California Fish and Game Commission
Marine Resources Committee

Draft Final Staff Synthesis Report on
California Coastal Fishing Communities Meetings

Revised July 2019

Note: This is a draft revised version of a report provided to the Marine Resources Committee in July 2018. Revisions, based on public comments, are shown in strike-out and underscore; unless otherwise directed by the committee, staff will accept the revisions and finalize the report following the July committee meeting.

Federal and California's state fisheries laws recognize the importance and value of fishing industries and communities to economic and social well-being and have established guidance for their consideration in management actions. The federal Magnuson–Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, which governs fisheries management in United States federal waters (from 3 to 200 nautical miles offshore), mandates fisheries management standards for providing sustained participation of fishery-dependent communities and for minimizing economic impacts to those communities. Commonly referred to as the Magnuson-Stevens Act, it provides a definition for the term "fishing community".[1]

While state law in California (covering from shore to 3 nautical miles offshore) does not define "fishing communities," the California Marine Life Management Act does establish goals for recognizing fishing communities when pursuing fisheries management program goals designed to address biological sustainability. The additional goals focus on observing the interests of and minimizing adverse impacts to fisheries participants, small-scale fisheries, coastal communities, and local economies.[2]

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[1] 'Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, Public Law 104-297, Sec. 3.(17); defines the term "Fishing Community" as "*a community which is substantially dependent on or substantially engaged in the harvest or processing of fishery resources, to meet social and economic needs, and includes fishing vessel owners, operators, and crew and United States fish processors that are based in such community.*"

[2] Marine Life Management Act, California Fish and Game Code Section 7056 et sec. Section 7056 and subdivisions 7056(i)- 7056(m) state: "In order to achieve the primary fishery management goal of sustainability, every sport and commercial marine fishery under the jurisdiction of the state shall be managed under a system whose objectives include all of the following: …(i) The fishery management system observes the long-term interests of people dependent on fishing for food, livelihood, or recreation. (j) The adverse impacts of fishery management on small-scale fisheries, coastal communities, and local economies are minimized. (k) Collaborative and cooperative approaches to management, involving fishery participants, marine scientists, and other interested parties are strongly encouraged, and appropriate mechanisms are in place to resolve disputes such as access, allocation, and gear conflicts.(l) The management system is proactive and responds quickly to changing environmental conditions and market or other socioeconomic factors and to the concerns of fishery participants. (m) The management system is periodically reviewed for effectiveness in achieving sustainability goals and for fairness and reasonableness in its interaction with people affected by management.

To consider how to more systematically approach meeting state and federal goals, ~~At the direction of~~ the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) and its Marine Resources Committee (MRC) directed Commission staff to host~~ed~~ a series of coastal fishing communities meetings. The purpose of the meetings was to receive public input on issues of concern affecting the vitality and resilience of California's fishing communities, and the areas in which the Commission can play a role to foster greater stability and long-term ~~vitality~~ resilience through its decision-making.

This report is intended to provide a brief background on the impetus for this project, an overview of the coastal fishing meetings and questions posed to participants, a summary of common themes and key findings, and initial ideas generated from the meetings for MRC to consider in helping ~~preparing~~ fishing communities prepare for future resilience. The information is intended to support MRC discussion and guidance on potential options and approaches to prioritize for further collaborative development and, ~~public input~~ ultimately, Commission consideration.

Background

In 2014, a petition from northern California fishermen requesting new fishery access adjacent to their port for a species that had become more locally abundant due to ~~climate-driven~~ shifts in distribution resulting from persistent increases in water temperature. While the request was to obtain small-scale experimental access to an otherwise restricted access fishery outside its traditional fishing grounds, the implicit intent was to support north coast harbors and fishing communities. The Commission requested that MRC schedule a discussion about the request and the community needs behind it.

Following exploratory discussions with MRC in 2015, the Commission directed staff to hold a public meeting to more comprehensively explore the concerns and needs of fishing communities. A statewide meeting was held in Petaluma in July 2016. Over 40 members of the public attended, including commercial and recreational fishermen, fish processors, city and county elected officials and staff, environmental non-governmental organizations, social scientists, and California Sea Grant staff. Participants emphasized that there were many changes and needs in their communities that could not be met under current management and policy ~~conditions~~. They urged the state to more directly recognize coastal community goals and the impact of different options on those communities while pursuing conservation and utilization goals in its fisheries management decisions.

The statewide meeting revealed that there was value in continuing the discussion; the Commission subsequently approved an MRC recommendation to broaden the conversation coast-wide through a series of locally-focused coastal fishing community meetings across the California coast. The goals of these meetings were to (1) identify challenges to individual coastal fishing communities; (2) discuss strategies for building more resilience in the face of external stressors that include changing climate, ocean and economic conditions; and (3)

identify sustainable coastal community goals and opportunities for the Commission to support them.

Seven locally-focused coastal fishing community meetings were held along the coast from June 2017 through June 2018 in Smith River, Fort Bragg, Montara/Half Moon Bay, Monterey, Atascadero, Ventura and San Diego. Attendance at each meeting ranged from 15-35 members of the public. The meetings offered a venue to more thoroughly explore, from the perspective of specific fishing-dependent coastal communities, current conditions and changes being experienced in different ports, constraints on adaptation, and needs for creating future resilience. The meetings were not only intended to inform the Commission, but to draw directly from the experience and expertise of community members to help generate ideas and potential pathways forward to adapt fishing practices or permitting structures in the face of changing fisheries and ocean conditions.

Commission Authority

The intent of the MRC is to use suggestions gathered through this process to help inform potential actions to support coastal fishing communities in ways that are consistent with Commission authority. However, throughout the meetings and the written comments, many suggestions relevant to coastal community needs fell outside of the scope of the Commission's authority (e.g., management of marine mammals which are federally managed). Actions falling within Commission authority under state law include formulation of general policies, and adoption of regulations and/or management plans for recreational and some commercial fisheries. For purposes of the Coastal Fishing Communities Project, the Commission directed staff to focus on areas in the scope of where the Commission has authority to act; where possible, however, the Commission seeks to coordinate with partner agencies with the relevant authorities to develop collaborative solutions in line with stakeholder needs.

Coastal Fishing Community Meeting Highlights

The coastal fishing community meetings were structured to include an introduction from Commission staff and participating commissioners. Each of the five commissioners was able to attend at least one meeting. Staff provided an overview of the Commission's role in implementing the state's vision for managing commercial and recreational fisheries, the Commission's authority to set policies and regulations for fisheries in California's state waters (0-3 miles from shore), the Commission's focus on possible actions within its sphere of authority; and answers to questions from the audience. For several of the meeting, port profiles were prepared and distributed to support the discussions (see Appendix B).

Group Discussion

At each fishing community meeting, staff overviews were followed by a full group discussion organized around a progression of exploratory questions to solicit input on:

1) The unique challenges faced within each fishing community;
2) How fishermen are adapting to these challenges;
3) The ideal vision for the future of each port; and

4) How the Commission can respond to help address challenges, facilitate adaptation, and support the future vision within the Commission's mandates and authorities.

Unique Challenges (Question 1)

The following is a synopsis of the perspectives shared by fishing community members about the unique challenges facing their communities. The answers to the questions were used to draw general themes as seen across the state; specific responses and regionally-specific perspectives regarding unique challenges to each port are found in Appendix A.

- *Fisheries Management Changes and Access*

  A repeated theme was "lack of access", whether this referred to changes in available fishing grounds due to spatial closures, such as marine protected areas and rockfish conservation areas; reductions in previous harvest levels, permit availability, or high cost of available permits. While these themes are explored further under themes below, many challenges were attributed to the State's policy on restricting access, in concert with federal fisheries limited entry policies. The main challenge presented was limitations on access to existing fisheries due to ~~current fishing access and~~ permit structures and constraints under the Commission's policy on restricted access commercial fisheries. The restricted access policy created a limited entry structure for specific fisheries and fisheries management decisions that, while creating stability in specific fisheries during a time of overcapitalization, was reported by many fishermen to erode flexibility within communities. This has occurred by reducing capacity through qualifying criteria for initial permit issuance, in some cases prioritizing larger California operations. However, other fishermen champion restricted access policies as crucial to preserving the biological and ecological vitality of California's fisheries.

  Meeting participants understood that in 1999, when the restricted access policy was adopted, many of California's fisheries were overcapitalized and both ecologically and economically unsustainable as vessels became larger and faster, greatly increased fishing power and hold capacity, and used a wide variety of electronic innovations to find and catch fish. Simultaneously, fishermen increased knowledge of the behavior of target species within their trade. The restricted access policy was designed to help better align capacity with biological and economic goals. However, conditions have changed substantially in the past 20 years, and several fishing communities reported that the size of fishing fleets in their port areas had greatly decreased with state and federal management restrictions and, subsequently, port infrastructure has declined. Furthermore, many small ports reported that they may be left with no access to their local fishing grounds, and there may be a migration of permits from California ports to areas outside California where quotas are highest. A change in policy could lead to adaptation of current management strategies and, thus, coastal fishermen have prioritized fisheries access policy as the highest concern for sustaining fishing communities.

- *Changing Climate and Ocean Conditions, and Environmental Impacts on Fisheries*

  Varying environmental conditions have had both individual and cumulative impacts on fisheries and coastal communities, particularly associated with climate change and corresponding changes~~ing~~ and variability in ocean conditions. Marine heat waves; associated species distribution shifts; increased interactions with protected species, such as marine mammals (e.g., sea otters); increased frequency and severity of storms; kelp forest ecosystem imbalance; ocean acidification; sea level rise; reduced productivity of spawning and rearing waters and biogenic habitat; and biotoxins and harmful algal blooms, have been detrimental to several fisheries in different ways. Extreme ocean events have occurred at an unprecedented magnitude and frequency. Participants shared their experience about unique impacts fishing communities will endure as productivity, health, and distribution of target marine species change, affecting their economic livelihoods. These events and associated uncertainty have served to expose challenges in adapting under the current management structure. It is important to acknowledge that climate change and extreme ocean events have different impacts on the various fisheries and a one-size-fits-all approach may not be feasible or beneficial to the state's fishermen and fishing communities.

- *Loss or Decline of Historic Fisheries*

  Fishing communities are still experiencing the impact of the loss or severe decline of historic fisheries that occurred due to factors such as decreased fish stocks and constraints to fishing seasons (e.g., salmon), catch levels (nearshore), or available fishing grounds (rockfish conservation areas). The restrictions were put in place to support stock rebuilding plans. Implementation of "fisheries rationalization" and capacity reduction plans such as federal groundfish trawl individual transferable quotas (ITQs), and implementing state restricted access programs in California with new qualification criteria for "initial permit issuance" met its goals for fishery sustainability, capacity, and stability, but had some unintended consequences: loss of previously-held permits, shrinking of fishing permit portfolios, loss of small scale open access options and other constrained opportunities for accessing existing fisheries or developing new fishery opportunities, and loss of some larger operations from transfer of locally-held trawl ITQ to outside California. Additionally, establishing marine protected areas in places that were traditionally fished has reduced the ability of fishermen to maintain access to historic fisheries resources.

- *Flexibility to Tailor Fishing Opportunities to Port-Specific Conditions*

  A clear message across the meetings was that individual fishermen and communities are seeking opportunities to adapt fishing to current conditions in their ports. In some areas, the loss of infrastructure previously associated with large volume fisheries means that communities need to adapt to smaller volume-based fishing operations compatible with remaining infrastructure, including storage and ice facilities. With climate change, fishermen see opportunities for "pop-up fisheries" for potentially ephemeral but now-locally-available fish. Small-scale fishing communities reported that they have a difficult time advocating for their access needs and competing with environmental advocacy organizations or higher-value fishing organizations that can pay for professional fishery

advocates. Community members emphasized the importance of managers recognizing that fishing opportunities for a port can change markedly and advocated for collaborative development from the bottom up with fishermen, processors, agency representatives, and researchers to tailor fishing opportunities when different opportunities for new access arises. The need for port-specific adaptations was identified across ports of all sizes, including those reliant on larger-volume operations.

- *Deteriorating Infrastructure*

  ~~Since variable catches are not consistent enough to retain infrastructure, c~~Community members detailed how port infrastructure is deteriorating, attributed in part to increased variability in landings or insufficient volume. Many fishermen have expressed frustration~~s~~ about the lack of resources or facilities to accomplish their work. Many ports are losing docks, ice machines, storage, and fuel facilities, resulting in a loss of fish buyers and processors. There were overwhelming requests for actions that would enhance infrastructure to save fishing communities and preserve commercial fishing harbor space. Fishermen highlighted the need for a detailed inventory of facilities and infrastructure available within all of California's ports and harbors serving the commercial and recreational fishing industries. Some commenters are seeking solutions to encourage restoring and facilitating buyers and processors, or developing local fish markets.

- *Retaining Local Markets*

  Fishing communities are faced with the challenge of retaining local markets for seafood products, indicating that ~~since~~ they experience competition from non-California product importations, especially foreign imports where costs associated with harvesting are lower. Most nations that export seafood and seafood products to the U.S. have less stringent fishery rules and regulations, which results in lower costs to harvest and are generally available year-round. Some communities report that, without a steady local supply, they are forced to rely on imports to ensure their needs are met. Sometimes after a fishery closure or change in available catch, markets may fill the product gap with imported product and are then reluctant to commit to purchasing local catch when it becomes available. ~~There~~ While in many coastal areas there is an increased public interest in having access to buying local, sustainable seafood, many fishermen have limited market access and struggle to meet the demand. Ports and harbors with local fishermen's markets are seeing some success in addressing this problem.

- *Complex Regulations (both State and Federal)*

  Many fishermen expressed experiencing difficulty with the existing management structure complexity and in deciphering regulations which, in many cases, leads them to alter their participation level due to risk of inadvertent non-compliance. There are different regulations for nearshore (state) versus offshore (federal); ~~it~~ many fishermen subject to spatial restrictions such as rockfish conservation areas or marine protected areas find it challenging to interpolate legal boundaries at sea; and party boat captains expressed a challenge with the requirement ~~have~~ to identify specific species, and to know and understand regulations for all species. Many fishermen have also expressed

the lack of simple information clearing houses and the struggle of complying with the demands of federal regulations.

- *Permit Availability and Costs*

  Due to the state's restricted access policy, some fisheries with limited entry permit requirements are experiencing ~~there are~~ permit transferability constraints and/or high costs to purchase permits. If permits are available, most are sold on the open market and are significantly more expensive. Furthermore, permits are often designed for higher vessel capacity instead of small-scale opportunities. Several commenters suggested creating community permit banks.

- *Recruitment of New/Young Fishermen*

  Due to the high cost of entry into the fishery, there is a shrinking fleet and lack of young fishermen entrants. ~~With a limited career trajectory~~ Without programs designed to attract new and/or~~for~~ young fishermen, there may not be enough fishermen in the future to keep commercial fisheries running, which could~~and~~ jeopardize food security. Furthermore, cultural knowledge within fisheries will be lost with the retirement of older fishermen.

- *Data Gaps in Fishery Management*

  There are currently data gaps in fishery management that prohibit new management decisions to be made to provide additional fishing opportunities. Fishermen are frustrated with the current stock assessment process. As a result of this issue, fishermen want to use their wealth of knowledge and engage in filling the research gaps by collecting the necessary data to contribute to more effective management decisions.

- *Competing Uses*

  Fishing communities shared that they are threatened by a variety of alternative, competing uses. ~~These~~ Offshore participants shared concerns about spatial uses in ocean waters overlapping with fishing grounds, including potential aquaculture farms, alternative energy facilities such as offshore wind farms, and desalination plants. Onshore, or adjacent to harbors, there is also competition for space utilization associated with gentrification including repurposing commercial fishing docks for yachts and pleasure boats, conversion of storage warehouses into breweries or restaurants, etc. Competing uses often generate higher or more consistent income than commercial fish landings; ports that have maintained commercial fishing facilities and docks have often done so through intentionally planning and prioritizing the non-monetary value of fishing to their community and maintaining its cultural heritage, while in other ports the fishing industry is seeking ways to champion that purpose, which they emphasize would be consistent with the California Coastal Act mandate to protect existing harbor space for commercial fishing operations.

Current Adaptation Strategies (Question 2)

A number of the key concerns highlighted during the group discussions associated with changing conditions and constraints on creative adaptation. Participants were specifically asked how they adapt when the key fisheries in which they engage are no longer viable or are closed. Responses included:

- Shifting geographic location from local communities based on seasons or resource availability (home port versus away ports).
- Redirecting focus from primary fisheries to secondary or different fisheries (e.g., fishermen turned to squid and sablefish in Half Moon Bay during salmon crash).
- Seeking jobs outside of fishing.
- Charter sport fishing boats: Switch to ecotourism and whale watching expeditions.

Future Vision (Question 3)

Participants were asked to describe not only what changes they have seen in and around their ports over the past 20 years, but also what they envision ~~for~~ their ports to be like 20 years from now. Responses included:

- Prioritization and support for fisheries from harbors and ports in the form of: offloading resources; local markets; reserved storage space for fishing boats and equipment; rebuilt waterfront infrastructure to support fishing activities.
- Streamlined permitting process, with more regionally-focused permit structures.
- Permit fishing for multiple species at different scales of operation.
- Community co-ops, where fishermen agree to sell all landed catch to one place and profits are split amongst fishers who participate in the co-op.
- Recreational and commercial fisherman participation in tagging/collecting data (sampling).
- Fishermen included in marine protected area collaboratives.
- Increased education of commercial fishing participants.
- Flexibility in fisheries management.
- Lower license costs.
- Electronic representations of the current fishing regulations in waters adjacent to each port.
- Modernization of facilities.

Potential Commission Actions (Question 4)

Finally, participants were asked what policies or regulation changes they would like to see the Commission develop to help adapt to uncertain conditions and meet future goals for their ports. Responses from participants included:

- Re-evaluate how the Commission approaches restricting access to fisheries - open small-scale and community-based fishing access.
- Adopt a fisheries policy that states that the Commission supports a future with California commercial fisheries and will consider the needs of fishing communities in its decision-making.
- Grant new fishing permits in existing fisheries (e.g., squid, pink shrimp) or open new fisheries opportunities (e.g., box crab, octopus) to expand long-term fishing opportunities.
- Encourage young fishermen/new entrants to join fishing communities. Ideas shared included:
- Adopt an apprenticeship program
- Create incentives for participation
- Establish a lower cost “apprentice” or “entry level” commercial fishing permit with a lower fee and opportunities to learn and leverage resources from experienced fishermen
- Promote pier fishing to bring young fishermen into the industry
- Permit transferability. Ideas shared included:
- Redistribute retired permits to other fishers, family members, and/or apprentices (young fishermen/new entrants)
- Make permits more easily transferrable within an apprenticeship program (e.g., no fee, lower fees)
- Create community permit banks to purchase permits
- Allow twelve-month sport fishing licences from the date of purchase
- Develop a fishing community viability plan at state level
- Recommend that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) conduct stock assessments for all fished species
- Re-examine historical policies and their impacts on coastal fishing communities
- Implement adaptive management in the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA)
- Implement artificial reefs to provide more fish habitat and fishing opportunities
- Increase stability and local control by tying permits to ports or restricting permit transfers to in-state or regional area (re: groundfish trawl ITQ)
- Engage more directly in Pacific Fishery Management Council meetings either via coordination/input to CDFW representatives, or directly

- Employ fishermen to collect data to fill information gaps and enhance management and opportunity
- Adopt a principle on not importing seafood
- Incentives for reduced carbon footprints
- Designing projects and policies that establish trust and enfranchise commercial harvesters in management processes
- Enhanced local co-management

Staff Recommendations: Initial Concepts for Potential Development

Input from fishing communities of potential supportive actions generally fell into fisheries management/regulatory actions ("Management"), changes to existing policies ("Policy"), or actions outside of Commission policy and regulation (i.e., "Other"). Staff recommends that MRC consider recommending to the Commission a broad range of options, both within the Commission's policy and regulatory authority, as well as considering how to extend beyond these core functions into other areas of influence consistent with staff and budget capacity. The initial list of potential actions highlights possible areas of focus, which can be used to evaluate and prioritize what the Commission will choose to address following public input and feedback. Staff recognizes that the Commission may not have the authority or the resources to fully commit to all stakeholder-identified recommendations, and that further action will be limited by staff capacity and available budget. The options below are limited to areas where the Commission could play a role or has authority to take direct action.

1. *Develop and adopt a policy and definition for coastal fishing communities.* Consider developing a new policy related to coastal fishing communities for Commission adoption. A policy could help clarify how the Commission wishes to consider coastal fishing community needs in decision-making, and the information necessary to help support those decisions Given that the term "fishing community" is not defined in the California Fish and Game Code, a definition could be developed for inclusion in the policy. Multiple stakeholders representing fishing groups have requested and provided written recommendations for this definition. Developing a draft definition and policy may be best accomplished in collaboration with stakeholders.

2. *Review the Commission's policy on restricted access commercial fisheries*. Restricted access programs and the Commission's policy were cited by many community members as contributing barriers to entry and adapting fishing strategies and targets as local changes arise, including those associated with climate dynamics. Other community members defended current restricted access programs as effective management that has improved the resource, the economic viability of fishing, or both. The Commission could conduct a review of how the policy has been applied since it was adopted in 1999, to examine where it was or wasn't applied to specific fisheries, how the policy performed at meeting the fishery objectives, identifying any unintended consequences for fishing communities, and whether any objectives have changed that

warrant possible adjustments to the policy. This complex policy includes 21 individual sub-policies across 9 unique topic areas.

3. *Approve specific, small-scale projects to test and evaluate proposed new approaches.*
   Stakeholders have requested that the Commission allow for stakeholders and partners to develop small-scale projects to test new approaches, including departures from the restricted access policy and current permit structures, acknowledging that permit holders are key stakeholders in helping to create, design and define these projects, in consultation with the Department. The new *experimental fisheries permit* program, authorized through legislation as of January 1, 2019, provides a possible pathway to testing pilot projects once regulations implementing the program are adopted by the Commission. Consider projects supporting opportunities for small-scale fishing that can be designed to help to fill information gaps consistent with guidance from the MLMA master plan for fisheries.

4. *Engage legislative staff to pursue adjustments to laws as ideas are refined, if warranted to support fishing community adaptability.~~, through vehicles such as the current fisheries omnibus bill.~~*
   Recognizing that some possible actions may be outside of Commission authority to accomplish, direct staff to seek to partner with stakeholders, the Department, and non-governmental organizations to find appropriate issues and means of engaging with legislative staff.

5. *Direct staff to increase engagement and coordination with sister agencies, when feasible, on management decisions affecting California coastal communities.*
   Commission-related actions in isolation cannot meet all needs of coastal fishing communities, and decisions made by different coastal management authorities can have a combined influence on the health of a coastal community. Community members have requested deeper Commission engagement with coastal management agencies to urge them to consider potential impacts to California's coastal fishing communities from their decision-making. Sister agencies that fishing community members emphasized include the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) related to west coast federal fisheries management decisions, and the California Coastal Commission, related to coastal development permit approvals to facilitate awareness and coordination on relevant topics and/or projects.

6. *Explore~~/research~~ pathways for authorizing ~~possible~~ community-based adaptable fishery structures (e.g., community permit banks or risk pools).*
   Explore options for community-organized structures that provide for adaptable responses within the community and could include co-management responsibilities. Consult with partner organizations and possibly convene an experts' workshop. This recommendation may require legislative or regulatory frameworks to accommodate such avenues. An example of such a structure that could be used as a model is the Monterey Fisheries Trust.

7. *Explore filling data needs through collaborative research and data collection.*

Coastal fishing community members have raised a concern that adaptive responses and new management strategies have not been pursued due to lack of data. Many fishermen have offered to support ~~of~~ collaborative data gathering. The Commission could ~~W~~work with the Department on identifying data gaps and possible scientific information that could be gathered through collaborative research or experimental fishing between partner entities and fishermen. Such efforts might be coordinated through creating an app or a website. However, great care must be taken to create citizen science data collecting systems that provide credible data. The Commission would have to rely on partners for labor costs.

8. *Survey communities, commercial and recreational fishers, and processors about their priorities for Commission focus.*
   This strategy could help refine understanding about the issues facing coastal fishing communities and their priorities. Some stakeholders have criticized this idea as being too similar to this coastal fishing communities project.

9. *Explore a model of "fishing community sustainability plans" (CSPs) and possible development of a state fisheries-based module to add to existing CSPs.*
   CSPs are cited in the Magnuson-Stevens Act as a potential method to avoid negative impacts in small fishing communities from the catch share program; they enable communities to plan strategically and to be more proactive in developing fishing community resilience for a sustainable future. Staff envisions that incorporating a state fisheries module could potentially be part of a future where ports are empowered to define how to support their own fishing community resilience and structure fisheries access according to their unique needs.

10. *Continue to develop an understanding of climate change impacts on fisheries and fishing communities.*
    Science is still evolving regarding how fish populations and fisheries are affected by and respond to changing climate dynamics, including short-term, extreme ocean events. Developing successful fisheries management response strategies that meet both biological and socioeconomic/community needs is still nacent. Increased understanding of what is often referred to as "climate-responsive fisheries management" or adaptable management structures).

For all of these potential actions, and any others identified by MRC or the Commission, staff will need to develop a work plan to clarify goals/objectives and identify specific next steps. Staff recommends that a more detailed discussion about the initial concepts for potential development, and potential recommendations to the Commission, be held at a future MRC meeting.

APPENDIX A:
Common General and Port-Specific Challenges Shared by Participants at Coastal Fishing Community Meetings

Common General Challenges

- Loss of access to historical fishing grounds, beach, and piers
- Restricted access
    - Limited access to local resources
    - Existing permit structure within state managed fisheries (permits are often for large-scale operations)
    - Results in transient existence of fleets and fishermen
    - Fishery and area closures
    - No access to areas where species have recovered
    - Cannot compete with imported fish sold at lower prices
    - Limited market and economic value
    - Demand for buying local is high
    - Decreased profitability with increased fish taxes
    - Decreased food system viability
    - Seasonal closures limiting access to markets
    - Increased fishing fees reduces fishing opportunities
- Limited career trajectory for young fishermen
    - Shrinking fleet and lack of young fishermen entrants
    - High cost of entry
    - Cultural knowledge lost with the retirement of older fishermen
    - Not enough fishermen to feed people (food security)
- Deteriorating infrastructures
    - Loss of docks, ice machines, storage, and fuel facilities
    - Variable catches aren’t consistent enough to retain infrastructure
- Environmental impacts
    - Climate change (e.g., species distribution shifts, marine heat waves, loss of biogenic habitat)
    - Coastal erosion
    - Diseases and human health risks (e.g., harmful algal blooms)
    - Drought
- Permit transferability constraints and/or costs to purchase
- Difficultly in deciphering regulations
    - Different regulations for nearshore versus offshore

    - Lack of simple information clearing houses
    - Difficult to interpolate legal boundaries
    - Conflicting regulations between federal and state laws (e.g., for shark fin ban)
- Data gaps in fisheries management
    - Stock assessment process needs revision for all fished species
    - Lack of data
- Competing uses
    - Marine spatial planning initiatives (e.g., aquaculture impacts on port dynamics, offshore wind energy)
    - Competition with onshore businesses (e.g., restaurants)

Port-Specific Challenges

North Coast

- General:
    - Problems related to reallocation of federal groundfish individual transferable quotas to outside of California
    - Competition with Oregon for processing capabilities and market
    - Small communities have a difficult time advocating for their access needs
        - e.g., the Commission denying requests that fishermen believe are available, such as issuance of experimental squid permits or new pink shrimp permits)
    - Restrictions on nearshore fishing due to Pacific Fishery Management Council limits
- Smith River:
    - No credit for closures of yelloweye rockfish (constrains all other groundfish catch)

Central Coast

- Half Moon Bay:
    - Fishing is concentrated in nearshore areas and no access to deep reef
    - Need regulation for tier allocation (e.g., crab and salmon)
    - Layout of rockfish conservation areas are arbitrary and difficult to decipher
    - Limited access to chilipepper rockfish since a special permit is required
- Monterey:
    - Over-regulation of groundfish and fishing grounds constrained by rockfish conservation areas
    - Loss of California halibut trawl grounds in Monterey Bay waters
- San Luis Obispo:
    - Trident Winds' proposal for offshore wind energy development project
        - Potential impact on fishable area
        - Fishing between windmills is a safety issue
        - Impact of wind energy cables on fishing

South Coast

- General:
  - Increase in marine mammal populations (e.g., sea lions, otters)
  - Lacking a solution to help fishermen coexist with marine mammals
- Santa Barbara:
  - Moratorium on abalone fishing. Still being impacted by closure of commercial abalone fishery.
- Ventura:
  - Redevelopment process that reduces commercial and recreational fishery access to the harbor
  - Concerns about sheephead fillet length requirements
  - Sea cucumber trawl fishing needs a time limit
  - Increased harbor business costs
  - Lack of money to dredge harbor mouth
  - Lack of lingcod data for management decisions
- San Diego:
  - Lost fishing access due to Shelter Island ramp construction
  - Tijuana River sewage spills polluting fishery
  - Transboundary issue
  - Difficulty in importation process from Mexico due to recreational fishing possession regulation in California
  - Need to expand hatchery program to include halibut and yellowtail

Appendix B

Fishing Community Profiles for Select Ports Distributed at Coastal Fishing Community Meetings

The following pages include profiles of commercial and some recreational fisheries for recent years in the following port areas:

- Fort Bragg
- Bodega Bay
- San Francisco
- Half Moon Bay
- Morro Bay Area
- Santa Barbara Channel Area

Appendix C

Meeting Summaries from Individual Coastal Fishing Community Meetings