



North Central Coast State of the Region Assessment (2010-2015) Portfolio Product

Document Title: MPA Enforcement and Compliance

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About: This product is part of a portfolio of documents developed to inform the *State of the California North Central Coast: A Summary of the Marine Protected Area Monitoring Program 2010-2015*. It was internally reviewed by CDFW. For more information about the State of the Region Assessment, visit oceanspaces.org/nccsotr.





MPA Enforcement and Compliance

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“The Mission of the Department of Fish and Wildlife is to manage California’s diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend for their ecological values and for their use and enjoyment by the public.”

Contributing to MPA Effectiveness

Marine protected area (MPA) success is influenced by the enforcement of and compliance with regulations. In the North Central Coast (NCC) region, enforcement officers report that many early violations may be due to a lack of knowledge about MPA boundaries and regulations. Even a single violation can have an impact on determining the effectiveness of an MPA. In 2014, for example, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) law enforcement officers caught a commercial fishing vessel setting over forty Dungeness crab traps in Montara SMR.

CDFW is the primary agency responsible for enforcing MPA regulations. Partner agencies including California State Parks, National Park Service, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration also assist in enforcing MPAs, but they do not always have the necessary authority, training, or focus to take independent action. There are fourteen CDFW law enforcement personnel assigned to the NCC region who may respond to MPA violations. There are no large patrol boats home ported north of San Francisco Bay; however, there are five smaller vessels with limited range that patrol this area.



Violations in North Central Coast MPAs 2010-2014

“The most common violation was illegal take of abalone.”



Records of CDFW citations from January 2010 to December 2014 show there were 2,637 marine-related citations (tickets) issued containing 3,515 individual violations in the NCC region. The most common violation was illegal take of abalone with 26%. Approximately 215 (6%) are associated with 14 of the 25 MPAs on the NCC. Of the 215 total MPA violations, 174 occurred in state marine reserves (SMR), 39 in state marine conservation areas (SMCA), and two in a special closure. Geographically, 47% of the MPA-related violations in the NCC occurred in Sonoma County (n=101). Of the 215 violations in the NCC, 14 were from recreational fishers, while 28 were commercial violations; the other 173 violations could not be specifically linked to either recreational or commercial.

Improvements in technology and community support will increase effective compliance through better surveillance technologies, detection, and interdiction. Improvements in violations tracking and mapping will inform management and improve enforcement efforts. CDFW-Law Enforcement Division collects data from the entire state concerning violations; improvements in data management will improve understandings over time. With that, we will be able to differentiate MPA violations by region and violation type with higher resolutions.

Number of Violations in North Central Coast MPAs

The number of NCC citations was highest in 2014, with an increasing trend in citations from 2010 to 2014 (Fig. 1). Montara SMR had the highest percentage of violations at 39% of total violations, followed by Bodega Head SMR at 18% of total violations (Table 1).

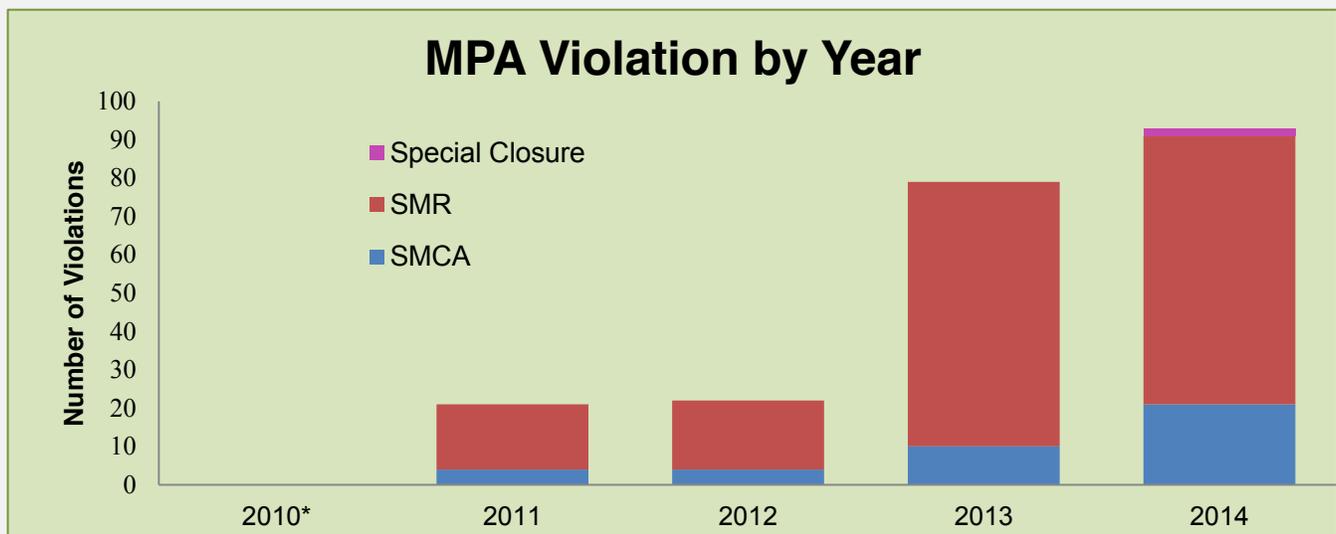


Figure 1. Number of NCC MPA violations by year
* MPAs were implemented in May 2010

Violations by Individual North Central Coast MPAs

Of the 215 total violations approximately 81% occurred in SMRs, 18% occurred in SMCAs, and 1% occurred in a special closure (Table 1).

Table 1. NCC MPAs with violations from May 2010 to December 2014

MPA-related violations	2010*	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Point Reyes SMR	0	2	0	1	0	3
Point Arena SMCA	0	0	1	0	0	1
Saunders Reef SMCA	0	4	0	6	1	11
Sea Lion Cove SMCA	0	0	0	0	5	5
Farallon SMR	0	0	0	2	0	2
Egg (Devil's Slide) Rock to Devil's Slide Special Closure	0	0	0	0	2	2
Montara SMR	0	14	1	19	51	85
Pillar Point SMCA	0	0	1	0	4	5
Bodega Head SMCA	0	0	0	0	5	5
Bodega Head SMR	0	0	0	26	13	39
Gerstle Cove SMR	0	0	1	0	0	1
Russian River SMCA	0	0	0	4	0	4
Stewarts Point SMCA	0	0	2	0	6	8
Stewarts Point SMR	0	1	16	21	6	44
Total	0	21	22	79	93	215

* MPAs were implemented in May 2010

Enforcement and Compliance Document Contributions

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