

Staff Summary for April 16-17, 2025

30A. Marine Resources Committee (MRC)**Today's Item**Information ☐Action ☒

Receive summary and consider approving recommendations from the March 13, 2025 committee meeting. Discuss referred topics and consider revisions to topics and timing.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Previous MRC meeting | March 13, 2025 |
| • Today consider MRC recommendations | April 16-17, 2025 |
| • Next MRC meeting | July 17, 2025: MRC
(proposed to add July 16) |

Background

MRC works under Commission direction to set and accomplish its work plan (Exhibit 1). Today, the Commission will receive a report on the previous MRC meeting and recommendations, as well as provide direction for any referred topics and revisions to MRC topics and timing.

Previous Committee Meeting

MRC met on March 13 in Sacramento, with Zoom and phone options. Official meeting minutes (video) are posted on the [Commission's YouTube page](#) with a link also available on the Commission's website meeting page at fgc.ca.gov/Meetings/2025; an abbreviated summary is included in this document.

Commercial Coonstripe Shrimp Fishery

MRC received public input regarding potential regulation changes for a regular rulemaking following Commission adoption of emergency regulations. The Department will work with stakeholders and fishermen to explore options for a regular rulemaking. Department staff will present proposed management options at the July 2025 MRC meeting.

Application for a New Aquaculture Lease – Santa Barbara Sea Ranch, Inc.

State water bottom lease applicant Santa Barbara Sea Ranch, Inc. presented its proposed lease project offshore Santa Barbara County to receive public and MRC input for consideration during the environmental review process, consistent with the Commission's enhanced leasing process. The application was originally submitted in 2018 and received a Commission public interest determination at that time. Staff presented background on the enhanced leasing process and how the new lease application fits within it. The MRC co-chairs provided guidance to the applicant, including to re-engage with the local community.

Note: Subsequent to the meeting, the applicant submitted a request to pause the application.

Status of Existing Aquaculture Leases

The Department presented a status update on the Commission's 17 existing aquaculture leases, pending requests from leaseholders, and new applications under review. MRC

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requested two aquaculture updates in July: (1) An update from the California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) on the status of the state aquaculture action plan, and (2) a draft timeline from the Department and staff for resuming efforts to develop best management practices plan requirements for leases.

Red Abalone Recovery

- **Risk Tolerance for Considering Limited Harvest Opportunities:** The Department presented historic fishery information for commercial and recreational landings over time, and the current status of various abalone species in California, including red abalone at San Miguel Island. The Department recommended a focus on statewide recovery, not harvest.
- **Extension of the Recreational Fishery Closure:** The Department reported on trends documenting continued large-scale decline of red abalone populations on the north coast, recognizing that small pockets observed in shallow water do not correspond to recovery but rather could be a potential source for restoration. The Department recommended extending the recreational closure indefinitely.

MRC provided a recommendation for both items under red abalone recovery.

Staff and Agency Updates – Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Regulation Change Petition Evaluation Process

- **2024 MPA Enforcement Statistics:** Law Enforcement Division (LED) Marine District provided a comprehensive presentation that synthesized MPA enforcement statistics for 2024 (Exhibit 2).
- **MPA Petition Evaluation Process and Timeline:** The Marine Region gave an update on MPA petition evaluation status and next steps, including a proposed process and timeline for evaluating and developing recommendations for MPA petitions in bin 2. At the July MRC meeting, the Department will present a draft evaluation framework and proposed petition groupings. Department bin 2 evaluations will occur between July and November, to support initial discussion of Department recommendations in November, followed by full Commission engagement and review (TBD). The interagency “Bin 2 Workgroup” (Department, Commission, and OPC staffs) will continue to meet regularly to coordinate and collaborate. See Exhibit 3.
- **SeaSketch California Demonstration:** Guest presenters (academic GIS developers from UC Santa Barbara) provided a demonstration of their SeaSketch California mapping and analytical platform, updated through OPC funding for the purpose of supporting visual and analytical evaluation of MPA petitions.

Staff and Agency Updates – Other Topics

- The Department Marine Region presented an update on an electronic reporting and monitoring pilot project, which includes testing the tools in the set gillnet fishery (Exhibit 4).

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- OPC staff provided updates on emergency funding for post-wildfire monitoring in Los Angeles, fishery investments, 30x30, and funding for MPA monitoring projects.
- Commission staff provided an update on recent outreach efforts related to the Coastal Fishing Communities Policy. Guest speaker Kate Fitzgerald, a graduate student at Scripps and a Commission intern last quarter, presented potential impacts of offshore wind on coastal fishing communities and offered recommendations.

MRC Recommendations

MRC developed four recommendations for Commission consideration related to red abalone, MRC meeting dates, and MRC work plan topics.

1. *Red Abalone Recovery*: Support the Department to: (1) Prioritize a focus on abalone recovery, rather than harvest opportunities; (2) continue to monitor the kelp restoration and management plan development process; and (3) build partnerships for abalone monitoring and recovery.
2. *Recreational Red Abalone Fishery Closure*: Support continuing the recreational red abalone fishery closure beyond the current sunset of April 1, 2026, as recommended by the Department. Schedule a rulemaking to commence in August 2025, to continue the recreational red abalone fishery closure by extending the sunset date for 10 years.
3. *July and November 2025 Meeting Dates*: Add a second day on July 16 and November 5, respectively, to ensure sufficient time for all proposed agenda items.
4. *Work Plan Topics*: Schedule updates for the July MRC meeting on aquaculture lease best management practices plans regarding a potential timeline for resumption, and on the draft state aquaculture action plan regarding its status and timeline for completion.

Committee Work Plan

The updated MRC work plan (Exhibit 1) outlines topics and timelines for Commission-referred items, including MRC-proposed changes.

New Topic

The Department recommends referring one new topic to MRC with a discussion in July 2025, related to the commercial bull kelp harvest regulations sunset date and whether to consider a potential extension before the regulations expire on January 1, 2026.

Completed Topics

Four completed topics are identified by staff for removal from the work plan as they were completed in November 2024 and advanced to the Commission for consideration:

- Market squid fishery management and fishery management plan review
- Kelp and algae commercial harvest regulations – sea palm (*Postelsia*)

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- Recreational crab trap gear options and trap validation for commercial passenger fishing vessels
- Recreational barred sand bass fishery regulations

Significant Public Comments

Recreational Red Abalone: An advocate for recreational fishing thanks co-chairs for their thoughtful discussion at the March 13, 2025 MRC meeting and supports a precautionary approach to managing the red abalone fishery, citing a lack of scientific data to support opening and challenges faced by the red abalone population. They agree with the MRC recommendation of a continued closure for the next ten years. Additionally, they encourage considering tribal rights before any general recreational allowances are discussed. (Exhibit 5)

Recommendation

Commission staff: Approve the MRC recommendations and approve the MRC work plan as reflected in Exhibit 1, including any changes identified during today's meeting.

Exhibits

1. [MRC work plan, updated April 9, 2025](#)
2. [LED Marine District presentation: 2024 MPA enforcement statistics](#)
3. [Marine Region presentation: MPA petition evaluation status and next steps](#)
4. [Marine Region presentation: Electronic reporting and electronic monitoring pilot](#)
5. [Letter from Anupa Asokan, Executive Director, Fish On, received April 3, 2025](#)

Motion

Moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that the Commission approves the recommendations from the March 13, 2025 MRC meeting and approves changes to the work plan as discussed today.

California Fish and Game Commission Marine Resources Committee (MRC) Work Plan

Updated April 9, 2025

Note: Proposed changes to topics/timing are shown in blue underscore or ~~strike-out~~ font.

Topics	Category	Nov 2024	Mar 2025	Jul 2025
Planning Documents, Fishery Management Plans (FMP)				
MLMA Master Plan for Fisheries – Implementation Updates	Plan Implementation			
Red Abalone Recovery Plan (statewide)	Recovery Plan			<u>X</u>
- Risk Tolerance for Reopening Fishery Harvest	Recovery		X/R	
California Halibut Fishery Management Review (CA Halibut Review) – CA Halibut Trawl Grounds Review	Management Review			
CA Halibut Review – Bycatch Evaluation for Trawl Gear	Management Review			X
<u>Market Squid Fishery Management and FMP Review</u>	<u>Management/FMP Review</u>	X/R		
Kelp Recovery and Management Plan (KRMP) Development	Recovery/ Management Plan	*		X
Marine Protected Area (MPA) Network 2022 Decadal Management Review Implementation: <i>MPA Petitions</i>	Management Review	X/R	*	X
Regulations				
Kelp and Algae Commercial Harvest – Sea Palm (Postelsia)	<u>Commercial Take</u>	<u>X/R</u>		
Recreational Crab Trap Gear Options and Trap Validation for Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessels	<u>Recreational Take</u>	<u>X/R</u>		
Recreational Barred Sand Bass Fishery	<u>Recreational Take</u>	<u>X/R</u>		
Recreational Red Abalone Fishery Closure Sunset Date	Recreational Take		X/R	
Commercial Coonstripe Shrimp Fishery Management	Commercial Take			X/R
<u>Commercial Bull Kelp Harvest Sunset Date</u>	<u>Commercial Take</u>		<u>X</u>	<u>X/R</u>
Marine Aquaculture and State Water Bottom Leases				
Statewide Aquaculture Action Plan	Planning Document			<u>*</u>
Status of Existing Leaseholder Requests	Current Leases		X	
Applications for New Leases	Lease Applications			
- San Andreas Shellfish Company (in Tomales Bay)		X		
- Santa Barbara Sea Ranch (off Santa Barbara County coast)			X	
Lease Best Management Practices Plans (Hold, TBD)	Leases–Regulatory			<u>*</u>
Special Projects, Informational Topics, and Emerging Management Issues				
Coastal Fishing Communities Project	MRC Project	*	*	
Kelp Restoration and Recovery Tracking	Kelp			X
Experimental Fishing Permit (EFP) Program				
Box Crab Exploratory Fishing	EFP	X		
Pop-Up Gear in State-Managed Fisheries	EFP	X		

Key: X = Discussion X/R = Recommendation and may move to Commission * = Written or oral agency update



MPA Enforcement Report

March 2025

Assistant Chief Eric Kord
Marine Enforcement
District



MPA Enforcement Stats – 2024 Totals

MPA Patrol effort from eDARs

- Patrol Hours – 35,109 Hrs.
- Contacts – 52,858
- Warnings Given – 2,934
- Citations Issued on MPA Patrol – 1,877 (eDAR)



RMS Data

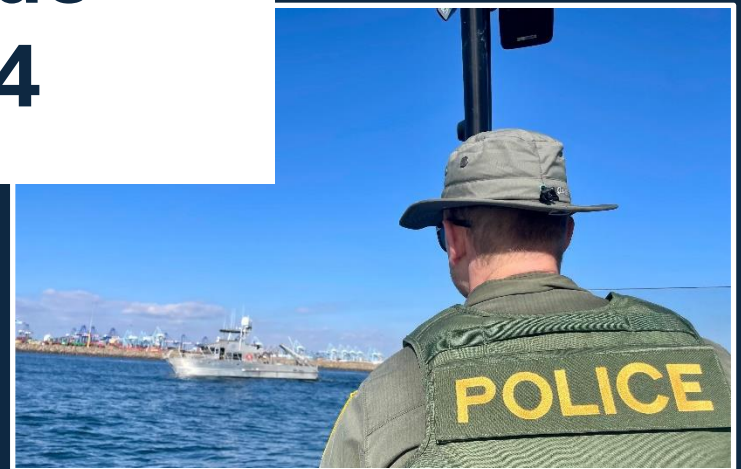
- Total Ocean Citations – 3,743
- Total Ocean Violations – 5,556
- Citations in MPAs – 471
 - Violations in MPAs - 696
 - MPA (Title 14, Sec. 632) violations – 370



eDAR- Electronic Daily Activity Report

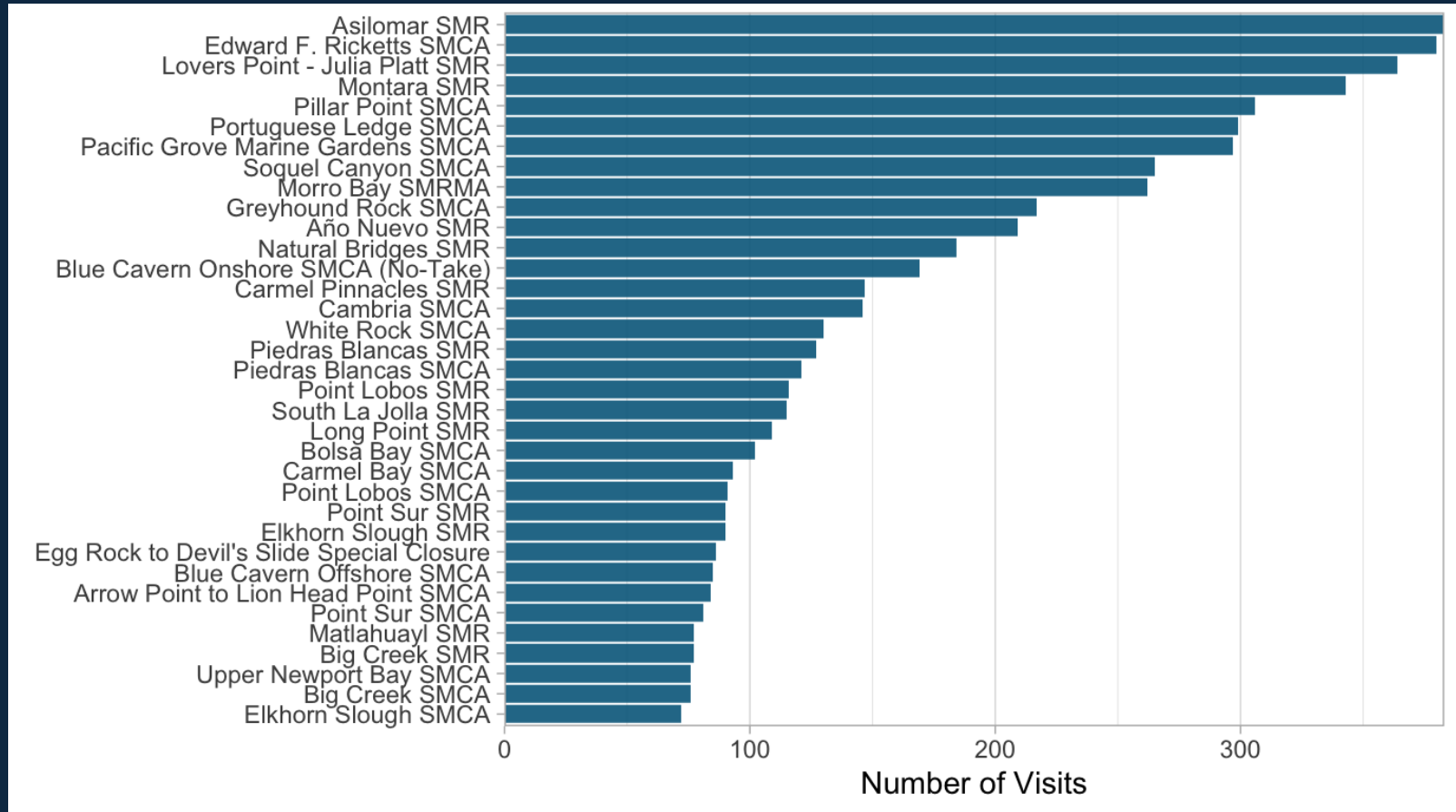


**7,461 MPA
individual officer
entries/ visits
statewide
in 2024**



Total MPA individual officer visits (eDAR)

Top 35 MPAs

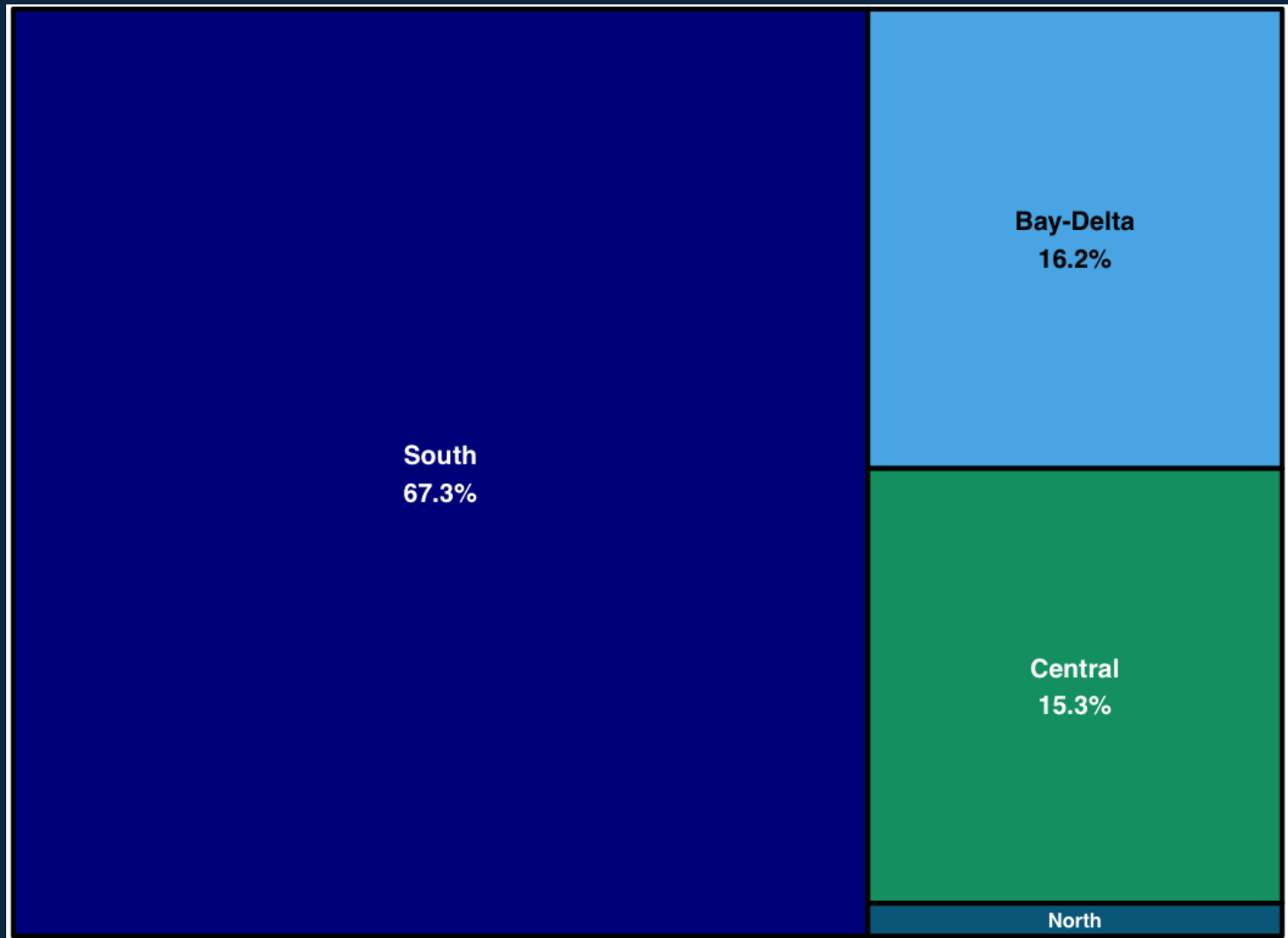


Number of Violations by MPA

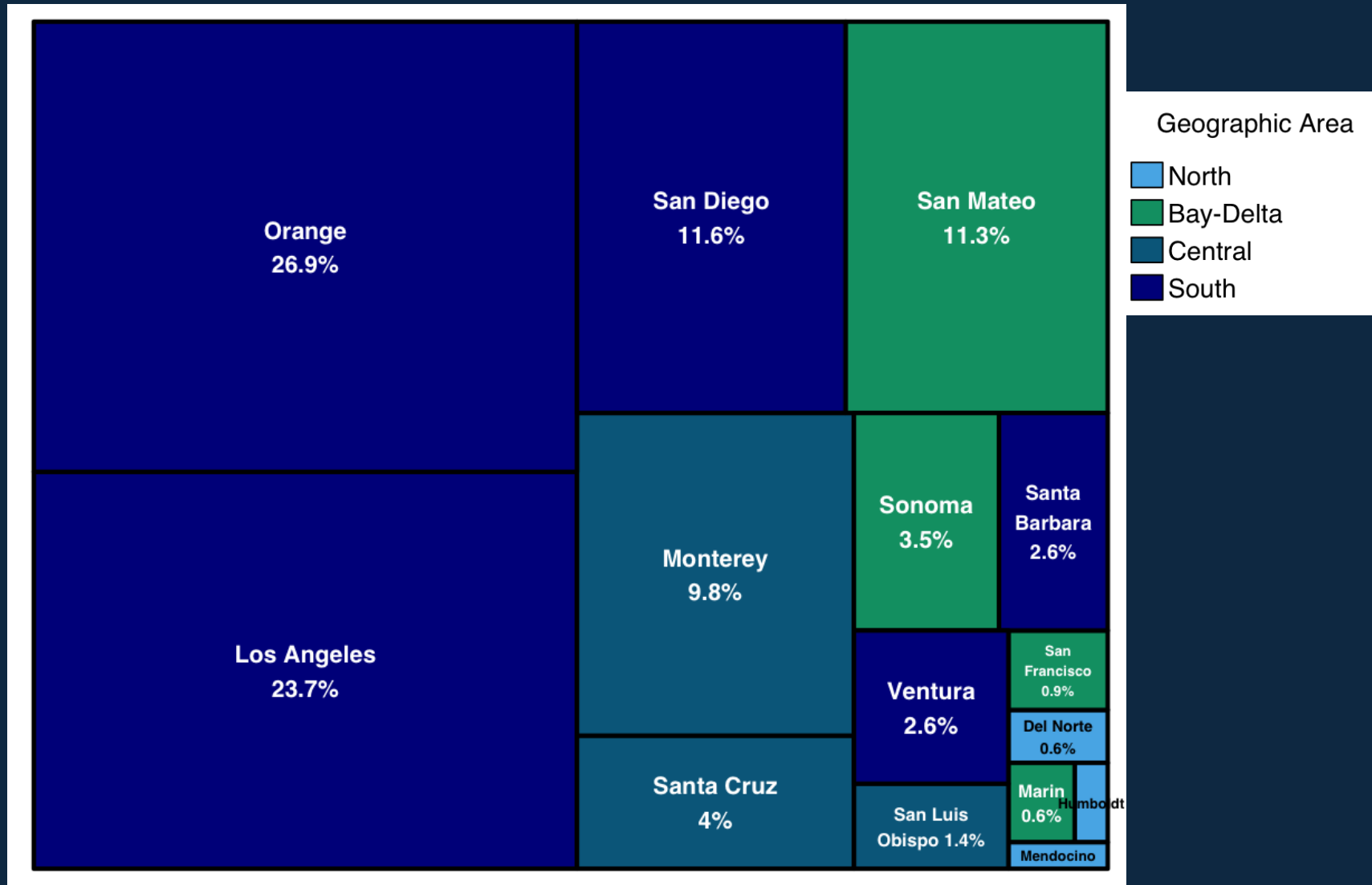
(MPAs with zero violations not shown)



MPA Violations (Sec. 632) by Geographic Area



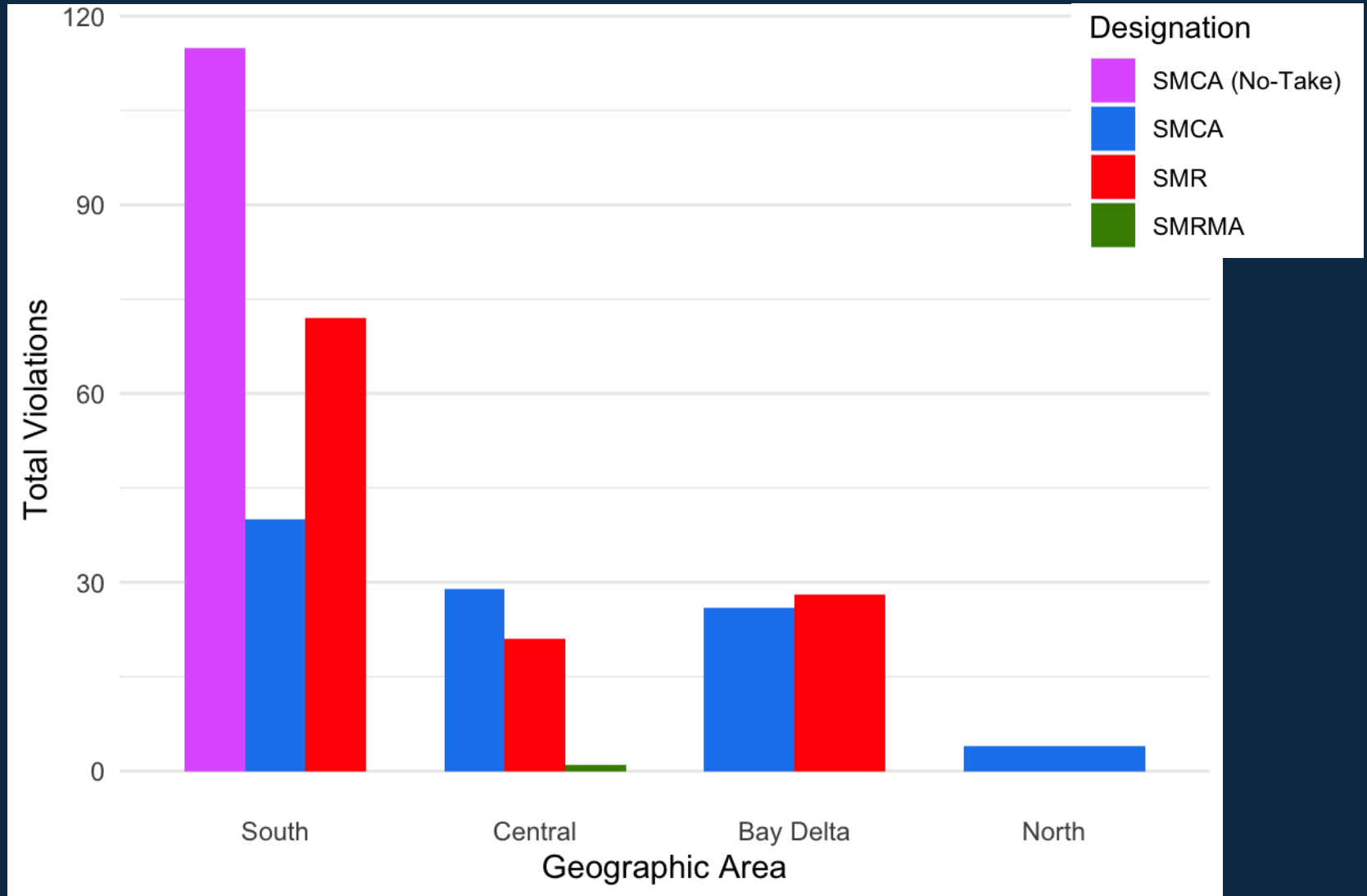
MPA Violations (Sec. 632) by County



Statewide MPA Violations (Sec. 632) by Month

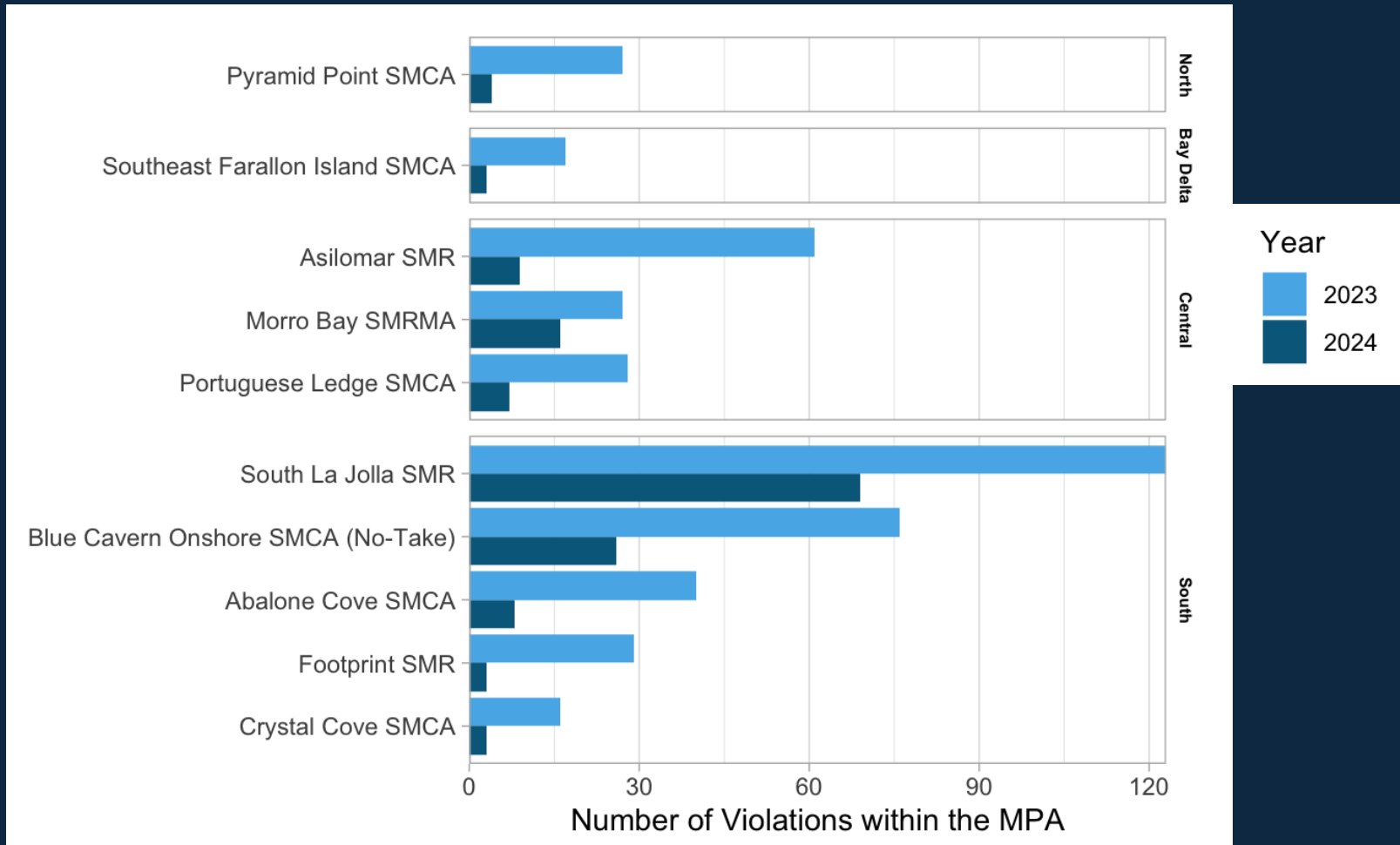


Total Violations by MPA Designation



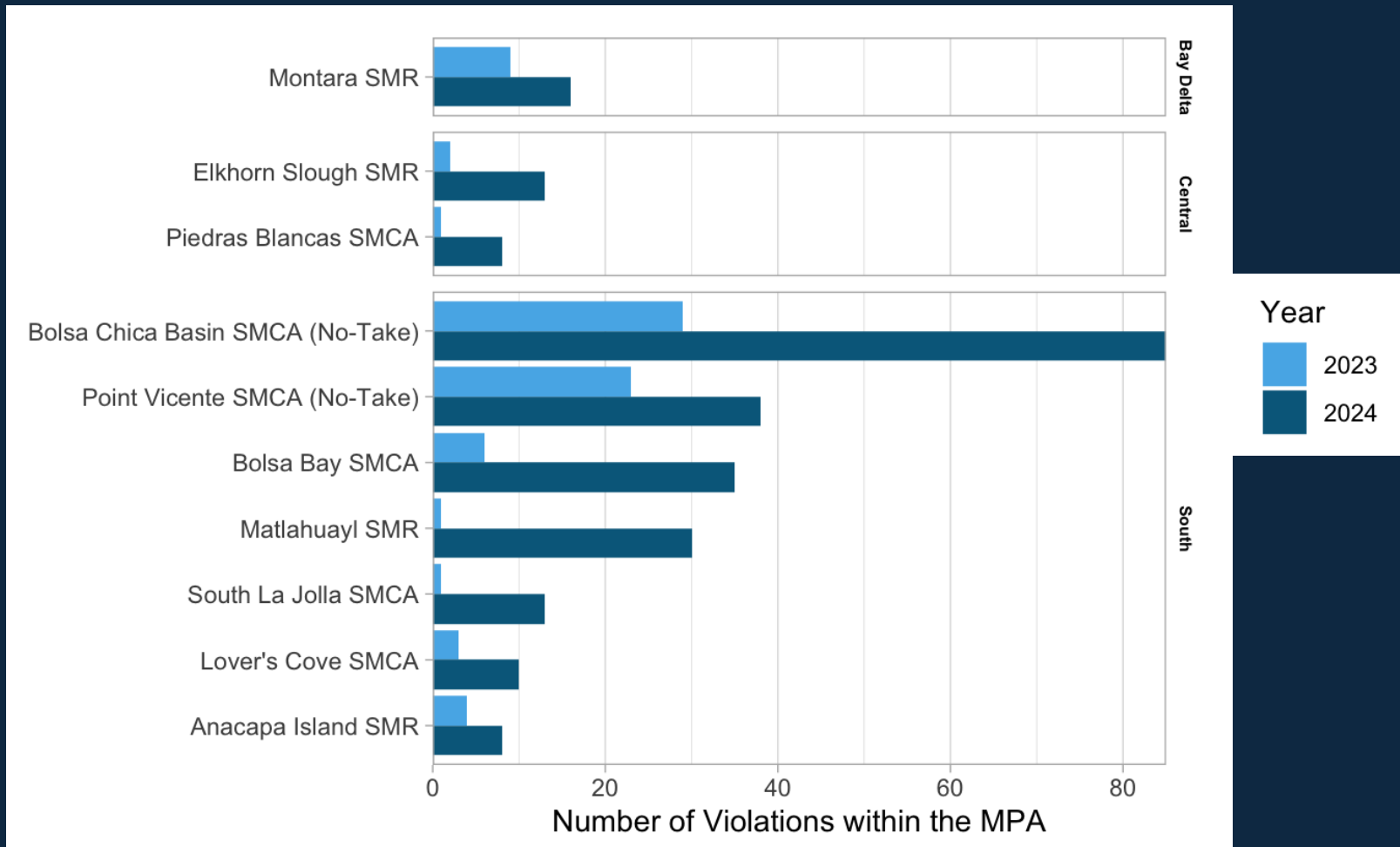
MPAs with largest *decrease* in number of violations

From 2023 to 2024



MPAs with largest *increase* in number of violations

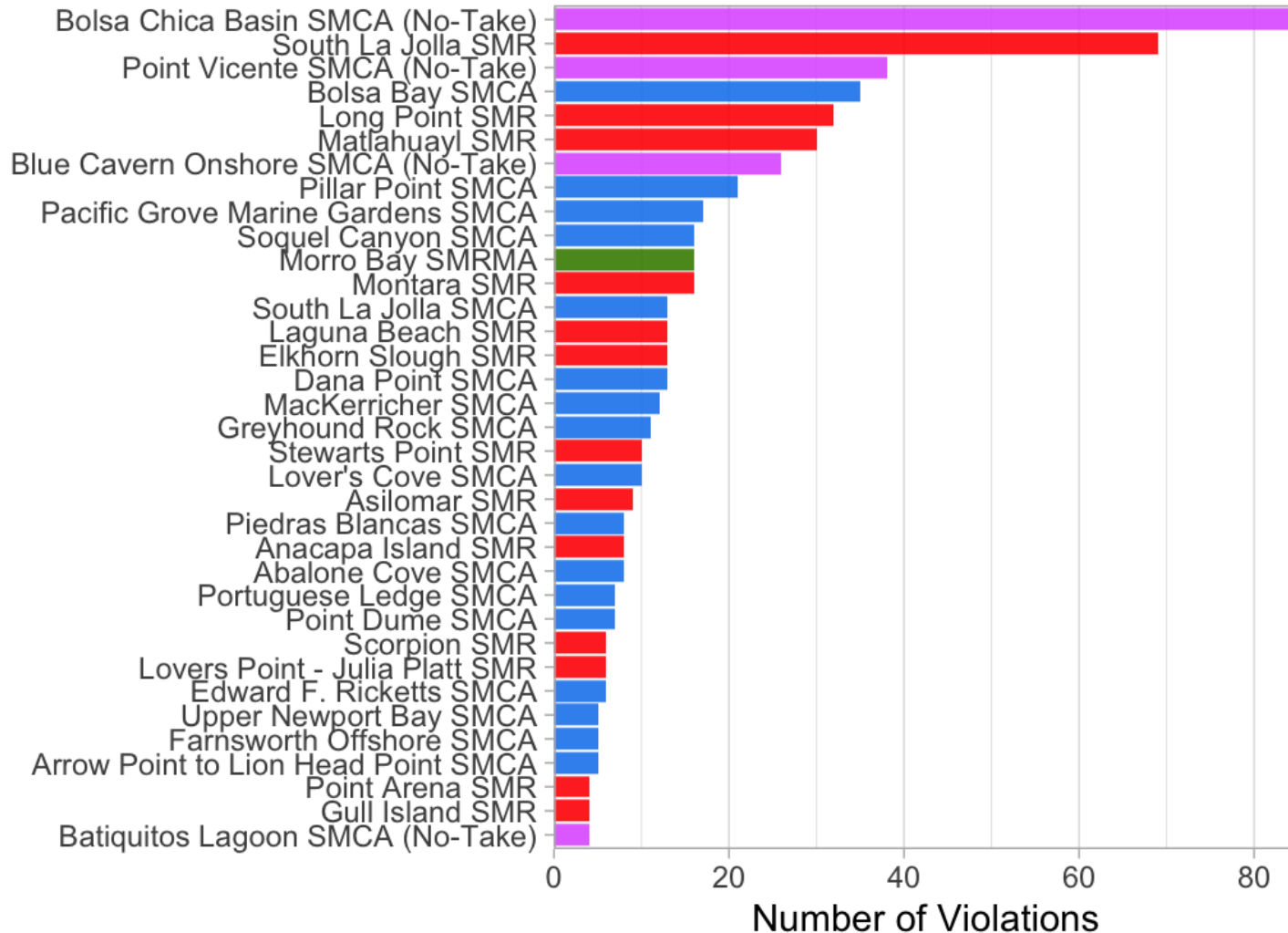
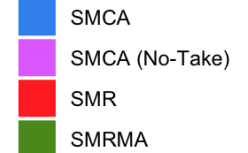
From 2023 to 2024



Violations within MPAs (count-696)

Top 35 MPAs

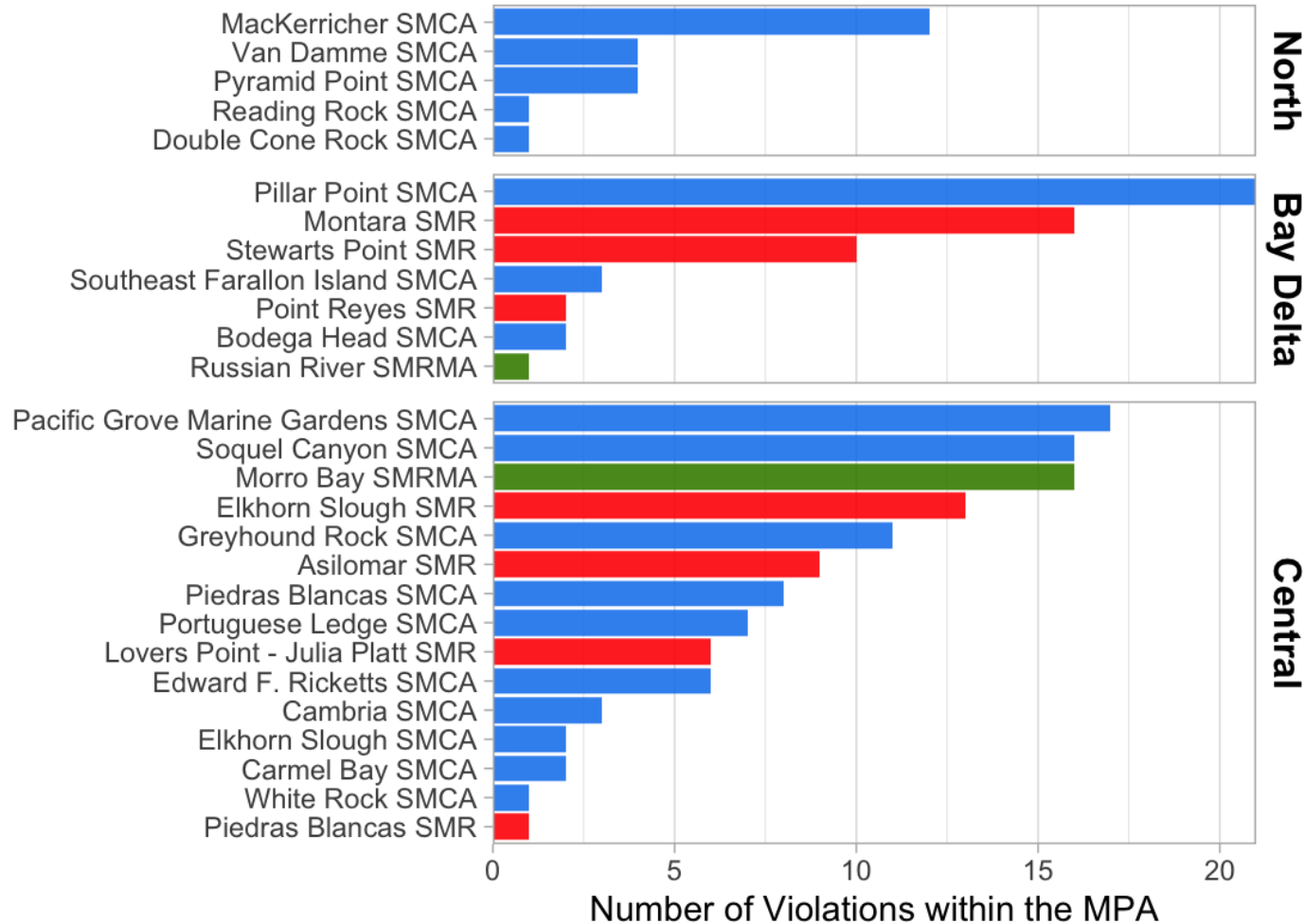
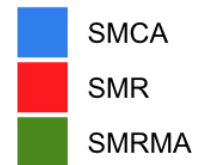
Designation



Violations within MPAs (count-696)

By Geographic Area: North - Central

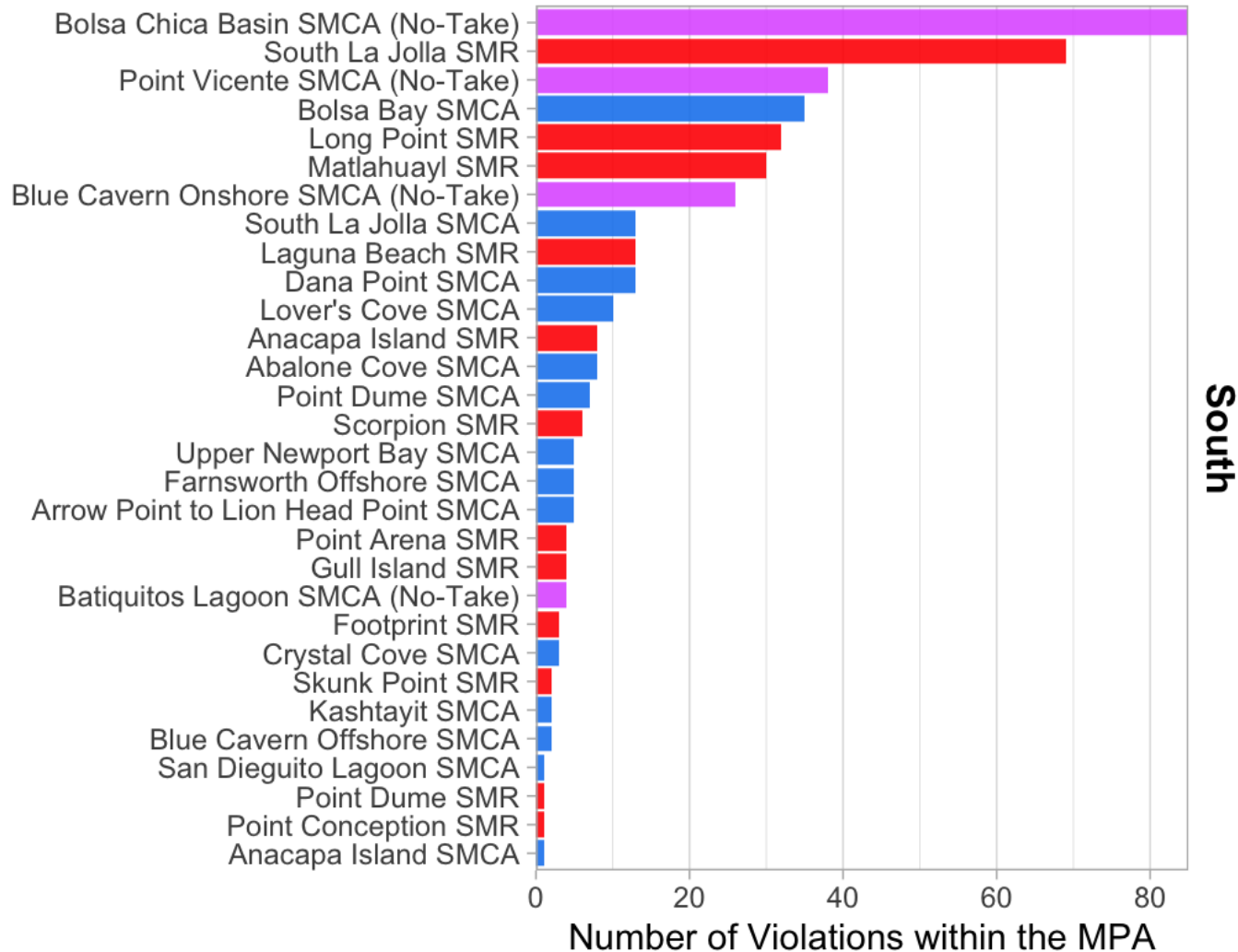
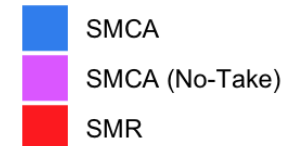
Designation



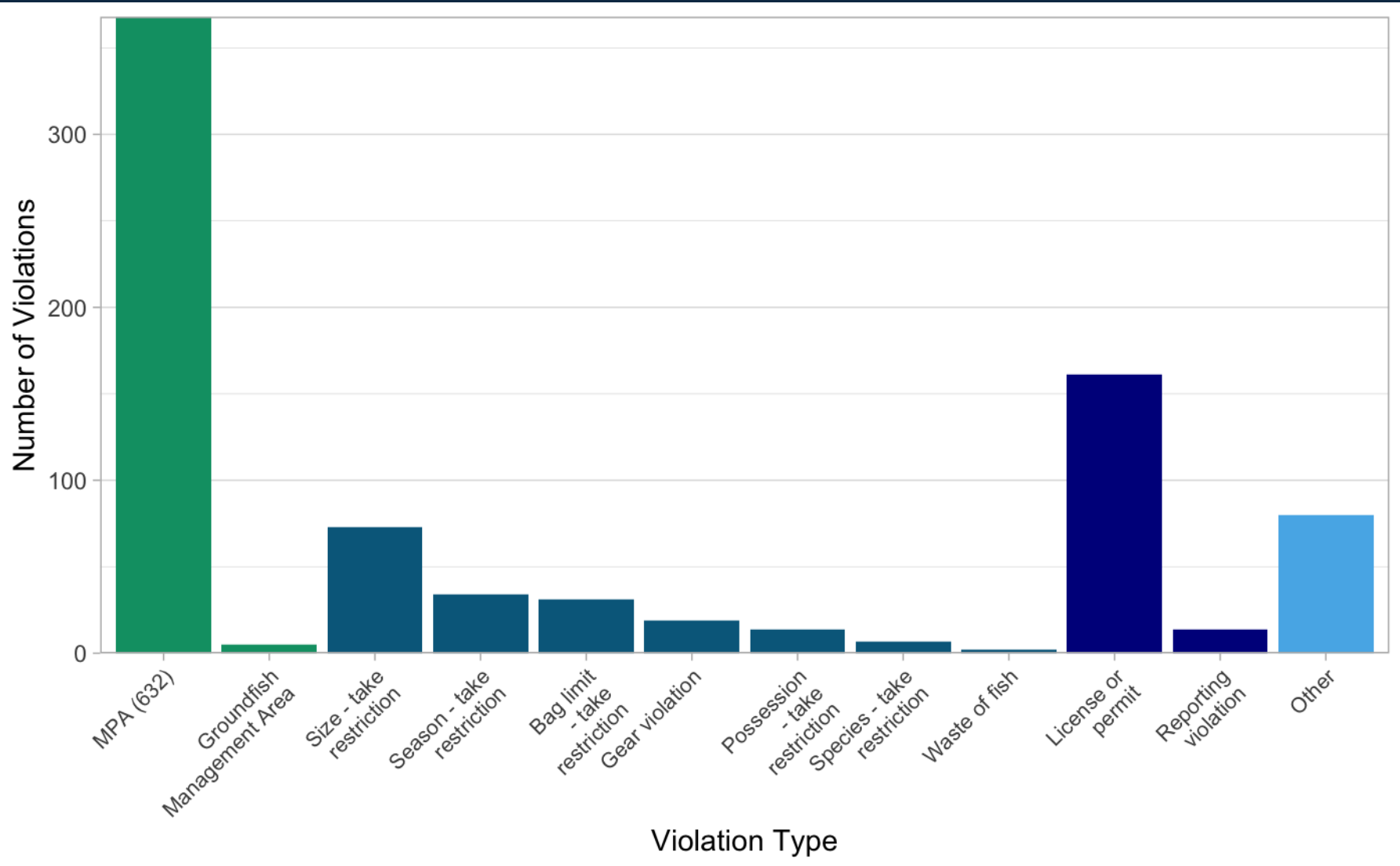
Violations within MPAs (count-696)

By Geographic Area: South

Designation

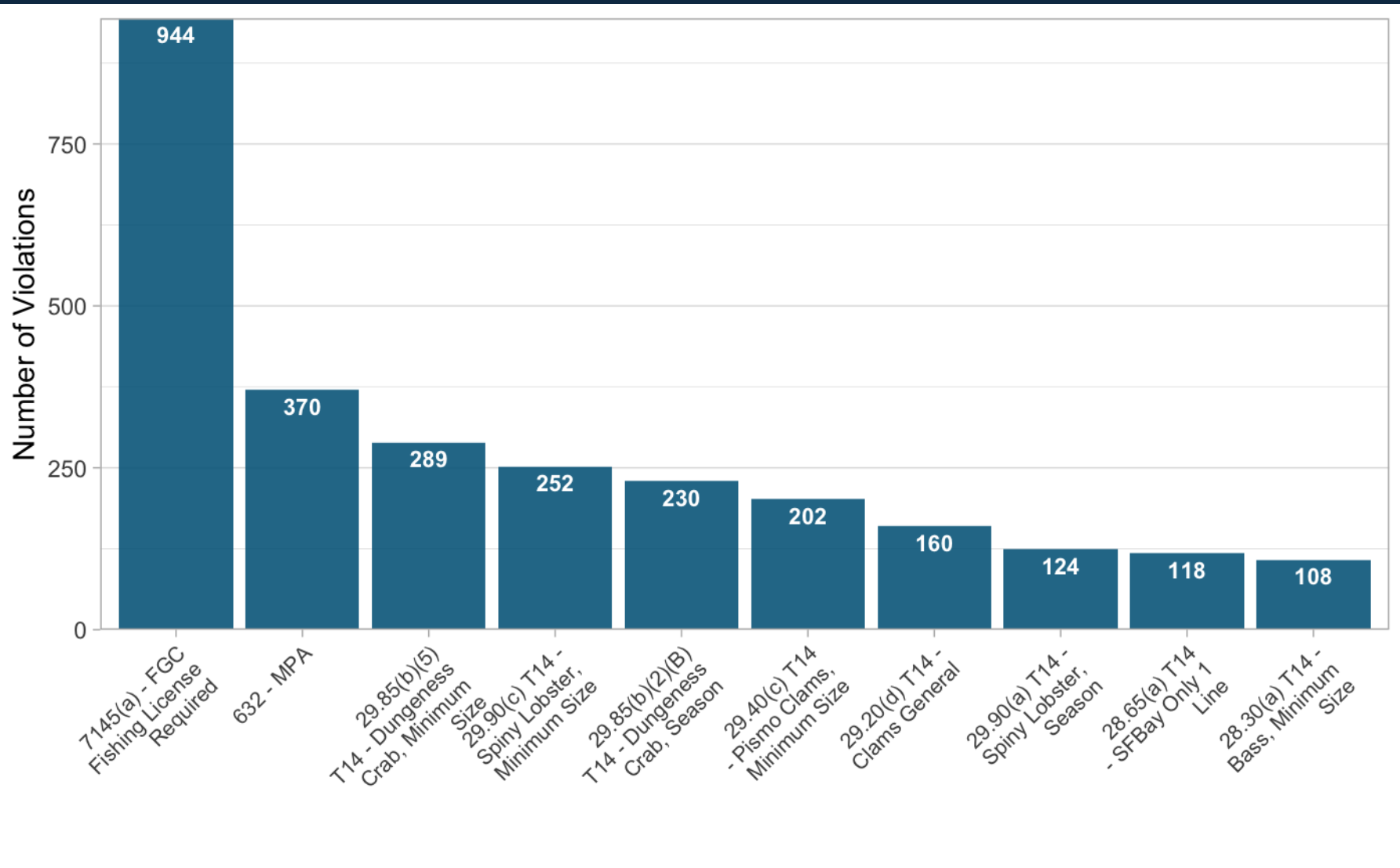


Categories of Violations in MPAs



Top 10 Ocean Violations

5,556 total ocean violations



Questions?





Marine Protected Area Petition Evaluation Status and Next Steps

13 March 2025

Presented to:

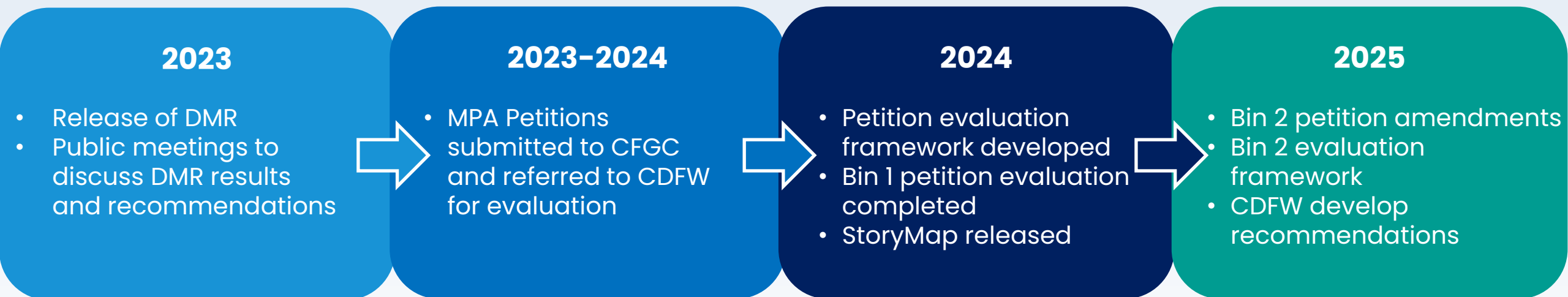
Marine Resources Committee
California Fish and Game Commission

Presented by:

Claire Waggoner
Marine Region Habitat
Conservation Program Manager



Recap: Decadal Management Review and Petition Timeline



Common acronyms:

CFGC=California Fish and Game Commission

CDFW=California Department of Fish and Wildlife

DMR=Decadal Management Review

MRC=Marine Resources Committee

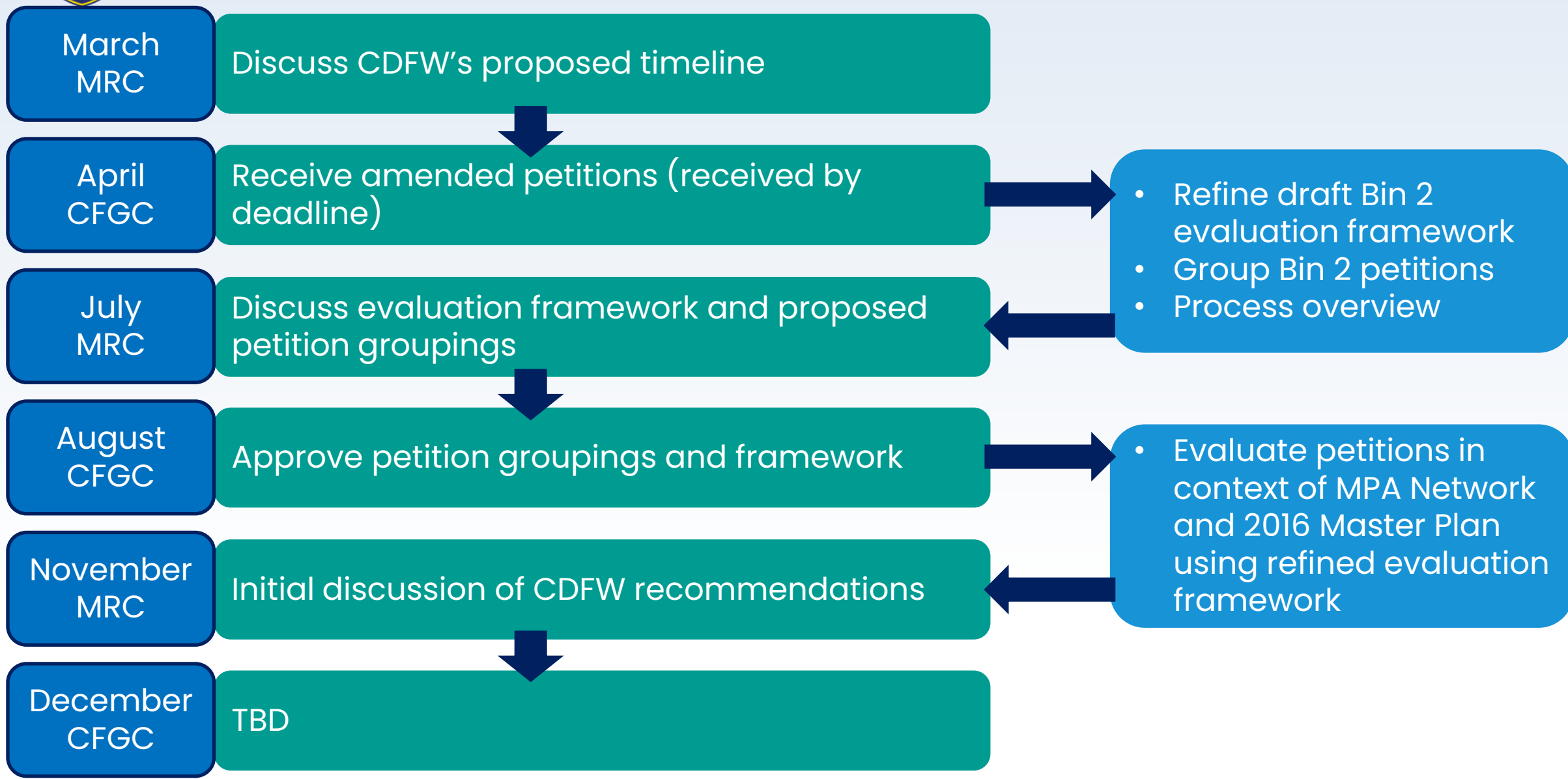


Petition Evaluation Framework: Status





Proposed Bin 2 Petition Milestones and Timeline





MPA Petition Updates: StoryMap



Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Petition Process

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Click through the collection to:

→ See an **overview** of the petition process, petition evaluation framework, and anticipated timeline

→ Dive into an **interactive map** to visualize proposed changes

→ Explore **petitions sorted** by numerical order, change category, or county, and click the links to learn more about each petition. Any petition proposing a change that can be visualized on a map (e.g., boundary or designation change) will have an image with a slider to swipe between the existing network and the proposed change. Any petition proposing a non-spatial change (e.g., take allowance or regulatory language change) will have a static image showing the location of the affected MPA(s).



Current status:

- CDFW is in Phase 2 of its 3-phased petition evaluation framework and splitting each petition into individual action items
- At the December Commission meeting, CDFW provided its annual report on MPA Management Program accomplishments for 2024; next steps for Bin 2 petition evaluation were discussed, including setting a timeline for accepting amendments to Bin 2 petitions; and, as recommended by the MRC, the Commission adopted a slightly modified version of CDFW's [draft recommendations](#) for Bin 1 petitions

Up next:

- For Bin 2 petitioners who submitted a notice to amend their petition, the full amendment package is due March 14, 2025



Stay up to date!





Next Steps: Implement DMR Recommendations

Near-Term (ongoing – 2 years)

- Rec 1: Improve state agencies tribal engagement
- Rec 4: Apply Review knowledge to Network/Management changes
- Rec 7: Expand outreach and education materials
- Rec 9: Continue OPC coordination
- Rec 10: Improve coordination across Management Program pillars
- Rec 11: Update Action Plan
- Rec 16: More targeted outreach to specific audiences
- Rec 17: Improve SCP process
- Rec 18: Use policy to review MPA restoration/mitigation efforts
- Rec 20: Increase enforcement capacity
- Rec 21: Enhance citation record keeping and management
- Rec 25: Implement MPA climate change research
- Rec 27: Improve understanding of MPA effects on fisheries

Mid-Term (2 – 5 years)

- Rec 2: Create pathway to tribal MPA management
- Rec 3: Build tribal capacity to participate in MPA management
- Rec 6: Include and fund more diverse researchers and stakeholders
- Rec 8: Evaluate MPA accessibility
- Rec 12: Improve understanding of human dimensions
- Rec 13: Explore innovative technologies
- Rec 14: Develop MPA community science strategy
- Rec 15: Evaluate Outreach needs and resource effectiveness
- Rec 22: Increase knowledge on MPA judicial outcomes
- Rec 23: Examine MPA Network design attribute more effectively
- Rec 26: Consider climate change in human dimensions monitoring
- Rec 28: Integrate influencing factors into MPA performance evaluations

Long-Term (5- 10 years)

- Rec 5: Establish targets to meet MLPA goals
- Rec 19: Create MPA Enforcement Plan
- Rec 24: Better incorporate marine cultural heritage into MPA Network





Thank You

Questions?

fgc@fgc.ca.gov

mpamanagementreview@wildlife.ca.gov





Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring Pilot

13 March 2025

Presented to:

**Marine Resources Committee
March 2025**

Presented by:

Todd Neahr

**Environmental Program Manager
Marine Region**



Electronic Reporting & Monitoring Status

- CPFV Web Application Released in 2015
- E-Tix Since 7/1/2019
- Multiple Logbook Reviews
- 2023 Review:
 - 13 DFW Forms & 3 Required Reports
 - Pilot Test Recommendation:
 - CPFV, Market Squid, Dungeness Crab & Experimental Fishing Permits (EFP), and Set Gill Net



Modernizing Data Collection

- Summer 2024
 - Electronic Reporting (ER) and Electronic Monitoring (EM) Vendor Demos
 - Narrowed List and Shared with Ocean Protection Council (OPC) and Resources Legacy Fund (RLF)
 - 3 ER Vendors and 2 EM Vendors
- March 3, 2025 OPC Meeting
 - Approved Disbursement of Funds to RLF
 - 3 Years Funding for Pilot Testing and Report Recommendations



ER and EM Pilot Overview

- Needing Near Real-Time Data
- Logbook Pilot Submissions Meet Current Reporting Requirements
- Valuing Industry Feedback Throughout Pilot
- End Goal: Proof of Concept Supported by Department, Partners and Participating Vessels



ER Testing: CPFV

- CPFV
 - Usage Survey during 2023 Log review
 - 30 Vessels, 3 Vendor Solutions
 - Using 3-4 Vessels Per Solution for Initial Testing and Acceptance
 - San Diego, LA and Orange County Landings, Bay Area



ER Testing: Market Squid Fishery

- Market Squid Fishery
 - Squid Fishery Advisory Committee Accepted Data Flow Mockup during 2023 Log Review
 - 30 Vessels, 3 Vendor Solutions
 - Southern and Central CA Participation



ER and EM Testing: Set Gill Net Fishery

- Bycatch Analysis Recommendation
- 2 ER Vendors & 2 EM Vendors Selected
- 5 Vessels - EM Hub & Cameras
- 5 Vessels - EM Position Logger
- Electronic Monitoring Components
 - Integrated with Electronic Reporting Logbook
 - Sensors Linked to EM Hub or Logger
 - Collect HD Camera Footage at Set & Retrieval Locations



ER and EM Testing: Dungeness Crab & EFP

- Develop New Logbook & Requirements
- 2 ER Vendors & 1 EM Vendor Selected
- 10 Dungeness Crab Vessels per ER Vendor, 5 EFP Vessels
- EM Position Logger
 - Integrated with Electronic Reporting Logbook
 - Sensors Linked to Logger
- Feed Ropeless Gear Portals



Next Steps

Timeframe	Task
Ongoing Through June 2025	Volunteer Recruitment
March & April 2025	Industry Association Meetings
Late April to June 2025	Workshops with Fishermen and Selected Vendors
June 2025	Vendor Development Contracts Start
June 2025 to June 2027	Development and Active Use
July 2027 to June 2028	Feedback Solicitation, Analysis & Reports

Thank You

Todd Neahr

Questions: r7regionalmgr@wildlife.ca.gov





April 3, 2025

California Fish and Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Submitted via email to fgc@fgc.ca.gov

RE: Agenda Item 30.a: Support for MRC Recommendation on Red Abalone Recovery

Dear President Zavaleta and Honorable Commissioners,

We are grateful to Vice President Murray and Commissioner Sklar for leading a thoughtful and productive discussion on red abalone at the March 13, 2025 Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting. And we appreciate each Commissioner for your dedication to the effective management of species in California waters. On behalf of our community of recreational and subsistence anglers, spearfishers and harvesters, Fish On is committed to our role in ensuring marine species and resources in California are resilient to increasing stressors.

We support a precautionary approach to managing such a vulnerable and beloved species as the red abalone. Science must be carefully evaluated to ensure that any harvest will not harm the recovery of the red abalone population. The red abalone fishery was closed to prevent its irreversible loss. Any consideration to reopen the fishery must be supported by scientific information to confirm that the abalone population is at a level capable of withstanding additional extractive pressure—in addition to increasing environmental stressors that this species now faces, like climate change and ocean acidification. At this time, there is no strong scientific evidence to demonstrate that red abalone has recovered sufficiently.

While fishery-dependent data is helpful to management of many marine species, harvest is not a necessary component to continued monitoring of red abalone. Opening up the fishery in this or any other capacity will risk further collapse of the species. **We support the MRC recommendation of a continued closure for the next ten years** before revisiting whether or not red abalone can be harvested from a stable population that can be sustained for generations to come. At that time—**given the cultural significance of abalone to California's Tribal Communities—we encourage Tribal rights to be considered before any general recreational allowances are discussed.**

Respectfully,

Anupa Asokan
Executive Director
Fish On