

Staff Summary for December 10-11, 2025

18A. Marine Resources Committee (MRC)**Today's Item**Information ☐Action ☒

Receive summary and consider approving recommendations from the November 6, 2025 committee meeting. Discuss referred topics and consider revisions to topics and timing.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

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| • Previous MRC meeting | November 6, 2025; MRC |
| • Today consider MRC recommendations | December 10-11, 2025 |
| • Next MRC meeting | March 12, 2026; MRC |

Background

MRC works under Commission direction to set and accomplish its work plan (Exhibit 1). Today, the Commission will receive a report on the previous MRC meeting and recommendations, as well as provide direction for any referred topics and revisions to MRC topics and timing.

Previous Committee Meeting

MRC met on November 6 in Sacramento. Official meeting minutes (video) are posted on the Commission's YouTube page with a link also available on the Commission's website meeting page (fgc.ca.gov/Meetings/2025); an abbreviated summary is included in this document. Detailed overviews, exhibits, and presentations for each of the topics are available in the MRC meeting materials.

Department Barred Sand Bass Working Group

The Department presented an update on the informal Barred Sand Bass Working Group, outlining goals of the group and progress made through recent meetings, 2025 catch trends that have shown strong activity, collaborative angling studies and ongoing data collection efforts, and future research studies planned to support a stock assessment. MRC emphasized the importance of encouraging a broader range of stakeholder perspectives in the working group in future meetings to ensure diverse input is considered.

Initial Vetting of Potential Regulation Changes (potential recommendation in March 2026)

- **Recreational Use of Hand-Held Harpoons and Flying Gaffs for Landing Tuna**
The Department presented regulatory options for authorizing recreational use of hand-held harpoons and flying gaffs to assist anglers in landing legally-caught tuna. The proposal was developed in response to regulation change Petition 2024-04, granted in part by the Commission in December 2024.
- **Determining Total Length of Fish and Invertebrates with Recreational Size Limits**
The Department presented a proposal to standardize legal size measurement methods (e.g., tail "fanning" and "swinging") across all fish species with recreational size limits. The Department initiated the proposal to reduce confusion and align with existing salmon and halibut measuring practices.

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Coastal Fishing Communities Project

Commission staff presented a review of the original staff recommendations (SRs) from Staff Synthesis Report on California Coastal Fishing Communities Meetings, 2016-2019 and summarized relevant actions to date.

The renewed focus originated in mid-2025, when MRC and the Commission expressed interest in revisiting the SRs to determine future priorities, recognizing this as the next planned step following adoption of the Coastal Fishing Communities Policy in April 2024.

Public and committee input at the meeting highlighted several key themes for future focus. MRC expressed interest in seeing more specific options and an evaluation of associated resource needs for advancing priority SRs. Staff committed to preparing this information for discussion at the March 2026 MRC meeting, which led to a formal MRC recommendation.

Evaluation of Bycatch in the California Halibut Trawl Fishery

The Department provided an update on its ongoing evaluation of bycatch in the California halibut trawl fishery. Since July, progress has included hosting a public data workshop to enhance transparency, and reviewing and incorporating updated data sources. The Department presented workshop outcomes, discussed the data sources, and outlined next steps, with an immediate focus on identifying key bycatch species for further analysis.

Staff and Agency Updates

Notable updates:

- California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) staff provided a written update on several key topics, including progress in developing a *California aquaculture action plan*. Staff offered to bring the draft plan to the March 2026 MRC meeting for discussion, noting that the timing would align well with OPC's subsequent formal receipt and public review.
- Department Marine Region provided a written update on two work plan topics: *Red Abalone Statewide Restoration Plan Development* and *Kelp Restoration and Management Plan Development*.

Future Meetings

MRC discussed and recommended two potential new topics for referral to MRC:

- Coonstripe shrimp fishery long-term management (Phase 2). This topic was proposed by a meeting participant to advance the next phase of planning by the Department.
- Nearshore groundfish management process. This topic was prompted by recent discussions at the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) regarding the potential delegation of management authority for certain nearshore groundfish species from PFMC to the state of California. The goal would be to enhance regional management flexibility and better align with state-specific conservation and fishery objectives.

In addition, MRC requested that the Department follow up on a topic raised during the meeting related to sport fishing license sales. The Department committed to reviewing license sales data and providing at the March MRC meeting an update on recent sport fishing license trends.

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MRC Recommendations

There are two MRC recommendations for Commission consideration today:

1. *Coastal Fishing Communities Project*. Direct staff to prioritize development of options for the next step(s) and associated resource considerations for advancing the Coastal Fishing Communities Project staff recommendations, for discussion and potential committee recommendation in March 2026.
2. *New topics*: Refer the topics “Coonstripe Shrimp Fishery Management, Phase 2” and “Nearshore Groundfish Management Process” to MRC.

Committee Work Plan

The updated MRC work plan (Exhibit 1) outlines Commission-referred topics and timing. Proposed changes are shown in blue underline or strike-through text to indicate whether a topic is proposed for referral, revision or removal. In addition to the MRC-recommended new topics, staff proposes a number of updates.

- Remove four completed topics:
 - *California Halibut Fishery Management Review (CA Halibut Review) – California Halibut Trawl Grounds Review*
 - *MPA Network 2022 Decadal Management Review Implementation: MPA Petitions*
 - *Commercial Coonstripe Shrimp Fishery Management (Phase 1)*
 - *Commercial Bull Kelp Harvest Sunset Date*.
- Rename *Red Abalone Restoration Plan (statewide)* to *Red Abalone Restoration Plan (Statewide) Development* to reflect its current status as being under development.
- Rename *White Seabass FMP Review* to *White Seabass Fishery Management Review* to reflect the broader scope of the upcoming review.

Significant Public Comments (N/A)**Recommendation**

Commission staff: Approve the MRC recommendations. Approve changes to the work plan as proposed in Exhibit 1.

Exhibits

1. [MRC work plan, updated December 2, 2025](#)

Motion

Moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that the Commission approves the recommendations from the November 2025 MRC meeting, and approves the changes to the work plan as discussed today.

California Fish and Game Commission Marine Resources Committee (MRC) Work Plan

Updated December 2, 2025

Note: Proposed changes to topics/timing are shown in blue underline or ~~strike-through~~ font.

Topics	Category	Jul 2025	Nov 2025	Mar 2026
Planning Documents, Fishery Management Plans (FMP)				
MLMA Master Plan for Fisheries – Implementation Updates	Plan Implementation			
Red Abalone Restoration Plan (statewide) <u>Development</u>	Restoration Plan	X	*	
<u>California Halibut Fishery Management Review (CA Halibut Review) — CA Halibut Trawl Grounds Review</u>	<u>Management Review</u>			
CA Halibut Fishery Management Review – Bycatch Evaluation for Trawl Gear	Management Review	X	X	<u>X</u>
Kelp Restoration and Management Plan (KRMP) Development	Restoration/ Management Plan	X	X	
<u>Marine Protected Area (MPA) Network 2022 Decadal Management Review Implementation: MPA Petitions</u>	<u>Management Review</u>	<u>X/R</u>		
White Seabass <u>FMP Fishery Management</u> Review	Management <u>Plan</u> Review			X
Regulations				
<u>Commercial Coonstripe Shrimp Fishery Management, (Phase 1)</u>	<u>Commercial Take</u>	<u>X/R</u>		
<u>Commercial Coonstripe Shrimp Fishery Management, (Phase 2)</u>	<u>Commercial Take</u>			
<u>Commercial Bull Kelp Harvest Sunset Date</u>	<u>Commercial Take</u>	<u>X/R</u>		
Recreational Use of Hand-Held Harpoons and Flying Gaffs to Assist with Landing Tuna	Recreational Take		X	X/R
Method of Determining Recreational Legal Size	Recreational Take		X	X/R
Marine Aquaculture and State Water Bottom Leases				
Statewide Aquaculture Action Plan	Planning Document	*	*	<u>X</u>
Status of Existing Leaseholder Requests	Current Leases			X
Applications for New Leases	Lease Applications	*		
- San Andreas Shellfish Company (Tomales Bay)				
Lease Best Management Practices Plans (Hold, TBD)	Leases–Regulatory	*		<u>X</u>
Special Projects, Informational Topics, and Emerging Management Issues				
Coastal Fishing Communities Project	MRC Project	*	X/R	<u>X/R</u>
Kelp Restoration and Recovery Tracking	Kelp	X		
Barred Sand Bass Working Group	Informal Advisory Body		X	<u>X</u>
<u>Nearshore Groundfish Management Process</u>	<u>State/Federal Fisheries</u>			
Experimental Fishing Permit (EFP) Program				
Box Crab Exploratory Fishing	EFP			
Pop-Up Gear in State-Managed Fisheries	EFP			

Key: X = Discussion X/R = Recommendation and may move to Commission * = Written or oral agency update