



**COLLABORATIVE
NETWORK**

CLIMATE AND THE COAST LOS ANGELES



**Los Angeles Marine Protected Area
Collaborative**

Perspectives on climate change, the coast, and
California's Marine Protected Area Network

*A summary of the greatest concerns, needs, and
priorities from a survey and focus group of Los
Angeles County residents on climate change, the
coast, and marine protected areas (MPAs).*

www.mpacollaborative.org



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is a summary of 19 survey respondents and 16 focus group attendees in Los Angeles.

Participants discussed climate resiliency and benefits of MPAs, climate change-related risks to MPAs, and avenues for ensuring MPAs continue to promote a healthy ocean.

Recommendations for decision makers can be found on page 3.

Key Takeaways

The following key takeaways are highlighted in further detail throughout the report.

Respondents believe...

- **climate change is negatively impacting MPA effectiveness**, coastal ecosystems, and coastal communities
- **MPAs are helping address climate change** impacts on local coastal ecosystems and communities
- **marine management is a priority** for addressing climate change
- **climate action is a high priority** for their community

Some takeaways **specific to Los Angeles** include:

- Connecting **underserved communities** with the coast
- Pushing for a **strengthened MPA network** for greater climate resiliency
- **Access concerns** (e.g., to conduct MPA Watch surveys)
- **Water quality concerns** (e.g., harmful algal blooms (HABs) and human feces), **prosecuting polluters**, and pushing policy to **improve water/sewage & other infrastructure** (e.g., PCH and Zuma Beach parking lot flooding with storms & sea level rise)

Recommendations

The following recommendations represent the perspectives of respondents and do not necessarily represent the perspectives of the MPA Collaborative Network, which represents many diverse viewpoints.

Develop...

- **outreach and education materials** (messaging) that clearly and succinctly communicates the intersections of climate change and MPAs
- **positions** within each organization/agency/department dedicated to climate change
- **co-management agreements** for MPAs between Tribes and state governing agencies
- **funding streams** towards projects focused explicitly on climate change and MPAs
- **learning opportunities** for partners and the public to learn about the intersections of MPAs and climate change
- **clear communication** to partners and the public about how **adaptive management** will address climate change

Prioritize...

- **Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)** in management and research practices
- **Protection of blue carbon ecosystems**
- **Research and monitoring** projects focused on MPAs and climate change to inform management decisions

Assess potential positive climate impacts of...

- **allowing for restoration** activities within MPAs
- **expanding protected areas** and **implementing stronger protections**
- additions of **dynamic MPAs** that address changing conditions

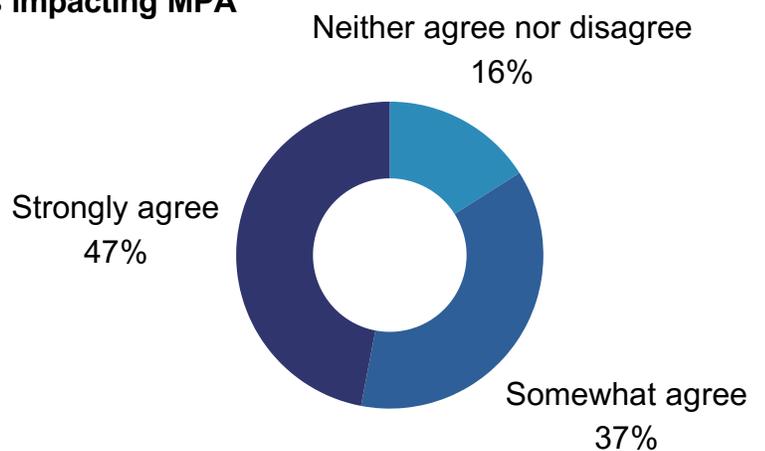
Conduct...

- a **blue carbon inventory** for California's MPAs (either as a whole or individually) that estimates how much blue carbon they sequester, as well as how much greenhouse gases are created through the management program
- a **climate change vulnerability assessment** for California's MPAs (either as a whole or individually)

TAKEAWAY #1

Respondents believe climate change is highly impacting MPA effectiveness and coastal ecosystems.

1.1 Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statement: **Climate change is impacting MPA effectiveness.**



1.2 Rank your **biggest concerns about how climate change impacts** your local coastal ecosystems and marine protected areas (MPAs).

Concerns ranked from highest to lowest

- 1 Increased ocean temperatures and marine heatwaves
- 2 Sea level rise
- 3 Ocean acidification
- 4 Coastal Storms
- 5 Climate driven shift in human impacts
- 6 Wildfire runoff
- 7 Invasive species
- 8 Other *



“Lack of opportunities for coast recreation especially for inner-city school age children”
- Respondent

TAKEAWAY #2

Respondents believe MPAs are helping address climate change impacts on local coastal ecosystems

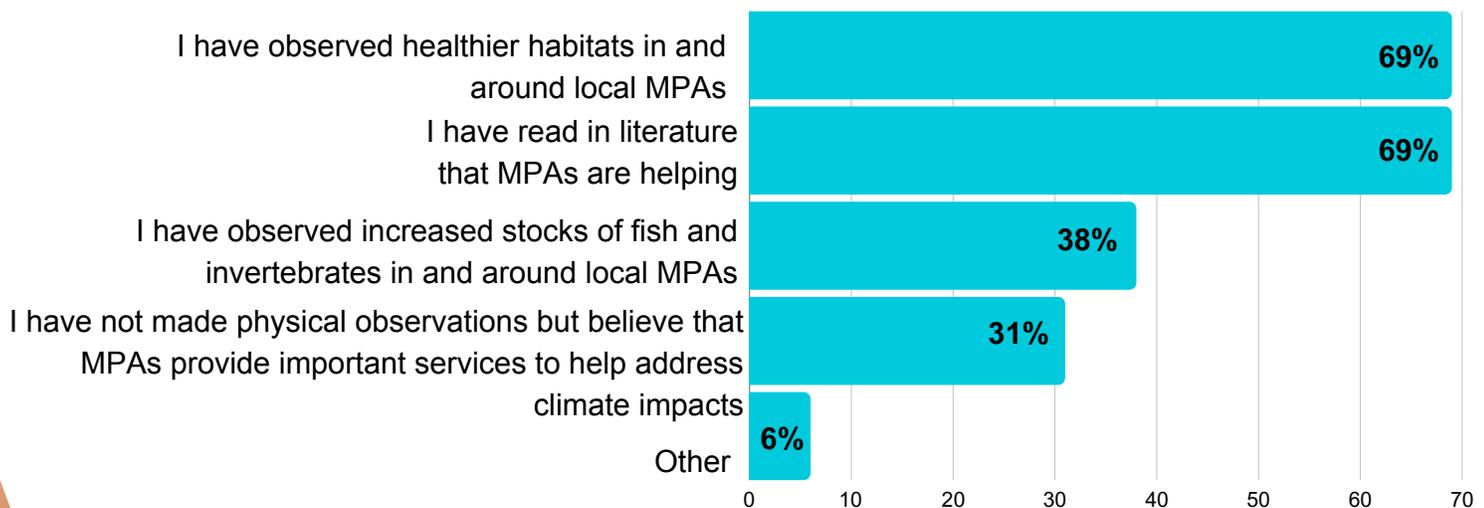
2. Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statement:

My local MPAs are offsetting/helping address these impacts to my local coastal ecosystems.



“MPAs provide important marine species a respite from activities that may extensively deplete their numbers. They also provide important recreational areas that can connect us closer to the urban ocean, creating more opportunities for equity in communities close to MPAs.” - Respondent

Respondents who **agreed** local MPAs are offsetting/helping address impacts to your local coastal ecosystems were asked why*



*Respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer



TAKEAWAY #3

Respondents are concerned about the impacts of climate change on coastal communities

3. Rank your biggest concerns about how the following **climate impacts affect the health** (ability to function and thrive) **of your community or your community’s resilience** (ability to bounce back).

Concerns ranked from biggest to smallest:

- 1 Warming and changing oceans further accelerating and exacerbating climate change on a larger scale
- 2 Impacts to culturally important species
- 3 Widening of existing social inequalities
- 4 Reduction of recreational opportunities
- 5 Impacts to species used for sustenance
- 6 Loss of aesthetically, culturally, and/or spiritually important sites
- 7 Loss of economic resources or opportunities
- 8 Impacts to infrastructure
- 9 Diversion of resources that could be used for other community programs/priorities

“[I am] especially concerned on how low-income communities and communities of color will be disproportionately affected by climate change” - Respondent



“Rapid changes on coast (erosion, storm surge, extreme high tides, [sea level rise]) impact access” ... “[to specific areas including] Westward beach, Broad beach, and Latigo point [in Malibu].” - Respondent

TAKEAWAY #4

Respondents believe MPAs are helping address climate impacts on communities

4. Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statement:

My local MPAs are offsetting/helping address climate impacts that affect the health (ability to function and thrive) **of my community or my community's resilience** (ability to bounce back)



Agree
64%

Neither agree nor disagree
37%

Respondents that **agreed were asked to explain their answer**. A thematic analysis of responses revealed the most frequently mentioned topics:

- by protecting the diversity of habitats and species, MPAs are more resilient
- general community awareness increases resilience
- MPAs provide sanctuary for species
- protected ecosystems conserve biodiversity

Respondents that **disagreed** were also given a chance to explain their answer. **No “disagree” responses were submitted for Los Angeles.**



“MPAs build stronger, more resilient ecosystems.” - Respondent

“While I am relatively new to learning about MPAs, I was able to see a visible difference in an environment where an MPA was established compared to where there was no MPA. The MPA seemed better preserved with a more vibrant atmosphere and abundant wildlife. I can imagine that communities prefer to have areas that are more beautiful as they would not have to go far to see them.”

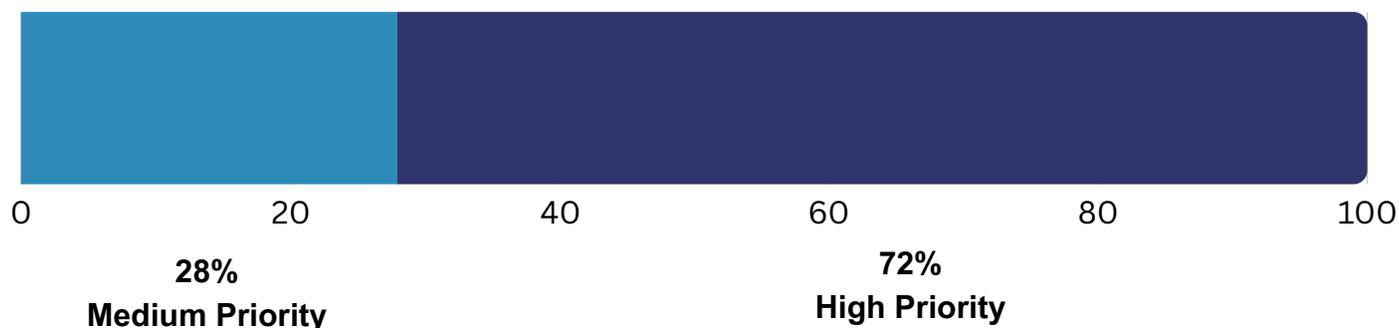
- Respondent



TAKEAWAY #5

Respondents believe marine management is a priority for addressing climate change

5.1 How would you **prioritize marine management alongside other climate change solutions** (such as renewable energy and carbon sequestration)?



5.2 Rank what you believe are the **most important priorities for adaptively managing MPAs** specifically in the face of climate change.

Priorities ranked fro most to least important

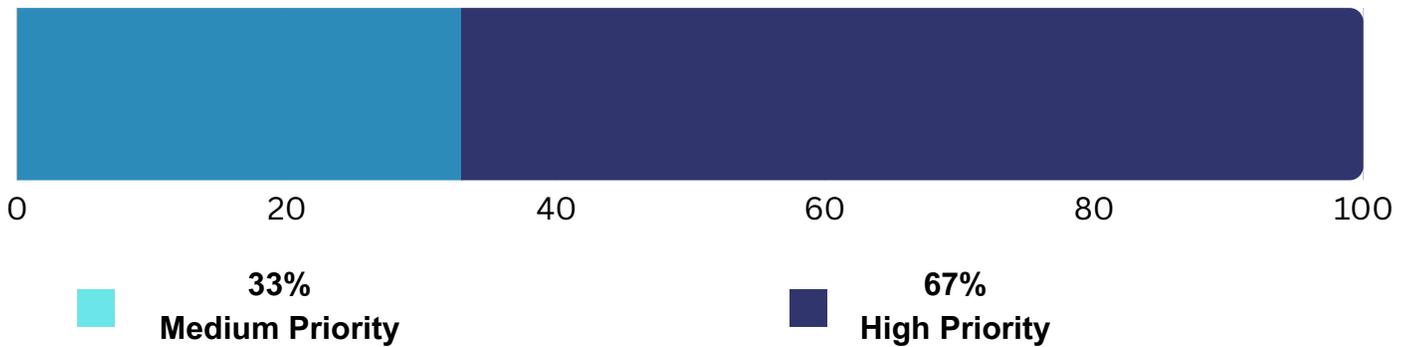
- 1 Expansion of protected areas and stronger protections
- 2 Research and monitoring projects to collect more data to inform decisions
- 3 Protection of blue carbon ecosystems (kelp, seagrasses)
- 4 Take necessary management action to allow for landward migration of submerged aquatic habitats
- 5 Integration of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) into MPA management and research
- 6 Allow for restoration activities within MPAs
- 7 Co-management of MPAs between tribes and state governing agencies
- 8 Consider addition of dynamic MPAs that address conditions impacting California currents



TAKEAWAY #6

Respondents believe climate action is a high priority for their community

6. How would you prioritize climate change alongside other drivers of political, demographic, and/or socioeconomic change impacting your community?



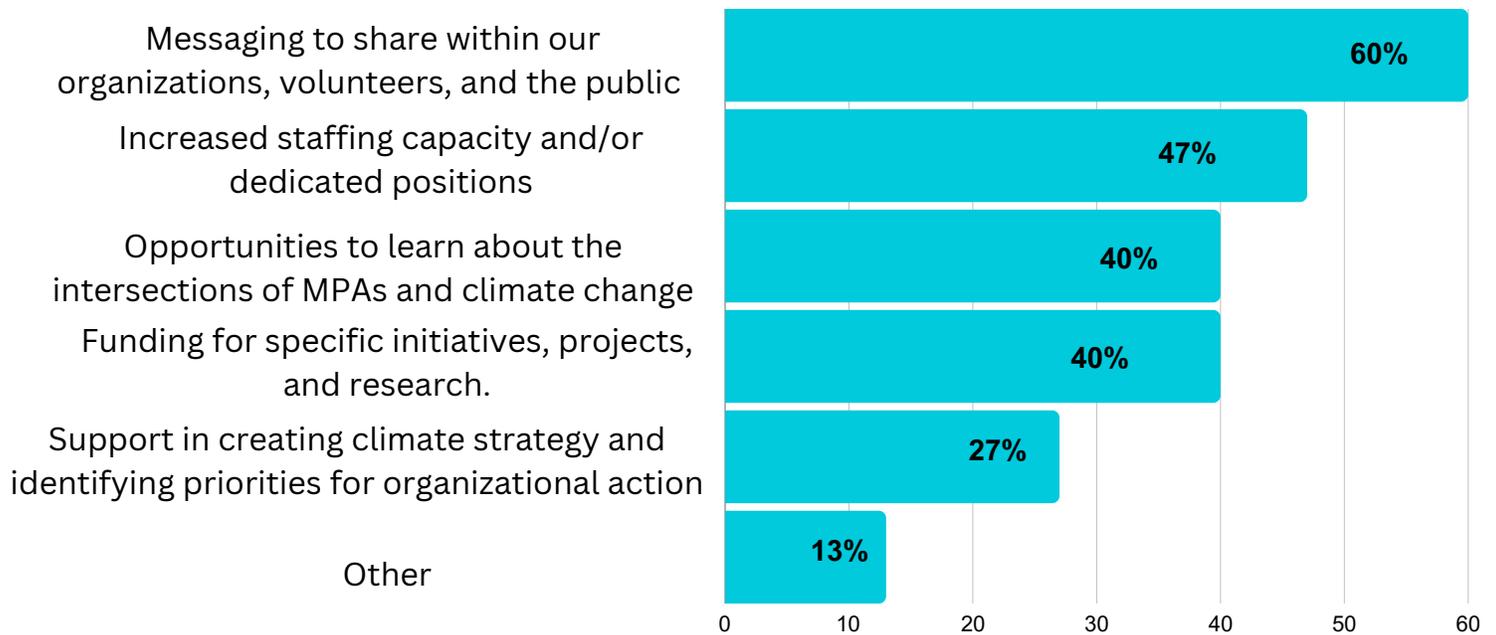
Respondents had the option to mention the most important general climate change solution along the coast (i.e. offshore wind, managed retreat, return of coastal land to tribal management, etc.)?



TAKEAWAY #7

Highest needs of respondents

7. What are the **needs of your organization/agency/tribe/business/community** in relation to MPAs and climate change?*



[Funding for specific initiatives, projects, and research including] “funding for efforts supporting MLPA goals” and “blue carbon projects” -Respondent

“Comprehensive plan and long-term approach to nourishment of beaches and protection of coastline.” -Respondent



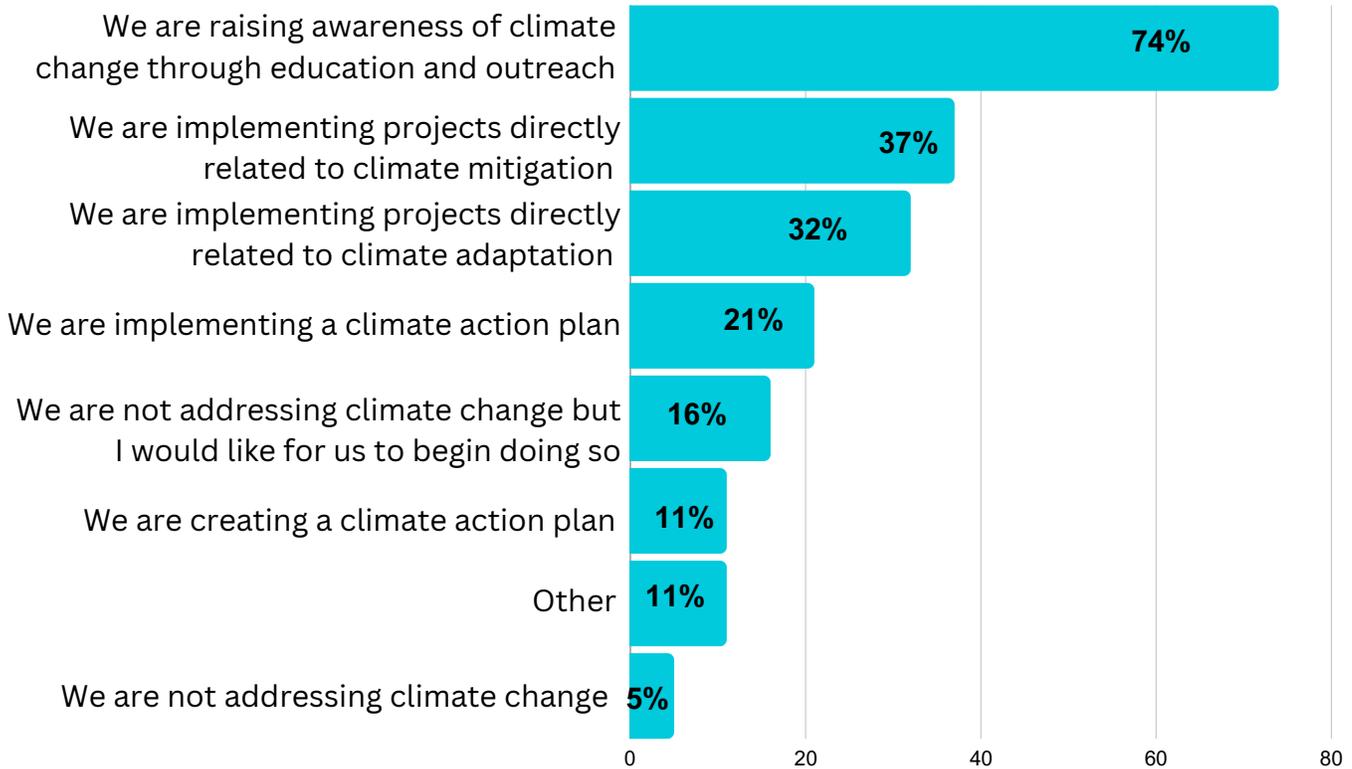
“More social science research to understand what is being done + how impacted communities are dealing with climate.” -Respondent

*Respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer

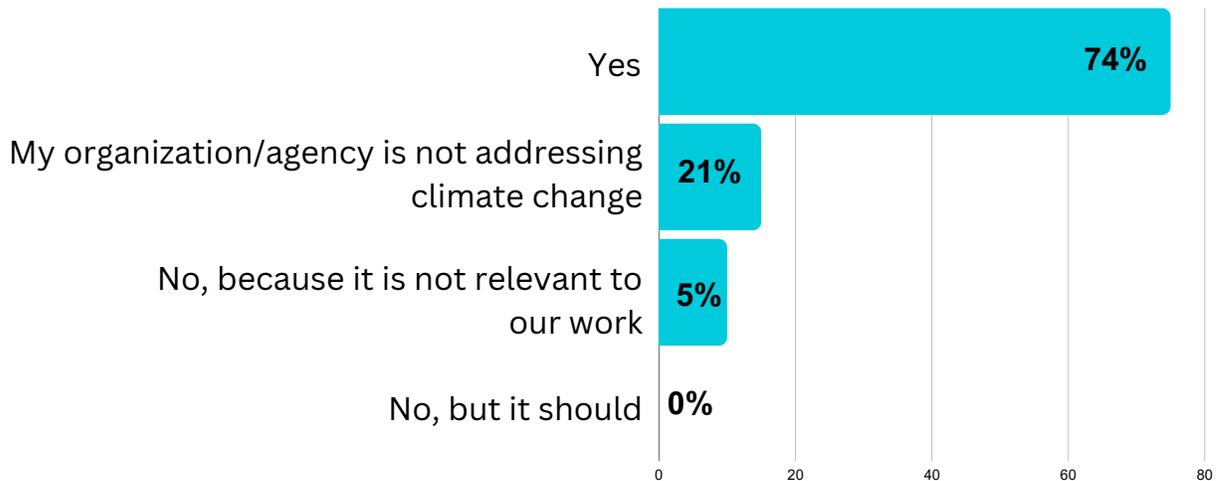
APPENDIX A

Community Work

How is your organization/agency/tribe/business/community addressing climate change?*



Do the climate actions of your organization/agency/tribe/business/community incorporate or consider MPAs?



*Respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer

APPENDIX A

Community Work and Resources

The following information/resources were provided by participants in regards to the work that is already occurring within Los Angeles and relevant community resources.

What is currently being done to address climate change:

- [Regional AdaptLA: Coastal Impacts Planning in the Los Angeles Region](#)
- [California Department of Insurance](#) addressing the issue of coastal flooding
- Science forums and conferences: [H2O conference and American Shore & Beach Preservation Association meetings](#)
- Climate change education is now mandated in California K-12 schools
- State mandates local solutions (e.g., Topanga Lagoon restoration, lifeguard station moving back and up)

Resources

For resources on Climate Change and MPAs, as well as resources specific to your region, [visit our resources document \(click on this link or scan QR code\)](#).



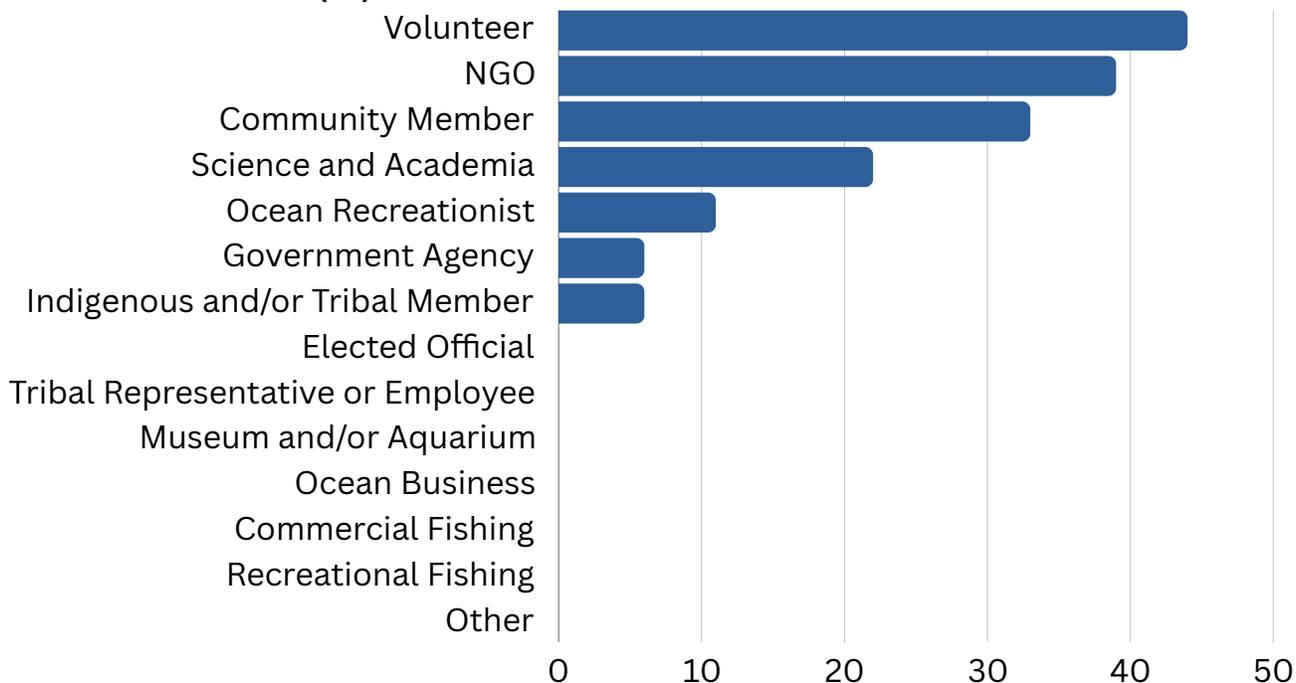
Resources

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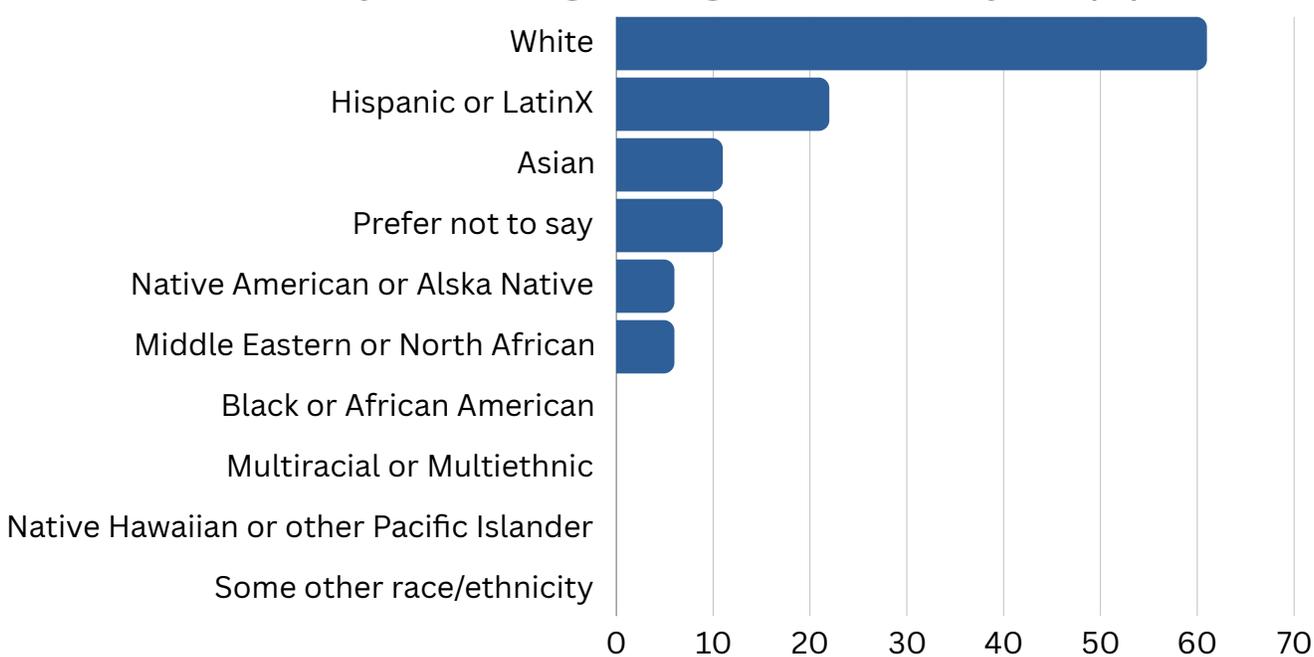
APPENDIX B

Demographics of survey respondents

Sector Affiliation (%)*



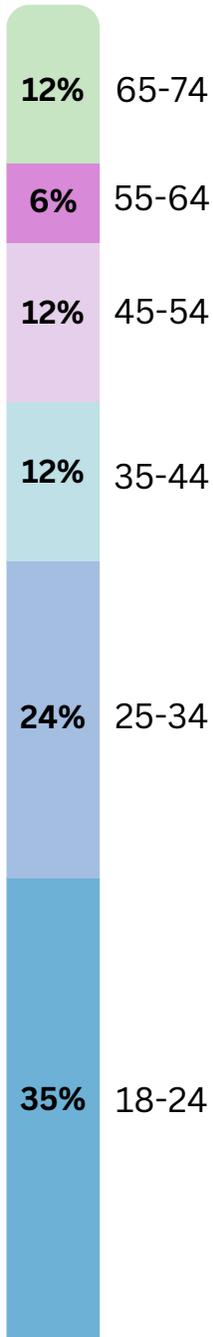
Which race, ethnicity and/or origin categories describe you? (%)*



*Respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer

APPENDIX B

Age Groups

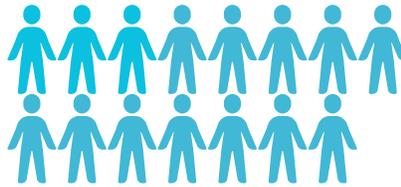


0% of respondents selected any of the following age groups: “Under 18,” “75-84” and “over 85”.

Gender Identity



11% of respondents selected “**male**” as their gender identity.

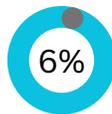


83% of respondents selected “**female**” as their gender identity.



0% of respondents selected any of the following gender identities: “Non-binary”, “Transgender”, “Not listed/Option to specify”

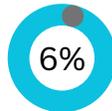
Highest level of education



6% High school graduate or GED



6% Some college, but no degree



6% Associate’s or technical degree



28% Bachelor’s degree

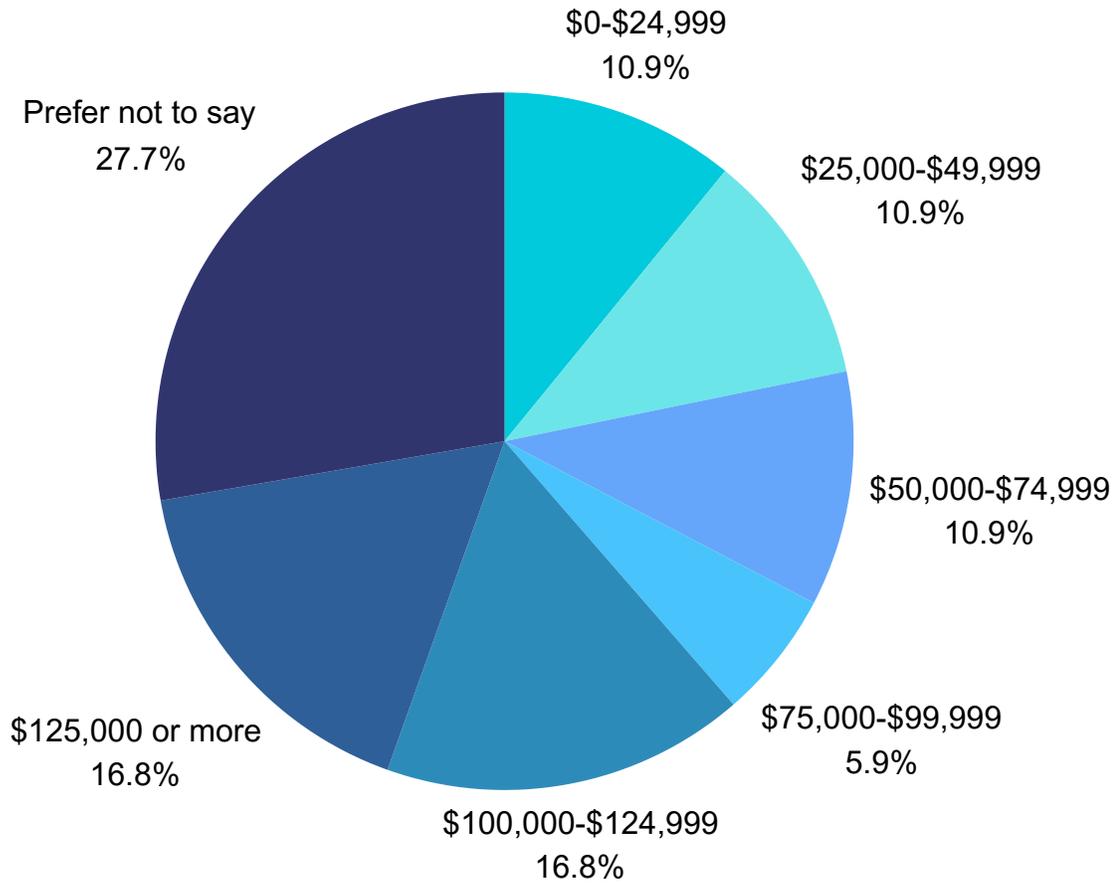


50% Master’s degree

0% of respondents selected any of the following: some high school or less”

APPENDIX B

Annual household income (before taxes) in 2022



Point Vicente No-Take SMCA



ABOUT THE MPA COLLABORATIVE NETWORK

The MPA Collaborative Network (CN) ensures that MPAs are effective by providing a robust structure for civic engagement in MPA management. The CN's 14 county-based volunteer groups (collaboratives) bring together over 1,700 members representing hundreds of distinct and diverse Californian organizations, agencies, Tribes, individuals, interests, and backgrounds for a more comprehensive and localized approach to resource management.

Learn more as well as join your collaborative:

www.mpacollaborative.org

For more information on MPAs:

<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs>

Photo credit: Aubrie Fowler, South Coast Specialist,
MPA Collaborative Network