

# Catalina Island



Catalina Island MPA  
**Collaborative**



**COLLABORATIVE  
NETWORK**

## **Marine Protected Area (MPA) Community Compliance Forum Report October 29, 2020**

With support and funding from:



# About

The **MPA Collaborative Network's Compliance Initiative** is supported by the Ocean Protection Council (OPC), and in partnership with the Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), the California District Attorneys Association, and Resources Legacy Fund. It is a multi-year initiative that aims to improve the compliance and enforcement of California's network of MPAs through community compliance forums, allied agency enforcement trainings, prosecutor training, and MPA violation data collection.

The individual **Community Compliance Forums** held for each coastal county provided space for local stakeholders to voice their MPA, ocean, and coastal compliance concerns and brainstorm ideas to address those concerns. The Collaborative Network hosted two in-person forums (pre-pandemic) and 13 virtual forums. Five hundred community members participated, resulting in over 2,200 compliance concerns and solutions mentioned during 40+ hours of engagement.

This report summarizes the input gathered from stakeholders during the Catalina Island Forum discussion as well the input provided in the post-Forum evaluation forms, Google surveys, and printed surveys.

Refer to the separate **Statewide Compliance Forum Report** for more information about the universal categories used to group mentioned compliance concerns and solutions. Refer to the **Glossary** at the end of this report for definitions of commonly used acronyms.

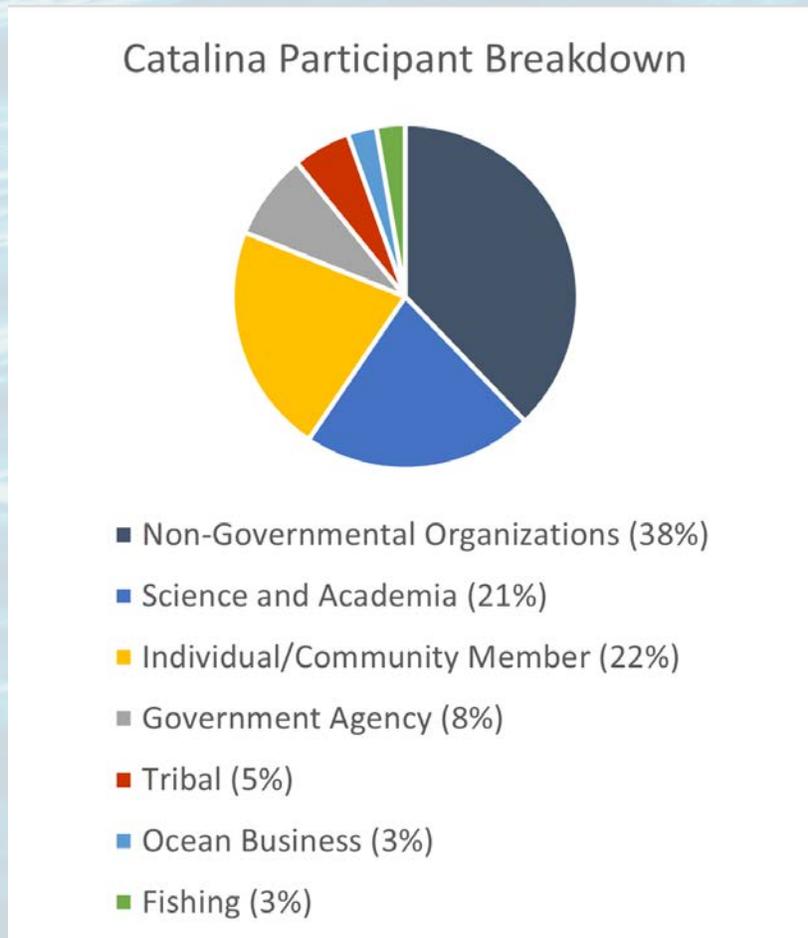
# Key Takeaways

- The top concern was a massive increase in boaters on the frontside of the island, taking from MPAs and making general Fish and Game Code (FGC) violations (e.g., abalone take, spearfishers at Long Point SMR).
- The top solution was targeted education and outreach programs/events. Participants mentioned prioritizing fishing license MPA outreach and a multifaceted MPA education campaign targeting tourists.
- Participants want to increase outreach to youth/families and tourists, and improve stakeholder engagement with the fishing community.
- The number of contacts made by LA County Lifeguards to private boaters in MPAs increased from one or two a day to 12-14 a day in 2020, even though the total visitation to the island decreased by about 50%.
- Lack of cell service on the island is a concern. Related solutions were digital resources like geofenced alerts in MPAs and downloadable georeferenced mobile apps (e.g., FishLegal).

## Highlighted Compliance Concerns

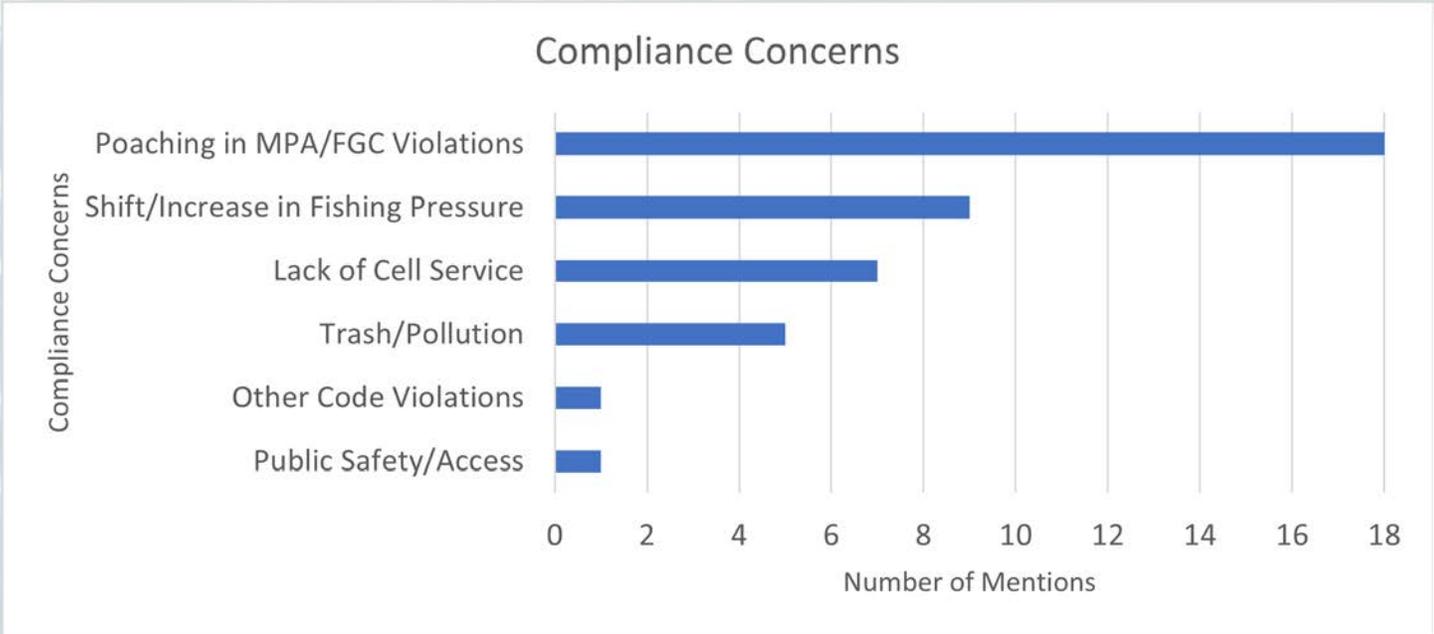
- MPA poaching/FGC violations have been reported in Blue Cavern Onshore (No Take) SMCA, Arrow Point to Lion Head Point SMCA (lobster), and Long Point SMR (spearfishers). Abalone take was also reported.
- Fishing the line and a shift in fishing pressure occurs at Lover's Cove SMCA near the Mole and Long Point SMR.
- Lack of MPA awareness is greatest among tourists visiting the front/eastside of Catalina Island.
- Lack of cell service makes it difficult to use MPA-related apps that require cell service.

# Participant Breakdown



- A total of **35 participants attended** the Community Compliance Forum. The majority of attendees identified as non-governmental organizations, science and academia, and individuals/community members. Government agency, tribal, ocean business, and fishing representatives also attended.
- A total of **42 people registered** for the Forum and received MPA-related information, educational resources, and additional avenues for sharing input in the Forum follow-up email.
- It is estimated that the Forum resulted in at least **1 new Collaborative sign-ups**.
- In-meeting Zoom poll results indicated that 93% of respondents were Very Familiar or Somewhat Familiar with MPAs and 52% identified as current Collaborative members.

# Compliance Concerns



This chart summarizes the number of times each MPA compliance concern was mentioned during the Forum discussions and in the post-Forum evaluation forms, Google surveys, and printed surveys. Concerns are organized into general categories based on the overall input from the community. See the Statewide Compliance Forum Report for more category detail.

# Compliance Concerns

## Compliance Concerns in Detail

### • **Poaching in MPA/FGC Violations**

- ◇ Overall, CDFW sees the most violations at Long Point SMR, Blue Cavern Onshore (No Take) SMCA, and Arrow Point to Lion Head Point SMCA.
- ◇ Participants mentioned boats fishing close to the cliff at Big Fisherman Cove, where CF numbers are hard to identify from shore, and using hoop nets at Blue Cavern Onshore (No Take) SMCA.
- ◇ A cooler full of abalone was reported and cited in Avalon Harbor and poaching of abalone has been reported at Emerald Bay.
- ◇ CPFVs (party boats) are seen at Arrow Point to Lion Head Point SMCA and in Farnsworth Offshore SMCA, moving out if they see the CDFW patrol boat approaching.
- ◇ Offshore poaching occurs regularly (trolling and fishing while anchored) at Long Point SMR, with take by spearfishing concentrated over the weekends and a “mine field” of hoop nets during the first few weeks of lobster season.
- ◇ Campers are illegally fishing in Cat Harbor.
- ◇ Rod and reel fishing occurs at Lover’s Cove SMCA, specifically people casting into the cove from the abandoned boat ramp during construction on the Mole. Violations also have been observed from live-aboard vessels. Many think the MPA stops at Abalone Point or are confused about where the line is.
- ◇ Poaching lobster occurs at Arrow Point to Lion Head Point, especially during the lobster season opener.

### • **Shift/Increase in Fishing Pressure**

- ◇ Participants noted a shift in fishing pressure from the Mole while under construction to the green pier and Lovers Cove SMCA.
- ◇ Some people are fishing the backwater at the Mole.
- ◇ Some people fish rod & reel from the boat launch and boats fish the line at Lover’s Cove SMCA.
- ◇ Using fish plotters, some boaters fish the line at Long Point SMR.

### • **Lack of Cell Service**

- ◇ The lack of cell service refers to limited to no cell service at Long Point, on some parts of the island, and on the water. This is an issue for apps that require cell service.

# Compliance Concerns

## Compliance Concerns in Detail Continued

- **Trash/Pollution**

- ◇ Participants mentioned trash, diesel, and boat debris from a boat run aground at Descanso beach.
- ◇ Participants are concerned about construction debris runoff at Lover's Cove SMCA.
- ◇ Lost lobster traps are a concern.

- **Other Code Violations**

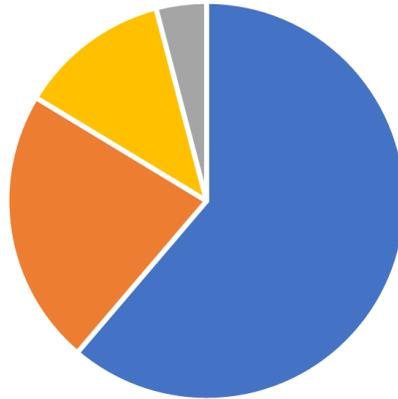
- ◇ Harbor patrol is busy regulating live-aboard and moored vessels, making sure vessels are secured and do not run aground.

- **Public Safety/Access**

- ◇ Public safety and access concerns refers to hazards to navigation because of the density of lobster traps on the front of the island, especially near Long Point SMR.

# Contributing Factors

Factors Contributing to Noncompliance



- Lack of Awareness
- Increase in Visitation
- Confusion Regarding Regulations, Boundaries, or Jurisdiction
- Shortage of Uniformed Personnel/Enforcement Officers

This chart summarizes the potential factors contributing to noncompliance in or near MPAs mentioned during the Forum discussions and in the post-Forum evaluation forms, Google surveys, and printed surveys. Factors are organized into general categories based on the overall input from the community. See the Statewide Compliance Forum Report for more category detail.

Across all the Forums, participants commonly mentioned an increase in visitation, a lack of awareness, a shortage of both enforcement officers and enforcement action, and confusion regarding regulations, boundaries, or jurisdiction as concerns. Due to their general nature and commonality across the state, these concerns were identified as underlying factors potentially contributing to noncompliance. During 2020, visitation to the coast and MPAs was elevated, especially in the summer months (except during mandated beach closures) in large part due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

# Contributing Factors

## Potential Factors Contributing to Noncompliance in Detail

- **Lack of Awareness**

- ◇ There is a need for more MPA education and outreach, signage, and translation of signs/materials into different languages for visitors.
- ◇ The lack of awareness was greatest amongst visitors and on the front side of Catalina Island.

- **Increase in Visitation**

- ◇ There has been a general increase in visitors (primarily tourists) to Catalina with an associated impact.
- ◇ There was an increase in (private) boaters during the pandemic, even though the total visitation decreased by about 50% in 2020.

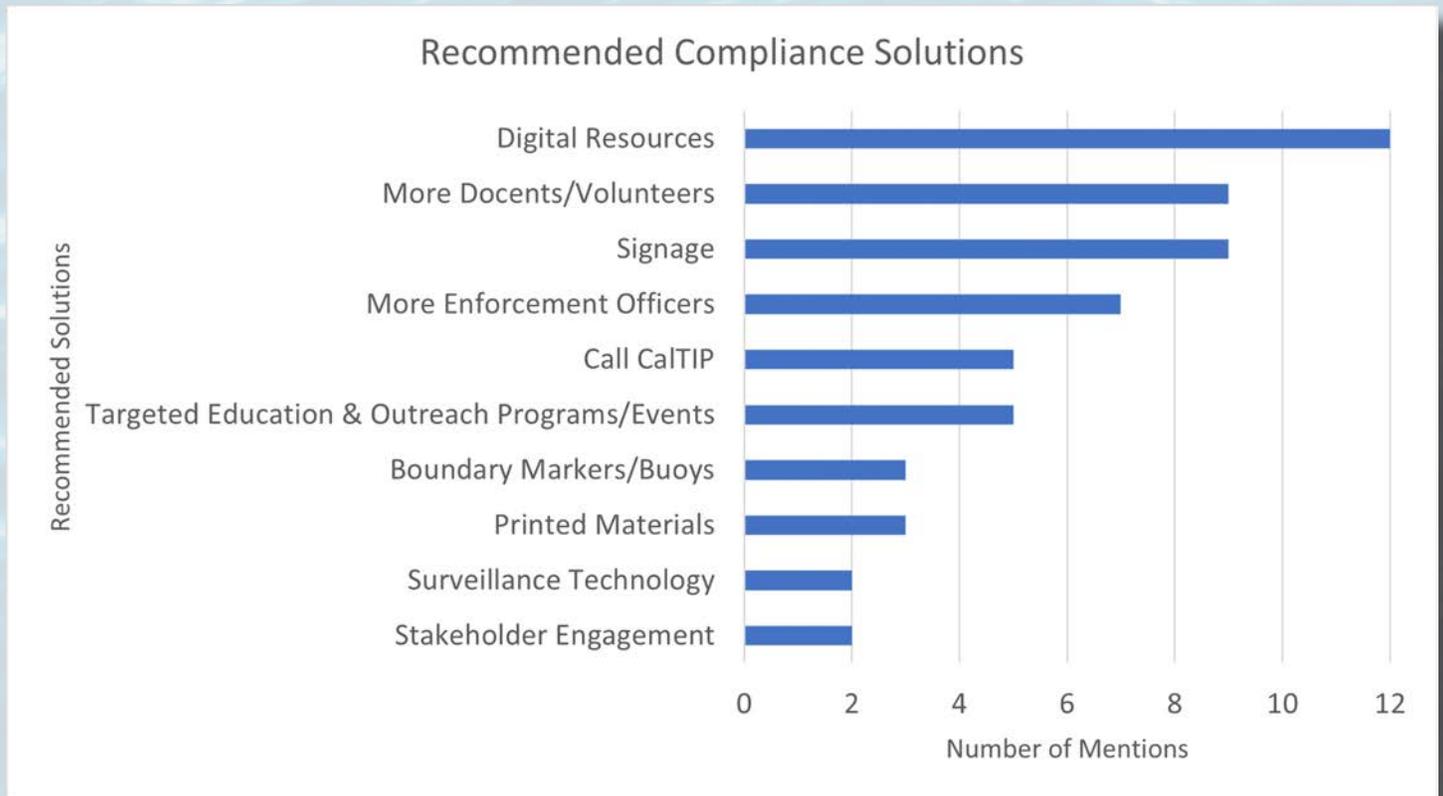
- **Confusion Regarding Regulations, Boundaries, or Jurisdiction**

- ◇ Some boundaries are confusing due to the angle of the coastline and/or man-made structures (e.g., piers) relative to the boundary for Lover's Cove SMCA (some people think the boundary is Abalone Cove) and Blue Cavern Onshore and Offshore (No Take) SMCAs.

- **Shortage of Uniformed Personnel/Enforcement Officers**

- ◇ There is a general lack of enforcement capacity or presence (including boat patrols), an inability to respond, or a diversion of marine enforcement resources to other priorities.
- ◇ More boat patrols at Blue Offshore (No Take) SMCA were suggested.
- ◇ More presence/enforcement from Avalon Harbor Patrol was suggested.

# Recommended Solutions



This chart summarizes the number of times each MPA compliance solution was mentioned during the Forum discussions and in the post-Forum evaluation forms, Google surveys, and printed surveys. Solutions are organized into general categories based on the overall input from the community. See the Statewide Compliance Forum Report for more category detail.

# Recommended Solutions

## Recommended Compliance Solutions in Detail

### • Targeted Education & Outreach Programs/Events

- ◇ Implementing the MPA IPA beer (modeled after Humboldt and Santa Cruz) as an outreach tool/program to fishermen was suggested.
- ◇ Participants wanted to revisit attaching educational resources with purchase of fishing licenses.
- ◇ Existing island groups should get involved in doing MPA outreach.
- ◇ A mainland MPA education campaign (social media) was suggested.
- ◇ Participants wanted to hold another MPA speaker training (presentation/event) like in years past.
- ◇ Outreach to yacht clubs and harbormasters is a valuable strategy.
- ◇ Outreach to campers in boat-in campgrounds was recommended.

### • Digital Resources

- ◇ People use and like the FishLegal app, even though there are some errors with names and possibly boundaries of Catalina MPAs.
- ◇ A georeferenced Catalina hiking map is being created by the Conservancy and may be able to add MPA information.
- ◇ Participants suggested a geofence-based text to alert people when they enter MPAs.
- ◇ The Golden Gate MPA Ambassador Online Training modules were mentioned.
- ◇ Participants suggested creating a virtual reality experience in an MPA and MPA live dives with the Trident mini-ROVs.
- ◇ More and in-depth (digital) educational resources created by the Tongva could be shared.

### • Printed Materials

- ◇ Printed materials/resources, such as the Catalina waterproof MPA brochures, are useful for on-the-water outreach.
- ◇ Enforcement manuals with boundary lines are helpful for allied agencies/lifeguards.
- ◇ MPA placemats could be used in Avalon restaurants.

### • Signage

- ◇ There is a general need for more, updated, or new signage and sign translations.
- ◇ There needs to be regulatory signage at the Mole.
- ◇ Signage is needed at Lover's Point clearing showing the boundaries of Lover's Point SMCA.
- ◇ Interpretive signage is needed at Casino Point.

# Recommended Solutions

## Recommended Compliance Solutions in Detail Continued

- **Signage Continued**

- ◇ Collaboration with the Catalina Island Conservancy is needed to implement signs at the campground near Long Point SMR.
- ◇ Signage on Bird Rock (with the family who owns Bird Rock's permission) in Blue Cavern Onshore SMCA (No Take) was suggested.
- ◇ During the Forum, participants discussed that all signage needs to be approved (as opposed to unapproved or guerrilla signage).
- ◇ There is concern that people are not referencing the locally installed boundary range markers at Blue Cavern Onshore SMCA because of poaching occurring right under the markers. It is difficult to understand what they are if you are not looking for them.

- **Boundary Markers/Buoys**

- ◇ A boundary or range marker should be placed at Pebbly Beach Road in Lover's Cove SMCA.
- ◇ Buoys placed along the boundary of Lovers Cove SMCA, like Casino Point SMCA, would be helpful.

- **Stakeholder Engagement**

- ◇ More people/local groups need to be involved in the Catalina Collaborative.
- ◇ Engagement with anglers, tribal members (Tongva), tourists, and families/youth was prioritized.

- **More Enforcement Officers**

- ◇ More uniformed personnel/enforcement officers are needed on the water to do outreach, especially to island visitors.
- ◇ Avalon Harbor Patrol needs to have support from up the chain to cite for violations around Avalon Harbor (Casino Point and Lover's Cove).

- **More Docents/Volunteers**

- ◇ More volunteer docents, specifically local island groups, are needed to help educate the public about MPAs (e.g., MPA Ambassadors).

- **Surveillance Technology**

- ◇ Participants suggested installing a surveillance camera on the cliff at Blue Cavern Onshore SMCA (No Take) because poachers are fishing up against the cliff and are undetectable from shore.

# Wrap-Up Discussion

## 1. What are our high priority needs?

- Address poaching in MPAs (mostly offshore) and the shift/increase in fishing pressure, specifically the increase of private boaters, take of abalone, spearfishing, boats fishing the line and trolling through MPAs, and take of lobster/setting traps in and on the line of MPAs. Areas that CDFW sees the most violations are: Blue Cavern Onshore SMCA, Arrow Point to Lion Head Point SMCA, and Long Point SMR.
- Improve awareness around MPAs and regulations to visitors on the frontside of the island.

## 2. What programs or projects could be used to increase compliance?

- Targeted outreach, educational programs/events – visitors/tourists, anglers when they get their fishing license, mainland outreach campaign, youth education.
- Digital resources - geofenced alerts in MPAs and georeferenced mobile apps (e.g., FishLegal).
- Signage – signs with QR codes, signs on campground tables and as placemats in Avalon restaurants, and better signs in strategic locations at Casino Point and Lover’s Cove SMCA
- Boundary markers or range markers at MPA boundaries with difficult angles or that have infrastructure that allow installation (Lover’s Cove).

## 3. What key partners need to be at the table to assist with law enforcement?

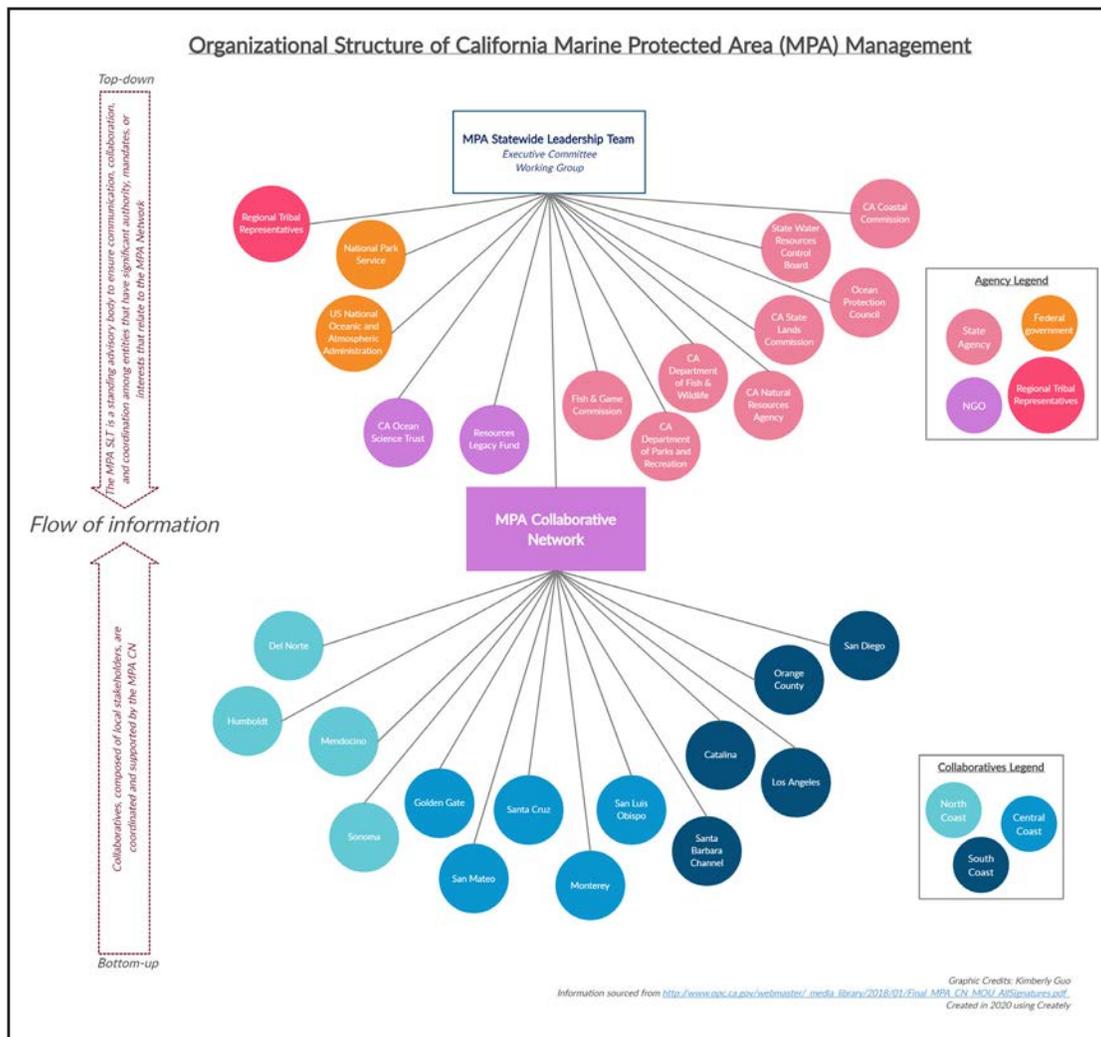
- California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW)
- Los Angeles County Sheriff
- Los Angeles County Lifeguards
- Avalon Harbor Patrol
- Other allied agencies (uniformed personnel)

# Issues for Elevation

As a member of the [MPA Statewide Leadership Team](#) (MSLT), the MPA Collaborative Network can elevate issues, concerns, and ideas shared by stakeholders at the local level to the State managing agencies that have jurisdiction over MPAs in California.

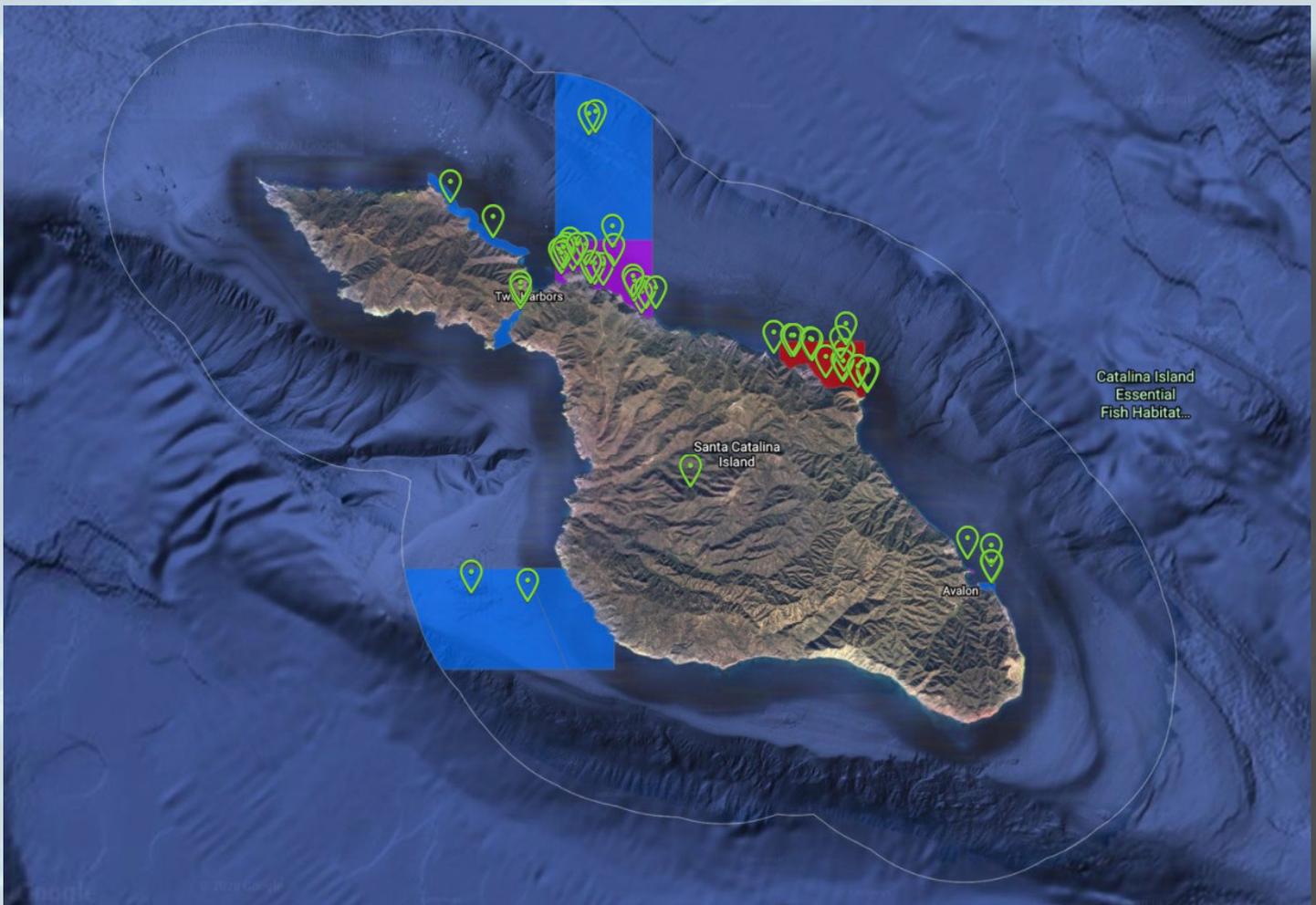
## Issues identified during the Forum that have a potential for elevation and discussion with the MSLT include:

- ◇ A community member is working on a project to install bronze statues in dive parks around the world, which helps to fundraise for ocean awareness. The next proposed location for a statue was in the Casino Point Dive Park, which the community thought was an excellent opportunity for positive outreach and a tourism alternative to “fish feeding” which was deemed more impactful. This project was raised to CDFW and categorized as an incompatible use in MPAs, despite a long history of this dive park using such features and strong support from the City of Avalon.



# Interactive Map Results

Areas of MPA compliance concern were anonymously identified by Forum participants on interactive maps using the virtual collaboration platform Poll Everywhere. A total of 18 participants put pins on the map with 69 total responses (pins). Green pin shapes indicate the location of a virtual push pin placed by a participant. The pinned areas corresponded with the MPA compliance discussions.



Identified areas of concern in and near all Catalina Island MPAs.

# Interactive Map Results



Identified areas of concern in and near Avalon MPAs.

# Glossary

The Glossary defines the acronyms used in any or all the Compliance Forum Reports.

- **ADA:** American Disabilities Act.
- **ASBS:** Area of Special Biological Significance.
- **BIPOC:** Black, Indigenous, and people of color.
- **CaITIP:** Californian's Turn in Poachers and Polluters.
- **CDFW:** California Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- **CHP:** California Highway Patrol.
- **COVID-19:** Coronavirus Disease 2019 (also referred to as COVID and the pandemic).
- **CPFV:** Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel (also referred to as a party boat).
- **DA:** District Attorney.
- **FGC:** Fish and Game Code.
- **GPS:** Global Positioning System.
- **HOA:** Homeowner's Association.
- **M2:** Marine Monitor (M2) Radar System.
- **MPA:** Marine Protected Area.
- **MSLT:** MPA Statewide Leadership Team.
- **NMS:** National Marine Sanctuary.
- **NOAA:** National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration.
- **NPS:** National Park Service.
- **OLE:** Office of Law Enforcement (within NOAA).
- **QR:** Quick Response [code].
- **SCP:** Scientific Collecting Permit.
- **SCUBA:** Self-contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus.
- **SMCA:** State Marine Conservation Area.
- **SMR:** State Marine Reserve.
- **SMRMA:** State Marine Recreational Management Area.
- **SUP:** Stand Up Paddle Board.
- **ROV:** Remotely Operated Vehicle.
- **UC:** University of California.
- **USFWS:** United States Fish and Wildlife Service.
- **USCG:** United States Coast Guard.



**OCEAN  
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These materials and MPA Community Compliance Forums made possible by a grant from the California Ocean Protection Council's Once-Through Cooling (OTC) Interim Mitigation Fund.

**Learn more about the MPA Collaborative Network at  
[www.mpacollaborative.org](http://www.mpacollaborative.org)**

**Join your local MPA Collaborative to get involved in bottom-up resource management.**

**Visit the California MPA website at  
[www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs)**