



Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) Master Plan Amendment Discussion for Interested Stakeholders

Management Strategies for Achieving the Sustainability of Marine Fisheries Under the MLMA

Thursday, May 25, 2017 | 1:30pm-3:00pm PT

Summary of Key Questions and Discussion Topics

On May 25, 2017, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) convened a webinar to continue the discussion of the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) Master Plan Amendment with interested stakeholders. The goal of the webinar was to share and discuss the draft approaches and tools that CDFW is considering to help identify management strategies for meeting the stock sustainability objectives of the MLMA.

Over 40 people participated to learn about CDFW's current and future approach to identifying management strategies to achieve the sustainability of state-managed fisheries. Approaches and tools that were discussed included the Fishery Management Cycle, Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE), and data-limited assessments such as the Data-limited Methods Toolkit.

The following document provides an overview of the discussion topics, key questions, and identified next steps that emerged from the call. This summary is intended to capture high-level details and key themes, rather than a transcript of the discussion.

Materials referenced during the webinar are available online at <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MLMA/Master-Plan>, including:

- Reference materials for the Management Strategies for Achieving the Sustainability of Marine Fisheries Under the MLMA stakeholder discussion include:
 - [Agenda](#)
 - [Presentation slides](#)
- General reference materials for the Master Plan amendment process include:
 - [Overview of a Draft Amended Framework for MLMA-based Management](#)
 - [MLMA Master Plan Amendment Timeline](#)
 - [MLMA Objectives Overview](#)
 - [Information Gathering Projects Overview](#)
 - [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Call participants and other interested stakeholders are invited to share additional feedback and insights on the draft approaches and tools for identifying management strategies via an [online questionnaire](#). Ideas and feedback shared will help inform the development of an amended MLMA Master Plan, including the [Draft Amended Framework for MLMA-based Management](#).

For more information about the MLMA Master Plan Amendment Process, including future opportunities for stakeholder discussions, please visit CDFW's webpage (<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MLMA/Master-Plan>) or contact MLMA@wildlife.ca.gov.



Overview

About the MLMA Master Plan

The MLMA Master Plan for Fisheries (Master Plan) is a planning document that describes how California fisheries are managed. The Master Plan is intended to help focus management effort on the highest priority species and to describe the specific tools and approaches to be applied to achieve the goals of the MLMA. The current Master Plan was developed by CDFW with input from stakeholders and approved by the Fish and Game Commission in 2001.

Discussion

Throughout the webinar, call participants were invited to ask clarifying questions and share their perspectives and feedback on the draft ideas presented. The following aims to capture the discussion topics that emerged from the conversation, which will be considered as CDFW continues to develop and refine a Draft Amended Framework for MLMA-based Management.

General

- In general, call participants expressed broad support for the tools and approaches that were discussed. Feedback shared was generally positive, and a few stakeholders stated that they appreciated CDFW's movement towards and goal of achieving a more systematic and transparent use of the conceptual Fishery Management Cycle.
- A question was asked about the importance and role of developing Harvest Control Rules (HCRs) for fisheries moving forward.
 - During the implementation phase of the MLMA Master Plan amendment process, CDFW will strive to learn what resources (time, funding, expertise, staff capacity, etc.) are available and sufficient to support the development of HCRs for a greater number of fisheries. CDFW is open to having a range of HCRs for fisheries that vary in risk, from simple trigger thresholds for low-risk fisheries to more thorough HCRs for high-risk fisheries that might also have a Fishery Management Plan (FMP). CDFW stressed that adopting an effective and efficient approach to FMP development (such as a scaled continuum) will assist with the development of HCRs for more fisheries.
- One participant inquired as to whether the MLMA Master Plan amendment process would result in the development of standardized criteria or guidelines for determining whether a fishery was 'overfished'. The approach taken for federal fisheries was referenced as a possible model/example. Concern was expressed that a lack of a uniform and consistent definition or set of criteria for determining when a fishery is 'overfished' could make it more difficult to assess when a management response has been triggered.
 - Due to the diverse characteristics of each fishery, CDFW does not envision the immediate development of a standard definition or set of criteria in the draft amended Master Plan for determining when a fishery is overfished. However, CDFW may develop these guidelines in the future.
- A question was asked about whether changing ocean conditions were considered when identifying the most appropriate management strategy for a given fishery, and how robust management strategies are in general to different climate and ocean scenarios.
 - Climate variability and change are considered throughout the draft amended framework for MLMA-based management and are important considerations when identifying management strategies for fisheries.
 - One [Information Gathering Project](#), supported by California Ocean Science Trust (OST), takes a close look at the potential impacts of climate change on California fisheries and provides recommendations for building resiliency. A report will be publically available this summer, and more information can be learned at the OST webpage,



<http://www.oceansciencetrust.org/projects/climate-change-and-california-fisheries/>.

- CDFW is exploring the potential for further development and refinement of the Data-limited Methods Toolkit, another Information Gathering Project, supported by the National Resources Defense Council. As part of this next phase of work, the effects of climate change may be explored by modifying biological parameters to reflect different scenarios and assessing the performance of various management procedures.
- Call participants discussed CDFW's approach to prioritizing fisheries for management action. CDFW shared that the prioritization process addresses four initial questions (each a separate box in the draft amended framework for MLMA-based management) before arriving at the question 'What should management strategies be?' Tools such as the Productivity and Susceptible Analysis (PSA) and Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA) are being evaluated to inform a priority list of fisheries.
- Plans for stakeholder review of the draft amended Master Plan were discussed. CDFW appreciated the request that a draft amended Master Plan would be made available to stakeholders for their review and feedback before the draft was submitted to the Fish and Game Commission and will further consider this as part of the overall amendment process timeline.
- A question was asked about how the Bycatch Working Group, convened by the California Fish and Game Commission, can inform the MLMA Master Plan amendment process.
 - CDFW hopes that the Bycatch Working Group can help identify important questions, considerations, and potentially recommendations to inform the development of the draft amended Master Plan, especially pertaining to areas of uncertainty and efforts in need of more-focused research or policy attention related to bycatch.

Next Steps

- Call participants and other interested stakeholders are invited to share additional feedback and insights via an [online questionnaire](#) by July 1.
- Feedback on the webinar experience and the best ways to share updates and products with stakeholders is also welcomed by sending an email to MLMA@wildlife.ca.gov.
- All feedback received from the call, via the questionnaire and email, and follow up discussions with stakeholders and interested members of the public will be considered as CDFW continues to evaluate tools and approaches to identifying appropriate and effective management strategies for diverse fisheries.
- Over the coming months, CDFW will continue to host "stakeholder discussions" on key components of a Draft Amended Framework to MLMA-based Management (<https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=132745&inline>) through future webinars, workshops, discussions at the FGC Marine Resources Committee, informal gatherings, and more.
- For more information about the MLMA Master Plan Amendment Process, including future opportunities for stakeholder discussions, please visit CDFW's webpage (<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MLMA/Master-Plan>) or contact MLMA@wildlife.ca.gov.