

# Marin MPA Watch

Environmental Action Committee of West Marin (EAC)  
PO Box 609 | 65 Third Street, Suite 12  
Point Reyes Station, CA 94956  
(415) 663-9312

[www.eacmarin.org](http://www.eacmarin.org)



Limantour Estero MPA transect

# Volunteer Field Guide



ESTABLISHED 1971



## Community-Science Collaborative Project

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION COMMITTEE OF WEST MARIN  
CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES  
POINT REYES NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



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## LOCAL EMERGENCY RESOURCES

### IN AN EMERGENCY: CALL 911

- Marin County Sheriff's Department: 415-479-2311
- Point Reyes National Seashore Dispatch: 415-464-5170

To report fishing or wildlife related illegal activities:  
 California Department of Fish & Wildlife

- **Cal-TIP for poachers and polluters:** 888-334-2258
- Bay Delta Regional Office: 707-944-5500

To report injured or sick wildlife:

- Within National Park, call PRNS Dispatch: 415-464-5170
- Wildcare in San Rafael: 415-453-100
- Marine Mammal Center: 415-289-7325

Contact MPA Watch:

- Environmental Action Committee – MPA Watch 415-663-9312



## OTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION COMMITTEE  
 Morgan Patton, Executive Director 415-663-9312

CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES  
 Dr. Rebecca Johnson 415-379-5252

POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE  
 Dr. Ben Becker [Ben\\_Becker@nps.gov](mailto:Ben_Becker@nps.gov)

## PUBLIC INFORMATION

### MARINE PROTECTED AREAS (MPAS)

California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
[www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/mpa](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/mpa)

MPA Watch (California)  
[www.mpawatch.org](http://www.mpawatch.org)

Marin MPA Watch  
[www.eacmarin.org/map-watch](http://www.eacmarin.org/map-watch)

## FINES AND PENALTIES

California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
 Fish and Game Code

### Marine Protected Area Violations

Section 12000 Recreational violations \$100-\$1,000

Section 12012.5 Commercial violations \$5,000 - \$40,000 and  
 potential loss of license

### National Ocean and Atmospheric Association

#### Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972

#### Marine Mammal Violations

Section 105 Civil penalty no more than \$10,000

Criminal penalty up to 1 year in prison, no more than  
 \$20,000 fine

Section 106 Vessel violations

Potential loss of vessel and fine of \$25,000

## DOG RULES

Drakes Beach: No Dogs Allowed

Limantour Beach: Dogs on Leash Allowed (South of Entry)  
 No Dogs (North of Entry)

Agate Beach: Dogs on Leash Allowed

Corte Madera: Dogs on Leash Allowed

## VIEWING ETIQUETTE & GUIDELINES

These wildlife-viewing guidelines include stewardship principles intended to help inform the public about safe and responsible wildlife viewing practices. Sharing these guidelines will help make sure wildlife stay safe while enhancing the visitor's experience.

### Look in the right place...at the right time

These two components are crucial for successful wildlife watching. Many species live only in specific habitats such as estuaries, tidepools, kelp forests, or the open ocean, and wildlife may be more sensitive during particular times of year. In addition to seasons, the times of day and tidal cycles are important factors in viewing wildlife. To maximize viewing opportunities, learn about the activity cycles of the species of interest beforehand. Also know local access restrictions. Some areas may be closed seasonally to protect animals during sensitive times such as breeding and pupping.

### Hands off

Never touch, handle, or otherwise disturb marine wildlife (some animals are protected by both federal and state laws). Touching wildlife or attempting to do so can injure the animal, put you at risk, and may also be illegal for certain species. The slimy coating on fish and many marine invertebrates protects the animal from infection and is easily rubbed off with a hand, glove, or foot.

### Keep your distance

Use binoculars, spotting scopes, and cameras with zoom lenses to get a closer look. Marine wildlife may be very sensitive to human disturbance, and if cornered they can harm the viewer or leave the area. If wildlife approaches you, stay calm and slowly back away or place boat engines in neutral. When close encounters occur, do not make sudden moves or obstruct the travel path of the animals—let them have the unhindered “right of way”.

### Follow good tidepooling rules

Never remove animals, shells, or rocks; never pick up animals; walk gently; and never turn over rocks. Help make sure that these organisms will still be here for many more generations.

### Help others to become responsible wildlife watchers

Speak up if you notice other viewers behaving in a way that disturbs the wildlife or other viewers, or impacts sensitive habitats. Be friendly, respectful, and discrete when approaching others. Violations of the law should be reported to local authorities or call 1-888-DFG-CALTIP (1-888-334-2258).

## CONTENTS

### RESOURCES

Emergency and Program Resources	2
Fishing Calendar	4

### PROGRAM

Goals and Survey Methods	5
North Central Coast MPA Map	6

### SURVEYS

How to Conduct a Survey	7
Example Survey	8

### ONSHORE ACTIVITIES

Onshore Non-Consumptive Activities	9
Onshore Consumptive Activities	10

### OFFSHORE ACTIVITIES

Offshore Non-Consumptive Activities	11
Offshore Consumptive Activities	12

### MPAS

Marin County MPA Maps	14-15
Drakes Beach West	16
Drakes Beach East	17
Limantour Estero	18-19
Agate Beach (Duxbury Reef)	20-21
Corte Madera Marsh SMP	22-24

### NOTES

Etiquette and Guidelines Wildlife Viewing	13&25 26
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### PUBLIC INFO, FINES, DOG RULES

27

## FISHING CALENDAR

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

### ANNUAL SHELLFISH AND MUSSEL CLOSURE

May – October

### DUNGENESS CRAB

November – June

### PACIFIC HALIBUT

Recreational: May – October

Commercial: March – October

### RED ABALONE

Recreational fishery closed until 2026

### SALMON

April – August

### SURF PERCH

August – April

## PUBLIC INFORMATION

### Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
[www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/mpa](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/mpa)

MPA Watch (California)  
[www.mpawatch.org](http://www.mpawatch.org)

Marin MPA Watch:  
[www.marinmpawatch.com](http://www.marinmpawatch.com)

## NOTES

## CORTE MADERA MARSH STATE MARINE PARK

### NORTHERN TRANSECT Continued

- If a Golden Gate Ferry passes out into the bay while you are observing, record it on the data sheet.
- Once complete with observations of the water, turn around, continue along the levy path walking straight and looking to the right (recording observations toward the boardwalk of the houseboats – do not count people on the boardwalks)
- Stop when you reach the border of the MPA line (37.936144, -122.511472). There is a pole that marks the stop of the survey.



## MPA WATCH PROGRAM

### Overview

The Marin MPA Watch Program (Program) is a community-science monitoring program that trains volunteers to observe and record human uses within the Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Marin County, and to interact with the public about the MPA regulations. To implement the Program, volunteers will take surveys of established MPA transects and collect data using standardized protocols.

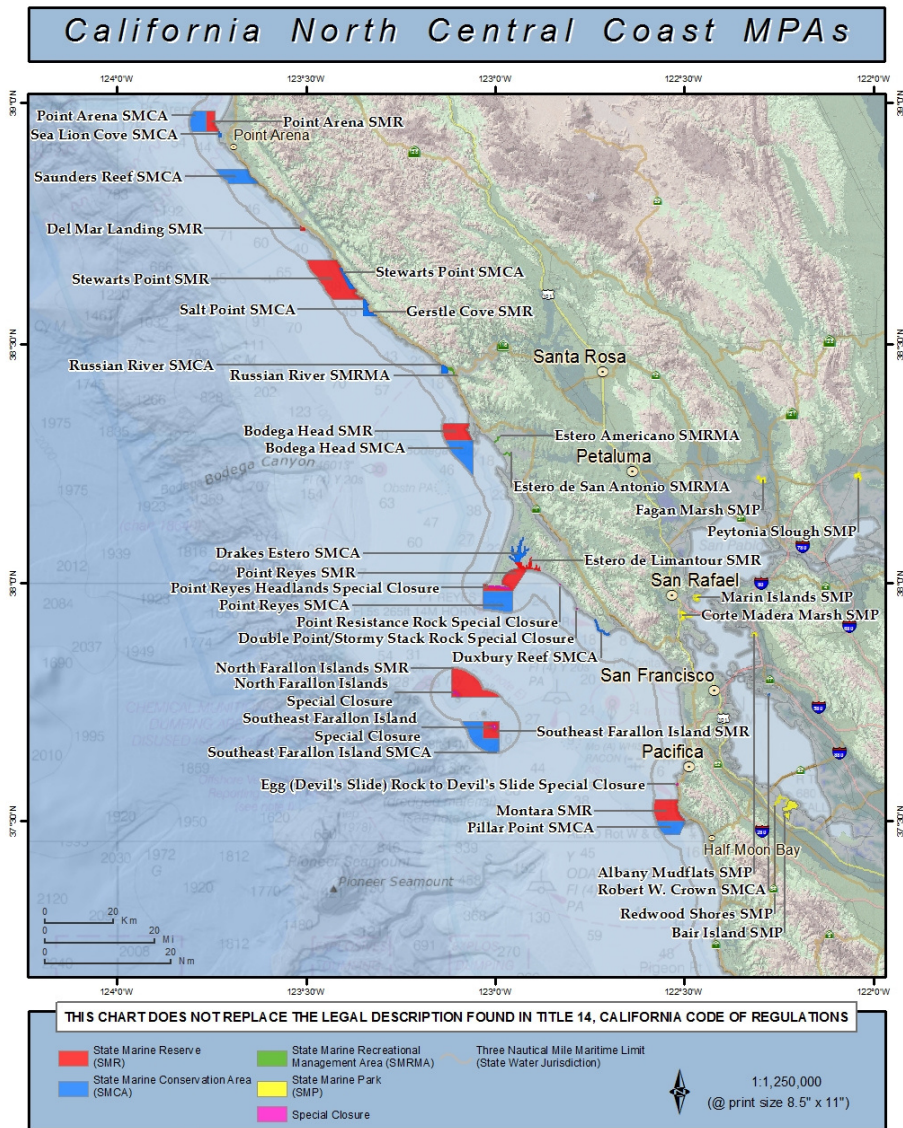
### Goals

The Program will increase awareness of adherence to MPA regulations by (1) creating a large pool of volunteers who regularly monitor the Marin MPAs and interact with and educate the public about the regulations, thereby increasing local knowledge of MPA regulations, (2) creating a data set of human uses within the MPAs based on statewide protocols that will track areas where MPA regulations are not being followed and can be used to inform law enforcement that certain areas and certain times/seasons may require additional enforcement, (3) provide information about illegal uses within MPAs to scientists that are assessing the effectiveness of MPAs (since chronic violations may diminish the actual utility of the MPA and hence scientific conclusions about MPA effectiveness).

### Survey Methods

MPA Watch volunteers walk along beaches, marsh and bluffs surveying and recording all non-consumptive and consumptive coastal activities both offshore and onshore. Volunteers are trained to recognize different activities and boats, using binoculars to view activities offshore, and record what they see on data sheets. These trained community-scientists observe and record both consumptive [e.g., fishing] and non-consumptive [e.g., wildlife watching] within the MPAs. These observations will provide important information to understand how the public is using California's new MPAs and will help to inform MPA management.

## MARIN COUNTY MPAS



## CORTE MADERA MARSH STATE MARINE PARK

## NORTHERN TRANSECT: CM 04

- Begin walking north at the Corte Madera Marsh Ecological Preserve "Sensitive Habitat" sign, off San Clemente Drive (GPS location 37.926887, -122.510900).
- Remember to mark yourself on the survey.
- Walk along the levy and record observations on the levy and only to your right (to avoid duplication). To the left of the levy is not protected area.
- Walk along the path to the end over looking the water (37.936833, -122.505916) and pause. Record observations along the shoreline north and south.
- Make observations out to the water using landmarks to orient the position of the observable MPA. Note: estimates of the MPA in the middle of the bay are rough estimates. Mark any activity occurring within the boundaries of the landmarks (in yellow dots below)
  - Landmark Southern: Rocky jetty to the right. Draw an invisible line to the northern landmark.
  - Landmark Northern: Buoy/Channel marker near San Quentin Prison.
  - Landmark North East: Richmond Bridge
  - Landmark South East: Docks from harbor

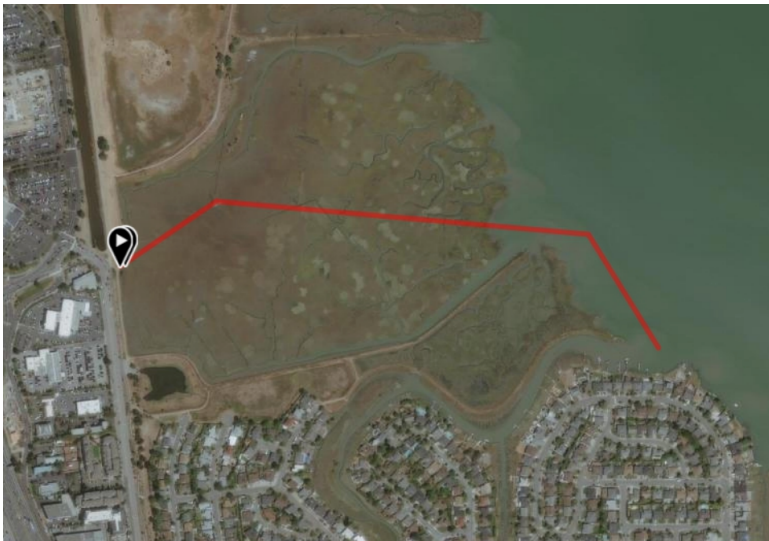
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## CORTE MADERA MARSH STATE MARINE PARK

There are two survey locations at Corte Madera Marsh SMP. You can record them on the same data sheet using two columns.

### SOUTHERN TRANSECT: CM 03

- Begin at the Corte Madera Marsh Ecological Preserve “Sensitive Habitat” sign which is off San Clemente Drive (GPS location 37.926887, -122.510900).
- Remember to mark yourself on the survey.
- With binoculars, look to the right (south/southeast) across the marsh, toward the end of the levee trail (landmark sight line is toward tall palm tree among ranch houses). Record any people observed on or along the trail.
- Scan the marsh to the right, south of closest (2nd to north) electric power line tower in the marsh, and toward the water.
- Record people and activities observed in the marsh area.



## HOW TO CONDUCT A SURVEY

### BEGIN SURVEY

1. Complete the top portion of the data sheet
2. Walk to designated start point of beach transect
3. Write site name and start time (do not enter start time until you have reached starting point).
4. Do not count yourself.
5. Take a snap shot of activity around you based on your transect details.

### RECORDING OBSERVATIONS

6. Walk along high-tide line.
7. Record any activity in the appropriate categories when you **pass the people/boats engaged in activity**.
  - a. Do not count activity occurring ahead of you, wait until you pass by to count
  - b. Do not count activity (even if new activity) occurring behind you.
  - c. Counting rules are in place to ensure there is not double counting of people or boats.
8. Only count activities where there is active engagement.
  - a. If someone is sitting in a kayak with fishing gear but the lines are not in the water, they are kayaking and not engaged in consumptive activity.
  - b. However, some activities are observed as they begin or end such as entering the water to dive, snorkel, surf, kite-surf, or gearing up for these activities. Count the activity if the person is actively getting ready for it or coming out of the water, i.e. gearing up counts as part of the activity, but sitting on the beach next to the gear does not.
9. Be clear about active and not active fishing items on survey sheets. People in boats may cross through the MPA with visible fishing gear, but not actively fishing. We would record it on the data sheet as consumptive activity, not active.

### FINISHING SURVEY

10. Stop at the stop point of survey and document end time.
11. Enjoy walk back, if you brought trash bag collect garbage or engage in recreational use of MPA.
12. Do not count any activity on your way back.

### TURN SURVEY IN

13. Turn in survey sheet 1) mail to EAC office 2) log to the statewide database, upload photo of survey sheet and submit for MPA Watch approval.

# EXAMPLE SURVEY SHEET



## Marin MPA Watch Core Tally Sheet



Name(s):	Date: ___/___/___	Beach Access: _____
Clouds: clear (0%) partly cloudy (1-50%) /cloudy(>50%cover)	Precipitation: yes / no	Visibility: perfect / limited / shore only
Air Temperature: cold / cool / mild / warm / hot	Beach Status: open / posted / closed / unknown	Wind: calm / breezy / windy
		Tide Level: low / med / high

On-Shore Activities	Transect ID: _____		Transect ID: _____		Transect ID: _____	
	Start Time	End Time	Start Time	End Time	Start Time	End Time
	Rocky	Sandy	Rocky	Sandy	Rocky	Sandy
Recreation (walking, resting, playing, etc. NOT tidepooling)						
Wildlife Watching						
Domestic animals on-leash						
Domestic animals off-leash						
Tide-pooling (not collecting)						
Hand collection of biota						
Driving on beach/shore (includes bikes)						
Shore-based hook and line fishing						
Shore-based fishing (list gear next to tally)						

Off-Shore Activities (Non-Boating)			
Offshore Recreation (e.g., swimming, bodysurfing)			
Board Sports (e.g., boogie boarding, surfing)			
Stand-Up Paddle Boarding			
Non-Consumptive SCUBA and snorkeling			
Other Consumptive Diving (e.g., nets, poles, traps)			

Boating			
Fishing Boat (Describe Traps, Line, Nets next to total count)	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown: _____
Paddle Operated Boat			
Dive Boat (stationary – flag up)			
Whale Watching Boat			
Work Boat (e.g., lifeguard, DFW, research, coast guard)			
Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel (5+ people)			
Other Boating (e.g., powerboat, sailboat, jet ski, ferry)			

Comments			
Did you observe:	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific research <input type="checkbox"/> education <input type="checkbox"/> beach closure <input type="checkbox"/> large gatherings: # _____ <input type="checkbox"/> enforcement activity	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific research <input type="checkbox"/> education <input type="checkbox"/> beach closure <input type="checkbox"/> large gatherings: # _____ <input type="checkbox"/> enforcement activity	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific research <input type="checkbox"/> education <input type="checkbox"/> beach closure <input type="checkbox"/> large gatherings: # _____ <input type="checkbox"/> enforcement activity
Did you report a violation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If Yes, how many?			
Who did you report to?	<input type="checkbox"/> DFW <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Park <input type="checkbox"/> Marin County Parks <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> DFW <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Park <input type="checkbox"/> Marin County Parks <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> DFW <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Park <input type="checkbox"/> Marin County Parks <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
How did you report?	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Text <input type="checkbox"/> App <input type="checkbox"/> Website <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Person	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Text <input type="checkbox"/> App <input type="checkbox"/> Website <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Person	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Text <input type="checkbox"/> App <input type="checkbox"/> Website <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Person

# AGATE BEACH (DUXBURY REEF) MPA

## Duxberry Reef SMCA

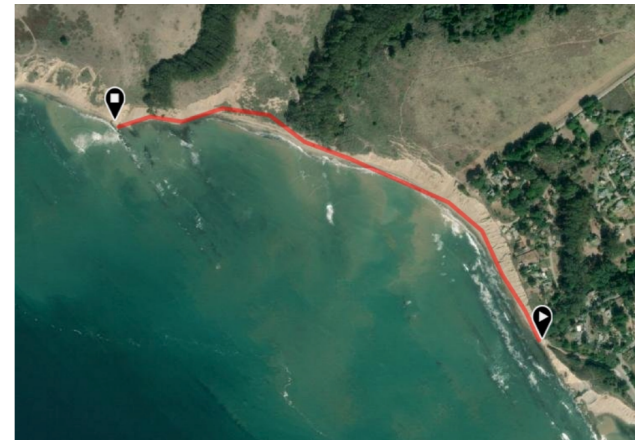
### AG\_BEACH 01: Duxbury Reef South



- Column #1 continued: After you finish this snapshot, walk back to the foot of the trail to begin Agate Beach North, using column #2.

## Duxbury Reef SMCA

### AG\_BEACH 02: Agate Beach North



Start point: Foot of trail.

- Column #2 records human activities along the beach from the main trail end to the north along beach and reef.

End Point:

- Take Snapshot view north, and/or walk to north along beach to bend of transect.



## AGATE BEACH (DUXBURY REEF) MPA

### Transect Monitoring:

- This transect requires two data sheet columns.
- **Column #1:** Duxbury Reef South. Begin with documenting the number of cars in the parking lot and add to notes section. Then proceed down the trail to overlook the reef. Take a ten minute “snap shot” recording human activities ahead and to the south. Note: reserve boundaries extend only 1000 ft offshore.
- Then, *at low tide only*, walk south to the reef ridge that extends south from the headland in order to view the southeast reef. Take a 5 minute snapshot here and record activities on datasheet.



## ONSHORE ACTIVITIES

### NON-CONSUMPTIVE ACTIVITIES

Beach Recreation  
 Walking  
 Running  
 Skim-boarding  
 Sunbathing  
 Frisbee  
 Picnic  
 Tidepooling (not collecting)  
 Rock Climbing  
 Wildlife Viewing (pointing, cameras, binoculars, etc.)  
 Driving on Beach  
 Dog Walking  
 Horseback Riding  
 Research (not collecting)  
 Media

Tidepooling (NOT collecting)



Wildlife Viewing



## ONSHORE ACTIVITIES

### CONSUMPTIVE ACTIVITIES

- Rod/Reel Fishing
- Trap Fishing
- Cast Net Fishing
- Clamming
- Tidepooling (hand collection of kelp, tidepool, mussels, etc.)
- Non-biological Collection (rocks, shells, trash)
- Sand Crab Raking/Hand Collection

Rod/Reel Fishing



Trap Fishing



Example: Hoop net

Cast Net Fishing



## LIMANTOUR ESTERO MPA

### Estero de Limantour SMR

#### LIM\_BEACH 02: Limantour Estero SMR



Where the dune breaks through the second time on your survey walk, walk through to the Limantour Estero. At this point, you pause LIM 1 survey.

At LIM 2, you are now entering the MPA.

This is a snapshot observation. Record the time.

View the Estero in both directions and record people and their activity in the water and on shore.

Then walk back toward the oceanside to Lim 1 transect and continue until you align with the south end of the last dune near the channel.

Lim 3, is a snapshot observation from this end point. Look across to the buoy south of Chimney Rock, four finger-widths from Chimney Rock. Observe activity occurring to the right of this sight line in the water and along the beach toward the inlet. (see map on page 13).

## LIMANTOUR BEACH OUTSIDE OF MPA

### Important Notes:

- 1) This is a 2.5 mile walk out and back (5 miles round trip). Bring water and wear comfortable shoes for walking.
- 2) Do not pick up or collect dead animals. Beach Watch monitors the beaches for birds and mammals and need species undisturbed.
- 3) Do not disturb Snowy Plovers in the sand dunes (Small white and brown birds. Nesting areas may be roped off.)

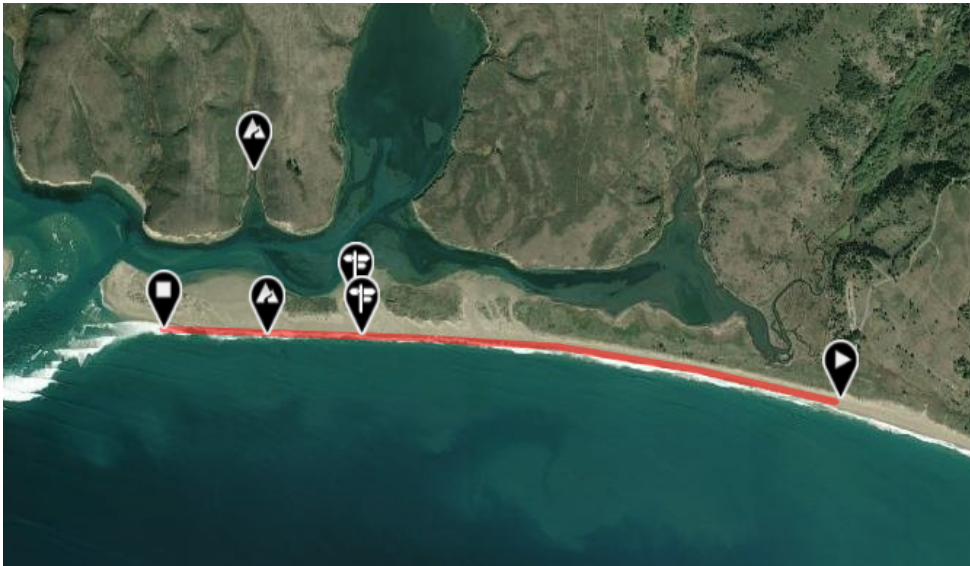
### Transect Monitoring:

·This transect requires three data sheet columns.

·**Column #1** (Lim 1) is used to monitor area outside MPA after entering beach. Look down beach to south, document activity, then move up beach towards Drake's Estero. Log data as you pass people and activity onshore and offshore.

·**Column #2** (Lim 2) is a snap shot within Estero de Limantour. Observe the Estero for 10 minutes, logging start and stop time. Return to Column 1 until you reach sand dune landmark for Column 3.

·**Column #3** (Lim 3) use the Point Reyes buoy to create visual line for MPA. Monitor the MPA in a new column.



## OFFSHORE ACTIVITIES

### NON-CONSUMPTIVE ACTIVITIES

- Research Boat (Not Collecting)
- Kayaking
- Surfing
- Paddleboard
- Canoeing
- Dinghy
- Sailing
- Jet Skiing
- Private Power Boat (Not Fishing)
- Whale Watching Boat/Party Boat (Not Fishing)
- Dive Boat (Dive Flag)
- Research (Not collecting)

\*\* Any fishing boats in water without fishing lines, nets, traps IN the water are considered "consumptive, not active" \*\*

Canoeing



Research (NOT collecting)



Dive Boat (with dive flag up)



## OFFSHORE ACTIVITIES

### CONSUMPTIVE ACTIVITIES

Scuba diving with spear gun  
 Scuba diving with mesh nets  
 Stand-up Paddleboard with Rod/Reel  
 Kayaking/Canoeing with Rod/Reel  
 Dingy with Rod/Reel  
 Private Vessel with Rod/Reel  
 Private Vessel with Hoop Nets  
 Party/Charter boat with fishing lines  
 Trolling Fishing Boat ("wings")  
 Research Boat (collecting)

**Trolling Fishing Boat ("Wings")**



**Private Vessel with Rod/Reel**



## DRAKES BEACH EASTERN TRANSECT

Point Reyes SMR

DRK\_BEACH\_E 01 and DRK BEACH E 02: Point Reyes SMR

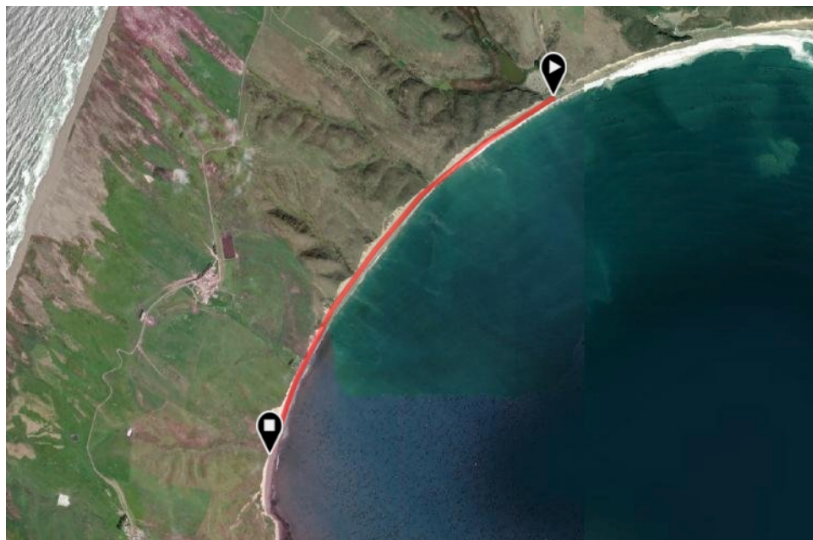


- Column 2 (Drakes Beach E 01) is used to monitor the area in the Point Reyes SMR along the beach (from the parking lot to the mouth of Drakes Estero). Walk east along the beach. You may need to cross over rocky outcrops.
- Column 3 (Drakes Beach E 02) is a snap shot at the east end of the beach within Estero de Limantour SMR. Once Drakes Beach E 01 survey is closed, switch to column 3 and conduct a five minute snapshot of activity inside the Estero (to the extent within the Estero shown in red on page 15).

## DRAKES BEACH, WESTERN TRANSECT

Point Reyes SMR

DRK\_BEACH\_W 01: Point Reyes SMR



### Important Notes:

- 1) Check tide and weather before traveling to this beach transect. Do not go during high tide. Best time is low tide.
- 2) Do not walk below cliffs. The rocks on the cliff face shift and there are rockslides from the cliff faces.
- 3) Do not pick up or collect dead animals. Beach Watch monitors the beaches for birds and mammals and need species undisturbed.

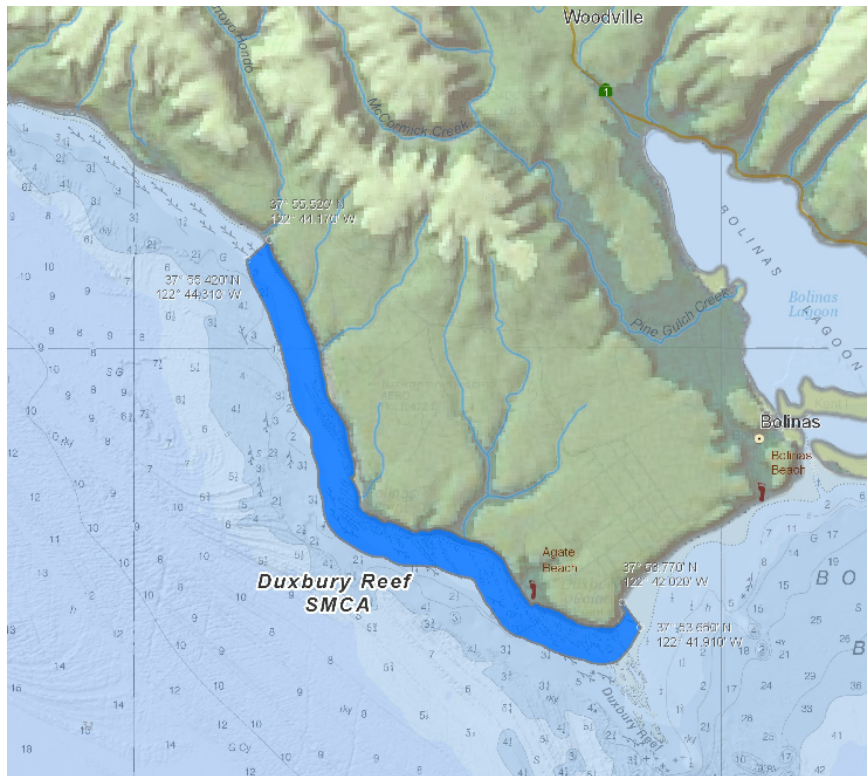
### Transect Monitoring:

This monitoring site requires three datasheet columns to record activities within the MPAs.

-Column 1 is a 5 minute snapshot observation using binoculars. The snapshot is taken from the lower high tide line near the water in front of the parking lot and looking west and seaward. Record activity along the beach and in Drakes Bay looking from your location out toward the buoy off of Chimney Rock.

## NOTES

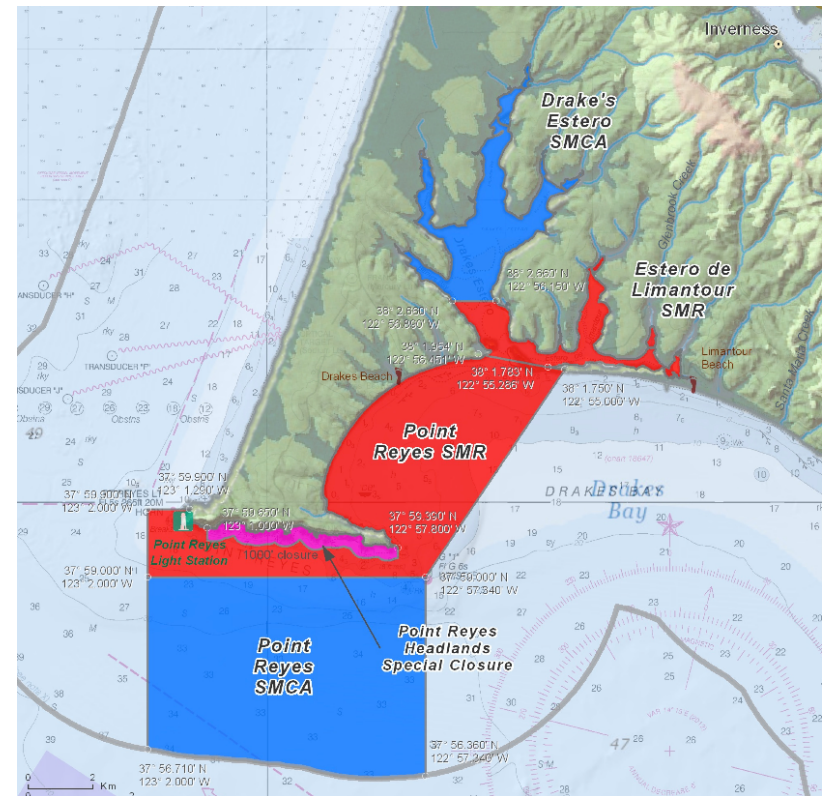
## DUXBURY REEF STATE MARIN CONSERVATION AREA



### State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA)

May limit recreational and/or commercial take to protect resource or habitat.

## DRAKES BEACH STATE MARIN CONSERVATION AREA



### State Marine Park (SMR)

No take areas. Unlawful to injure, damage, take, possess any living, geological, or cultural marine resource, except under scientific collecting permit, authorized research, restoration or monitoring.

### State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA)

May limit recreational and/or commercial take to protect resource or habitat.

### Special Closure

Access limited always or seasonally