



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

**Considering Approaches to Fisheries Partnerships Under the MLMA**  
Friday, July 28, 2017 | 11:00am-12:30pm PT

### Summary of Key Questions and Discussion Topics

On July 28, 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 intention of the webinar was to share and discuss draft fisheries partnerships ideas and approaches that CDFW is considering to advance the [collaboration objectives of the MLMA](#).

During the webinar, CDFW shared proposed core elements of effective partnerships, reflected on past and present collaborations and partnerships, and invited over 40 participants to share feedback on the ideas presented. Elements of the discussion included the goals and potential benefits of partnerships, key considerations for entering into and building effective partnerships, and a draft approach to match collaboration opportunities with partner capacity.

This document provides an overview of the discussion topics, key questions, and identified next steps that emerged from the stakeholder discussion. 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 Considering Approaches to Fisheries Partnerships Under the MLMA stakeholder discussion include:
  - [Agenda](#)
  - [Presentation slides](#)
  - [Fisheries Partnerships Overview document](#)
  
- 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 ideas and approaches to fisheries partnerships 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, please visit CDFW's webpage (<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MLMA/Master-Plan>) or contact [MLMA@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto: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 and has not been updated in over 15 years. CDFW has been in the process of amending the MLMA Master Plan since late 2015 to better achieve the mandates of the MLMA and provide enhanced transparency and consistency in the state's approach to fishery management. The amended Master Plan is intended to enable the state to apply scientific advances in fisheries management, be more responsive to potential impacts due to changing climate and oceanic conditions, and increase our understanding of socio-economic drivers and human dimensions to better support healthy marine ecosystems and sustainable fisheries.

## 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

- A number of participants expressed appreciation and general support for the proposed ideas and approaches CDFW is considering to strengthen the durability and success of its partnerships.
  - The need to balance developing guidance to help ensure effective partnerships while also maintaining flexibility so each partnership can be tailored to reflect the goals and priorities of everyone involved was acknowledged.
  - Not all partnerships and collaborations are equal, and can range in the size and scope. In some circumstances, smaller partnerships allow for more fluidity and responsiveness to identified, and at times evolving, needs.
- A question was asked regarding where the ideas and concepts discussed during the webinar will be presented as part of the draft Master Plan Amendment.
  - CDFW confirmed that the draft amended Master Plan will include components that will specifically address fisheries partnership as they help to achieve the broader collaboration objectives of the MLMA. CDFW recognizes that partners are interested and involved in issues that extend beyond state-managed fisheries, and CDFW will continue to consider how the topic of fisheries partnerships might be applied more broadly.
- A question was asked about how individuals can find opportunities to partner with CDFW. While individuals may not have the resources that an organization may have, there was expressed interest in sharing knowledge and volunteering time, in addition to attending regular state meetings.
  - CDFW will consider how to improve sharing partnership opportunities that might be suitable for an individual. Listservs, web pages, etc. were identified as good resources for interested stakeholders to learn about opportunities to lend their expertise and knowledge.
    - The MPA Collaboratives offer an opportunity for individuals to become engaged with MPA implementation at the local level. There was discussion about challenges experienced by recreational fishermen to be invited to join their local MPA



Collaborative, which prompted CDFW and Ocean Protection Council (OPC) staff to coordinate with fishermen offline to address this issue.

- Individuals are encouraged to reach out to CDFW staff directly to discuss ideas. It was acknowledged that this might be easier to do with individuals who have an established relationship with CDFW staff.

### **Ideas and Suggestions for Effective Partnerships**

- CDFW emphasized that open lines of communication that take place early and often allow for partnerships to be successful at the onset, and also support the success of the partnership in the long-term. As part of regular communications, it is important to revisit and re-confirm shared goals, priorities, and products with all partners.
  - CDFW expressed a preference to connect with interested partners as early as possible. Partnerships have a much higher potential for success if ideas, identified concerns, or priority topics are brought forward in the initial stages so that CDFW can be involved in developing a partnership pathway. This upfront conversation will also help to identify places where a shared vision is not possible, which in turn can help to inform if a partnership is a suitable way to move forward.
- It is important to clearly identify expectations, measures of success, and roles and responsibilities when entering into a partnership.
  - As a state agency, there are limitations to how fast CDFW can move towards establishing new partnerships. Patience, flexibility, ability to compromise, and a willingness to work within internal operating requirements of CDFW is extremely helpful.
  - Additionally, limits to CDFW staff capacity and priorities will need to be considered at all stages of a partnerships' evolution.
- CDFW was asked how partners should navigate circumstances where they introduce an opportunity to partner with CDFW, but CDFW is unable to partner on the identified priority topic/issue.
  - CDFW highlighted the importance of flexibility in developing partnerships. Flexibility allows the priorities and goals of both partners to evolve as the partners learn more about each other's needs and constraints.
    - For example, when the stakeholder group that presented CDFW with the need for a herring fisheries management plan (FMP) identified how the process would improve efficiency in the long-term, CDFW was able to justify investing resources in this effort.
    - There will also be times where CDFW and a potential partner will agree to disagree about a priority issue, which is also an important part of the partnership process.

### **Lessons Learned from Fisheries Partnerships**

- Participants reflected on lessons learned from the Fish and Game Commission's Bycatch Work Group (BWG), which was considered a partnership in it's own right, as well as the evolution of its relationship with CDFW to help inform the Master Plan Amendment.
  - Informed by the Master Plan Amendment timeline as a driver to accomplish identified tasks (informed by FGC), the BWG was most effective when it updated it's approach and established a subgroup to help develop proposals for the larger group's consideration. Additional elements to this successful partnership included diverse stakeholder representation in the BWG and subgroup, and well-respected leadership within the group to help move product development



forward.

- It would have been helpful to have had the BWG and FGC establish clearer goals and objectives, including a problem statement that the BWG was addressing, to help guide the product development process. More frequent communication between the FGC and the BWG would also have helped the process overall. Once the BWG started to become integrated into the Master Plan Amendment process, communication between the BWG and CDFW would also have been beneficial.
- A participant highlighted the partnership established between Coastal Conservation Association California (CCA CAL) and CDFW to engage in stakeholder discussions about artificial reefs.
  - This issue was a priority topic for the recreational fishing community, however CDFW did not have the staff capacity to coordinate a discussion with interested stakeholders. In an attempt to help take this undertaking off CDFW's plate, CCA CAL reached out to CDFW staff to discuss the idea of CCA CAL assisting with the planning and convening of a series of workshops for CDFW to provide information and engage in a dialogue with interested stakeholders.
- A participant reflected on the Spiny Lobster FMP process, including the partnership between CDFW and the Lobster Advisory Committee (LAC).
  - Maintaining open lines of communication about process updates, including the scope of requested input from the LAC, CDFW staffing changes, etc. would have helped the LAC to have had a better understanding of CDFW needs and limitations. More frequent check-ins related to how the LAC process was progressing overall would have helped avoid some confusion experienced by LAC members.
  - It can be challenging working as a stakeholder advisory body to a state agency because of the long timeframes that are typically involved. Patience is essential for both stakeholders and CDFW staff who start processes with a great deal of enthusiasm and energy, that might shift due to lengthy timelines.

## Next Steps

- Call participants and other interested stakeholders are invited to share additional feedback and insights via an online [questionnaire](#) by October 2.
- 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](mailto: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 identify appropriate and effective fisheries collaborations and partnerships.
- Additionally, CDFW has updated its timeline to include public review of the Master Plan Amendment prior to submitting a draft to the Fish and Game Commission. [Click here](#) for a timeline with details.
- For more information about the MLMA Master Plan Amendment Process, please visit CDFW's webpage (<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MLMA/Master-Plan>) or contact [MLMA@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:MLMA@wildlife.ca.gov).