



DRAFT SUMMARY

Fisheries Partnerships in the MLMA Master Plan Amendment

Background

The Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) places significant emphasis on the importance of collaboration in achieving its objectives. This is reflected in a number of areas and in Section 7059 particularly, which states:

- 1) Successful marine life and fishery management is a collaborative process that requires a high degree of ongoing communication and participation of all those involved in the management process, particularly the Commission, the Department, and those who represent the people and resources that will be most affected by fishery management decisions, especially fishery participants and other interested parties.
- 2) In order to maximize the marine science expertise applied to the complex issues of marine life and fishery management, the Commission and the Department are encouraged to continue to find creative new ways to, contract with or otherwise effectively involve Sea Grant staff, marine scientists, economists, collaborative fact finding process and dispute resolution specialists, and others with the necessary expertise at colleges, universities, private institutions, and other agencies.
- 3) The benefits of the collaborative process required by this section apply to most marine life and fishery management activities including, but not limited to, the development and implementation of research plans, marine managed area plans, fishery management plans, and plan amendments, and the preparation of fishery status reports such as those required by Section 7065.

Structured partnerships are an important form of this collaboration. The Department has engaged in a wide variety of partnerships and has learned valuable lessons regarding what can make them successful. Additionally, as part of the information gathering phase, the Nature Conservancy developed an overview of fisheries partnerships in California. The Master Plan review presents an opportunity to provide guidance that can help both managers and stakeholders effectively partner to achieve the goals of the MLMA. To develop that draft guidance, the Department is seeking input from stakeholders on the initial concepts below.

Benefits

Well-structured partnerships can help support short and long term fishery management goals and enhance and increase the state's capacity to manage fisheries under the MLMA. They can also strengthen buy-in and support for management decisions by all those involved.

Partnership continuum

Partnerships can vary significantly in terms of their degree of responsibility-sharing and duration. On the less intensive end of the spectrum are those that have a limited scope and may be focused on a particular research project, for example. On the more intensive-end are those partnerships that involve agreements that are formalized and often intended to be long-lasting. Generally, partnerships with greater responsibility-sharing will require a more formalized structure such as a memorandum of understanding or other type of formal agreement that clearly outlines the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the parties.

Fisheries management consists of a wide variety of tasks, each of which present specific opportunities for collaboration and partner prerequisite needs that can be identified in the Master Plan. The figure and table below reflect the general outline of this concept. The figure shows generalized categories of management tasks (green boxes) ordered by the degree of capacity (blue arrow) that is needed by partners to effectively engage in a partnership. For these purposes partner “capacity” is proposed to consist of three characteristics, 1) how representative the group is of the broader fleet or community, 2) the resources the group has available to allocate to the collaboration, and 3) how long-standing and durable the partner is.



Figure from TNC (2016)

Matching opportunities with partner capacity

In addition to a more formal structure, partnerships involving sharing responsibility for more inherently agency-led functions (*e.g.*, enforcement) will also require a greater degree of organizational capacity and durability on the part of partner organizations. More formal partnerships may also require greater capacity at the Department.

| Management Task | Partner Capacity | | |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| | Representativeness | Resources | Durability |
| Prioritization of Fisheries Management | Medium | Low | Low |
| Fishery Specific Planning | High | Medium | Low |
| Research and Monitoring | Low | Low | Low |
| Stock Assessment | High | High | Medium |
| Decision Rules | High | Medium | High |
| Compliance and Enforcement | High | High | High |

Elements of effective partnerships

If a partnership is well-designed, it can help advance the objectives of the MLMA. If not, it can distract from other high priority activities and frustrate partners. Effective partnerships would ideally:

- Advance shared or aligned research and management goals, and operate within defined roles and objectives.
- Involve organizations that have necessary capacity, resources, and durability and be sufficiently representative.
- Depend on effective communication, the ability to build trust, and the exchange of knowledge and information between partners.



Collaboration in Master Plan Development and Implementation

There are many good examples of effective partnership in California, including the Department's engagement with the Herring FMP development steering committee and the efforts to address management needs of the Dungeness crab fishery by the Dungeness Crab Task Force. The development of the Master Plan itself is also an example of a suite of partnerships with outside organizations that have helped to develop tools and considerations to inform the Master Plan. Similarly, full implementation of the Master Plan will require additional capacity and well-designed partnerships to effectively carry out its strategies and achieve its goals.

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