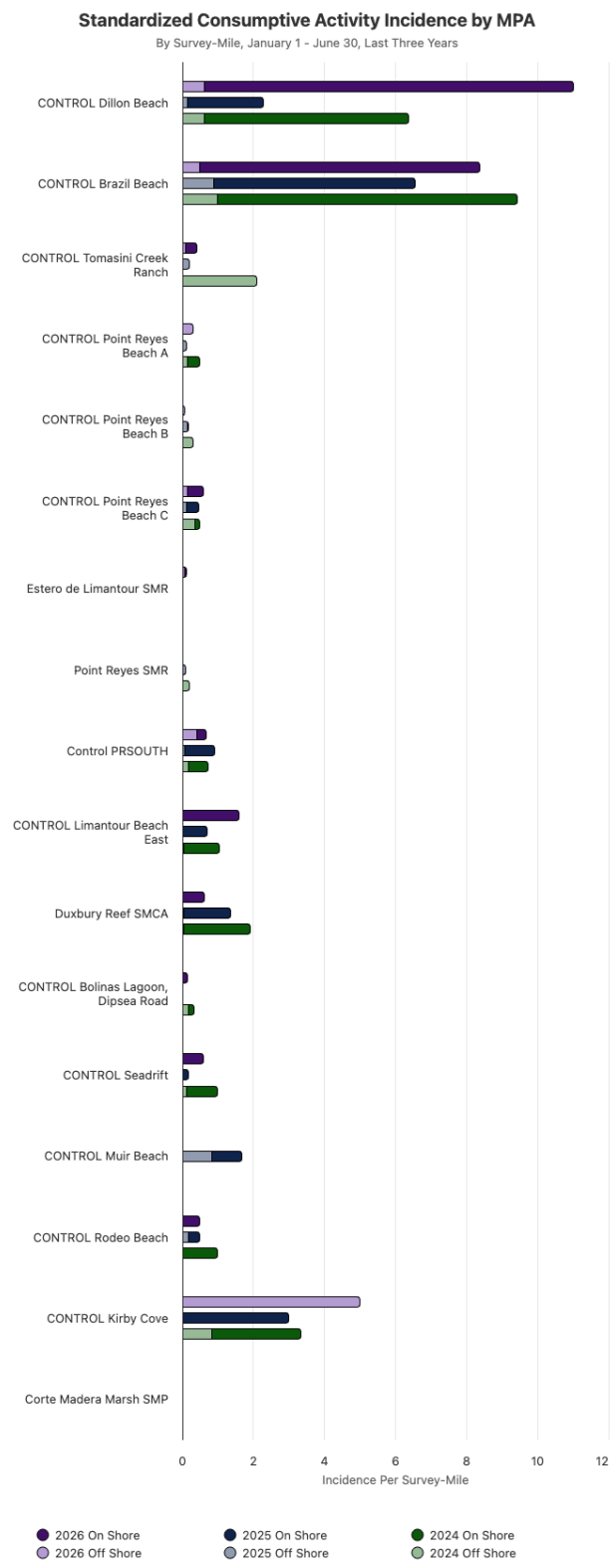
OVERVIEW



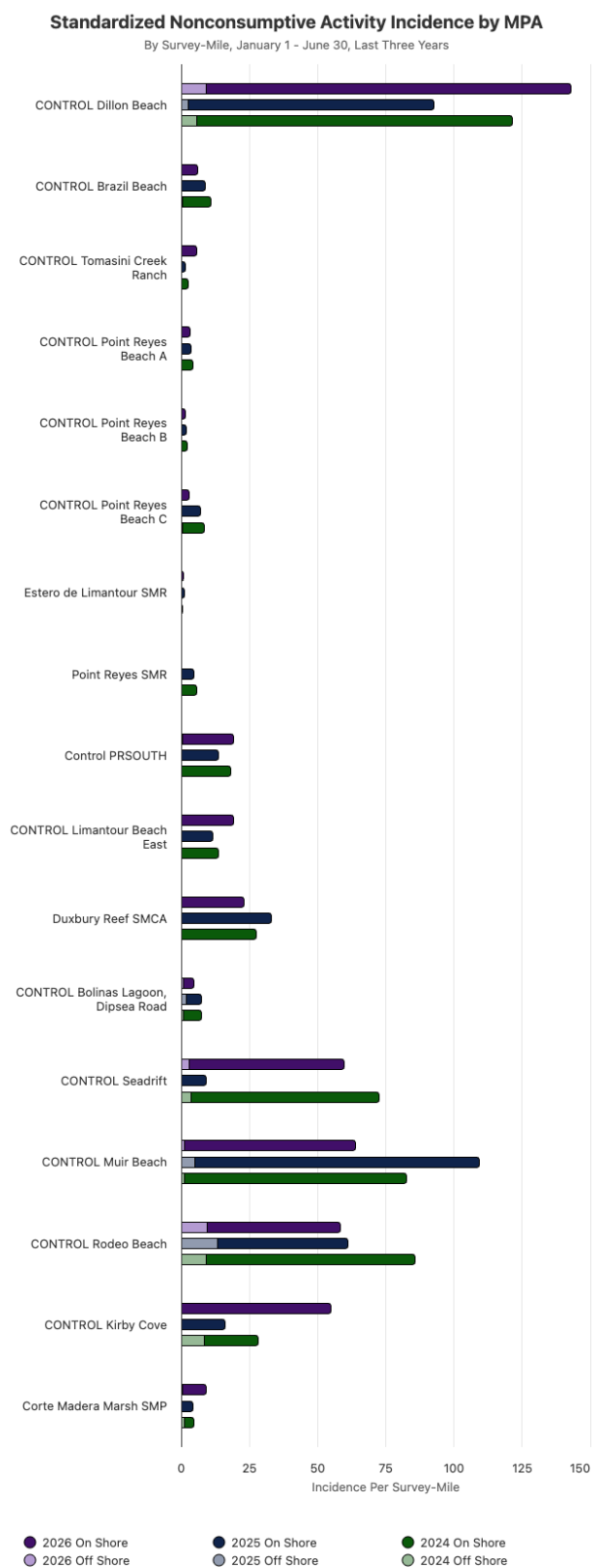
Caption: Map of MPAs in the region colored by activities per survey-mile for 2026.



CONSUMPTIVE VS. NON-CONSUMPTIVE ACTIVITY BY MPA, THREE YEAR COMPARISON



Caption: Standardized Consumptive Activity Incidence by MPA, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.



Caption: Standardized Nonconsumptive Activity Incidence by MPA, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.

ACTIVITY CLASSIFICATIONS

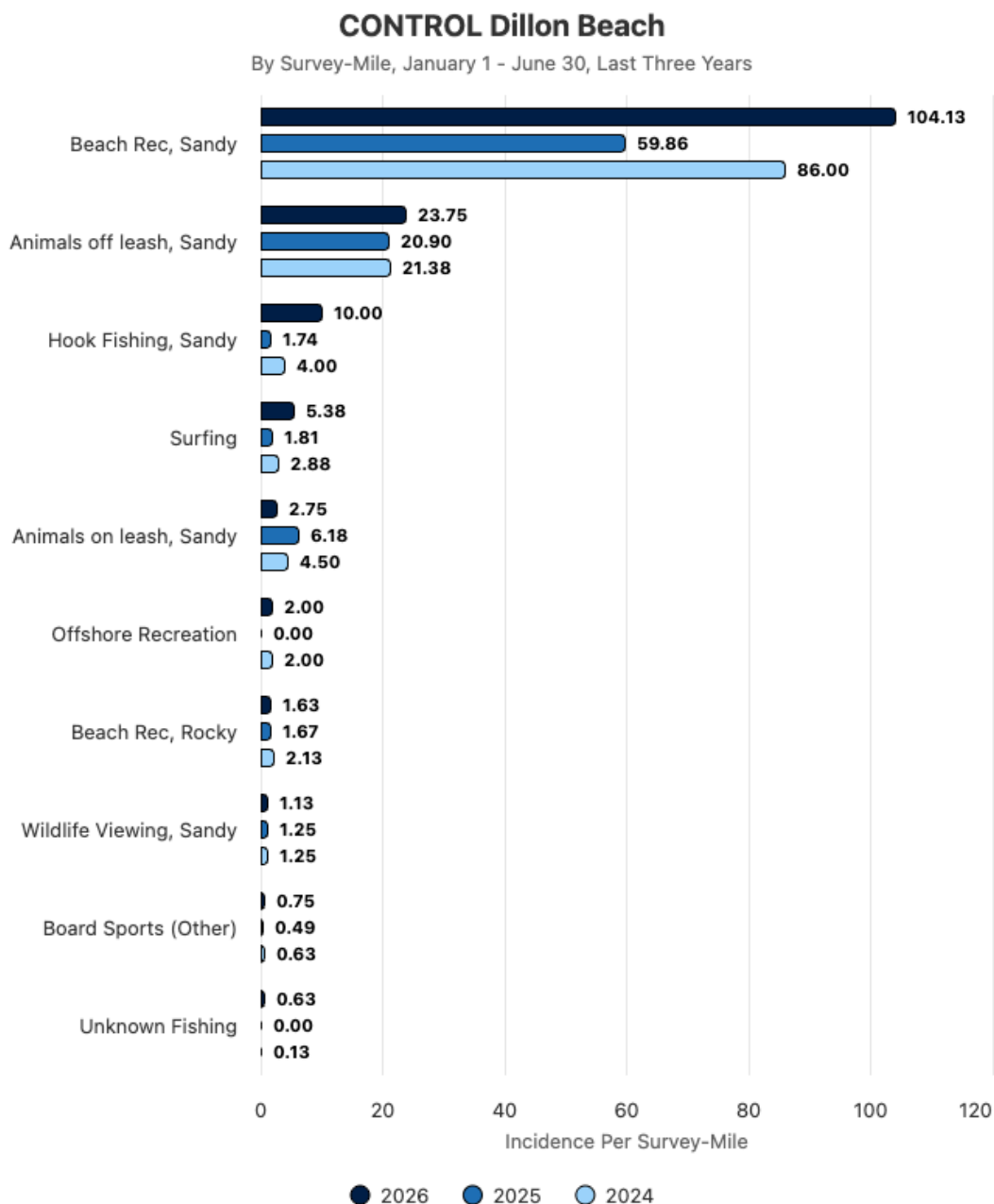
On-Shore - Activities that take place on a sandy or rocky beach. Excludes bluffs, trails, sea walls, parking lots, or other man-made structures. Includes recreation, tidepooling, shore-based fishing, etc.

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.

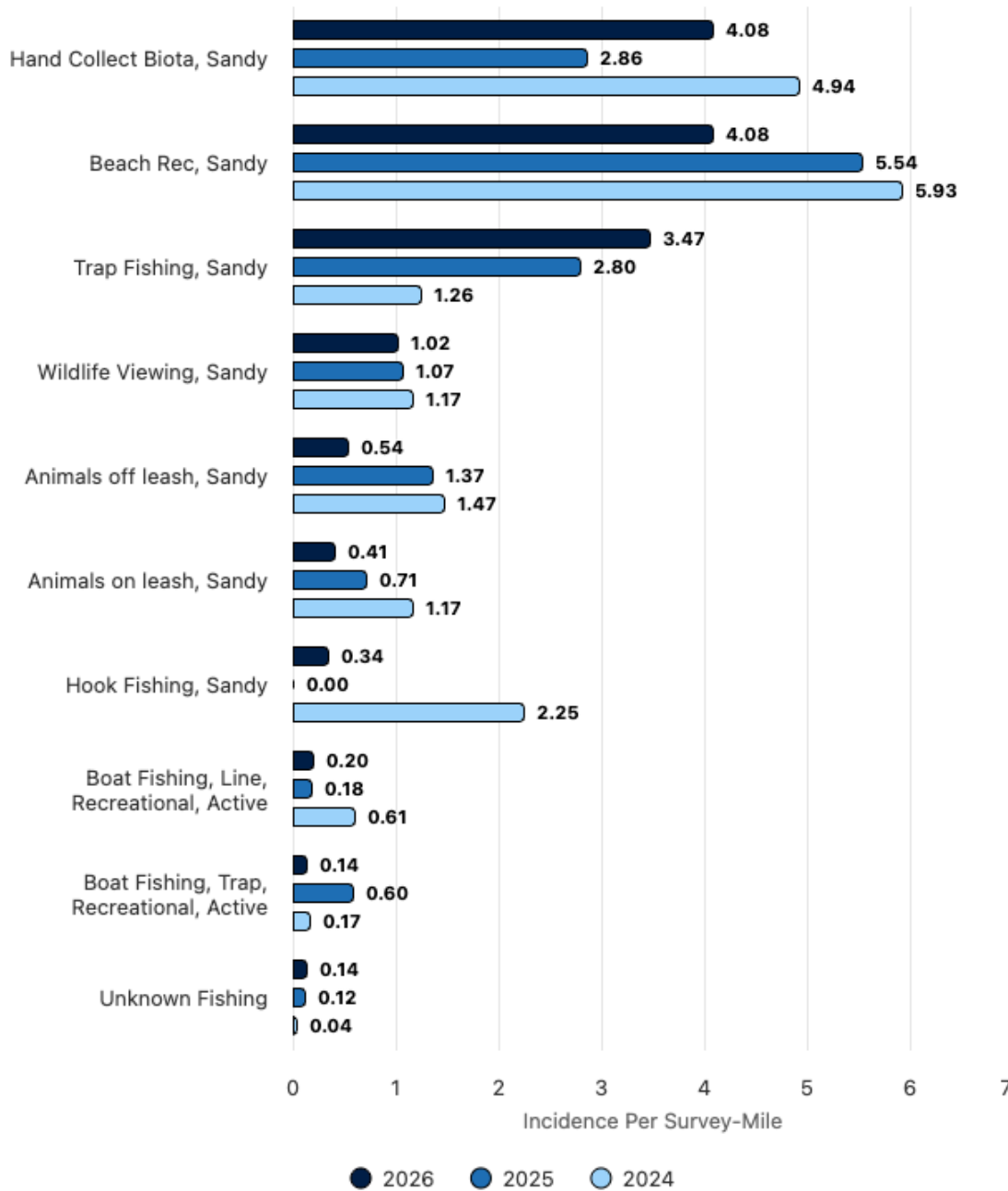
ACTIVITY BY MPA



Caption: Top 10 Activities for CONTROL Dillon Beach, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.

CONTROL Brazil Beach

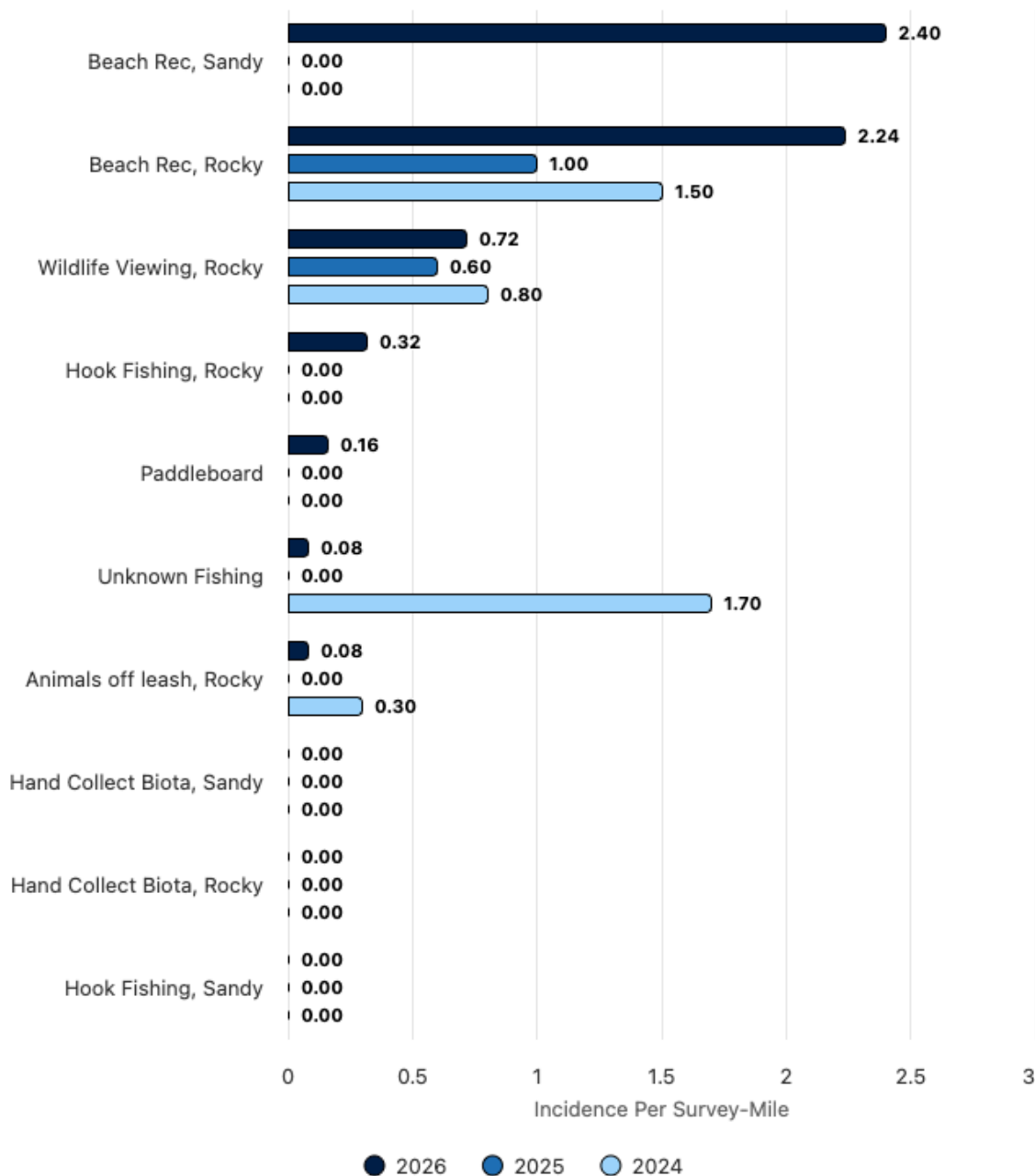
By Survey-Mile, January 1 - June 30, Last Three Years



Caption: Top 10 Activities for CONTROL Brazil Beach, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.

CONTROL Tomasini Creek Ranch

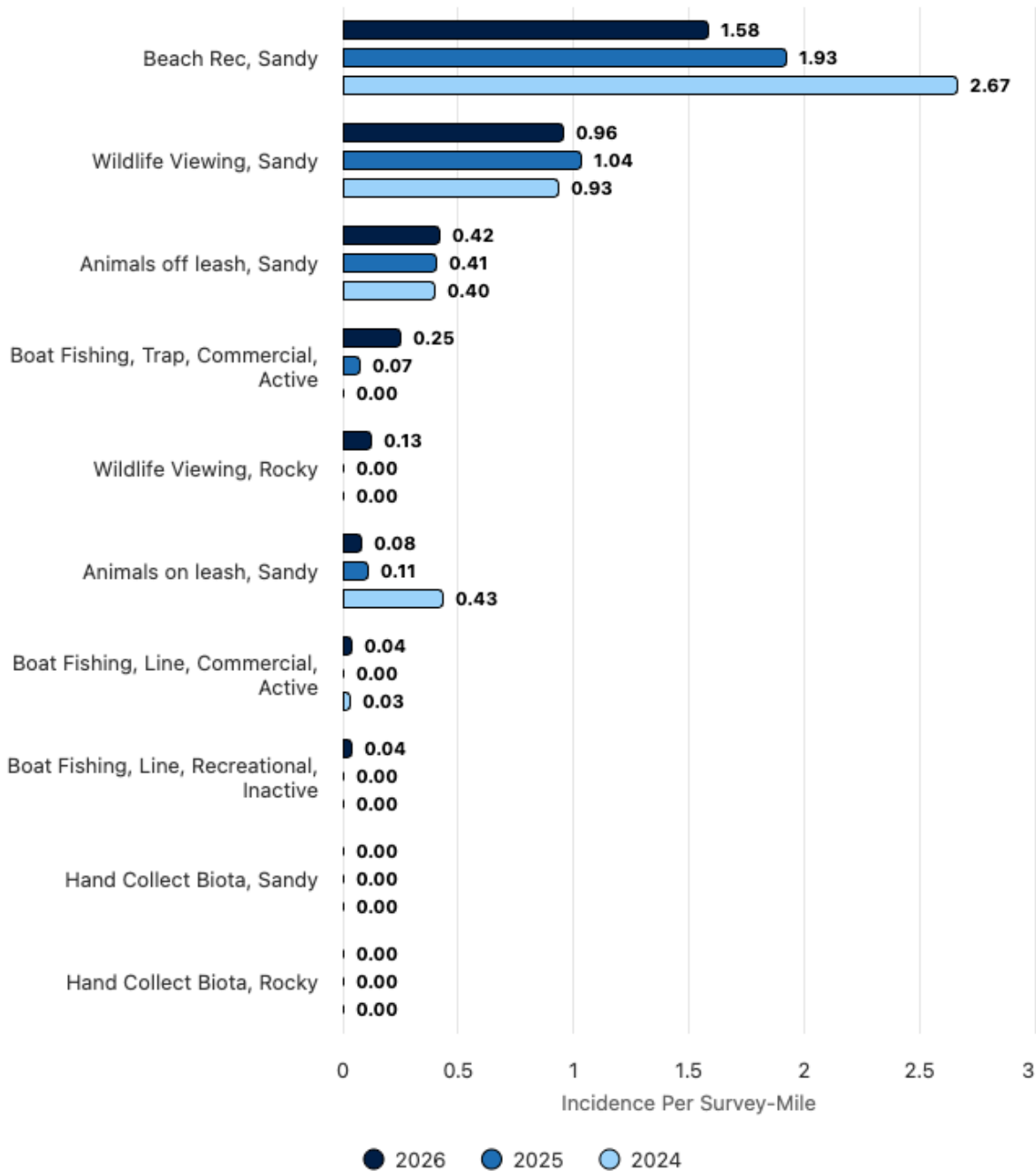
By Survey-Mile, January 1 - June 30, Last Three Years



Caption: Top 10 Activities for CONTROL Tomasini Creek Ranch, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.

CONTROL Point Reyes Beach A

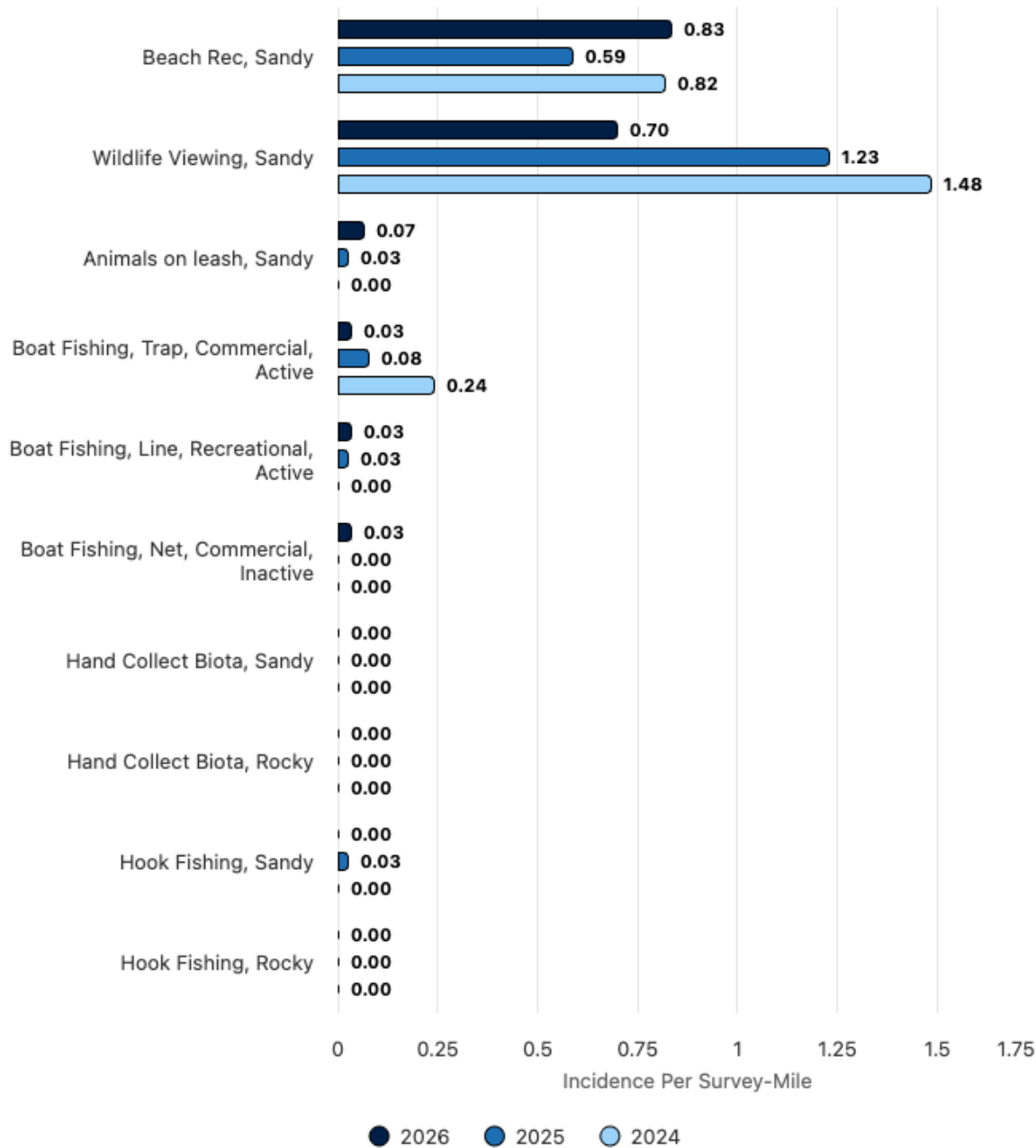
By Survey-Mile, January 1 - June 30, Last Three Years



Caption: Top 10 Activities for CONTROL Point Reyes Beach A, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.

CONTROL Point Reyes Beach B

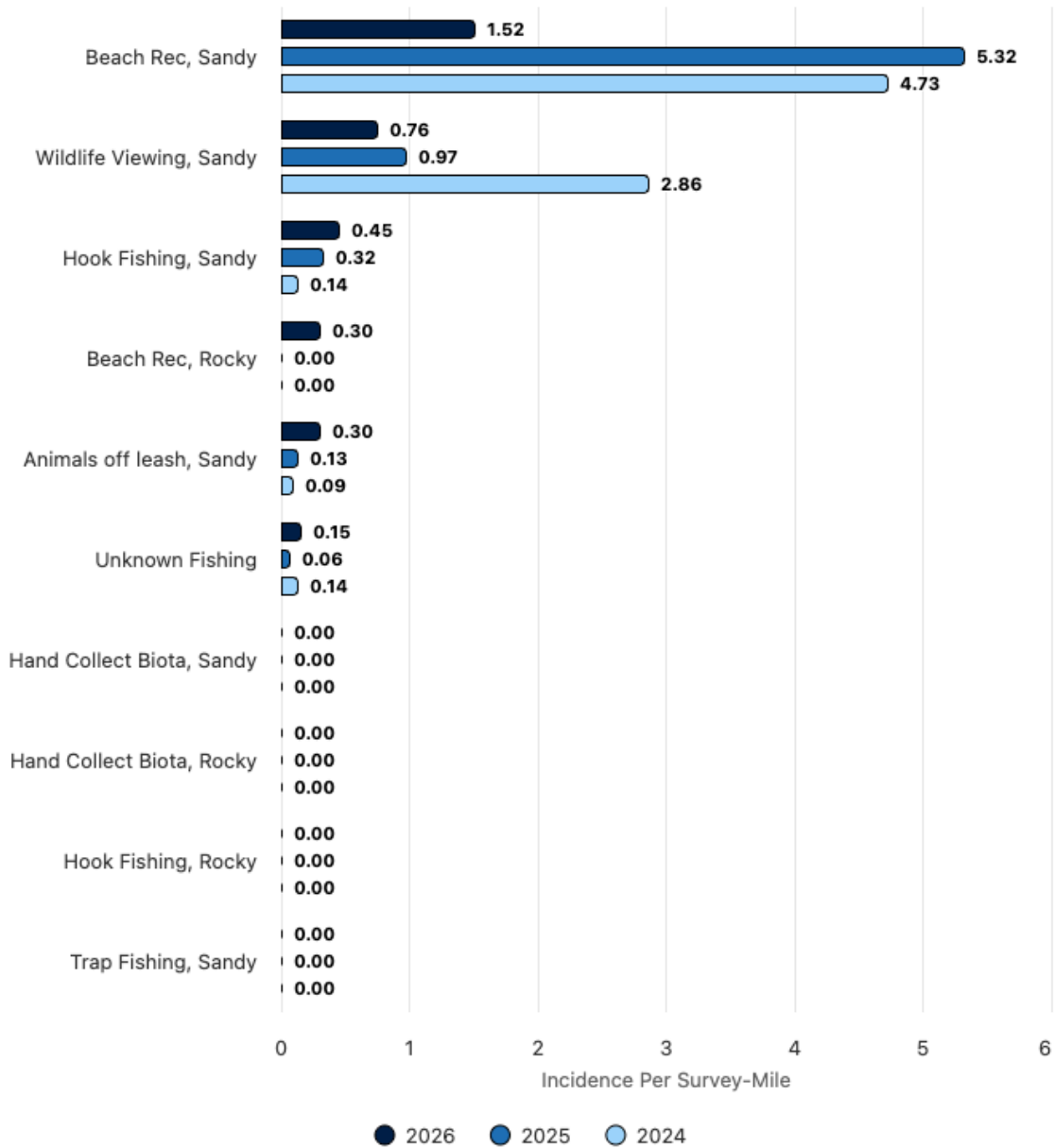
By Survey-Mile, January 1 - June 30, Last Three Years



Caption: Top 10 Activities for CONTROL Point Reyes Beach B, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.

CONTROL Point Reyes Beach C

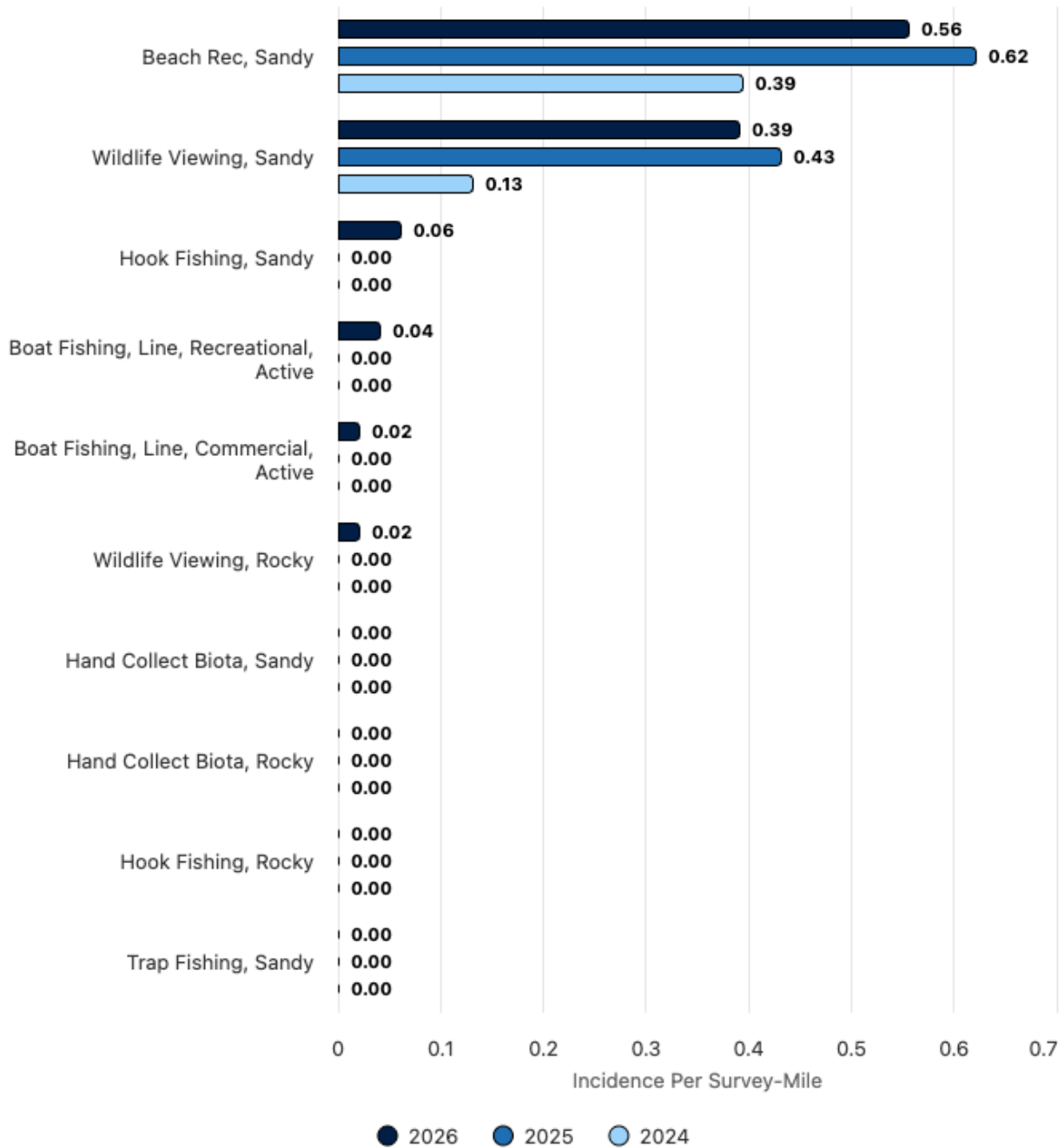
By Survey-Mile, January 1 - June 30, Last Three Years



Caption: Top 10 Activities for CONTROL Point Reyes Beach C, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.

Estero de Limantour SMR

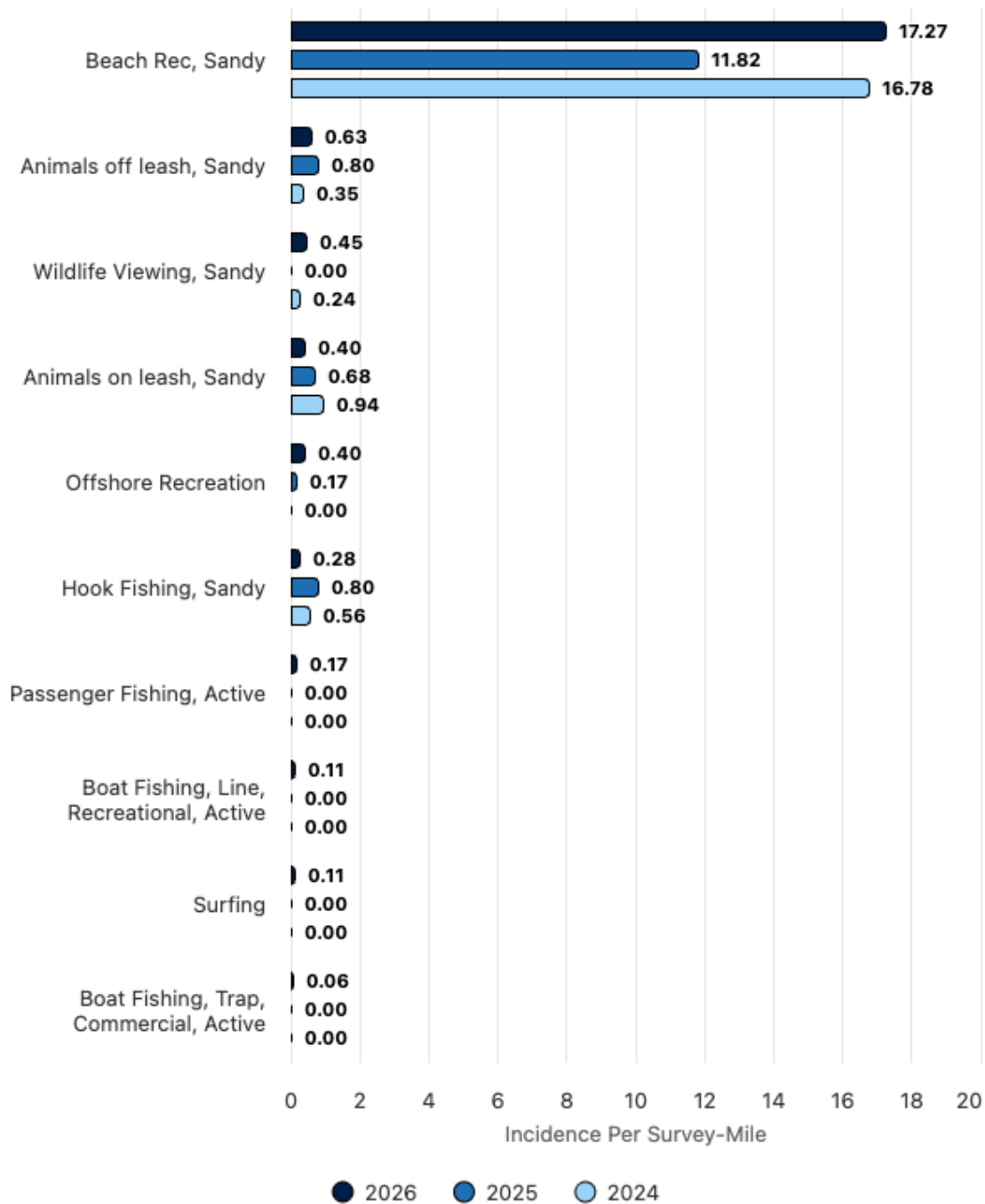
By Survey-Mile, January 1 - June 30, Last Three Years



Caption: Top 10 Activities for Estero de Limantour SMR, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.

Control PRSOUTH

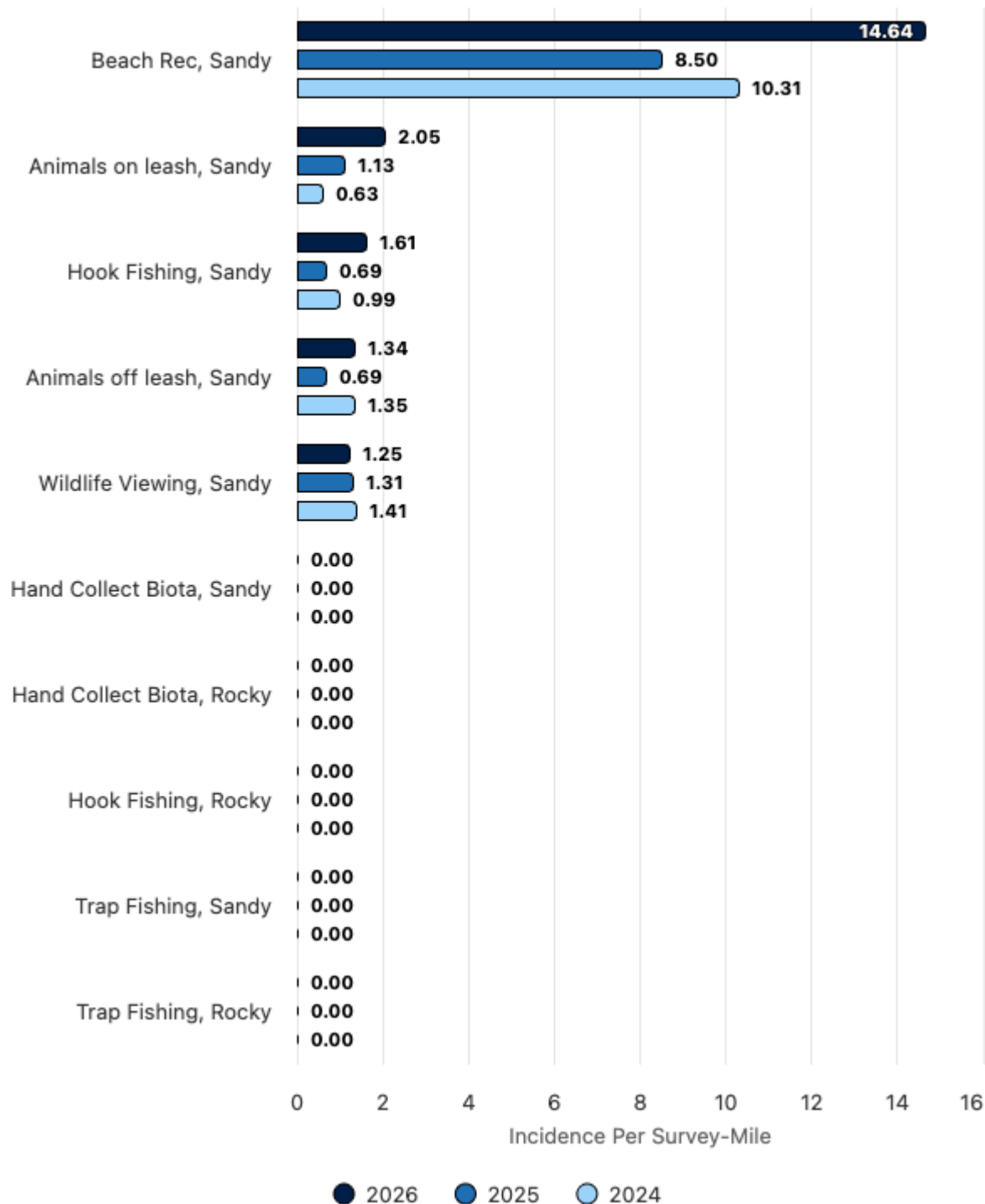
By Survey-Mile, January 1 - June 30, Last Three Years



Caption: Top 10 Activities for Control PRSOUTH, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.

CONTROL Limantour Beach East

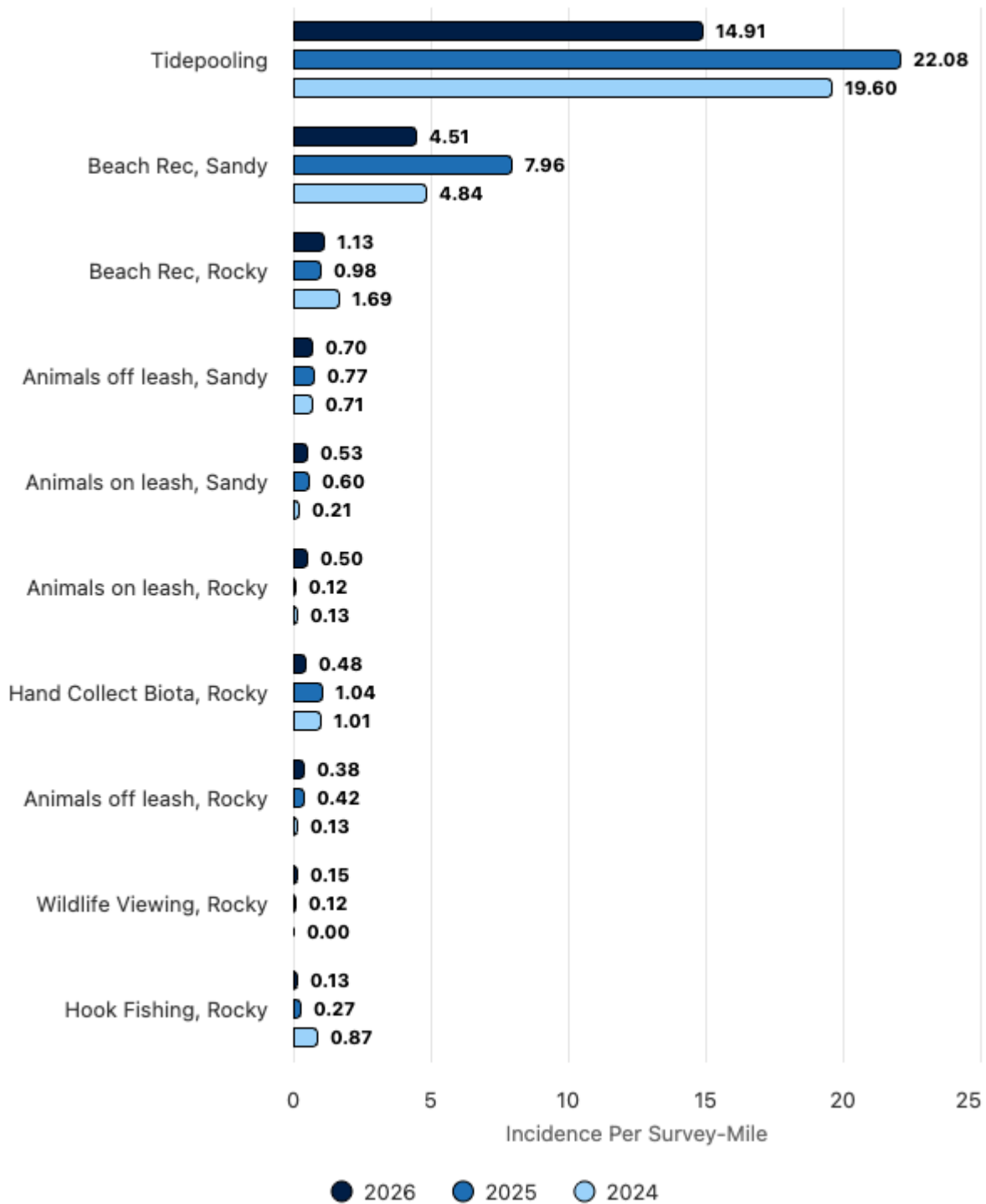
By Survey-Mile, January 1 - June 30, Last Three Years



Caption: Top 10 Activities for CONTROL Limantour Beach East, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.

Duxbury Reef SMCA

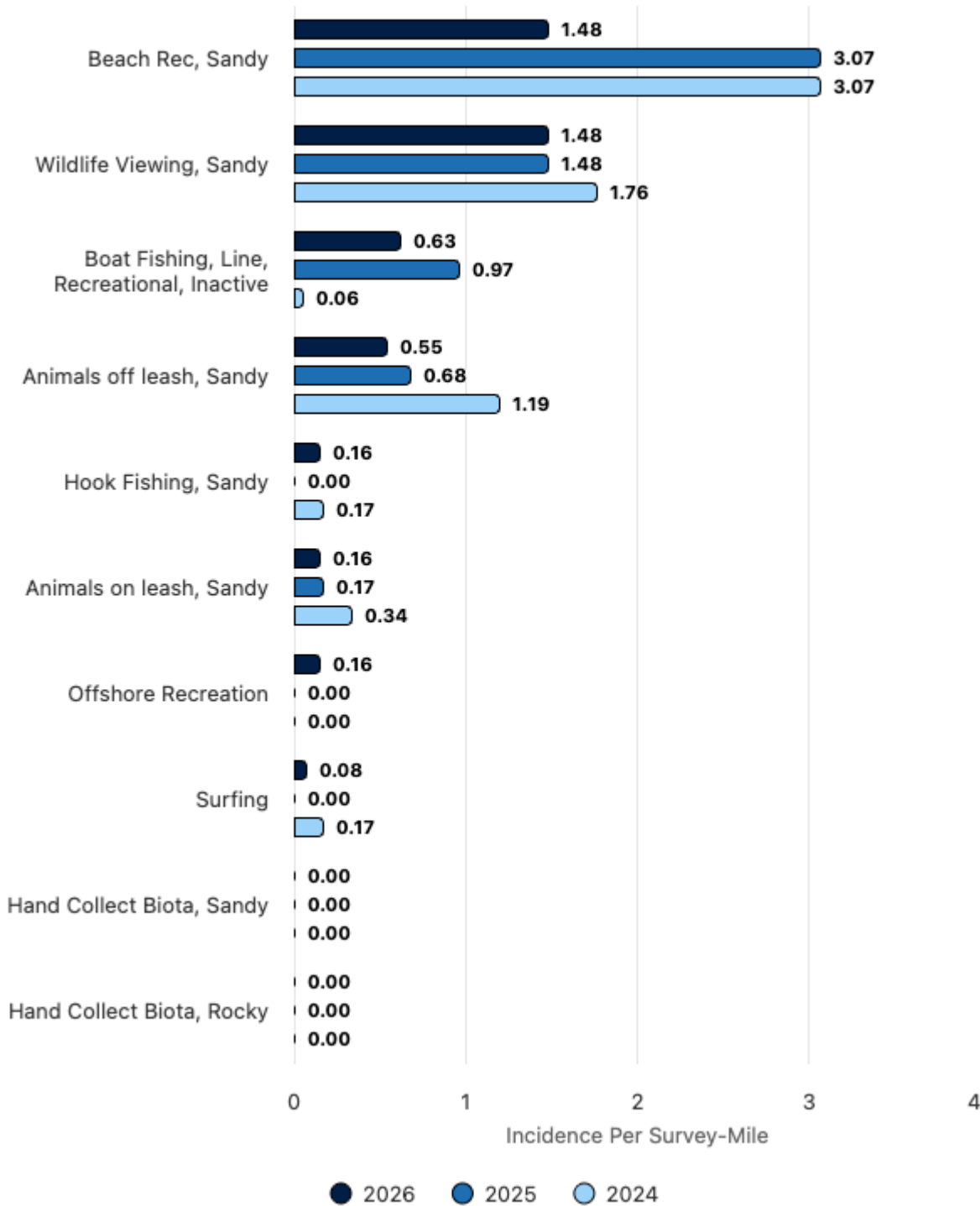
By Survey-Mile, January 1 - June 30, Last Three Years



Caption: Top 10 Activities for Duxbury Reef SMCA, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.

CONTROL Bolinas Lagoon, Dipsea Road

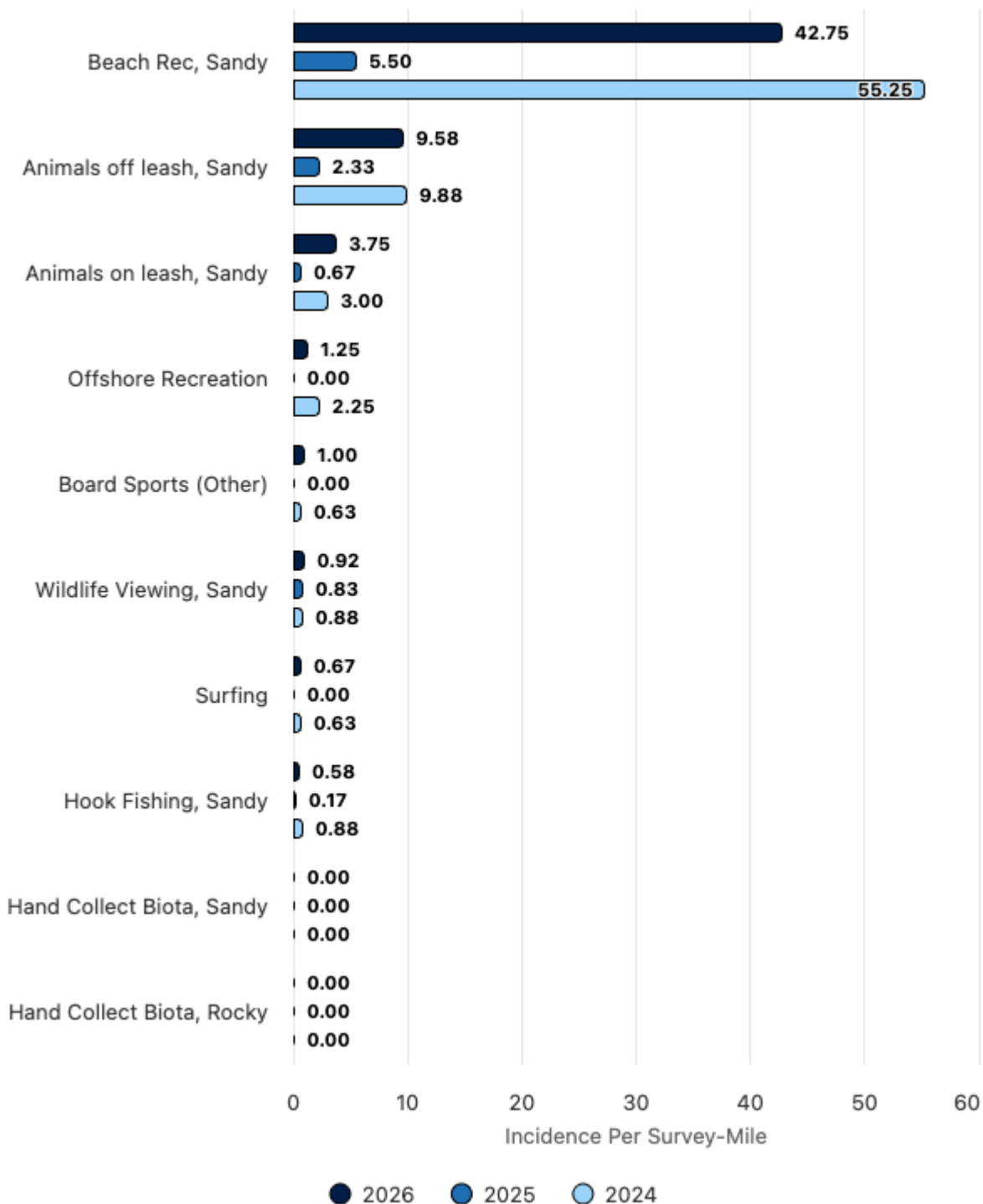
By Survey-Mile, January 1 - June 30, Last Three Years



Caption: Top 10 Activities for CONTROL Bolinas Lagoon, Dipsea Road, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.

CONTROL Seadrift

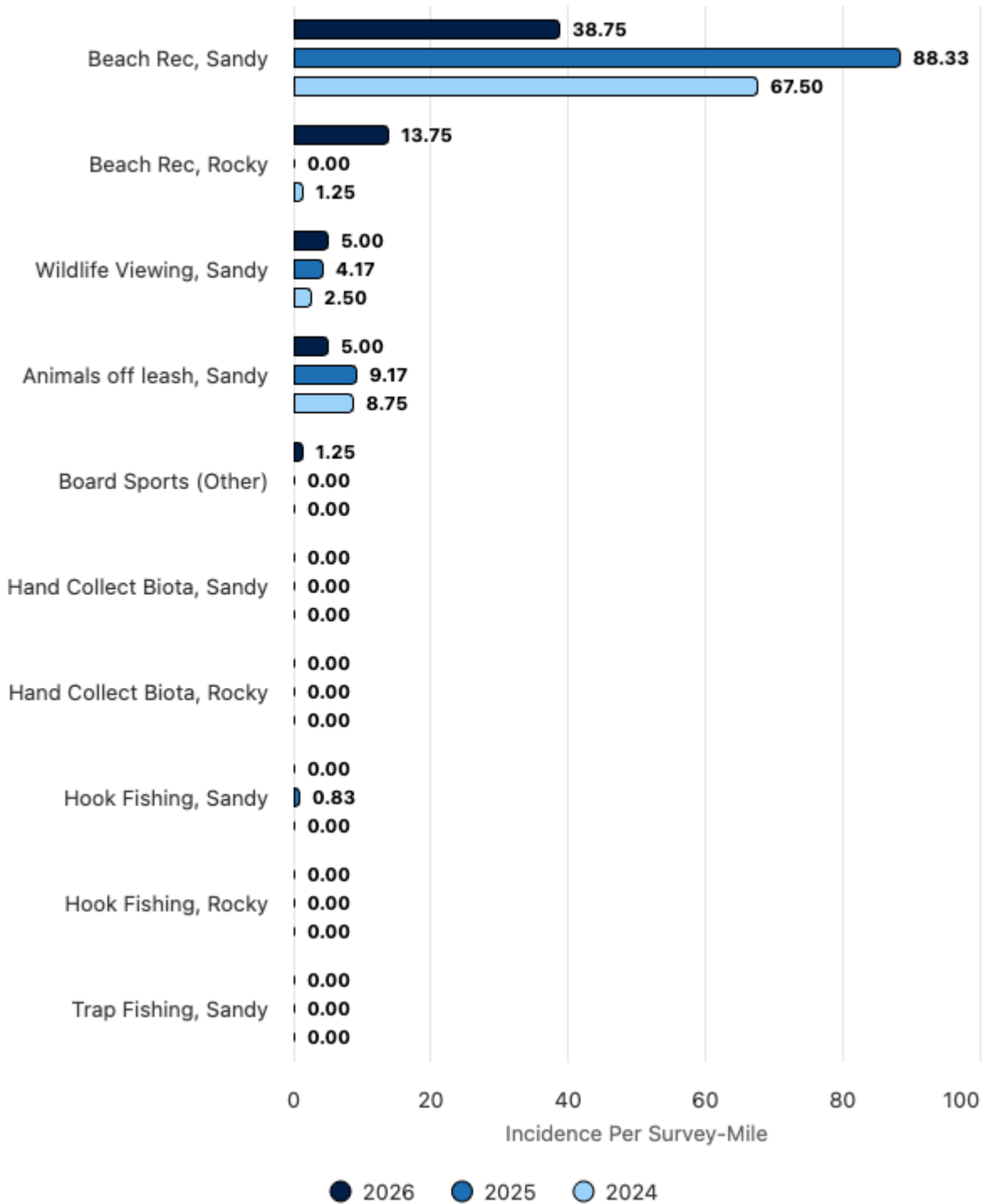
By Survey-Mile, January 1 - June 30, Last Three Years



Caption: Top 10 Activities for CONTROL Seadrift, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.

CONTROL Muir Beach

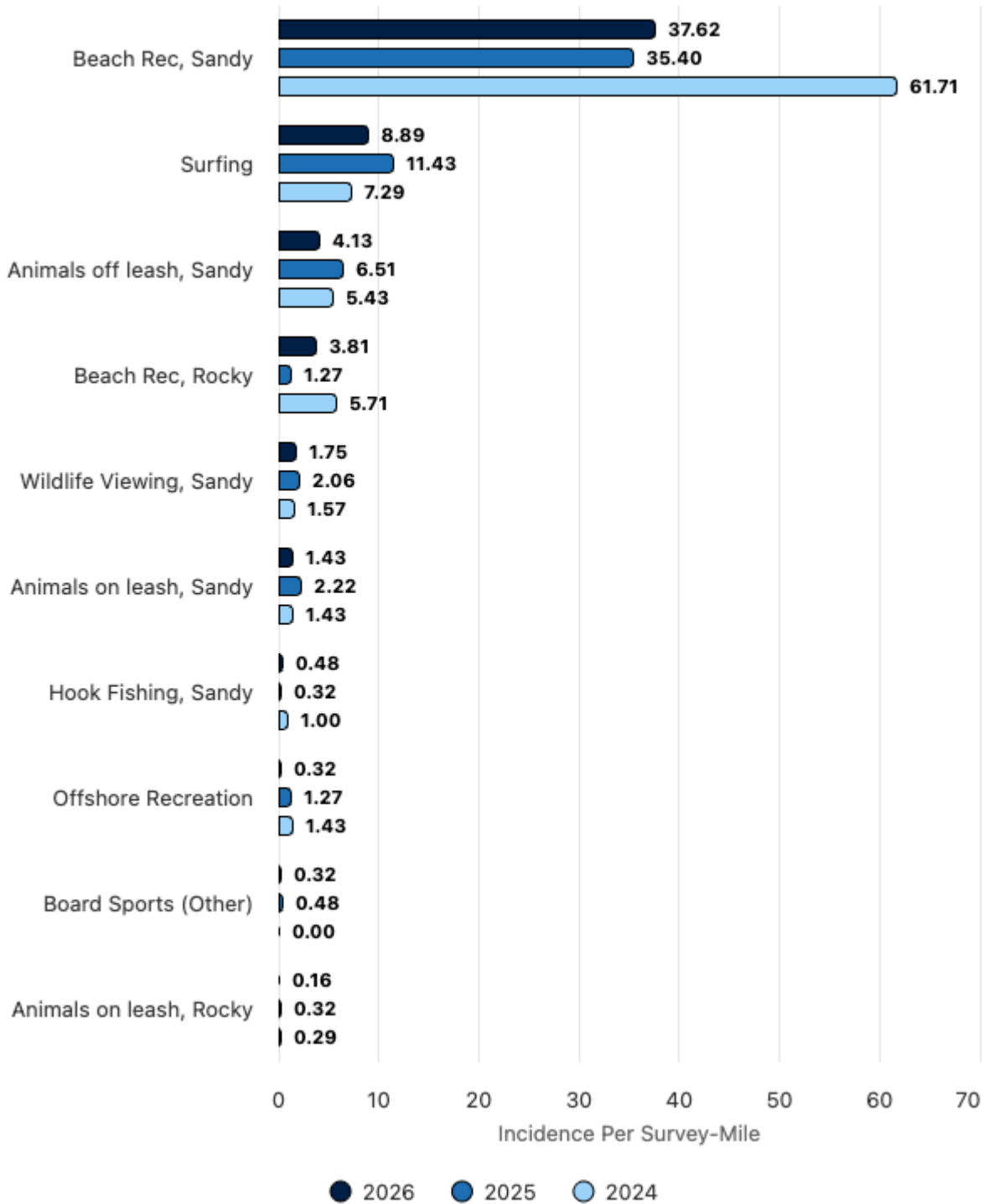
By Survey-Mile, January 1 - June 30, Last Three Years



Caption: Top 10 Activities for CONTROL Muir Beach, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.

CONTROL Rodeo Beach

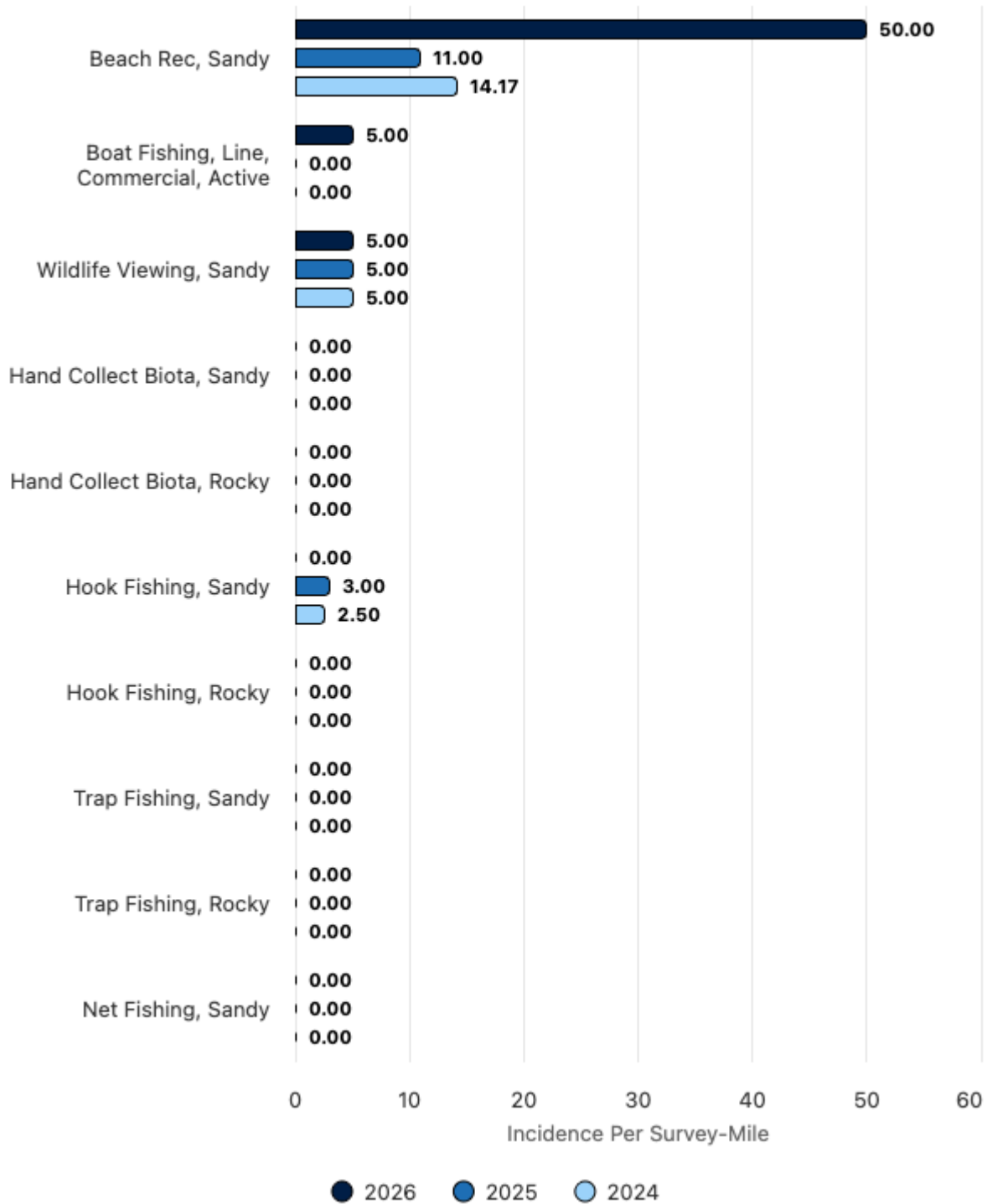
By Survey-Mile, January 1 - June 30, Last Three Years



Caption: Top 10 Activities for CONTROL Rodeo Beach, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.

CONTROL Kirby Cove

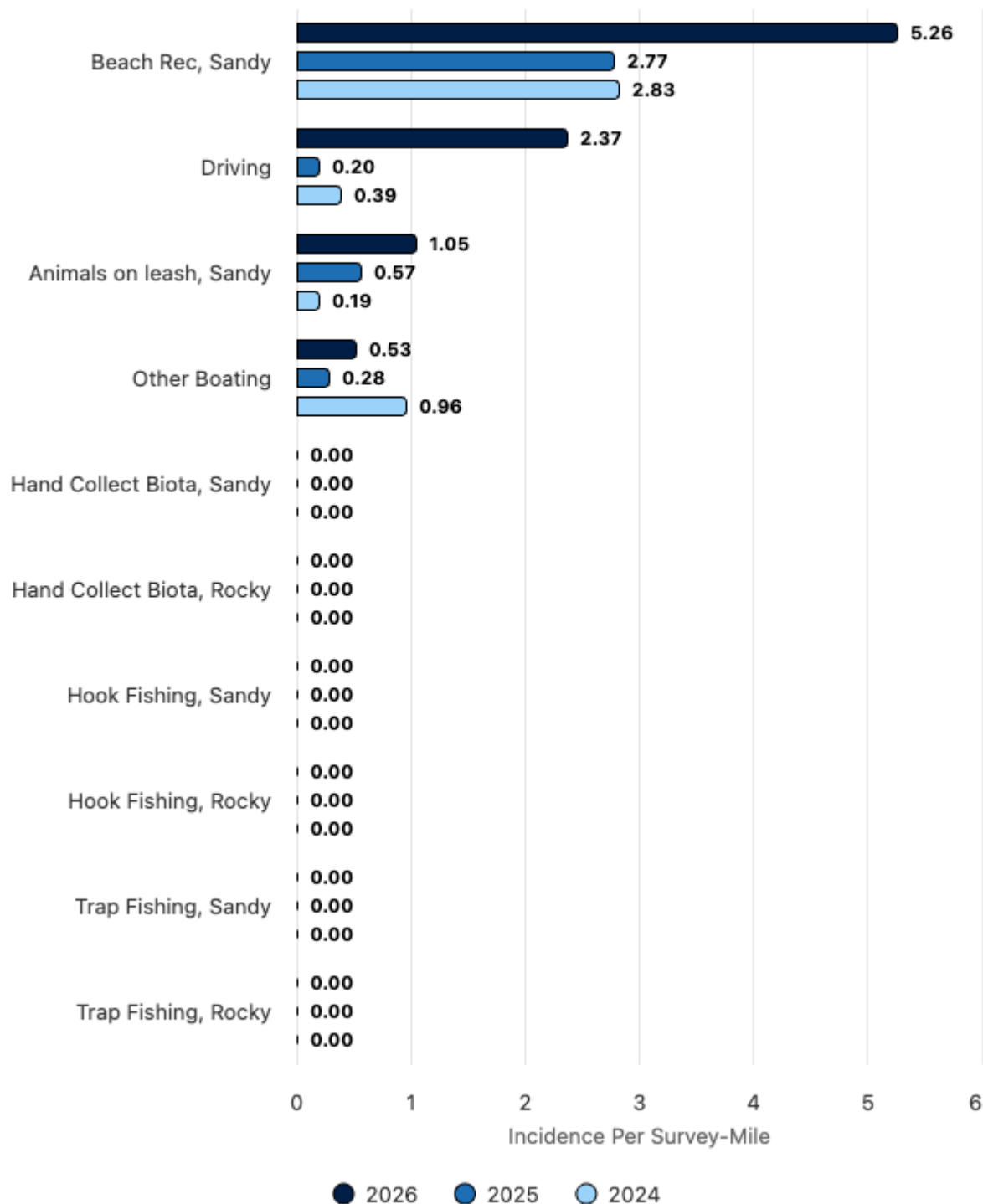
By Survey-Mile, January 1 - June 30, Last Three Years



Caption: Top 10 Activities for CONTROL Kirby Cove, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.

Corte Madera Marsh SMP

By Survey-Mile, January 1 - June 30, Last Three Years



Caption: Top 10 Activities for Corte Madera Marsh SMP, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.

BREAKDOWN BY MPA

MPA	Number of Surveys January 1, 2026 - June 30, 2026	Activities Observed January 1, 2026 - June 30, 2026
CONTROL Dillon Beach	5	1,230
CONTROL Brazil Beach	7	213
CONTROL Tomasini Creek Ranch	5	75
CONTROL Point Reyes Beach A	8	84
CONTROL Point Reyes Beach B	10	51
CONTROL Point Reyes Beach C	3	23
Estero de Limantour SMR	16	53
Point Reyes SMR	6	0
Control PRSOUTH	8	351
CONTROL Limantour Beach East	7	234
Duxbury Reef SMCA	37	939
CONTROL Bolinas Lagoon, Dipsea Road	8	60
CONTROL Seadrift	6	726
CONTROL Muir Beach	2	51
CONTROL Rodeo Beach	9	371
CONTROL Kirby Cove	1	12
Corte Madera Marsh SMP	4	35
All MPAs Combined	142	4,508

Estero de Limantour State Marine Reserve

This MPA is observed from two survey transects within Point Reyes National Seashore and accessed from either 1) Limantour Beach and walking north-west, or 2) Drakes Beach and walking east. This MPA does not allow any onshore or offshore consumptive activities.

Volunteers conducted 16 surveys and recorded 53 activities with an incidence rate of 1.1 activities per survey mile, compared with 1.2 average in this time period in all years past. Visitation remains low compared to other sites, with non-consumptive uses comprising 89% of onshore observations with activity rates for sandy recreation (0.56) and wildlife watching (0.39). There was a low incidence of non-compliant recreational boat (0.02) and shore (0.06) fishing in the SMR.

Dogs are restricted by the National Park Service from this MPA as it is critical habitat for the Western Snowy Plover and the seasonal presence of marine mammals.

Point Reyes State Marine Reserve (Point Reyes SMR)

This MPA is observed from two survey transects within the Point Reyes National Seashore and accessed from either 1) Limantour Beach and walking north-west, or 2) Drakes Beach. This MPA does not allow any onshore or offshore consumptive activities.

Data collection for Point Reyes SMR was limited from the Drakes Beach access due to seasonal beach closure for elephant seal pupping from January through April 2026.

Volunteers conducted 6 surveys of this MPA from Limantour Beach, and recorded no observations, 0.0 activities.

Dogs are restricted from beach access at Drakes Beach by the National Park Service and at the north-west portion of Limantour Beach for critical habitat for the Western Snowy Plover and the seasonal presence of marine mammals.

Control PRSOUTH

This survey site is accessed at Limantour Beach.

Volunteers conducted 8 surveys and recorded 351 activities, with an activity rate of 19.9 per survey mile. The most common activity was Sandy Beach Recreation (use rate of 17.27), and overall, onshore, non-consumptive uses comprised 94% of activities observed.

Leashed dogs are allowed to access the southern portion of Limantour Beach. Dogs are restricted from the north-west portion of the beach for critical habitat for the Western Snowy Plover and the seasonal presence of marine mammals. As the next highest activity rate, animals off-leash had a use rate of 0.63 activities per mile.

Duxbury Reef State Marine Conservation Area

Duxbury Reef is accessed through Agate Beach Marin County Park. Shore-based recreational fishing is allowed in this MPA.

Volunteers conducted 37 surveys and recorded 939 activities, with a use rate of 23.5 per survey mile, comprising 68% of observations within Marin MPA Watch survey sites. Tidepooling was the most common activity, with a use rate of 14.91, more than double the rate for sandy beach recreation (4.51, and the second-most commonly observed activity), yet less than last year's tidepooling rate of 22.08. The incidence of hand collection of biota was 0.48 (19 observations), which is lower than last mid-year count (54 observations), even considering the greater number of surveys last year (47). Hand collection is not allowed at this SMCA. Shore-based rocky hook fishing comprised 0.13 activities per survey mile. There were two reports of low-flying overflights: One was a low-flying personal helicopter, and another was a drone operating from the reef.

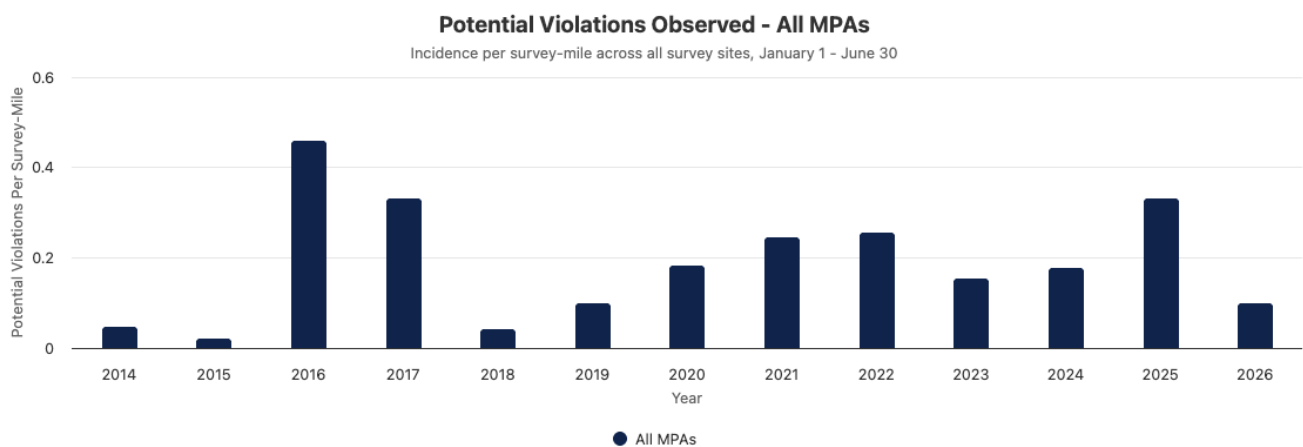
Leashed dogs are allowed by Marin County Parks.

Corte Madera Marsh State Marine Park

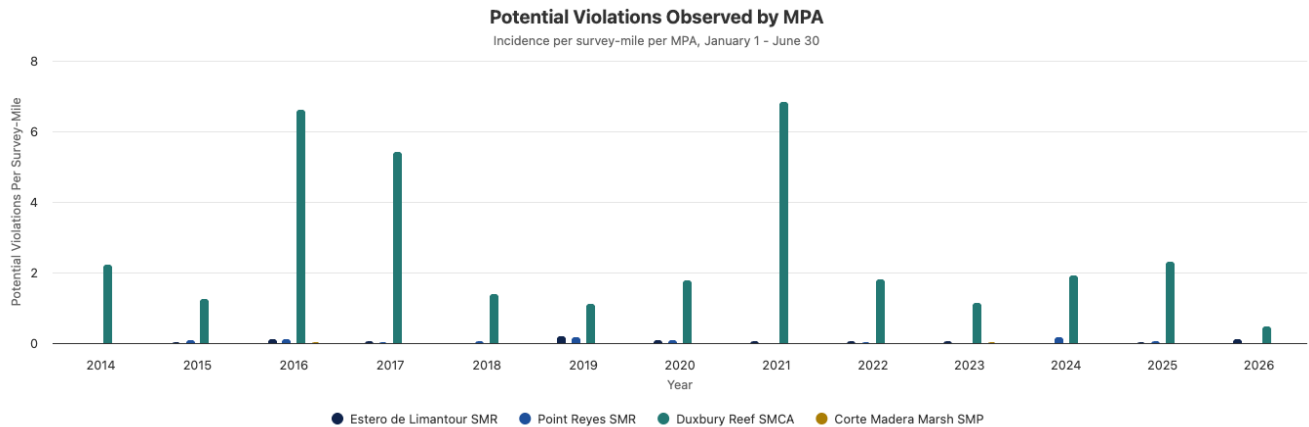
This MPA is observed within the city limits of Corte Madera and accessed by the network of public trails at Corte Madera Ecological Reserve.

Volunteers conducted 4 surveys and observed 35 activities. Survey effort was lower than previous years as two long-term volunteers had retired and we did not train a school group this year. Recreation (walking, running) is by far the most popular activity, followed by driving on beach, which means biking on the trail in this location.

POTENTIAL VIOLATIONS



Caption: Potential Violations Observed - All MPAs. Incidence per survey-mile across all survey sites, January 1 - June 30 of each year. 2014, 0.048; 2015, 0.022; 2016, 0.459; 2017, 0.330; 2018, 0.041; 2019, 0.100; 2020, 0.184; 2021, 0.245; 2022, 0.255; 2023, 0.155; 2024, 0.177; 2025, 0.332; 2026, 0.100.



Caption: Potential Violations Observed by MPA. Incidence per survey-mile per MPA.

NEXT STEPS

This summer, recruitment for training sessions has been successful. We will continue to support volunteers to and encourage their continued participation in the survey program.

Our summer interns have been helping to implement MPA Watch this summer. We aim to have one intern continue through the fall semester to support MPA Watch data management and conduct surveys.

We have initiated our refresher training sessions this summer for continuing volunteers to ensure continued alignment with the standard protocols and have refreshed 26 volunteers so far. The new volunteer resources are being provided to the new volunteers as well, and training content has been strengthened to include the updated protocol clarifications. We will continue to provide opportunities to refresh volunteer training this fall for continuing volunteer who were not able to attend the summer refresher training sessions.

EAC's Marin MPA Watch is participating in the second stage of the Intercept pilot project at Duxbury Reef SMCA and Limantour Beach (Control PRSOUTH, Estero de Limnatour SMR, Point Reyes SMR). This project uses a visitor intercept survey instrument that aims to understand basic visitor demographics, what people understand about MPAs, and travel distance information through brief interviews on-site. The data gathered by this survey tool is complementary to the data gathered by standard MPA Watch survey protocol on the same day.

Marin MPA Watch collaborates with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife through email, CALTip reports, and distributing MPA Watch reports to regional wardens and managers in order to provide information to help with management and enforcement of MPAs. Each year, MPA Watch posts human use data reports on their 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 throughout California.



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.

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.

The Marin MPA Watch program was developed in partnership with the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin (EAC), California Academy of Science, and Point Reyes National Seashore. The program is managed by EAC. For more information / to become involved with the program, please visit eacmarin.org/mpa-watch.