

San Mateo County



Marine Protected Area (MPA) Community Compliance Forum Report

October 21, 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 San Mateo County 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

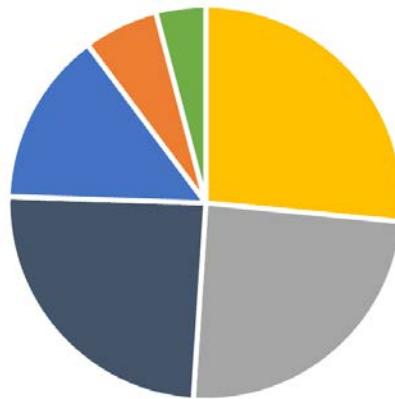
- There is a drastic increase in visitation to and take from the tidepools around Pillar Point. This includes overtaking of marine species (e.g., clams, snails), poor tidepooling etiquette, and more trash.
- There is concern regarding poaching and wildlife disturbance in Montara State Marine Reserve (SMR) and Pillar Point State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA), which can be addressed with education and outreach, and more uniformed personnel/enforcement officers and actions.
- Researchers/volunteers need to be easily identifiable (e.g., wear vests, display banners on research boats, post signage at access points during surveys/monitoring). Similarly, there is a desire to create a notification system for advertising/sharing research activities, especially activities with a Scientific Collection Permit (SCP).
- Interagency collaboration through joint allied agency enforcement trainings is needed. This could include a pre-training call prior to the enforcement training to determine jurisdiction and level of enforcement authority.

Highlighted Compliance Concerns

- Huge amounts of illegal take from the intertidal occurs at Pillar Point, especially just south of the MPA.
- Illegal clamming occurs in Pillar Point Harbor.
- Overtake of snails is an issue.
- Illegal fishing and wildlife disturbance occurs in Montara SMR and Pillar point SMCA.
- Unidentified researchers in closed areas mislead the public.

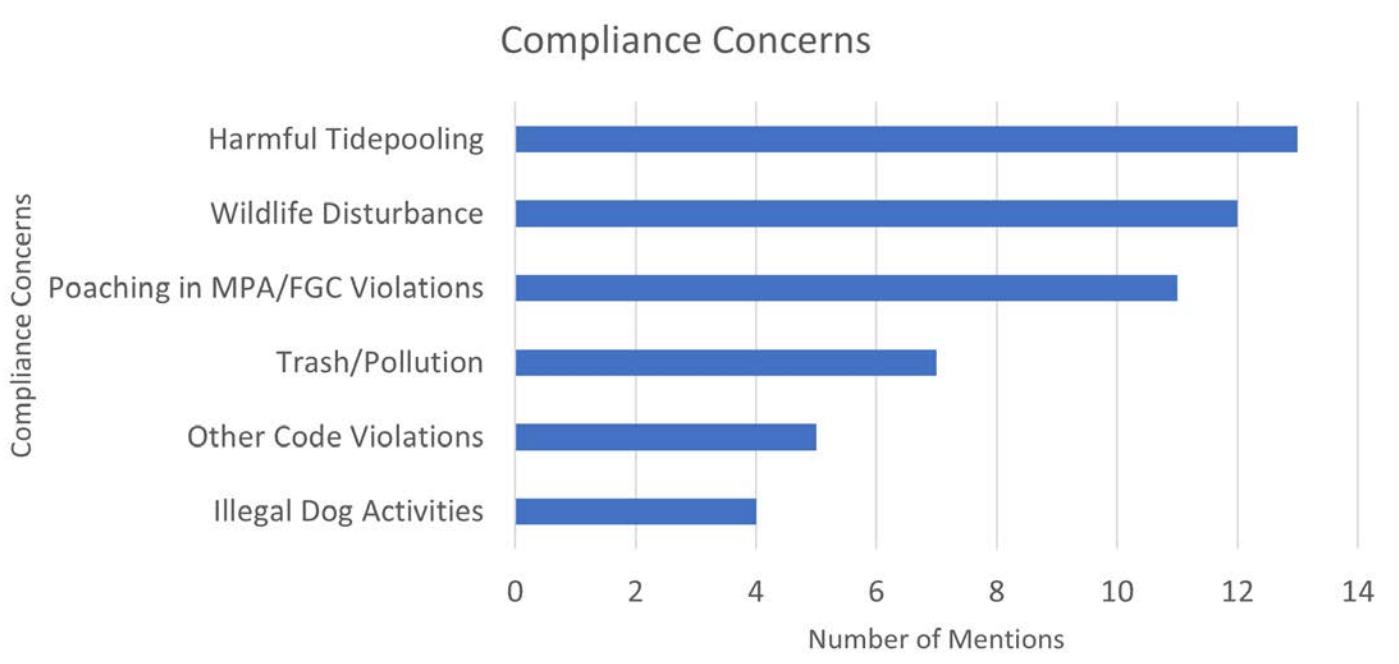
Participant Breakdown

San Mateo Participant Breakdown



- A total of **41 participants attended** the San Mateo Community Compliance Forum. The majority of attendees identified as individuals/community members, government agencies, or non-governmental organizations. Science and academia representatives, volunteers, and fishing representatives also attended.
- A total of **51 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 **5 new Collaborative sign-ups**.
- In-meeting Zoom poll results indicated that 89% of respondents were “Very” or “Somewhat Familiar” with MPAs and 32% of respondents were 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

• Harmful Tidepooling

- ◊ Heavy use of tidepools is occurring, including trampling, removing, or disturbing intertidal organisms (e.g., placing animals like sea stars in buckets for viewing).
- ◊ There has been an increased pressure from harvesting of intertidal animals south of Pillar Point SMCA, potentially due to social media posts in Bay Area groups/threads (e.g., scavenging in tidepools by Sea Forager).
- ◊ Pillar Point and Mavericks were identified as areas of high concern.
- ◊ Sea snail take using a colander was observed in Año Nuevo SMR.

• Wildlife Disturbance

- ◊ People are getting too close to marine mammals and birds (e.g., seals at Montara SMR).
- ◊ Light pollution coming from commercial squid fishery.
- ◊ Vehicle (boat, plane, kayak) related wildlife disturbance or injury (e.g., low flying aircraft by Devil's Slide, propeller cuts, flushing, etc.).
- ◊ CDFW is receiving lots of CalTIP calls around Devil's Slide and wrote one citation for a fishing vessel inside the Special Closure.

• Poaching in MPA/FGC violations

- ◊ Tidepool and overlimit take occurs frequently at Pillar Point (e.g., clams, snails, eels).
- ◊ Unlawful take of snails has been reported to occur at Año Nuevo SMR and Pillar Point SMCA.
- ◊ Onshore hook & line fishing, boats dragging lines, commercial squid fishing seen in Montara SMR.
- ◊ Early morning onshore and offshore fishing occurs in Montara SMR at the northern boundary, the southern end, and at 8th Street.
- ◊ Fishing boats poach off Cypress Point in Fitzgerald State Marine Reserve.

• Pollution/Trash

- ◊ Increased trash, general pollution, human waste, toilet paper, seen across the coast. Tossed glass bottles across from the distillery (near Seal Cove).

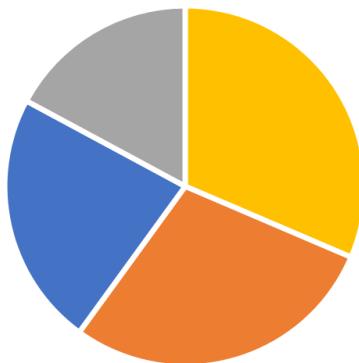
• Other Code Violations - Illegal camping, dumping, and keg parties on the beach.

• Illegal Dog Activities

- ◊ Mostly off leash dogs and dogs in non-designated areas (e.g., at Ross' Cove and Pillar Point), not picking up dog waste, and dogs potentially disturbing/flushing marine mammals and birds.
- ◊ At least two elephant seal pups were attacked by dogs off leash this year at Mavericks Beach and near the old Romeo's Pier.

Contributing Factors

Factors Contributing to Noncompliance



- Confusion Regarding Regulations, Boundaries, or Jurisdiction
- Increase in Visitation
- Lack of Awareness
- 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

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

- ◊ Boundary confusion is common when a SMCA is adjacent to a SMR and/or the boundary does not align with landmarks (e.g., the angle of the coast makes north/south boundaries confusing). There are community members who want to see the boundary between Montara SMR and Pillar Point SMCA adjusted for ease of outreach/enforcement.
- ◊ There needs to be a map of the jurisdictions at Pillar Point to determine who is responsible for this area (e.g., Air Force, San Mateo County Parks, Golden Gate National Recreation Area).
- ◊ There was discussion around whether kayaks are allowed/enforced at Bair Island in the San Francisco Bay (no boats are allowed).

- **Increase in Visitation**

- ◊ Pillar Point has had a huge increase in visitors during the pandemic.
- ◊ Social media may have helped drive the increase.

- **Lack of Awareness**

- ◊ There is a general lack of awareness of marine protected areas among public.
- ◊ Special Closure and MPA/fishing regulation awareness was specifically identified as an outreach need.
- ◊ A local restaurant (The Distillery) misinforms people about the rules of the adjacent coast.

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

- ◊ There needs to be more enforcement out at Pillar Point due to increase in harvesting there.

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

- **More Uniformed Personnel/Enforcement Officers**
 - ◊ More CDFW Wardens and uniformed personnel and more enforcement actions are needed to respond to increased visitation and violations.
 - ◊ Joint allied agency enforcement trainings are needed.
 - ◊ More funding/resources are needed, such as a small patrol vessel for Pillar Point Harbor Patrol/CDFW.
- **Targeted Education & Outreach Programs/Events**
 - ◊ Educational programs (e.g., Respect Wildlife Campaign, Dock Walker Program) should be expanded.
 - ◊ The docent program at Fitzgerald should be expanded to include Pillar Point.
 - ◊ Outreach events (e.g., low tide & King Tide weekends, at the crab opener, community events and festivals) could improve awareness.
- **Signage**
 - ◊ There needs to be signage in multiple languages (e.g., English, Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog) at Pillar Point/Mavericks Beach.
 - ◊ Signage for Pillar Point SMCA is needed near 8th Street at the access trail at Hwy 1. Signage is also needed across from the Army/Navy Store at the foot of 10th Street.
 - ◊ There need to be MPA-specific signs for the Pillar Point SMCA as well as for the area outside the SMCA that still has Fish and Game regulations that limit tidepool take.
- **Docents/Volunteers**
 - ◊ More volunteer docents/paid staff are needed at popular locations/access points (e.g., Pillar Point tidepools and Mavericks Beach), especially at low tide, to support compliance efforts.
- **Research/Volunteer Identification**
 - ◊ Unidentified researchers in closed areas mislead the public (i.e., people call in research activities to CalTIP to report observed violations).
 - ◊ Identification for Beach Watch and LiMPETS (Long-term Monitoring Program and Experiential Training for Students) volunteers, and identification for researchers in Montara SMR were mentioned.
 - ◊ The view from the bluffs makes it difficult to see if the area in the Seal Cove neighborhood is open when researchers are inside. People have been seen jumping the fence here; sheriffs were called.

Recommended Solutions

Recommended Compliance Solutions in Detail Continued

- **Stakeholder Engagement**
 - ◊ More people/local groups should be involved in the San Mateo Collaborative, especially from communities actively harvesting at Pillar Point.
 - ◊ More engagement from the community and landowners/managers is needed around boundary and jurisdiction decisions at Pillar Point.
- **Printed Materials**
 - ◊ More printed materials/resources including MPA manuals and literature/handouts.
- **Culturally Relevant Outreach/Translations**
 - ◊ There is a general need to tailor messaging to diverse audiences to make outreach culturally relevant, including translations.
 - ◊ People from diverse backgrounds can be invited to do/proofread translations and then recruited to participate in the Collaborative.
- **MPA Boundary Photos**
 - ◊ Surveyed MPA boundary photos shown in the presentation (for use in the enforcement training manuals) should be made widely accessible and included in outreach products.
- **Call CalTIP**
 - ◊ It is important to call the CalTIP hotline to report observed violations.
- **Public Safety/Access**
 - ◊ There should be ramps at the coast for improved access for people with disabilities (e.g., ADA wheelchair access).

Wrap-Up Discussion

1. What are our high priority needs?

- Address unlawful/unsustainable tidepooling and poaching in MPAs/Fish and Game Code (FGC) violations
- Address wildlife disturbance

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

- Signage – for tidepool regulations, with QR codes/translations, and in strategic locations
- Targeted outreach, educational programs/events (e.g. to kayakers/stand up paddlers, at the harbor launch ramps)
- A programmatic approach to advertising research and volunteer activities and personnel in the field and making sure they are easily identifiable (e.g. vests, research banners)
- Allied agency/joint trainings

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

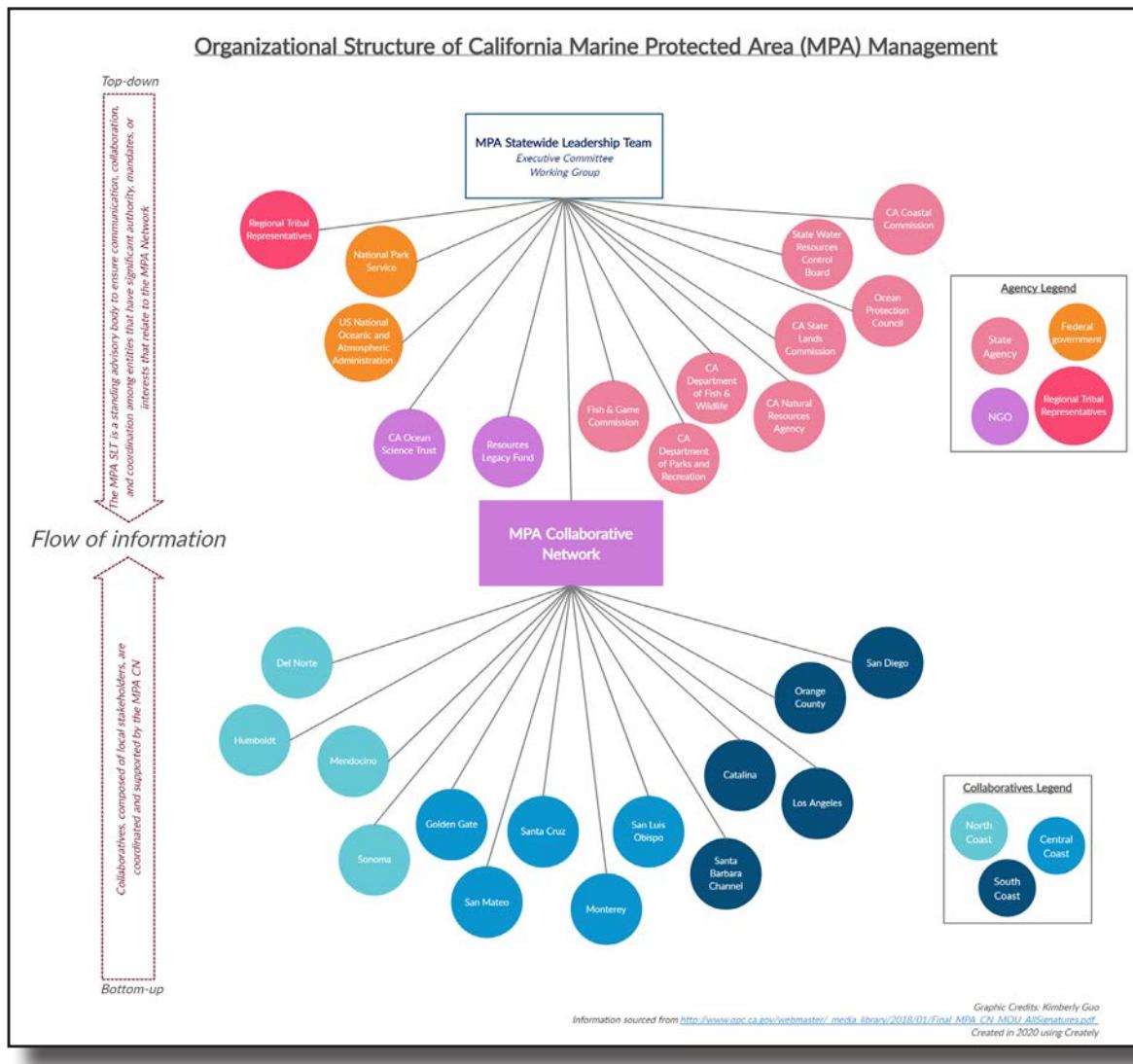
- California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW)
- US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- California State Parks
- San Mateo County Parks
- Pillar Point Harbor Patrol
- County Sheriffs
- National Park Service (NPS)/Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA)
- US Air Force
- Other allied agencies (uniformed 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.

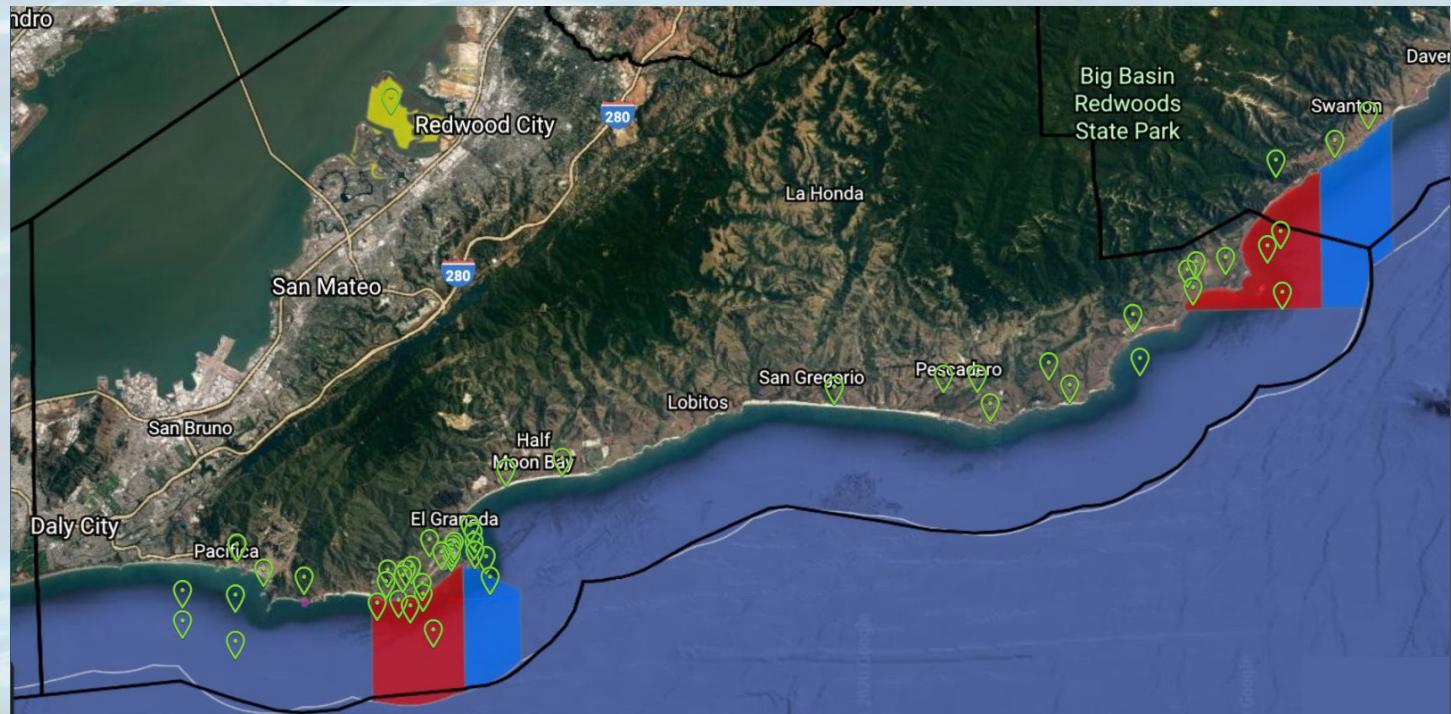
Issues identified during the Forum that have a potential for elevation and discussion at the MSLT include:

- ◊ Pillar Point SMCA and adjacent intertidal areas were identified areas of concern because of unsustainable harvest (e.g., snails, mussels) and impacts of hundreds of visitors to the tidepools. Area could be “wiped clean” even if everyone only takes their legal limit.
- ◊ Boundary line between Montara SMR and Pillar Point SMCA needs to be adjusted for ease of outreach and enforcement.



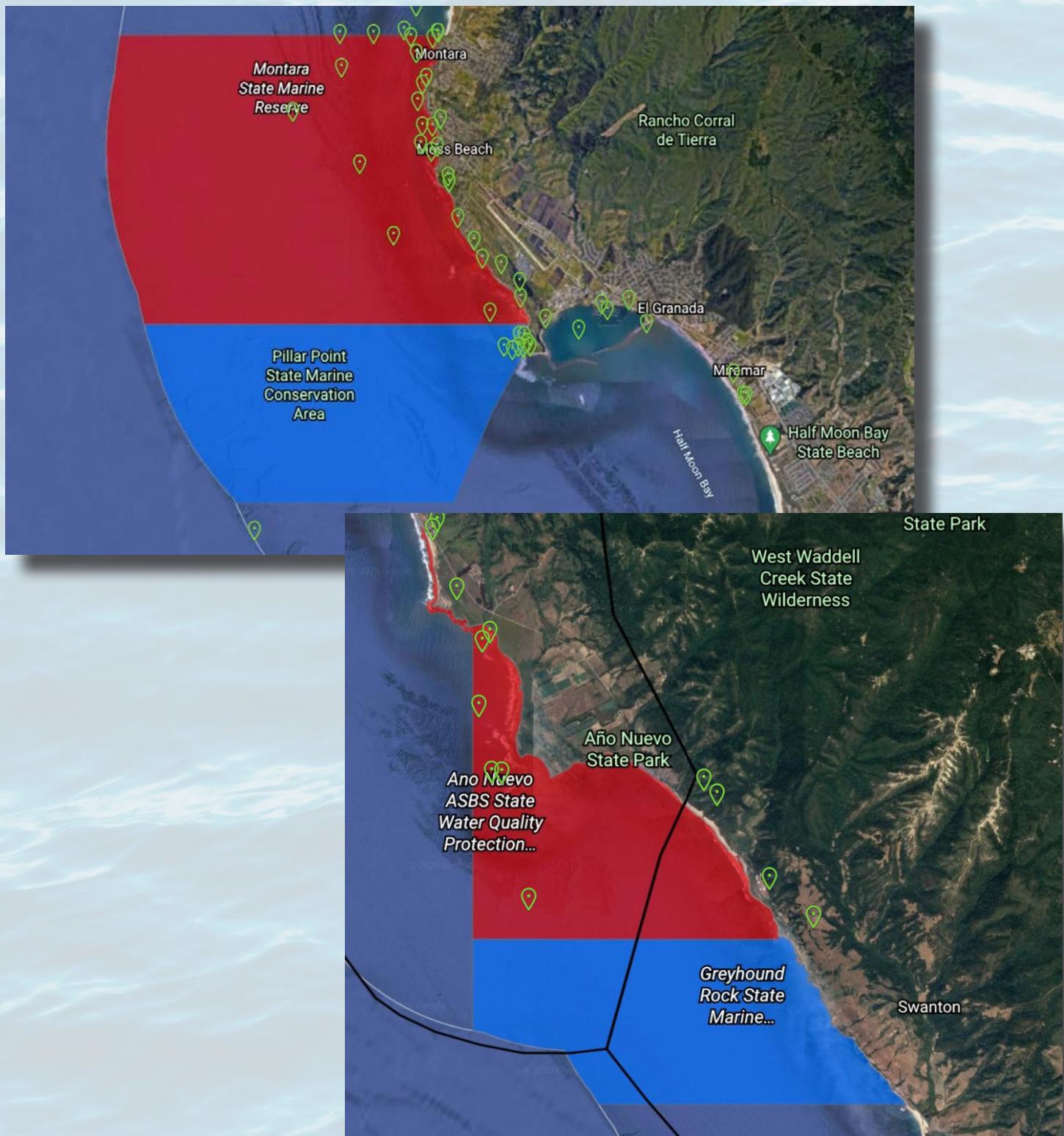
Interactive Map Results

Areas of MPA compliance concern were anonymously identified by Forum participants on interactive maps using the virtual collaboration platform Poll Everywhere. A total of 37 participants put pins on the map with 123 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 San Mateo County MPAs.

Interactive Map Results



Identified areas of concern in and near Montara SMR and Pillar Point SMCA (top) and Año Nuevo SMR and Greyhound Rock SMCA (bottom).

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.
- **CalTIP:** 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.



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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

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

Visit the California MPA website at
www.wildlife.ca.gov/MPAs