

Marine Protected Area (MPA) Watch Regional Report

Mendocino County, Sonoma County, San Francisco County, San Mateo 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. The North-central Coast Marine Protected Area (MPA) Watch Program, conducted by the Beach Watch project, a joint program of the Greater Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries (GFNMSCBNMS) and Greater Farallones Association (GFA) which engages 140 community scientists in 9 MPAs, spanning 5 counties.

Executive Summary

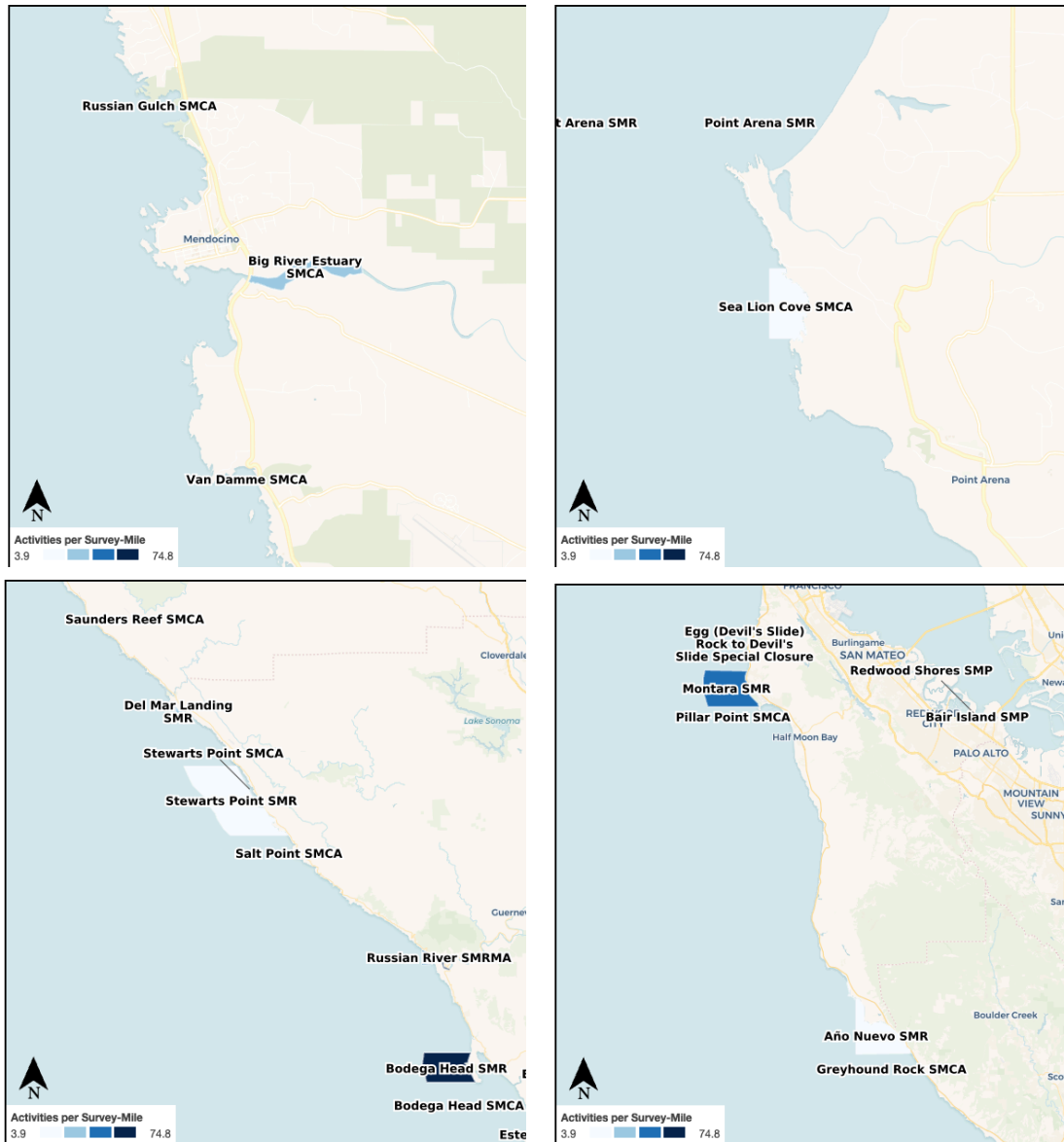
- At 3 of 9 MPAs we observed significant increases from the average incidence rates of human activities (Russian River SMCA, Russian River SMRMA, Bodega Head SMR).
- At 5 of 9 MPAs monitored we observed slight decreases in human activities from our historical average incidence rate (Sea Lion Cove SMCA, Del Mar Landing SMR, Stewarts Point SMR, Montara SMR, Año Nuevo SMR).

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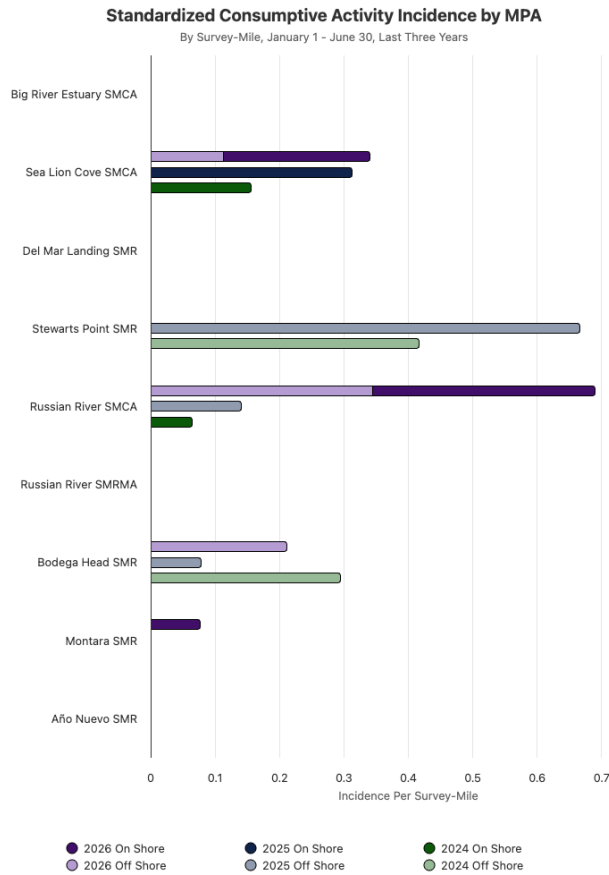
1,866 activity events were observed during January to June 2026. Shore-based non-consumptive recreational activities accounted for 96% (n=1,792) of observed activities. Offshore non-consumptive recreational activities accounted for 3% (n=58) of observed activities. Shore based consumptive activities accounted for <1% (n=8) of observed activities. Offshore consumptive activities accounted for <1% (n=8) of observed activities.

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

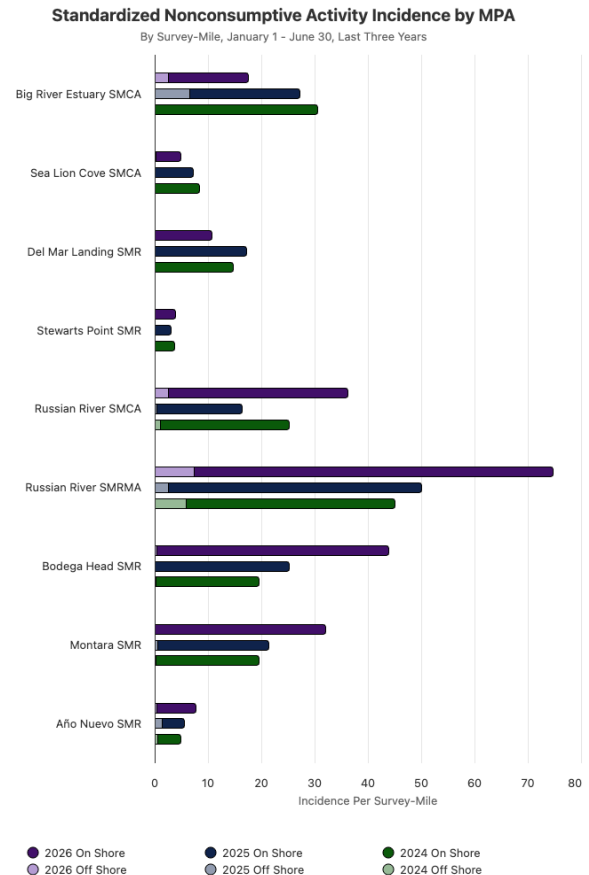


Caption: Maps of MPAs in the region colored by activities per survey-mile for 2026. Upper left map: Big River Estuary SMCA, 17.5; Upper right map: Sea Lion Cove SMCA, 5.3; Lower left map: Del Mar Landing SMR, 10.8 ; Stewarts Point SMR, 3.9; Russian River SMCA, 36.9; Russian River SMRMA, 74.8; Bodega Head SMR, 44.1; Lower right map: Montara SMR, 32.2; Año Nuevo SMR, 7.8;

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

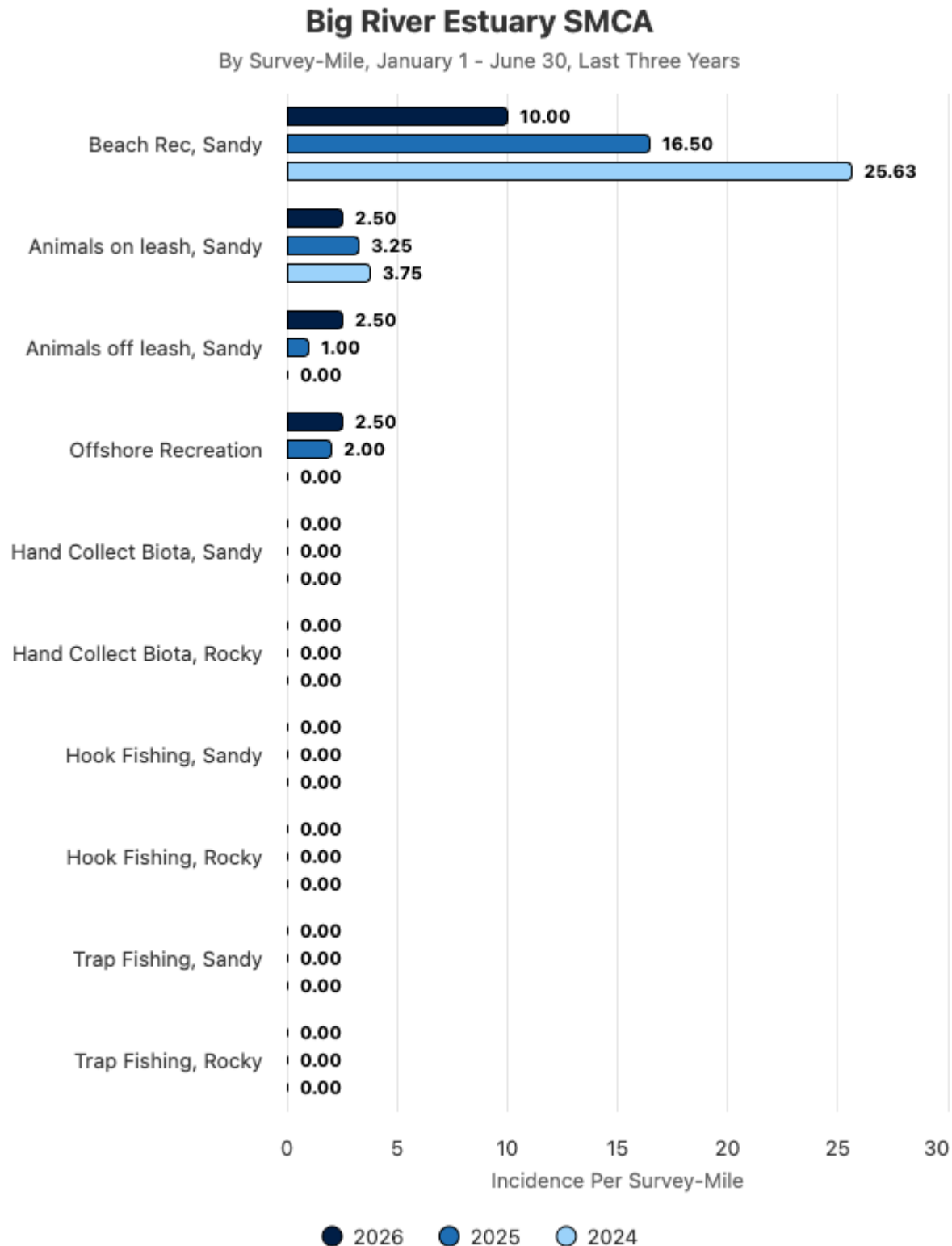
On-Shore - Activities that take place on a sandy or rocky beach. Excludes bluffs, trails, sea walls, parking lots, or other man-made structures. Includes recreation, tidepooling, shore-based fishing, etc.

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.

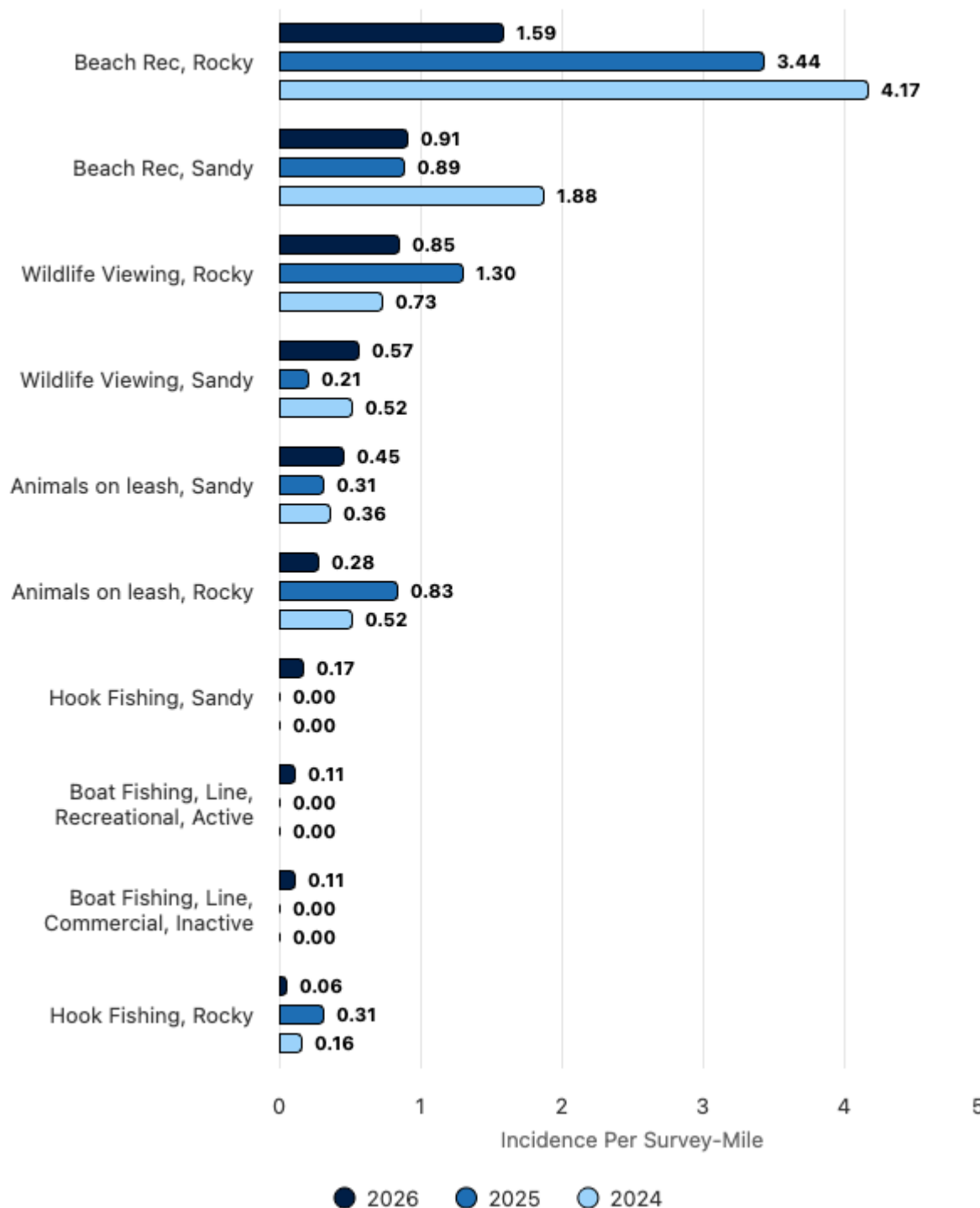
ACTIVITY BY MPA



Caption: Top 10 Activities for Big River Estuary SMCA, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.

Sea Lion Cove SMCA

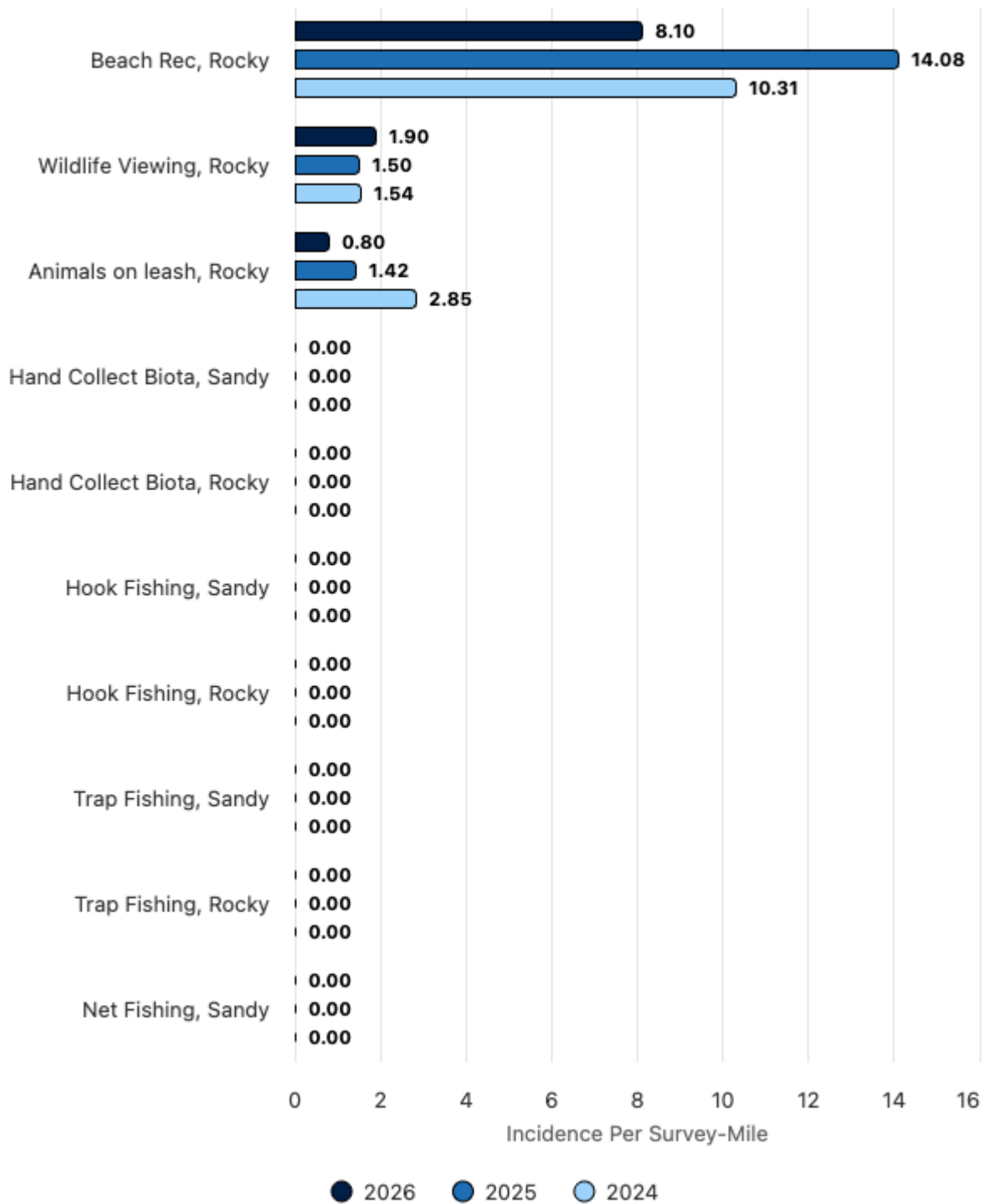
By Survey-Mile, January 1 - June 30, Last Three Years



Caption: Top 10 Activities for Sea Lion Cove SMCA, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.

Del Mar Landing SMR

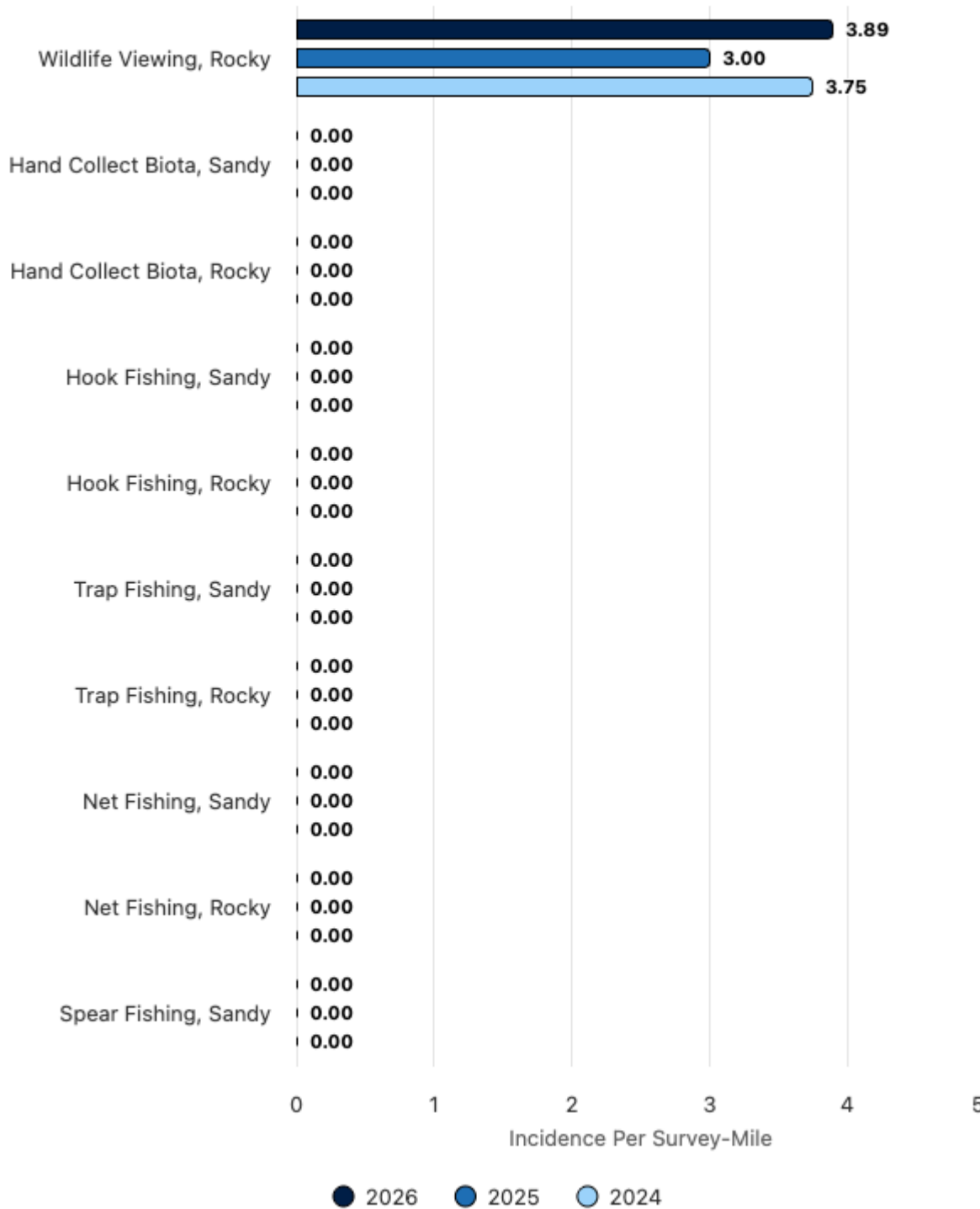
By Survey-Mile, January 1 - June 30, Last Three Years



Caption: Top 10 Activities for Del Mar Landing SMR, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.

Stewarts Point SMR

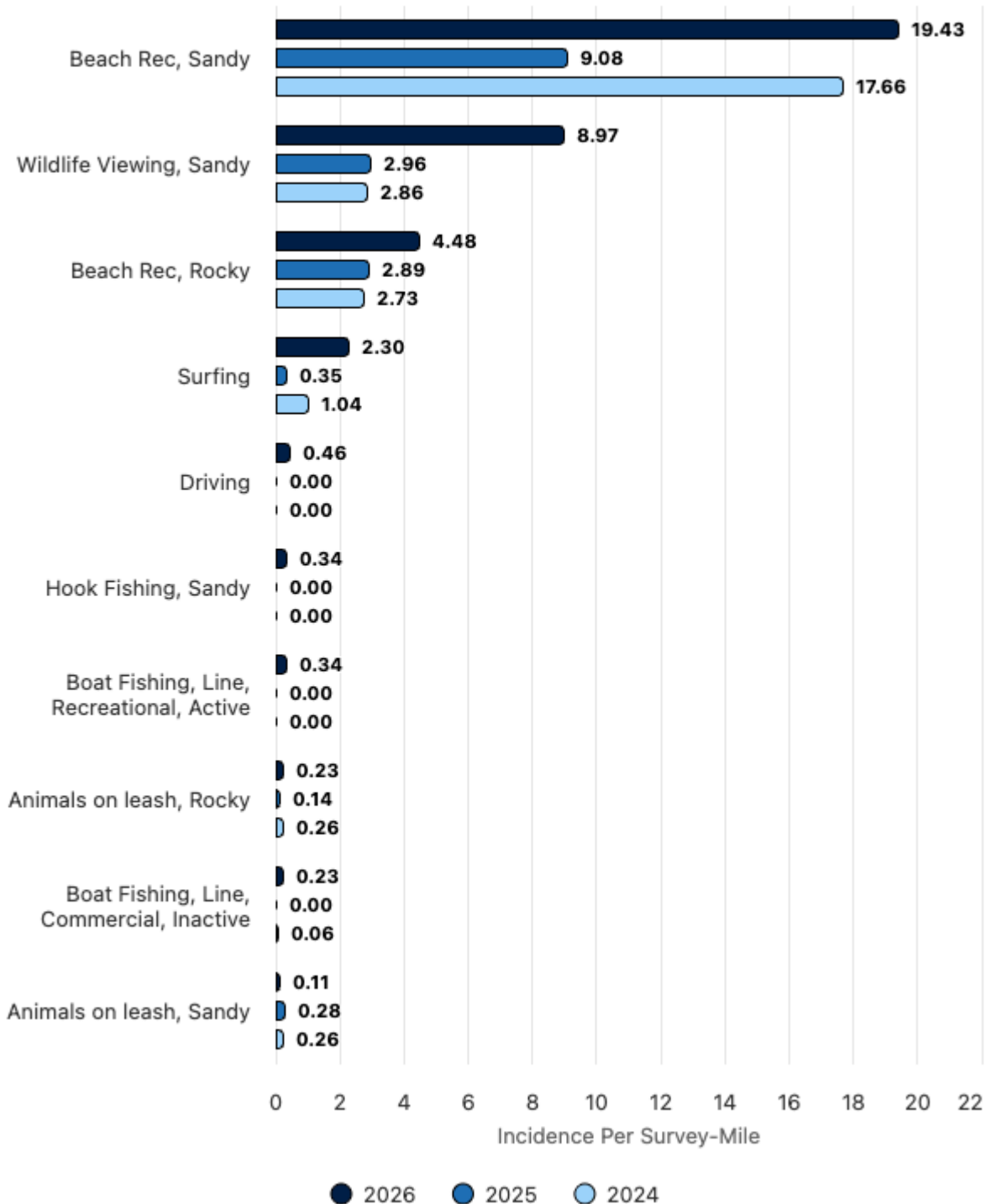
By Survey-Mile, January 1 - June 30, Last Three Years



Caption: Top 10 Activities for Stewarts Point SMR, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.

Russian River SMCA

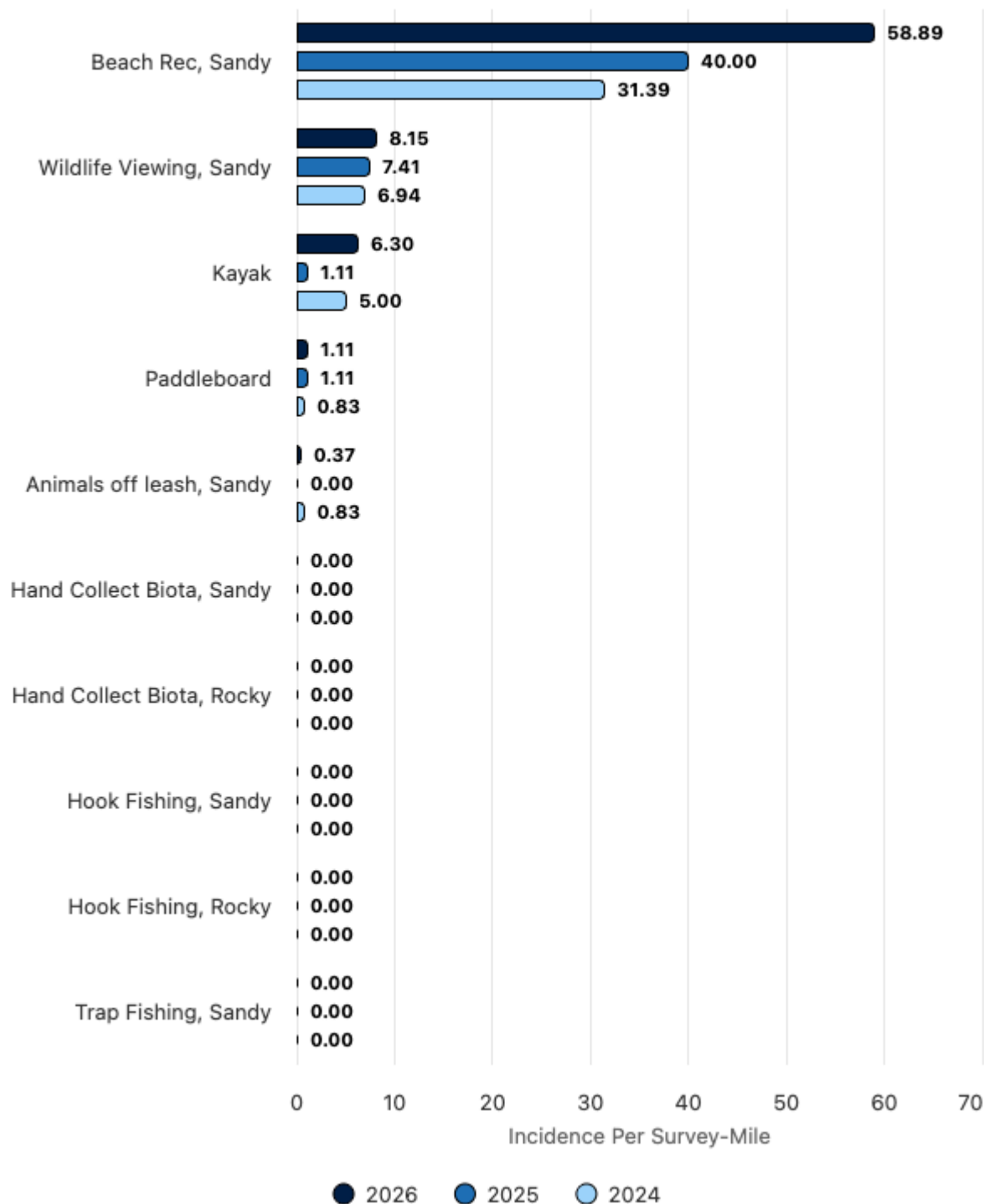
By Survey-Mile, January 1 - June 30, Last Three Years



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

Russian River SMRMA

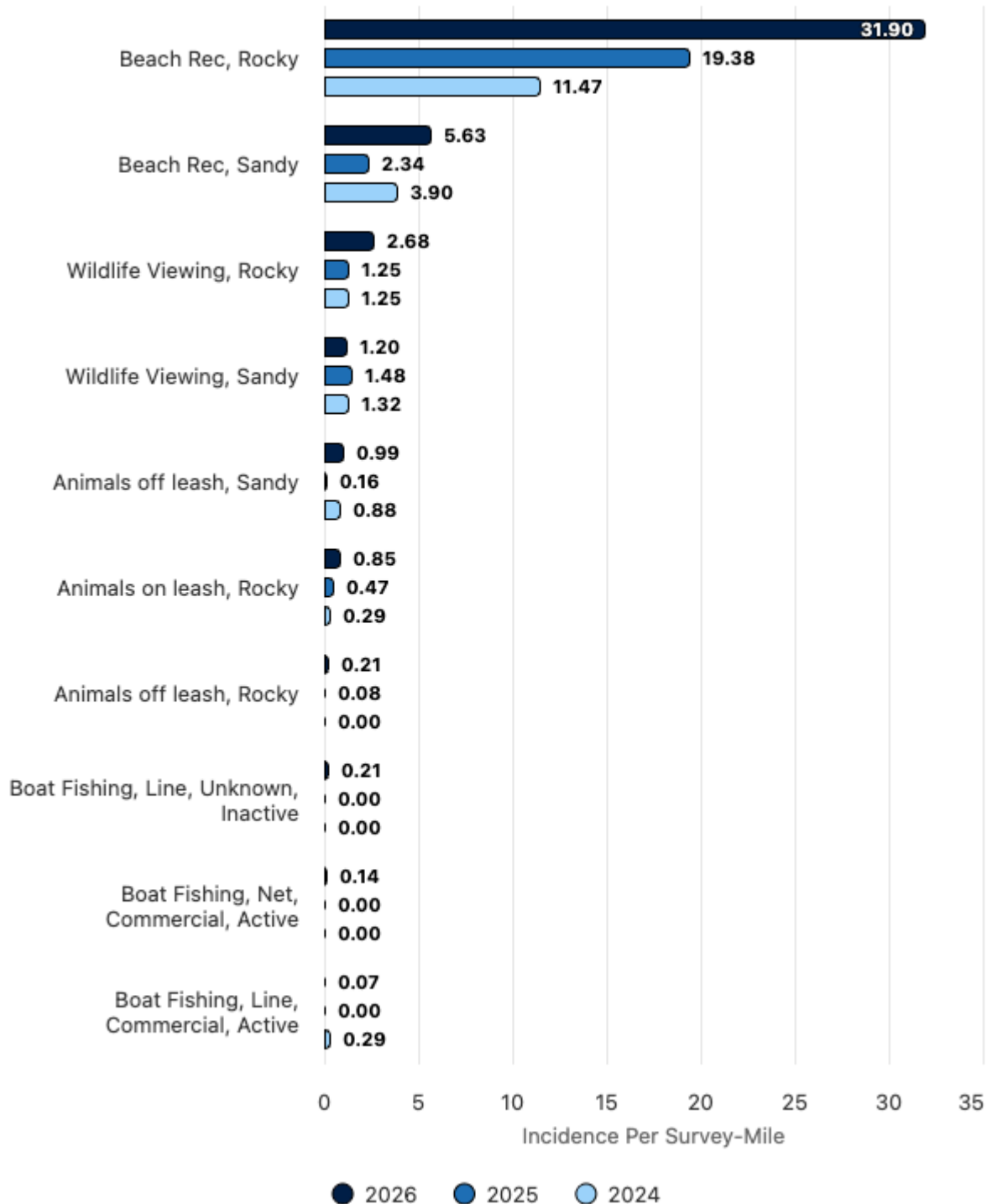
By Survey-Mile, January 1 - June 30, Last Three Years



Caption: Top 10 Activities for Russian River SMRMA, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.

Bodega Head SMR

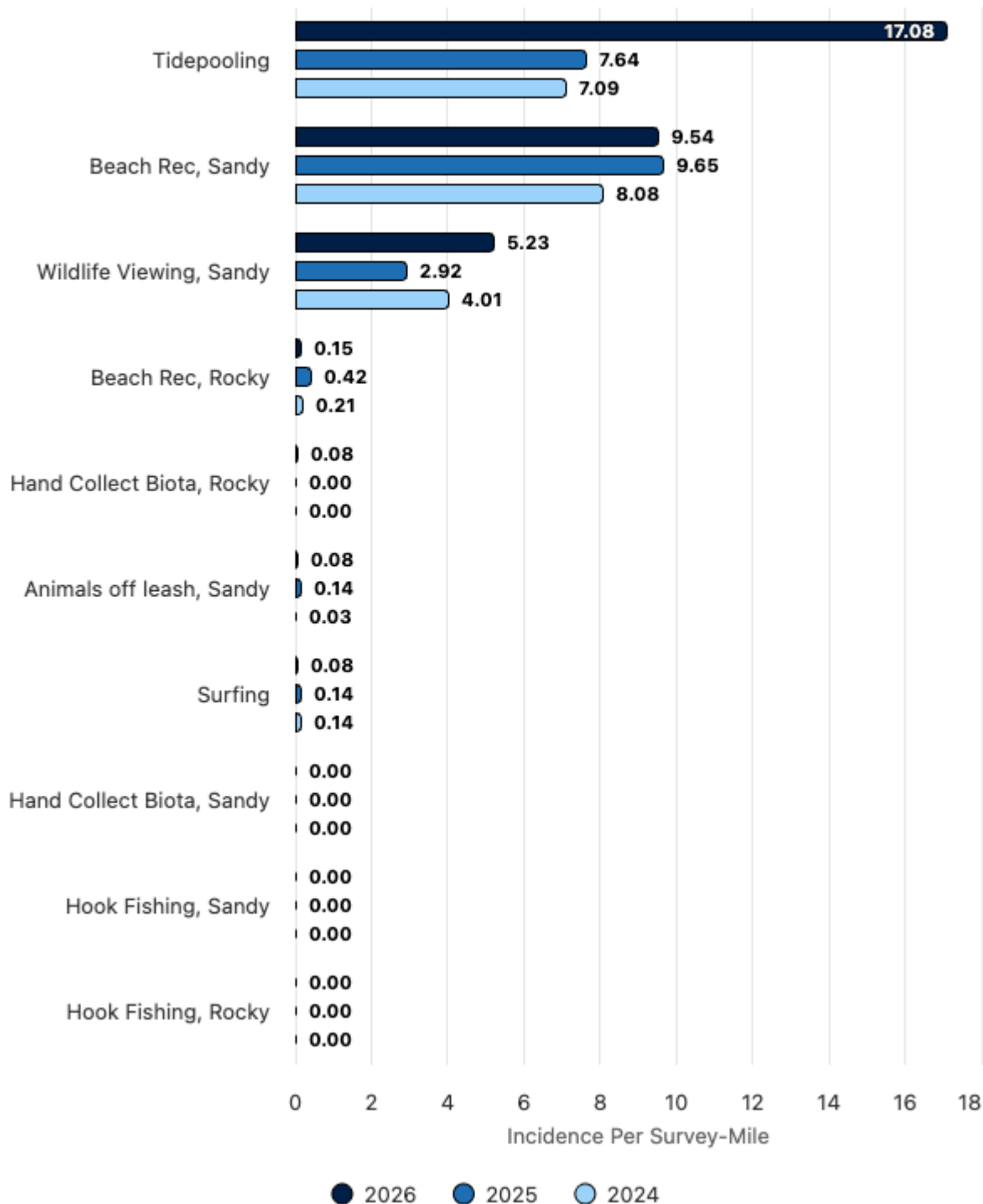
By Survey-Mile, January 1 - June 30, Last Three Years



Caption: Top 10 Activities for Bodega Head SMR, By Survey-Mile, Last Three Years.

Montara SMR

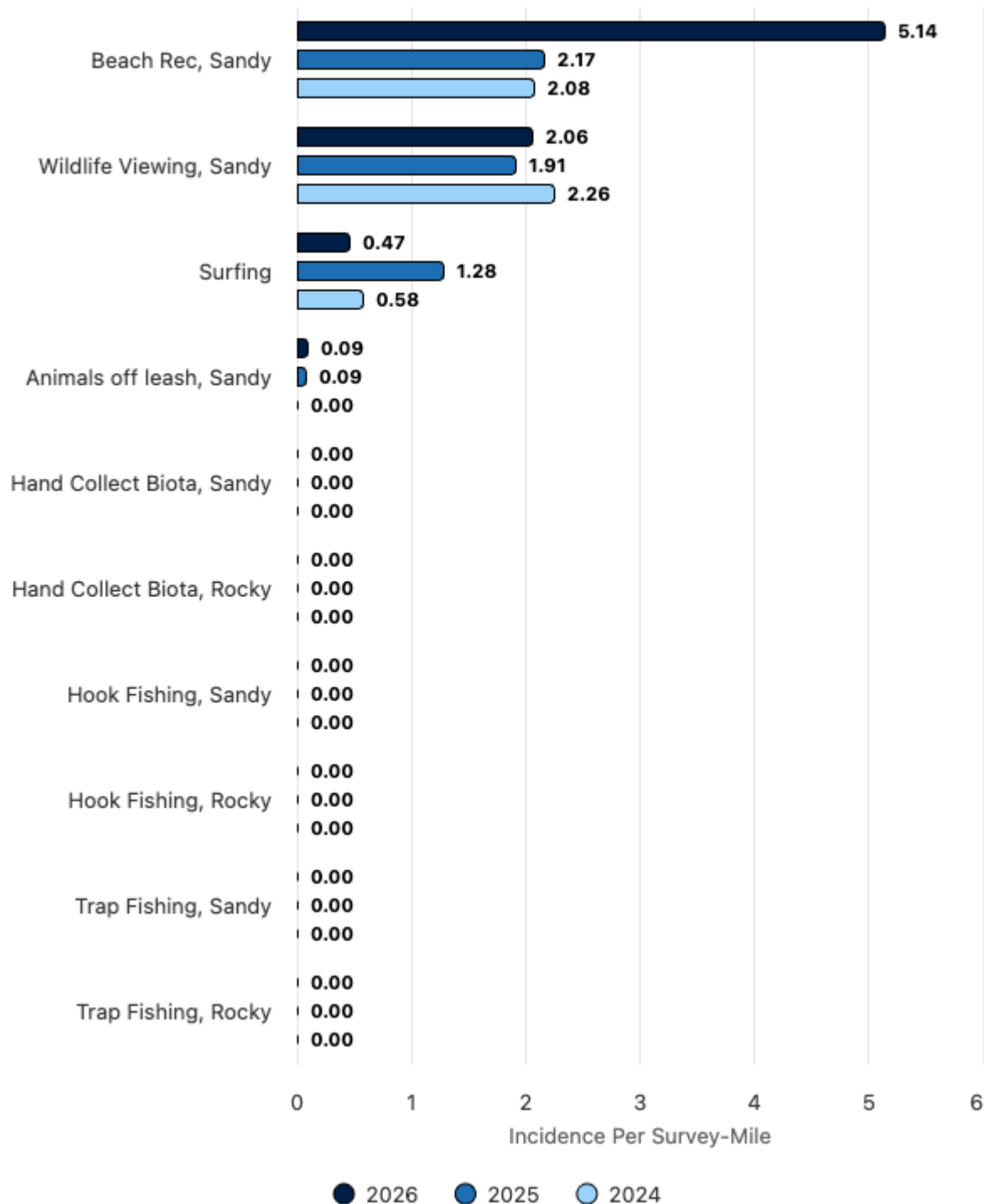
By Survey-Mile, January 1 - June 30, Last Three Years



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

Año Nuevo SMR

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



Caption: Top 10 Activities for Año Nuevo SMR, 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
Big River Estuary SMCA	1	7
Sea Lion Cove SMCA	11	93
Del Mar Landing SMR	10	108
Stewarts Point SMR	3	7
Russian River SMCA	12	321
Russian River SMRMA	9	202
Bodega Head SMR	16	626
Montara SMR	20	419
Año Nuevo SMR	13	83
All MPAs Combined	95	1,866

Breakdown by MPA

Big River (n=1, 7 total observations) State Parks conducted one survey.

Sea Lion Cove State Marine Conservation Area (n=11 surveys, 93 total observations). Between the months of January and June 2026, GFA's Beach Watch reports a rate of 5.3 total uses per mile surveyed in this MPA. This is 18.5% lower than the historical average rate for this time of year.

Del Mar Landing State Marine Reserve (n=10 surveys, 108 total observations). Between the months of January and June 2026, GFA's Beach Watch reports a rate of 10.8 total uses per mile surveyed in this MPA. This is 11.5% lower than the historical average rate for this time of year.

Stewarts Point State Marine Reserve (n=3 surveys, 7 total observations). Between the months of January and June 2026, GFA's Beach Watch reports a rate of 3.9 total uses per mile surveyed in this MPA. This is 27.8% lower than the historical average rate for this time of year.

Russian River State Marine Conservation Area (n=12 surveys, 321 total observations). Between the months of January and June 2026, GFA's Beach Watch reports a rate of 36.9 total uses per mile surveyed in this MPA. This is 50% higher than the historical average rate for this time of year.

Russian River State Marine Recreational Management Area (n=9 surveys, 202 total observations). Between the months of January and June 2026, GFA's Beach Watch reports a rate of 74.8 total uses

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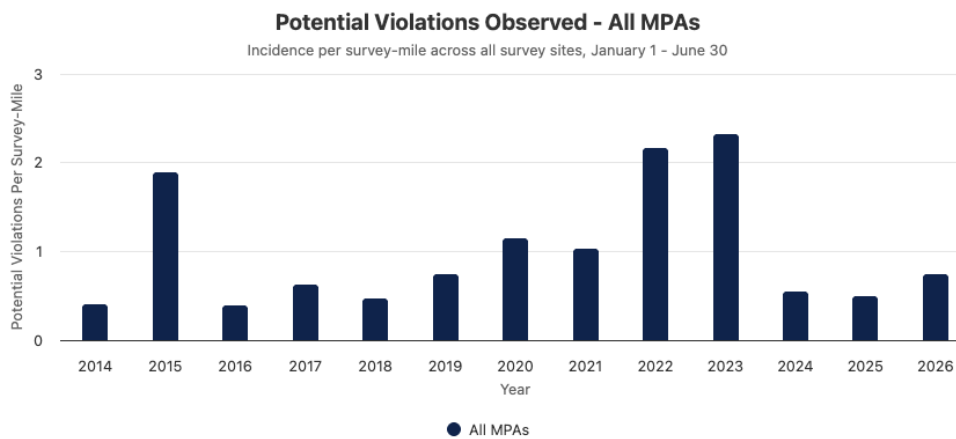
per mile surveyed in this MPA. This is 56.8% higher than the historical average rate for this time of year.

Bodega Head State Marine Reserve (n=16 surveys, 626 total observations) Between the months of January and June 2026, GFA's Beach Watch reports a rate of 44.1 total uses per mile surveyed in this MPA. This is 111% higher than the historical average rate for this time of year.

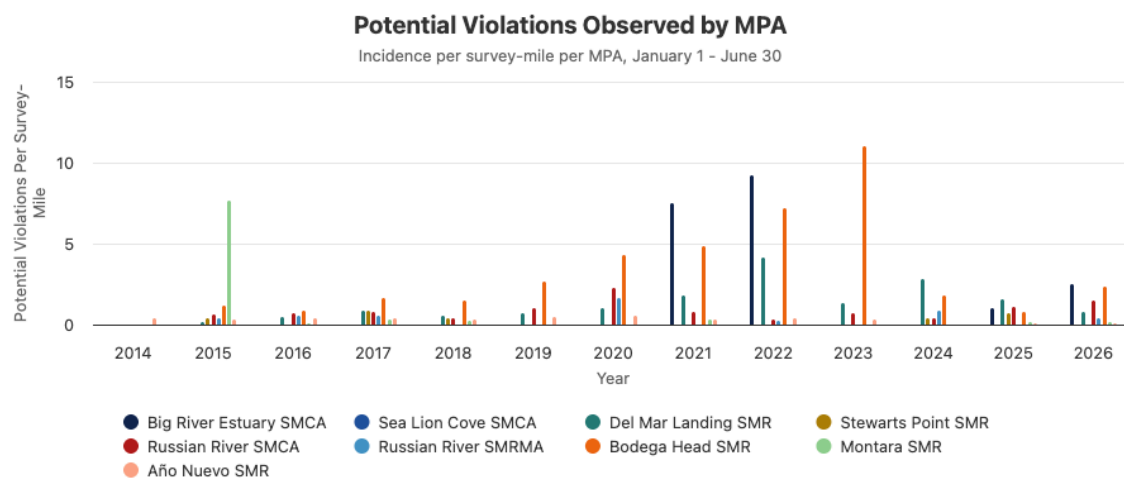
Montara State Marine Reserve (n=20 surveys, 419 total observations) Between the months of January and June 2026, GFA's Beach Watch reports a rate of 32.2 total uses per mile surveyed in this MPA. This is 11.3% lower than the historical average rate for this time of year.

Año Nuevo State Marine Conservation Area (n=13 surveys, 83 total observations) Between the months of January and June 2026, GFA's Beach Watch reports a rate of 7.8 total uses per mile surveyed in this MPA. This is 10.3% lower than the historical average rate for this time of year.

POTENTIAL VIOLATIONS



Caption: Potential Violations Observed - All MPAs. Incidence per survey-mile across all survey sites, January 1 - June 30 of each year. 2014, 0.400; 2015, 1.890; 2016, 0.389; 2017, 0.623; 2018, 0.473; 2019, 0.741; 2020, 1.152; 2021, 1.035; 2022, 2.159; 2023, 2.328; 2024, 0.541; 2025, 0.493; 2026, 0.746.



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

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NEXT STEPS

GFNMS/CBNMS and GFA continue to maintain their roughly 140 Beach Watch volunteers through training new volunteers and continuing education for experienced volunteers. MPA Watch collaborates 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 maintains publicly accessible data on our website to make it accessible to partners, resource agencies, municipalities, and other interested parties. One of the goals 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.

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 the Greater Farallones Association does to conserve California's Federal and California MPAs and other conservation projects please visit farallones.org.