

Committee Staff Summary for July 16-17, 2025 MRC

5. Red Abalone Statewide Restoration Plan**Today's Item****Information** ☒**Action** ☐

Receive and discuss Department update on statewide red abalone restoration planning.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| • Commission supported development of a recreational red abalone fishery management plan (FMP) | October 2014; FGC |
| • Commission supported Department pausing development of the red abalone FMP, pausing development of a <i>de minimis</i> fishery, and focusing efforts on recovery planning | December 2022; FGC |
| • The Marine Resources Committee (MRC) received Department update on red abalone recovery planning | July 17-18, 2024; MRC |
| • Today, receive and discuss update on developing red abalone restoration (formerly “recovery”) plan | July 16-17, 2025; MRC |

Background

California's abalone populations have experienced significant declines, leading to the closure of commercial fisheries and, more recently, the recreational fishery. Factors contributing to the decline have included environmental conditions, disease, and fishing pressure.

An FMP for the north coast recreational red abalone fishery was under development by the Department between 2014 and 2022. Throughout that period, the Department conducted field surveys and stakeholder outreach, and prepared an in-depth report for its management strategy recommendation. At its November 2022 meeting, MRC received an update on red abalone surveys, which indicated historically low abundance and densities of red abalone. MRC recommended the Commission support the Department in: (1) pausing development of the red abalone fishery management plan – except to memorialize the harvest control options evaluated; (2) pausing development of a *de minimis* fishery approach while retaining the concept in a future fishery management plan; and (3) focusing current efforts on restoration planning. The Commission adopted the recommendation at its subsequent December meeting.

At its July 2024 meeting, MRC received a Department update on its development of a community working group and technical advisory committee to inform restoration planning and its exploration of facilitation and funding sources.

Today's Update

Since July 2024, funding challenges and staff capacity reductions and redirection have impeded restoration plan development. Thus, in January 2025, red abalone restoration plan development was paused. Today, the Department will provide an overview of the necessary elements within a restoration plan. The Department will highlight one element of a restoration plan “essential restoration information,” which includes data such as species status, range, life history, habitat and threats (Exhibit 1). Further, the Department will discuss what is needed to

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obtain and evaluate essential restoration information, which includes several opportunities for partners to engage in the near-term and long-term. Several tasks to gather essential restoration information evaluation would depend heavily on partners and funding.

Significant Public Comments

A former red abalone diver submitted several comments compiled in Exhibit 2. They shared videos of abalone populations off San Miguel Island, examples of other countries continuing to fish abalone, and frustration about the management of red abalone in California as a whole (Exhibit 2).

Recommendation (N/A)

Exhibits

1. [Department presentation](#)
2. [Compilation of email from Steve Rebuck](#), received June 25 and 26, 2025

Committee Direction/Recommendation (N/A)



Red Abalone Restoration Plan Update

16 July 2025

Presented to:

Marine Resources Committee
CA Fish and Game Commission

Presented by:

Joanna Grebel
Invertebrate Program Manager
Marine Region



Overview

- History of Restoration Planning
- Restoration Plan Elements
- Essential Restoration Plan Data Evaluation
- Partnerships
- Next Steps



History of Restoration Planning

December 2022 (CFGF)

- Recommendation to pause FMP development
- Shift efforts to restoration plan development

July 2024 (MRC)

- Finalizing Community Working Group and Technical Advisory Committee
- Exploring facilitation and identifying funding sources

August 2024- December 2024

- Facilitation funding challenges
- Staff capacity reductions and redirection

January 2025

- Paused restoration plan development



Restoration Plan Elements



Essential Restoration Information (ERI)

- Species status, range, life history, habitat, and threats



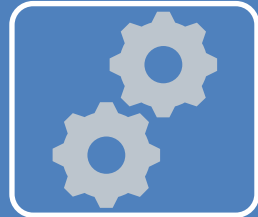
Restoration Goals, Objectives, and Criteria

- Desired outcomes
- Conditions needed to achieve those outcomes
- Values to measure progress toward restoration



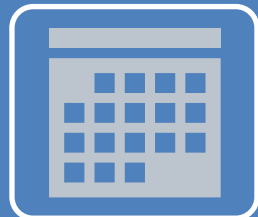
Restoration Strategy

- Long term approach
- Informed by goals and ERI



Restoration Actions

- Long term actions to meet criteria
- Informed by strategy



Implementation Schedule

- Timeline to achieve restoration actions



Restoration Plan Elements



Essential Restoration Information (ERI)

- Species status, range, life history, habitat, and threats



Restoration Goals, Objectives, and Criteria

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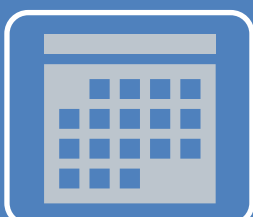
Restoration Strategy

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- Informed by goals and ERI



Restoration Actions

- Long term actions to meet criteria
- Informed by strategy



Implementation Schedule

- Timeline to achieve restoration actions



Essential Restoration Information Evaluation Process



Conduct evaluation using existing data



Identify information gaps



Identify approaches to data collection



ERI Data Evaluation

Evaluate existing data sources

- Long term data sets
 - CDFW
 - NOAA
 - PISCO/MARINe
 - Reef Check
 - Others
- Tribal Ecological Knowledge
- Other public data





Identify information gaps in ERI

- CDFW report findings of ERI information gaps
- Solicit feedback on missing elements, etc.





Identify Data Collection Approaches

- Identify new data collection opportunities to address ERI gaps
- Continue data collection for long-term data sets
- Collect data to inform restoration statewide using non-lethal techniques





Partnerships


























- California Native American tribes
- State and Federal Agencies
- Academics/Universities
- Environmental Organizations/Non-Profits
- Public
- Others



Partnership Opportunities

Task	CDFW	Partners	Near Term	Long Term
Conduct ERI data evaluation				
Identify data gaps and partners				
Develop methodologies for addressing data gaps				
Data collection for restoration long term data sets				
Data evaluation for other restoration plan elements				
Data collection (restoration plan elements & restoration strategy implementation)				
Citizen science and partnership coordination				
Funding for restoration plan development, implementation: facilitation, workshops				

Partnership Opportunities

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Develop methodologies for addressing data gaps				
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Data collection (restoration plan elements & restoration strategy implementation)				
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Funding for restoration plan development, implementation: facilitation, workshops				



Next Steps

- Conduct data evaluation
- Explore role of partnerships and citizen science
- Identify formats and processes for engagement
- Explore funding opportunities

Thank You



Questions: Abalone@wildlife.ca.gov

From: Steve Rebuck <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Thursday, June 26, 2025 11:21 AM

To: Ashcraft, Susan [REDACTED]; FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>; Rogers, Kimberly [REDACTED]; Grebel, Joanna [REDACTED]
<[REDACTED]>

Cc: [REDACTED] Ed Pierce
[REDACTED] TRENT ROBERT PETERSEN
[REDACTED] Jack Likins [REDACTED] Bill Bernard
[REDACTED]; Robert Duncan [REDACTED]; Bobby McKinley [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Bob_McMillen [REDACTED];
[REDACTED] Generic Bonnette [REDACTED]
Arapawabluepearls Co Info [REDACTED] Sam Shrout
[REDACTED]

Subject: Re: San Miguel Island, Abalone YouTube - Jeff Baldwin

WARNING: This message is from an external source. Verify the sender and exercise caution when clicking links or opening attachments.

Dear Ms. Ashcroft:

Concerning this outline for a Red Abalone Restoration Plan. Is it possible for the Department and/or Commission to appoint a contact person to us who actually knows: 1) The history of the commercial abalone fishery; 2) The history of Marine Protected Areas; 3) The history of sea otters in California; 4) The history of the abalone closure debate beginning 1995; 5) The historic published literature on these subjects?

It is continually frustrating because we have spent the last 20 years, since 2005 when the FGC adopted the ARMC, debating these issues before FGC when it is beyond clear nobody we deal with knows any of this history. With all due respect to your Commissioners, none of them seem to have the fundamental knowledge either. This is why they likely rush through agenda items, without asking relevant questions. There seems to be no interest among your Commissioners to care about working men or our coastal economies, or as Karpov says, "You guys make too much money."

Abalone fisheries exist around the world, even in Mexico. What's wrong with California? Your Commissioners are extremely cruel and uncaring when dealing with these issues. And, please, no Karpov, Haaker or Bennett. These people have difficulty with the truth and have proven it repeatedly over the decades.

Sincerely, Steve Rebuck

On Wednesday, June 25, 2025 at 10:09:06 AM PDT, Steve Rebuck

> wrote:

Concerning the Red Abalone Restoration Plan, in preparation for the July 16, 2025 meeting of the Fish and Game Commission, Marine Subcommittee on red abalone, I have reviewed an outline of the Red Abalone Restoration Plan, AI Report.

Comments added.

* "Implement Marine Protected Areas to safeguard habitat."

Comment: CDFG marine biologist Dan Miller, in his report on Pt. Lobos, 1976, reported 3 components were necessary for successful MPAs: Clean water, control of human use, control of marine mammals. Pt. Lobos has failed due to sea otter predation on abalone as predicted by Miller.

Marine Protected Areas and State/Local Conservation Zones.

Monterey County: Big Creek, Pt. Sur, Pt. Lobos, Carmel Bay, Asilomar, Pacific Grove, Lovers Pt., Ed Ricketts, Portugese Ledge, Soquel Canyon, Mor Cojo Slough, Elkhorn Slough.

San Luis Obispo County: Pt. Buchon, Morro Bay, Cambria, White Rock, Piedras Blancas.

Santa Barbara County: Santa Barbara Island, Scorpion, Gull Island, Painted Cave, South Pt., Skunk Pt., Carrington Pt., Judith Rock, San Miguel Island, Harris Pt. Richardson Rock, Goleta Slough, Campas Pt., Naples, Koshtayit, Pt. Conception, Vandenberg.

Ventura County: Begg Rock, Anacapa Island.

Of these 36 MPA/Conservation Areas, those in the current sea otter range, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, northern Santa Barbara county have few if any red abalone. Some areas appear to have localized extinctions where living abalone, abalone shells, broken shells, and shell debris is now rare.

Reliance on MPAs for red abalone "population stability" have failed to function. Why does the FGC have this as it's number one strategy for red abalone (population) stability when nearly 70 years of MPA designation has not worked?

* "Conduct regular population assessments to monitor health."

Comment: When was the last time the Department of Fish and Wildlife has conducted a red abalone survey? Other species? We showed the video below to the FGC/DFW in 2020. This showed healthy populations of large red abalone at San Miguel Island. A second video was later provided by Jeff Maassen. We followed these by a third from April 13, 2024. This third video show recent emergent red abalone all the way around the north-west end of SMI to the Sand Spit. One would think this would be good news to the FGC and DFW. There

appears to be no interest nor any recent survey data. (Note: San Miguel Island MPAs "may" be an example of an MPA functioning as designed without a sea otter population interfering).

* "Enhance breeding programs to increase juvenile survival rates."

Comment: Is this a ploy to "relocate" abalone? Or enhance by out planting juveniles? The commercial fishery remains opposed to relocating abalone. Please identify any successful relocations.

* Reduce fishery pressure through sustainable practices and regulations."

Comment: Since the fishery south of San Francisco has been closed for 28 years, what "fishery pressure" are you referring to? Organized poaching estimated at \$24,000,000. per years (DFW, 2014, New Zealand, 2024)?

* Restore kelp forests which are vital for abalone habitat."

Comment: The decline of red abalone on the North Coast began around 2010 (Hamdorf, 2012). To date, we have seen no published explanation of what occurred with kelp, abalone, urchins in Northern California.

How does DFW expect to restore kelp when we do not know what happened? DFW was concerned about hammering sea urchins as "wastage." Why is allowing red abalone to die of old age, as is occurring at San Miguel Island, not wastage?

* "Engage local communities in conservation efforts and education."

Comment: The FGC has failed to "engage" the Santa Barbara County region since the Treanor FGC in 1995-2005. We once had multi-hour meetings where speakers were not limited to 1 or 2 minute presentations. The Commissions engage with speakers, asked good questions and got new information exposed and on the record. The current FGC does none of this. FGC did conduct fact finding efforts during the debate over closing Northern California circa 2015-2017.

The definition of "conservation" is the wise use of resources, in contrast to the last 28 years of no use south of San Francisco even though abalone are dying of old age in some areas. And, considering the vast bar-cut issues of the 1970s by the sport sector, education is severely needed. Poaching and raiding of tide-pools needs to stop.

Respectfully submitted, Steve Rebuck

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Steve Rebuck [REDACTED]

Cc: Steve Rebuck [REDACTED]; Leonard Marcus
[REDACTED]; John Becker [REDACTED]; Mike and Susy
Kitahara [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, March 29, 2024 at 10:07:49 AM PDT

Subject: San Miguel Island, Abalone YouTube - Jeff Baldwin

[San Miguel Island Abalone November 2020](#)



From: Steve Rebuck [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 8:41 AM
To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>; Ashcraft, Susan [REDACTED]; Rogers, Kimberly [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Pink and Green abalone

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Evidence of Pink and Green abalone from circa 2011.

SR

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Steve Rebuck <[REDACTED]>
To: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 15, 2019 at 03:29:48 PM PST
Subject: Pink and Green abalone

<https://youtu.be/KDLHpIVgTMI>

From: Steve Rebuck [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 8:39 AM
To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>; Ashcraft, Susan [REDACTED]; Rogers, Kimberly [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Crooks Point 1999

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Another video, this from 1999, showing healthy abalone at Crooks Point, San Miguel Island. This despite Karpov claims of no abalone and all So Cal landing originating from Northern California.

SR

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Steve Rebuck <absforman@sbcglobal.net>

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: Buzz Owen [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Floyd Damschen [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, February 11, 2019 at 03:52:59 PM PST

Subject: Crooks Point 1999

<https://youtu.be/nT2PEdzt-aQ>

From: Steve Rebuck [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 8:35 AM
To: Rogers, Kimberly [REDACTED]; FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>
Subject: Fw: Abalone Diving Super Real

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San Miguel Island commercial abalone fishery 1997. Despite claims by Karpov and Haaker, red abalone landings were stable. Divers were requesting relief from Minimum Landing Requirements. Those with dual permits, abalone and urchin, were making more money from urchin and wanted to give abalone a rest. DFG did not assist.

SR

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Steve Rebuck [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 11, 2019 at 01:14:30 PM PST
Subject: Abalone Diving Super Real

<https://youtu.be/7Wjuz0yRH DU>

From: Steve Rebuck [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 8:30 AM
To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>; Ashcraft, Susan [REDACTED] Rogers, Kimberly [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Wild Caught Abalone Steaks | 3 lb box Free Shipping; Great Alaska Seafood

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Alaskan Abalone.

SR

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: paul weakland [REDACTED]
To: Steve Rebock [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, May 15, 2025 at 03:32:22 PM PDT
Subject: Wild Caught Abalone Steaks | 3 lb box Free Shipping; Great Alaska Seafood

<https://www.great-alaska-seafood.com/Free-Shipping-Deals/SB-abalone-steaks-10lb.htm>

Sent from my iPad

From: Steve Rebuck [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 8:28 AM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>; Rogers, Kimberly [REDACTED]

Ashcraft, Susan [REDACTED]; Grebel, Joanna [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Subject: Fw: clemente

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Recent images from San Clemente Island.

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Chris Goldblatt [REDACTED]

To: Steve Rebuck [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, June 13, 2025 at 06:13:52 PM PDT

Subject: clemente

Kind regards,
Chris Goldblatt
Fish Reef Project- CEO