

Staff Summary for May 5-6, 2026

2. Marine Protected Area (MPA) Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2 (Tribally Co-Led)**Today's Item****Information ☒****Action ☐**

Receive a presentation from the petitioner, followed by public comment and discussion for Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2: Request to designate a new state marine conservation area (SMCA) near Point Sal — using boundaries proposed in November 2025 — that allows recreational take of finfish by hook and line from shore and take during mission-critical operations at Vandenberg Space Force Base, and to consult with tribes to identify a tribal name for the SMCA.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| • Received 20 MPA petitions; referred to MRC and the Department for review | December 2023;
February 2024 |
| • Granted or denied all individual actions in the 5 “bin 1” MPA petitions | December 2024 |
| • Tribal Committee (TC) received overview from tribal leads or co-leads for 5 MPA petitions; received Department presentation, and developed TC recommendation | April 14, 2026; TC |
| • Received Department bin 2 petition evaluations for 10 non-tribally led or co-led petitions; adopted TC recommendation for tribally led and co-led petitions | April 15-16, 2026 |
| • Received petitioners’ presentations and discussed region-specific petitioned actions in bin 2 MPA petitions, from Del Norte through Monterey counties | April 21, 2026 |
| • Today, receive petitioners’ presentation and discuss region-specific petitioned actions in bin 2 MPA petitions, from San Luis Obispo through Santa Barbara counties, northern Channel Islands, and Santa Barbara Island | May 5-6, 2026 |
| • Receive petitioners’ presentation and discuss region-specific petitioned actions in bin 2 MPA petitions, from Los Angeles through San Diego Counties and Catalina Island | May 19, 2026 |
| • Receive Department bin 2 evaluations for 5 tribally led or co-led petitions | Date to be determined |

Background

In November 2023, the Commission received Petition 2023-28MPA, alongside 19 other petitions proposing changes to the state’s MPA network and management program. In February 2024, the Commission referred all MPA petitions to the Department for its evaluation and recommendation, while developing and updating guidance over time. For a detailed background and key documents on the process leading to this point, including a Department companion document to the non-tribally led or co-led evaluations, the Department’s evaluations presentation, and a letter from the California Ocean Protection Council with input

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to the Commission complement the Department evaluations, see the [Introduction to Bin 2 MPA Petitions staff summary and exhibits](#).

Petition Amendments

Bin 2 petitioners were provided until March 2025 to submit formal amendments to their original petitions for inclusion in the Department's evaluation. While the original 2023 petition (2023-28MPA) proposed a state marine reserve (SMR), this petitioner submitted a formal amendment (AM1) by the deadline to modify the proposed classification from an SMR to a SMCA and to add a proposed take allowance, based on community feedback.

In August 2025, the Commission extended the timeframe for California tribes to formally join petitions as co-sponsors and allow tribes to contribute additional modifications as needed to their petitions. The Commission also referred all tribally led or co-led petitions to TC for review prior to Commission review.

In November 2025, the Northern Chumash Tribal Council (NCTC) and the petitioner notified the Commission that NCTC had joined as a co-sponsor of the amended Petition 2023-28, thereby formalizing the petition as tribally co-led, and submitted a second amendment to the petition (AM2). As part of AM2, the co-petitioners also requested a modification, identified as a priority by the Vandenberg Space Force Base, to shift the proposed southern boundary northward by approximately one mile to avoid overlap with critical base assets.

The second amended petition (2023-28MPA_AM2) is provided in Exhibit 1.

TC Petitions Review

At the April 14, 2026 TC meeting, tribal petitioners provided verbal and/or PowerPoint summaries and clarifications of their petition proposals. For a Zoom-recorded video of the meeting, see [Tribal Committee Meeting - April 14, 2026 - via YouTube](#). Through the discussions, it became clear that the intended actions for three of the five tribally led or co-led petitions differed from their previous submissions.

For Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2, the tribal co-lead confirmed that their stated intent and proposed actions remain consistent with the second amended petition submitted in November 2026. The co-lead also requested that the Commission accept the proposed southern boundary adjustment and the incidental take allowance supported by Vandenberg Space Force Base (see Exhibit 3 for the NCTC presentation); TC supported this request.

At its April 15–16, 2026 meeting, the Commission approved TC's recommendation to accept the clarified intents for the tribally led and co-led petitions, based on the information share by tribal leads and co-leads at the April 14 TC meeting. The Commission also requested that the Department proceed with evaluating the five tribally led or co-led petitions, incorporating the clarifications and revisions shared at the TC meeting.

Overview of Actions in Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2 Relevant to This Region

This amended petition, submitted by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and co-led by NCTC, proposes to establish a new SMCA located in this region:

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- Action 1. Designate a new SMCA (9.18 square miles) at Point Sal in Santa Barbara County that prohibits take except for recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line from shore and take incidental to mission-critical military operations of the adjacent Vandenberg Space Force Base; and name the MPA with a Chumash place name to be identified through consultation with the Chumash people.

The petitioner also requests to establish a co-management agreement between NCTC, other Chumash tribes, and the Department (*note that this does not require a regulatory change*).

Stated Intent

In summary, the petitioners state that the proposed MPA would recognize that, “Point Sal is located in Chumash ancestral territory, and holds historic and cultural significance to Chumash people.” They note that the area lies within the newly designated Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary — a recently designated federal marine protected area that the petitioner highlights was, “proposed and championed by NCTC.” The petitioners emphasize that establishing the MPA would provide, “strong protections for the sacred and culturally important waters of Point Sal.” The petitioners also emphasized that the proposal would, “... advance Tribal co-stewardship and MPA management through a collaborative approach with NCTC.” From a conservation perspective, the petitioners believe that the proposed MPA would be, “...sufficiently protective of critical conservation features...such as Lion’s Rock, persistent kelp forest habitat, biologically important areas for cetaceans and porpoises, and the larval retention zone on the leeward side of Point Sal” while “...as amended still meet[ing] minimum size and shoreline extent guidelines.” (See Exhibit 1 for more details.)

Public Comments

The Commission has received public comments on MPA petitions on an ongoing basis since they were submitted in late 2023. Staff has compiled into a single packet the comments related to this petition that were included in Commission or committee meeting binders or supplemental handouts from the December 2023 through April 2026 Commission meetings (Exhibit 2). Comments received after the April 2026 Commission meeting but before the deadline for this meeting are included as exhibits to this staff summary.

Petition Evaluations

On March 20, 2026, the Department publicly released its evaluations and recommendations for the ten petitions that were not tribally led or co-led. Evaluations for the five tribally led or co-led petitions, including the petition addressed in this item, have not yet been completed. The Commission supported the Department’s decision to defer evaluation of tribally led or co-led petitions to allow time for government-to-government consultation with tribes and for TC to review and discuss those petitions at its April 14, 2026 meeting.

In addition, on March 20, 2026 the [California Ocean Protection Council \(OPC\), in its role as policy lead for the MPA network, sent a letter to the Commission](#) outlining its overarching perspectives on the MPA petitions, including the tribally led and co-led petitions (see [OPC news release, dated March 20, 2026](#)). OPC indicated that it plans to provide more detailed input on the bin 2 petitions using a policy lens intended to complement the Department’s

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evaluations. OPC now anticipates transmitting its evaluation for consideration at the June 2026 Commission meeting.

Today's Meeting

Today, the petitioner(s) will present Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2. This meeting provides petitioners with an opportunity to engage in dialogue with the Commission alongside robust public participation.

All participants are encouraged to review the [Regional Meeting Expectations and Guidelines](#) (included in the agenda) as a reference for engaging in today's meeting.

Significant Public Comments

1. The Santa Barbara County Action Network (SBCAN) supports petitions 2023-28MPA and 2023-29MPA, stating that both Point Sal and Mishopshno MPAs would conserve essential habitats that support rich biodiversity, strengthen the Chumash peoples' stewardship of a culturally significant area, provide benefits to the coastal economy through recreation and tourism, and would help fill a current gap in the MPA network design and improve ecological connectivity. (Exhibit 3)
2. The Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Center transmits handwritten cards and drawings from local students who support the Point Sal SMCA; samples included. The students urge the Commission to protect Point Sal's biodiversity. (Exhibit 4)
3. Two marine scientists from the University of California Santa Barbara support the petition, stating that the Point Sal SMCA would help to advance California's tribal marine stewardship goals and protect important marine life and habitats that are exposed to local stressors not currently protected by Point Buchon SMR/SMCA and Vandenberg SMR. The commenters also describe the overall benefits that MPAs provide more broadly pointing to ecosystem benefits, spillover for fisheries, ecosystem resilience for environmental perturbations such as marine heatwaves, and providing benefits to the local eco-tourism and recreation industries. (Exhibit 5)
4. A Santa Barbara resident supports the petition, stating that the proposed location for the Point Sal SMCA is ecologically important by providing a variety of habitat types to support diverse ocean life and that the designation would enhance the tribal stewardship in the area as well as protect important present-day and historical sites for the Chumash people (Exhibit 6).
5. The Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association (VCCFA) opposes the petition and offers several concerns, including the lack of a comprehensive socioeconomic analysis and the absence of an evaluation of regional impacts, such as fishing effort displacement for fishermen operating out of Morro Bay, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Channel Islands Harbor, and Los Angeles/Long Beach. VCCFA emphasizes that closures may appear to have a small impact, but a closure at a place like Point Sal would impact fishing operations and redistribute fishing effort. (Exhibit 7)
6. A recreational angler and diver from northern California who frequently recreates along the central coast, shares their position on all petitions scheduled for discussion at the May 5-6, 2026 meeting. The commenter urges the Commission to deny Petition

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2023-28 MPA because the location is already protected by the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary and, therefore, would not be helping increase California's 30x30 goals, and the remote aspect of this location serves as a refuge to fishers because it is only possible to fish in the area when the water is calm (Exhibit 8).

7. A group of 42 diverse non-governmental organizations (tribal, cultural, environmental, shore fishing access, conservation, and others) submit a joint letter in support of the petition highlighting that the Point Sal SMCA would help to advance California's tribal marine stewardship goals – emphasizing their support of tribal co-management and the important opportunity for adaptive management it presents; increase overall MPA network connectivity, protect biodiversity and critical habitat, create an area where both land and sea are conserved, and support local, as well as network-wide, resilience to the impacts of climate change and growing ocean threats. The commenters highlight that the other local MPAs in the area — the Point Buchon SMR/SMCA complex and Vandenberg SMR — do not provide enough protection to the local sea life and that an MPA at Point Sal would alleviate local stressors. (Exhibit 9)

Recommendation

Commission staff: Based on the day's discussion, consider what additional information, if any, will be needed to inform a Commission decision on the petition.

Department: Currently under development.

Exhibits

1. [Petition 2023-28MPA AM2](#), received November 24, 2026
2. [Packet of comments](#), received November 2023 through April 17, 2026
3. [Email from Jeanne Sparks and Ken Hough, co-executive directors, Santa Barbara County Action Network](#), received April 9, 2026
4. [Email from Saule Baipsys, Outreach Coordinator and Educator, Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Center, transmitting 47 handwritten student letters \(a sample included\)](#), received April 15, 2026
5. [Letter from Dr. Douglas McCauley, Director, and Molly Morse, Senior Manager, Benioff Ocean Science Laboratory University of California Santa Barbara](#), received April 20, 2026
6. [Email from Bill Woodbridge](#), received April 21, 2026
7. [Letter from David Colker, Executive Director, Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association](#), received April 21, 2026
8. [Email from Rick Duenas](#), received April 22, 2026
9. [Joint letter from 42 diverse non-governmental organizations \(tribal, cultural, environmental, fishing access, and conservation\)](#), received April 22, 2026

Motion (N/A)



November 24, 2025

Erika Zavaleta, President
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95817

Submitted electronically to fgc@fgc.ca.gov

RE: Amendments to Petition 2023-28MPA: Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area

Dear President Zavaleta and Honorable Commissioners:

We are writing on behalf of the Northern Chumash Tribal Council (NCTC) and Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) with a request to amend Petition 2023-28MPA, which seeks to designate a new marine protected area (MPA) off the coast of Point Sal and within state waters of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary.

As per the email dated Monday, October 13, NCTC will join NRDC as a formal co-sponsor of this petition. Point Sal is located in Chumash ancestral territory, and holds historic and cultural significance to Chumash people. It also lies within the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, a recently designated federal marine protected area proposed and championed by NCTC. As part of NCTC's ongoing leadership in Chumash stewardship of California's marine resources, we are committed to garnering strong protections for the sacred and culturally important waters of Point Sal. If designated, this petition would advance progress toward Recommendations 2a, b, and c of the California MPA Decadal Management Review, and advance Tribal co-stewardship and MPA management through a collaborative co-stewardship approach with NCTC. We respectfully request that Petition 2023-28MPA be reclassified as a Tribal petition because of this change in co-sponsorship. Further, we support the option to rename the Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area with a Chumash place name after further consultation with other Chumash Tribes in the region, as stated in the original petition.

Following months of productive conversations, we are adjusting the southern boundary of the proposed MPA roughly one mile to the north to avoid conflicts with existing mission-critical operations of Vandenberg Space Force Base (VSFB). Initially, the proposed boundaries were drawn to align with visible landmarks and natural geographies as much as possible, with the northern boundary beginning at Mussel Point and the southern boundary drawn at the end of Brown's Beach – two visual landmarks that are likely visible from sea, per MLPA Master Plan guidance.

Since the petition's submission in fall 2023, conversations with officials at VSFB have improved our understanding of the base's operations and facilities, and we learned that the southernmost offshore boundary of the SMCA (as originally proposed) overlaps with critical VSFB assets. The new southern boundary as amended herein is the result of productive conversations and negotiations with VSFB. We believe it is sufficiently protective of critical conservation features in the proposed MPA such as Lion's Rock, persistent kelp forest habitat, biologically important areas for cetaceans and porpoises, and the larval retention zone on the leeward side of Point Sal. Critically, the proposed MPA as amended still meets minimum size and shoreline extent guidelines, and the new southern boundary generally aligns with the southern end of Point Sal State Beach, making it easily recognizable and understandable for the public.

We recognize that these are two significant changes during the review process. We appreciate your understanding that building authentic partnerships and conducting thorough outreach with critical stakeholders takes time. Please let us know if you have any questions or would like to schedule a meeting to discuss this addition in sponsorship or changes in boundaries.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Violet Sage Walker
Chairwoman
Northern Chumash Tribal Council

Sandy Aylesworth
Director, Pacific Initiative, Nature
Natural Resources Defense Council



Tracking Number: (2023-28MPA AM2)

To request a change to regulations under the authority of the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission), you are required to submit this completed form to: California Fish and Game Commission, (physical address) 1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1320, Sacramento, CA 95814, (mailing address) P.O. Box 944209, Sacramento, CA 94244-2090 or via email to FGC@fgc.ca.gov. Note: This form is not intended for listing petitions for threatened or endangered species (see Section 670.1 of Title 14).

Incomplete forms will not be accepted. A petition is incomplete if it is not submitted on this form or fails to contain necessary information in each of the required categories listed on this form (Section I). A petition will be rejected if it does not pertain to issues under the Commission's authority. A petition may be denied if any petition requesting a functionally equivalent regulation change was considered within the previous 12 months and no information or data is being submitted beyond what was previously submitted. If you need help with this form, please contact Commission staff at (916) 653-4899 or FGC@fgc.ca.gov.

SECTION I: Required Information.

Please be succinct. Responses for Section I should not exceed five pages

1. Person or organization requesting the change (Required)

Name of primary contact person: Lisa Suatoni, National Resources Defense Council
Address: 111 Sutter St 21st floor, San Francisco, CA 94104
Telephone number: (415) 875-6100
Email address: lsuatoni@nrdc.org

2. Rulemaking Authority (Required) - Authority cited: Sections 200, 205(c), 265, 399, 1590, 1591, 2860, 2861 and 6750, Fish and Game Code; and Sections 36725(a) and 36725(e), Public Resources Code.

3. Overview (Required) - We propose the designation of a new State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) in the waters around Point Sal, Central California to 1) advance Tribal co-stewardship and MPA management through a collaborative co-stewardship approach with the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, 2) protect the rich and productive ecosystem and biodiversity found within, 32) protect an important larval retention zone and enhance the connectivity dynamics within the region, and 43) enhance the climate resilience of the broader state MPA network.

The proposed area aligns with state MPA design and feasibility guidelines provided by CDFW, and is bounded by the mean high tide line, the 3 nm state waters boundary, and straight lines connecting the following points in the order listed:

- 34.89521266534.880667518 N lat. 120.731972573 120.726433061 W long. (SW corner)
- 34.929894739 N lat. 120.727488272 W long. (NW corner)
- 34.930008197 N lat. 120.666597401 W long. (NE corner)
- 34.895212665 34.880979714 N lat. 120.642637239 120.639473286 W long. (SE corner)



The proposed SMCA would prohibit the injury, damage, take, or possession of all living, geological, or cultural marine resources with the exception of incidental take related to mission-critical military operations of the adjacent Vandenberg Space Force Base and recreational take of finfish from shore using hook and line. This permitted activity would allow for fishing access to the shoreline and marine resources for recreational, traditional, ceremonial, cultural, and subsistence purposes for the public including the Chumash people and other members of federally and non-federally recognized tribes.

We recommend that the state consult with local Indigenous communities and Tribes to explore co-management options for the Point Sal SMCA before designation.

- 4. Rationale (Required)** - Located in Santa Barbara County in Chumash ancestral territory, Point Sal is an ecologically rich and relatively remote promontory along the coastline that supports a diverse marine ecosystem and provides critical habitat for seabirds and marine mammals alike. The nutrient-rich waters found at this site allow for a diversity of ocean life to thrive, with kelp beds, rich tidepools, and productive waters that support humpback whales, gray whales, a variety of sea lions and seals, sea otters, and a biologically important feeding area for endangered blue whales nearby. Offshore, Lion Rock is a significant roosting site for seabirds like the Brown pelican and Brandt's cormorant and acts as a relatively undisturbed haulout for sea lions, seals, and other pinnipeds, underlining the area's conservation value for these animals as the California coastline becomes increasingly developed. In addition, the leeward waters of Point Sal act as a larval retention zone. Larval retention zones are known to be highly beneficial areas for the recruitment of fish and invertebrate larvae in wind-driven upwelling zones while promoting the biodiversity of the surrounding ecosystem. Point Sal also holds cultural significance for the Chumash people, with evidence of their occupation as recently as 250 years ago and as far back as 4,800 years ago; Chumash artifacts are visible throughout Point Sal, and analyses of burial sites from the area demonstrate the rich cultural ties to the traditional stewards of this land. Furthermore, Point Sal is still of importance to the Chumash people who visit and use the area today. Protecting the marine waters and coastal resources of Point Sal would help to recognize its value as a cultural heritage site that still contributes to the identity, sense of place, and cultural and subsistence practices for many of the Indigenous people of Central California today. Cosponsored by the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, the Point Sal SMCA seeks to advance Tribal co-stewardship and management of a California MPA, in alignment with the recommendations identified after the MPA network Decadal Management Review (Recommendations 1, 2, and 3). We request that upon designation of this SMCA, CDFW work to formalize an official collaborative co-stewardship agreement with NCTC and other interested Tribes.

Protecting the waters of Point Sal aligns strongly with the goals set by the California Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA), especially with regards to the protection of natural biodiversity found in relatively undisturbed marine ecosystems and advancement of Tribal marine stewardship. Given the remote nature of Point Sal, its relative lack of human disturbance, and potential for increased threats to the California MPAs found nearby, there is value in maximizing the ecological and biological benefits that Point Sal provides to the marine species that inhabit the area and to the broader Central California region. As development of the state's coastline and seascape progresses, protecting relatively undisturbed areas will add to



the resilience of the MPA network by providing refugia for marine life from encroaching threats. Furthermore, designating a Tribal MPA in the proposed area will improve recreational, educational, and study opportunities at Point Sal and support equitable access to coastal resources moving forward into the future.

See Petition Narrative for full rationale.

SECTION II: Optional Information

5. Date of Petition: 11/30/2023

6. Category of Proposed Change

☐ Sport Fishing

☐ Commercial Fishing

☐ Hunting

☒ Other, please specify: MPAs, Section 632.

7. The proposal is to: *(To determine section number(s), see current year regulation booklet or <https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs>)*

☒ Amend Title 14 Section(s): Westlaw regulations.

☐ Add New Title 14 Section(s): Click here to enter text.

☐ Repeal Title 14 Section(s): Click here to enter text.

8. If the proposal is related to a previously submitted petition that was rejected, specify the tracking number of the previously submitted petition

Or ☒ Not applicable.

9. Effective date: If applicable, identify the desired effective date of the regulation.
If the proposed change requires immediate implementation, explain the nature of the emergency:

10. Supporting documentation: Identify and attach to the petition any information supporting the proposal including data, reports and other documents:

a. Proposed Point Sal SMR petition narrative

b. Figure 1 - Proposed Point Sal SMR habitat map

c. Appendix A - Climate-smart MPA design guidelines met by proposed Point Sal SMR

d. Appendix B - Proposed Point Sal SMR letter of support

11. Economic or Fiscal Impacts: Identify any known impacts of the proposed regulation change on revenues to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, individuals, businesses, jobs, other state agencies, local agencies, schools, or housing:

Current fishing in the proposed area is limited, likely due to its considerable distance from the nearest port areas of Morro Bay and Santa Barbara. The proposed Point Sal MPA overlaps with 14% of California fishing block 631, and 11% of California fishing block 632. According to the Marine Fisheries Data Explorer, annual landings reported from these blocks over a 10-year period from 2012 to 2022 were an average of 231,460 lbs by weight and \$678,632 by value



per year. This represents just 0.11% of the landings by weight, and 1.1% of landings by value, reported for the Central Coast region over the same 10-year period. For this reason, and due to the relatively small proposed size of the MPA, we believe the establishment of an SMR in this area would have minimal economic impact to commercial fisheries.

Our request to CDFW for recreational fishing data from this area was being processed at time of submission; we will evaluate the potential impact to recreational fishers and submit it to the state following receipt of the requested data.

12. Forms: If applicable, list any forms to be created, amended or repealed:

SECTION 3: FGC Staff Only

Date received: ~~Click here to enter text.~~ 11/24/2025

FGC staff action:

- ☒ ~~X~~ Accept - complete
☐ Reject - incomplete
☐ Reject - outside scope of FGC authority

~~Tracking Number~~

Date petitioner was notified of receipt of petition and pending action: 11/26/2025

Meeting date for FGC consideration: Receive and Re-refer on
12/11/2025

FGC action:

- ☐ Denied by FGC
☐ Denied - same as petition _____
Tracking Number
☐ Granted for consideration of regulation change

Petition to Designate a New State Marine Reserve at Point Sal, Central California

PETITION NARRATIVE

Point Sal is located in Santa Barbara County, California, roughly 50 miles (80 kilometers) to the northwest of Point Conception. The nearest city to Point Sal is Guadalupe, located about six miles to the northeast, and Vandenberg Space Force Base is located to the south. Known for its scenic beauty, rugged cliffs, and stunning ocean views, Point Sal is a relatively remote and undeveloped area along California's coastline located in Chumash ancestral territory. Its waters are home to rich biodiversity, productive oceanographic features, and intact food webs that are worth protecting. This petition calls for the designation of a new State Marine Conservation Area with a Chumash collaborative co-stewardship approach with the Northern Chumash Tribal Council (NCTC) and other interested Tribes, allowing for cultural and subsistence use by Tribes and Indigenous communities in this area. This MPA would advance the goals of California's network of marine protected areas (MPAs) in the face of climate change and threats from increased human activities and threats in the future, and advance California's priorities of recognizing and remedying the displacement of Indigenous nations from California's coasts and lands. The Point Sal SMCA would allow for cultural and subsistence use by Tribes and Indigenous communities in this area and the continuation of recreational hook and line fishing from shore.

Goals

The overall goals of this new MPA are to 1) advance Tribal co-stewardship and MPA management (DMR Recommendation 2a, b, and c) through a collaborative co-stewardship approach with the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, 24) protect this rich and productive ecosystem and the biodiversity found within, 32) to protect this larval retention zone and the connectivity dynamics within the region, and 43) to enhance the climate resilience of the broader state MPA network.

Proposed boundaries

In keeping with state MPA design and feasibility guidelines provided by CDFW, the proposed area is bounded by the mean high tide line and straight lines connecting the following points in the order listed:

- a. 34.895212665 34.880667518 N lat. 120.731972573 120.726433064 W long. (SW corner)
- b. 34.929894739 N lat. 120.727488272 W long (NW corner)
- c. 34.930008197 N lat. 120.666597401 W long. (NE corner)
- d. 34.895212665 34.880970744 N lat. 120.642637239 120.639473286 W long. (SE corner)

The proposed boundaries were drawn to align with visible landmarks and natural geographies as much as possible, with the northern boundary beginning at Mussel Point, and the southern boundary aligned with the end of a Vandenberg Space Force Base road~~drawn at the end of~~

~~Brown's Beach~~. The eastern boundary aligns with the mean high tide line, and the western boundary extends out to the edge of state waters as recommended by state feasibility guidelines.

The proposed area is ~~9.18 14.22~~ square miles with an alongshore span of ~~4.03 3.2~~ miles, which meets the state's minimum size guidelines and design recommendations. The proposed area is located 19 miles alongshore from Point Buchon SMR/SMCA, the nearest MPA to the north, which meets the state's minimum spacing recommendations, and 6.5 miles from Vandenberg SMR, the nearest MPA to the south.

Proposed regulations

- Any injury, damage, take, or possession of all living, geological, or cultural marine resources is prohibited, with the exception of recreational take of finfish from shore using hook and line.
- Take incidental to base operations and commercial space launch operations identified by the Vandenberg Space Force Base Commander as mission critical is allowed.
- Public entry may be restricted at the discretion of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) to protect wildlife, aquatic life, or habitat, or by the Commander of Vandenberg Space Force Base to protect and provide safety for base operations.
- The Department shall enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Commander of Vandenberg Space Force Base for the mutually beneficial management and administration of the Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area. The MOU shall include, but not be limited to, the identification of Vandenberg Space Force Base's national defense mission activities that are unrestricted by the subject regulations and details on management and administrative roles and responsibilities.

Ecological significance of the area

The coastal waters around Point Sal in California support a diverse and dynamic marine ecosystem. The rocky coast is home to abundant and rich tidepools. The kelp beds found in waters leeward of the point provide habitat for endangered Southern sea otters and many other kelp-associated species. The rocks and coastal habitats around the point provide critical roosting and foraging habitats for multiple species of seabirds. State waters surrounding the point are home to a variety of feeding and migrating marine mammals, including bottlenose and common dolphins, harbor porpoises, humpback and gray whales, California sea lions, harbor seals, elephant seals, and Steller sea lions.¹

An analysis of species, habitats, threats, and existing protections within the California Current found that the waters around Point Sal are among the top 5% in conservation value in the

¹ Condor Environmental Planning Services, "Point Sal Reserve Revised Management Plan" (Santa Barbara County Parks Department, July 2002), <https://ryono.net/pointsal/ptsalreserve.pdf>.

California Current.² Notably, the area remained within the top 5% regardless of whether conservation value was being measured utilizing the species richness index or the rarity index, with a significant portion of these areas falling into the top 2%. This region of California is also well-known as a marine biogeographic 'transitional zone' for ocean and coastal biota. Many species reach the southern or northern limits of their ranges here, making it an important biogeographic boundary along California's coast.³

The nutrient-rich waters in this region support a productive food web. Upwelling, where nutrient-rich deep waters rise to the surface, enhances primary productivity, providing ample food resources for a variety of marine organisms, from plankton to larger predators. A krill hotspot⁴ and Biologically Important Area (BIA) for blue whale foraging are located just outside the proposed area,⁵ indicating that these waters are productive enough to support feeding blue whales, which ingest up to 16 tons of krill per day.⁶ The state waters within the proposed area are home to several other BIAs for marine mammal species, including a BIA for humpback whale foraging, a BIA for migrating gray whales, and BIA for resident harbor porpoises.⁷

Lion Rock haul out and roosting site

Lion Rock, located off the southern coast of Point Sal, is an important haul out site for sea lions and other marine mammals. As many as 883 sea lions have been observed on the rock on a single day, and the site is also occasionally used by Steller sea lions and elephant seals.⁸

Haulouts are critical to the behavioral cycles of foraging, resting, and breeding for pinnipeds. However, these species are highly sensitive to visual and auditory disturbance and will leave haulouts when they become stressed – even abandoning them permanently, if disturbances occur frequently. Undisturbed haulouts are thus necessary for the protection of these species. Given Point Sal's remote location, Lion Rock currently experiences little to no human-caused disturbance⁹ and may be one of the few remaining undisturbed haulouts along the busy California coastline – making it especially important for the conservation of these marine mammals.

Commented [A1]: discrepancy in spelling from "haul out". are these supposed to be different?

² Nathan Elliott et al., "Assessment of Marine Protected Areas in the California Current" (Petaluma, CA: Point Blue, June 5, 2020), https://www.pointblue.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/MPA-Assessment_Final.pdf.

³ Ronald S. Burton, "Intraspecific Phylogeography Across the Point Conception Biogeographic Boundary," *Evolution* 52, no. 3 (June 1998): 734–45, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1558-5646.1998.tb03698.x>.

⁴ Jarrod A. Santora et al., "Mesoscale structure and oceanographic determinants of krill hotspots in the California Current: Implications for trophic transfer and conservation," *Progress in Oceanography* 91, no. 4 (December 2011): 397–409, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pocean.2011.04.002>.

⁵ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "Biologically Important Area Map," Web map, Cetacean & Sound Mapping, accessed November 20, 2023, <https://cetsound.noaa.gov/biologically-important-area-map>.

⁶ Matthew S. Savoca et al., "Baleen Whale Prey Consumption Based on High-Resolution Foraging Measurements," *Nature* 599, no. 7883 (November 2021): 85–90, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-021-03991-5>.

⁷ NOAA, "Biologically Important Area Map."

⁸ NMFS, NOAA, and Department of Commerce. Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Weapons Testing at Vandenberg Air Force Base; California. 87 FR 762 (Jan. 6, 2022). Available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/01/06/2022-00032/takes-of-marine-mammals-incidental-to-specified-activities-taking-marine-mammals-incidental-to>.

⁹ Dan Robinette, Sara Acosta, and Julie Howar, "Year 1 Results of Baseline Monitoring Within the Point Sur to Point Mugu Study Area of the Seabird Protection Network" (Petaluma, CA: PRBO Conservation Science, November 15, 2012).

Lion Rock is also an important roosting site and breeding site for many seabird species. Roosting is a vital behavior for seabirds, providing essential rest, social interaction, protection, and nesting opportunities, thereby enhancing their energy conservation, reproductive success, and overall well-being in the dynamic marine environment. Seabirds like cormorants do not have oil-producing glands to help their feathers repel water, making roosting especially critical for these species to dry after foraging. Thousands of cormorants have been observed roosting on Lion Rock,¹⁰ and it is also a roost site of significant importance for Brown Pelicans, which until recently were listed as endangered species.¹¹ Finally, Lion Rock is a breeding site of growing importance for Brandt's cormorants, with as many as 14 breeding pairs observed on the rock in recent years.¹²

Connectivity and larval retention zone

Although wind-driven upwelling is a vital source of nutrients for California ecosystems, this large-scale offshore transport of coastal ocean water poses a significant challenge to larval stages of marine organisms that must recruit to coastal environments. Headlands, such as found at Point Sal, can help to mitigate this effect by slowing down or recirculating ocean currents, and research has shown waters on the leeward sides of coastal promontories or headlands provide refuge for fish and invertebrate larvae against offshore transport during upwelling events.¹³ These "larval retention zones" are critical for enhanced recruitment, and help to ensure that adult populations are supplied with larvae in recruitment-limited upwelling regions.¹⁴ Larval retention zones also serve as biological hotspots, where upwelling delivers nutrients that then fuel phytoplankton growth and support marine food webs. This effect has been shown even for small headlands like Point Sal (e.g., Bodega Headland).¹⁵

Point Sal's leeward waters are known to serve as a larval retention zone in this stretch of the Central Coast. One study used seabird foraging rates as a proxy for juvenile fish recruitment to explore whether seabird foraging and geographic indicators can be used to identify larval retention zones, in order to help inform MPA network spatial design.¹⁶ The findings show that both long and short headlands—including Point Sal—lead to higher juvenile fish abundance, and that coastal orientation was an important determinant of juvenile fish abundance. Pelagic cormorant foraging rates were also found to be higher at south-facing coasts like Point Sal's compared to other coastal orientations. This is due to weaker offshore advection caused by

¹⁰ Condor Environmental Planning Services, "Point Sal Reserve Revised Management Plan."

¹¹ Dan Robinette and Julie Lanser, "Brown Pelican Roost Utilization Along the Coastal Margin of Vandenberg Air Force Base, 2004" (Stinson Beach, CA: PRBO Conservation Science, May 3, 2006).

¹² Robinette, Acosta, and Howar, "Year 1 Results of Baseline Monitoring Within the Point Sur to Point Mugu Study Area of the Seabird Protection Network."

¹³ Amber J. Mace and Steven G. Morgan, "Larval Accumulation in the Lee of a Small Headland: Implications for the Design of Marine Reserves," *Marine Ecology Progress Series* 318 (August 3, 2006): 19–29, <https://doi.org/10.3354/meps318019>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Dan Robinette, Nadav Nur, and Jaime Jahncke, "Spatial Patterns in Nearshore Juvenile Fish Abundance Throughout the California Network of Marine Protected Areas as Revealed by Seabird Foraging Rates," *California Cooperative Oceanic Fisheries Investigations* 60 (2019).

coastal upwelling along south-facing coasts, and eddies forming in the lee of the south-facing coasts of embayments.¹⁷

This biological evidence for local retention zones is supported by physical oceanography data. Multiple studies of oceanographic currents in the area show that within the Santa Barbara Channel, ocean currents primarily run from east to west.¹⁸ Just north of Point Conception there is strong seasonal equatorward flow heading south. Around the area of Point Sal, the interaction of these westward and southward surface currents cause convergence.¹⁹ Additionally, the region experiences episodic periods of wind relaxation in the spring, leading to less vigorous upwelling with important biological consequences for larval retention and surface productivity.²⁰

Chumash Heritage and collaborative co-stewardship~~Historical and cultural use~~

The ocean is an integral part of Chumash culture and heritage and Point Sal holds significant cultural and historical ties to the Chumash people, who have inhabited the region for thousands of years.²¹ For instance, the Chumash village Axwin was located very close to the area.²² There is abundant evidence of Chumash occupation of Point Sal as recently as 250 years ago and as far back as 4,800 years ago. Rock rings where homes once stood, grinding stones, and other Chumash artifacts are easily visible. Human remains found at Chumash burial sites indicate that the diet of Indigenous peoples living at Point Sal was high in marine protein. Chumash oral histories and their current marine practices, demonstrating the strong link between coastal peoples and marine resources.²³ There are many Chumash people who still live in the general area and come to Point Sal for a variety of reasons. Protecting the marine waters and coastal resources of Point Sal would help to recognize its value as a cultural heritage site that still contributes to the identity and sense of place and cultural and subsistence practices for many of the Indigenous people of Central California today.

Cosponsored by the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, the Point Sal SMCA seeks to advance Tribal co-stewardship and management of a California MPA, in alignment with the recommendations identified after the MPA network Decadal Management Review (Recommendations 1, 2, and 3). We request that upon designation of this SMCA, CDFW work

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Clinton D. Winant, Edward P. Dever, and Myrl C. Hendershott, "Characteristic Patterns of Shelf Circulation at the Boundary between Central and Southern California," *Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans* 108, no. C2 (2003), <https://doi.org/10.1029/2001JC001302>.

¹⁹ Sutara H. Suanda et al., "Wind Relaxation and a Coastal Buoyant Plume North of Pt. Conception, CA: Observations, Simulations, and Scalings," *Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans* 121, no. 10 (2016): 7455–75, <https://doi.org/10.1002/2016JC011919>.

²⁰ Louis W. Botsford et al., "Effects of Variable Winds on Biological Productivity on Continental Shelves in Coastal Upwelling Systems," *Deep Sea Research Part II: Topical Studies in Oceanography*, The Role of Wind-Driven Flow in Shelf Productivity, 53, no. 25 (December 1, 2006): 3116–40, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dsr2.2006.07.011>.

²¹ Bureau of Land Management, "Point Sal," Visit Point Sal, accessed November 20, 2023, <https://www.blm.gov/visit/point-sal>.

²² King, Chester. *The Names and Locations of Historic Chumash Villages*. The Journal of California Anthropology, 12 Jan. 1975, escholarship.org/uc/item/8833s5k5

²³ Bureau of Land Management, "Point Sal," Visit Point Sal, accessed November 20, 2023, <https://www.blm.gov/visit/point-sal>.

to formalize an official collaborative co-stewardship agreement with NCTC and other interested tribes that would aim to achieve the following: 1) incorporate Indigenous Knowledge, goals, perspectives, and monitoring into CDFW's management of the MPA (DMR Recommendation 2c), 2) provide for appropriate, substantive involvement of all interested local Indigenous community groups (federally and non-federally recognized local Tribes and Indigenous groups) in the ongoing stewardship of the MPA, 3) provide tribes with meaningful resources to support participation in management of the MPA (DMR Recommendation 3), 4) facilitate and support Tribal and Indigenous community cultural access, connection to, and activities within the MPA (DMR Recommendation 2b).

Habitat

Since the creation of the California MPA network, a new dataset that allows for detailed delineation of the habitat categories used in the design of the MPA network for all California state waters has been completed and made available through the California State Mapping Program (CSMP). Using this dataset, we characterized the habitat types present in the area proposed for protection around Point Sal (Figure 1).²⁴

The proposed area is characterized by a large amount of sandy bottom, with some rocky substrate south of the point and in the northeast portion of the area (8.3% shallow (0-30m) rocky bottom, 41.9% shallow sandy bottom, 1.2% deeper (30-100m) rocky bottom, and 48.6% deeper sandy bottom). Kelp beds are present on the shallow rocky bottom substrate (personal communications, Dan Robinette), supporting numerous marine species like rockfish and sea otters.²⁵

Adding this area to the California state MPA network would increase the number of replicate sites for these four important habitat types, as recommended by the science-based guidelines for the MLPA planning process and recent peer-reviewed guidelines for the design of climate-smart MPA networks.²⁶

Land-sea connection

Coastal marine ecosystems are influenced by both ocean- and land-based activities. Conservation efforts focused on addressing ocean-based threats alone are often compromised by land-based impacts that affect coastal ecosystems, such as nutrient runoff, organic and inorganic pollutants, and the direct impacts associated with high levels of human traffic and visitation.²⁷ Planning for and designating MPAs that are linked with terrestrial reserves or

²⁴ California State University, Monterey Bay, Seafloor Mapping Lab. 2014. California Seafloor Mapping Project - Undersea Imagery Archive 2007-2014. <https://csumb.edu/undersea/seafloor-maps> Accessed 2023.

²⁵ Condor Environmental Planning Services, "Point Sal Reserve Revised Management Plan."

²⁶ Nur Arafah-Dalmau et al., "Integrating Climate Adaptation and Transboundary Management: Guidelines for Designing Climate-Smart Marine Protected Areas," *One Earth* 6, no. 11 (November 17, 2023): 1523–41, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2023.10.002>.

²⁷ David M. Stoms et al., "Integrated Coastal Reserve Planning: Making the Land–Sea Connection," *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 3, no. 8 (2005): 429–36, [https://doi.org/10.1890/1540-9295\(2005\)003\[0429:ICRPM\]2.0.CO;2](https://doi.org/10.1890/1540-9295(2005)003[0429:ICRPM]2.0.CO;2).

adjacent to areas with little to no human impact can therefore considerably improve MPA conservation outcomes.²⁸ The proposed SMCA is adjacent to Point Sal State Beach, which currently protects approximately 80 acres and includes just over 1 1/2 miles of ocean frontage. Due to its remote location, and possibly these terrestrial protections, Point Sal's terrestrial habitats remain relatively undisturbed and free of negative human impacts,²⁹ making the waters around Point Sal a particularly valuable area to protect.

Access and recreation

The coastline of the proposed SMCA is currently accessible through Point Sal State Beach and Point Sal Trail. Recreational activities at Point Sal State Beach include fishing, beach combing, hiking, nature study, photography, picnicking, and sunbathing.

In 1998, heavy rains destroyed Point Sal Road in several places, which was the main access road for Point Sal State Beach. The road was closed until May 2008, when Air Force and County officials announced they had reached an interim agreement to provide access. They have since been “coordinating to place informational signs, fix fences and repair washed-out sections of the County road”, though progress has been extremely slow. The road remains closed, although according to California's State Parks Department, efforts to develop a long-term access plan to Point Sal State Beach are ongoing.³⁰

Point Sal State Beach is currently best accessed via Point Sal Trail, which is located at the end of Brown Road. This moderately challenging trail is approximately 10 miles round trip to the beach and back,³¹ or 5 miles round trip to a popular coastal bluff overlook and back, and is open year-round. It provides unparalleled access to pristine coastal wilderness, traversing astonishingly beautiful coastal habitats such as dunes, chaparral, windswept bluffs, and rocky cliffs. The trail is described as “a very popular area for hiking”³² and locally-based environmental groups like the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Center regularly organize group hikes to Point Sal as part of their educational programming for local underserved communities.³³

By making the ocean more productive and resilient to climate change, stronger marine protections like the proposed Point Sal SMCA can enhance shore-based recreation. When combined with efforts to increase access and connect more people to nature, additional state MPAs can give those from marginalized communities more equitable access to the ocean's resources and benefits. California's MPAs have been shown to increase the biomass of fishery-targeted species and promote “spillover” into nearby coastal areas, benefitting nearby fishing

²⁸ Arafeh-Dalmau et al., “Integrating Climate Adaptation and Transboundary Management.”

²⁹ Robinette, Acosta, and Howar, “Year 1 Results of Baseline Monitoring Within the Point Sur to Point Mugu Study Area of the Seabird Protection Network.”

³⁰ California State Parks, “Point Sal SB,” CA State Parks, accessed November 20, 2023, <https://www.parks.ca.gov/>.

³¹ County of Santa Barbara California, “Point Sal,” County of Santa Barbara Parks, accessed November 20, 2023, <https://www.countyofsb.org/900/Point-Sal>.

³² All Trails, “Point Sal Overlook,” Travel Website, AllTrails.com, accessed November 20, 2023, <https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/california/point-sal-overlook>.

³³ For example, see <https://dunescenter.org/event/%f0%9f%a5%bepoint-sal-docent-led-community-hike/>

grounds.³⁴ The California Environmental Protection Agency identifies the adjacent city of Guadalupe as “disadvantaged” under CA Senate Bill 535, and their synthesis of environmental and socioeconomic indicators further reveals that Guadalupe – alongside Santa Maria and Lompoc – are underprivileged communities that experience significant cumulative impacts from pollution.³⁵ Given these communities’ close proximity to Point Sal, implementing an SMCA at the proposed site could enhance access for disadvantaged populations to valuable coastal resources and fishing opportunities, as a popular shore fishing site is located just north of the proposed Point Sal SMCA boundary, near the Rancho Guadalupe Dunes Reserve area. In addition to the designation of a new Point Sal SMCA, we urge the state to redouble its efforts to provide access to Point Sal State Beach by reopening Point Sal Road.

Socioeconomic impacts

Current fishing in the proposed area is limited, likely due to its considerable distance from nearest port areas of Morro Bay and Santa Barbara. The proposed Point Sal MPA overlaps with 14% of California fishing block 631, and 11% of California fishing block 632. According to the Marine Fisheries Data Explorer, annual landings reported from these blocks over a ten year period from 2012 to 2022 were an average of 231,460 lbs by weight and \$678,632 by value per year.³⁶ This represents just 0.11% of the landings by weight, and 1.1% of landings by value, reported for the Central Coast region over the same 10 year period.^{37,38} For this reason, and due to the relatively small proposed size of the MPA, we believe the establishment of an SMCA in this area would have minimal economic impact to commercial fisheries.

Our request to CDFW for recreational fishing data from this area was being processed at time of submission; we will evaluate the potential impact to recreational fishers and submit it to the state following receipt of the requested data.

Historical context

During the MLPA planning process, a large SMR around Point Sal was proposed in External Proposed MPA Package AC. The proposed SMR was 21.92 mi², with an alongshore span of 6.1 miles and depth range of 0-192 feet. Based upon a review of the historical documents provided by the Fish & Game Commission in October 2023, it is not clear why the state chose not to designate this proposed SMR at that time.

³⁴ Hunter S. Lenihan et al., “Increasing Spillover Enhances Southern California Spiny Lobster Catch along Marine Reserve Borders,” *Ecosphere* 13, no. 6 (2022): e4110, <https://doi.org/10.1002/ecs2.4110>.

³⁵ OEHHA, “CalEnviroScreen 4.0,” Text, CA.Gov, September 20, 2021, <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-40>; OEHHA, “Final Designation of Disadvantaged Communities Pursuant to Senate Bill 535” (CalEPA, May 2022).

³⁶ Assuming equal distribution of effort and value across all years. Because smaller timescales resulted in confidential data outputs from the Marine Fisheries Data Explorer, we aggregated 10 years of landings data from both blocks to calculate average annual landings data. However, the state should look into the confidential data to find more detailed estimates of fisheries landings from this area.

³⁷ We defined the Central Coast region as all fishing blocks from Point Año Nuevo to Point Conception:

<https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=144496&inline>

³⁸ California Department of Fish and Wildlife, “Marine Fisheries Data Explorer,” database, MFDE, accessed November 21, 2023, <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Data-Management-Research/MFDE>.

The Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) did not direct how state agencies were to engage or consult with Tribes as sovereign nations during the process of establishing California's MPA Network, and the text of the law did not acknowledge coastal Indigenous peoples' long standing relationships to, dependence on, and stewardship of marine resources. In the years following the MPA network's initial implementation, Tribes, state agencies, and policymakers have made progress to encourage and facilitate Tribal marine co-management and access in MPAs.³⁹

Now, as California is conducting its first-ever adaptive management process, the state has the opportunity to more thoroughly include the groups that were underrepresented during the initial implementation of the network. This petition is one of the first Tribally proposed state marine protected areas in California. Designating this MPA would strengthen the role and authority of California Tribes in the state's ocean and marine life protection efforts. With a collaborative co-stewardship approach, the Point Sal MPA would also contribute to the integration of Tribes in California's marine monitoring and management initiatives. Furthermore, this proposal aligns with the state's goal of supporting Tribally-led conservation.⁴⁰

Future stressors may compromise California's coastal waters and nearby MPAs

There is increasing pressure to develop resources in and otherwise utilize California's coastal waters. For example, as efforts intensify to mitigate and adapt to climate change, the state is investing in offshore wind and desalination plants. Interest in ocean-based carbon dioxide removal (CDR) is growing, and aquaculture activities are proliferating. Scientists warn that a rising wave of ocean industrialization, such as underway in California's waters, will pose additional strain on marine biodiversity.⁴¹

MPAs along the central coast of California will likely experience these types of stressors in the coming decade. Vandenberg SMR, located 17 km to the south of this proposed area, and the Point Buchon SMR/SMCA complex, located 50 km to the north, are both sited near potential future offshore wind development projects. The proposed California Demonstration Project (CADEMO) seeks to place four floating offshore wind turbines in state waters just outside the boundaries of Vandenberg SMR, and would deliver power via a subsea cable traveling under the seafloor to an onshore cable landing site at Vandenberg Space Force Base. The Morro Bay Wind Energy Area is located in federal waters just outside Point Buchon SMCA, and two leases have recently been issued to commercial wind developers to begin planning for offshore wind development. Offshore wind construction and operations are expected to impact the marine environment through increased ocean noise, collisions with turbines, entanglements, the introduction of electromagnetic fields, alterations to existing habitats and hydrodynamics, and

³⁹ McGinnis, Michael. 2022. *Co-Management of California-Chumash Marine Conservation Areas: A White Paper Produced for the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians.*

⁴⁰ California Ocean Protection Council, 2025. "Roadmap to Achieving 30x30 in California's Coastal Waters." <https://opc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Roadmap-to-Achieving-30x30-in-Californias-Coastal-Waters-508.pdf>

⁴¹ Douglas J. McCauley et al., "Marine Defaunation: Animal Loss in the Global Ocean," *Science* 347, no. 6219 (January 16, 2015): 1255641, <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1255641>.

the possible release of contaminants.⁴² While the state of California is working closely with developers and the federal government to minimize the environmental impacts of these projects as much as possible, it stands to reason that the region, including Vandenberg SMR and the Point Buchon SMR/SMCA complex, will experience some level of adverse impact related to the development of heavily industrialized renewable energy projects.

In addition, Point Buchon SMR/SMCA is located just north of the Diablo Canyon Power Plant, which uses seawater for its once-through cooling process. The plant's intake pipes draw in more than 2.5 billion gallons of water per day. This large and continuous seawater withdrawal is estimated to kill roughly 1.5 billion fish in early life stages each year, as creatures are sucked into the cooling systems or become impinged against the screens on the open-water pipes.⁴³ The cooling water is also discharged back into the ocean water at a warmer temperature, which can cause additional harm to kelp, fish, and other marine life in the area.⁴⁴ While Diablo Canyon's intake is not directly within the Point Buchon SMR/SMCA cluster, the area of source water being drawn into the plant likely overlaps with the MPA boundaries and has the potential to withdraw marine life out of the protected area.

As the increase of local stressors are likely to strain resources in the Vandenberg and Point Buchon MPAs, a new MPA at Point Sal could help to protect similar habitat not subject to these local stressors, adding a helpful replicate MPA to serve as an insurance policy for the region's MPA network.

Climate resilient MPA networks

Changing ocean conditions, such as warming temperatures, acidification, and reduced oxygen, combined with increasing crowding, and pressure on our ecosystems, will compound local stressors mentioned above – putting California's spectacular marine biodiversity at elevated risk. MPAs are increasingly recognized as an important ocean-climate solution. Fully protected MPAs can allow for disturbed and degraded areas to recover, and also promote and retain complex, intact food webs and ecosystems that are better at resisting future stressors.⁴⁵ A recent meta-analysis of more than 22,000 peer-reviewed studies spanning more than 200 MPAs around the world demonstrated that marine reserves can significantly enhance carbon

⁴² NOAA Fisheries, "Offshore Wind Energy: Protecting Marine Life," Protecting Marine Life, National, accessed November 20, 2023, <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/offshore-wind-energy/protecting-marine-life>.

⁴³ Mackenzie Shuman, "How California's Last Remaining Nuclear Power Plant Transformed Marine Life off the Coast," *San Luis Obispo Tribune*, March 25, 2022, <https://www.sanluisobispo.com/news/local/environment/article258804173.html>.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Lewis A.K. Barnett, Marissa L. Baskett, and Louis W. Botsford, "Quantifying the Potential for Marine Reserves or Harvest Reductions to Buffer Temporal Mismatches Caused by Climate Change," *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences* 72, no. 3 (March 2015): 376–89, <https://doi.org/10.1139/cjfas-2014-0243>; Lewis A. K. Barnett and Marissa L. Baskett, "Marine Reserves Can Enhance Ecological Resilience," ed. Peter Mumby, *Ecology Letters* 18, no. 12 (December 2015): 1301–10, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ele.12524>; Callum M. Roberts et al., "Marine Reserves Can Mitigate and Promote Adaptation to Climate Change," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 114, no. 24 (June 13, 2017): 6167–75, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1701262114>.

sequestration, coastal protection, biodiversity, and the reproductive capacity of marine organisms as well as fishers' catch and income.⁴⁶

Further, when designed with climate resilience in mind, MPA networks can provide greater resilience than single MPAs on their own.⁴⁷ A new analysis focused on the California Bight has identified 21 actionable guidelines for the design of climate-smart MPA networks across large geographies and international boundaries.⁴⁸ The designation of a new MPA at Point Sal would meet or help to advance at least 11 of these climate-smart MPA design guidelines ([Appendix A](#)). Specifically, a new MPA at Point Sal would help to increase habitat representation and replication; protect critical and unique areas relevant to the life histories of important California species; incorporate and enhance connectivity across the broader MPA network; provide permanent protections better suited for the maintenance of ecosystem function and resilience at relevant timescales for climate resilience, and; enhance the MPA network's protections for healthy and relatively undisturbed habitats ([Appendix A](#)). In the face of increasing impacts related to climate change, it is critical that the state adaptively manage its MPA network with climate resilience in mind.

Relevance to MLPA Goals and DMR Recommendations

This proposed Point Sal SMCA contributes directly to MLPA Goals 1, 2, 3, and 6 ([California Marine Life Protection Act](#)). Protecting the rich biodiversity, relatively undisturbed habitats, and important larval retention zone found in the relatively undisturbed waters around Point Sal would help to protect the state's marine life and habitats, marine ecosystems, and marine natural heritage, as well as improve recreational, educational and study opportunities provided by marine ecosystems subject to minimal human disturbance.

In addition, this petition helps to advance [a number of DMR Recommendations](#). [As a Tribal petition, the Point Sal SMCA advances DMR Recommendations 1.\) "Improve state agencies' tribal engagement and relationship building efforts," 2.\) "Create a clear pathway to tribal MPA management," and 3.\) "Build tribal capacity to participate in MPA management activities." It also advances Recommendation 4.b.\) "Identify and utilize best science-based approaches to inform potential changes to the MPA Network in order to enhance Network performance."](#) New and groundbreaking peer-reviewed guidelines for the design of climate-smart MPA networks have recently been developed, and the proposed MPA at Point Sal aligns strongly with these guidelines.⁴⁹ We recommend the state consider these guidelines for the review and implementation of additional proposals to enhance and expand California's MPA network.

We must pass on a healthier ocean for future generations to experience, benefit from, and enjoy. California has the opportunity now to protect the conservation legacy of our iconic coastal state, including its rich and diverse marine wildlife. We urge the state to designate a new MPA

⁴⁶ Juliette Jacquemont et al., "Ocean Conservation Boosts Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation," *One Earth* 5, no. 10 (October 2022): 1126–38, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2022.09.002>.

⁴⁷ Roberts et al., "Marine Reserves Can Mitigate and Promote Adaptation to Climate Change."

⁴⁸ Arafeh-Dalmau et al., "Integrating Climate Adaptation and Transboundary Management."

⁴⁹ Ibid.

| at Point Sal to advance Tribal marine stewardship and enhance the protection and climate resilience of our coastal and ocean resources, for the benefit of current and future generations of Californians.

California Fish and Game Commission



Compilation of Public Comments on Petition 2023-28MPA_AM2

This PDF file compiles public comments that were included as exhibits in meeting materials and supplemental handouts for Commission and Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meetings since November 2023. Additional exhibits and supplemental handouts will be added after each Commission meeting, including those received by the public comment deadline, until the Commission takes final action on the petition.

Note: Commission meeting materials include a representative selection of comments, rather than a comprehensive suite of all related comments received. Given the large volume of public comments received, the Commission has directed staff to summarize comments and provide a representative selection in meeting materials to reflect the range of perspectives shared. Commissioners are able to review a diversity of perspectives while still having access to all individual comments submitted, which are part of the Commission's administrative record. Members of the public may contact staff for access to any written comments not included in this document.

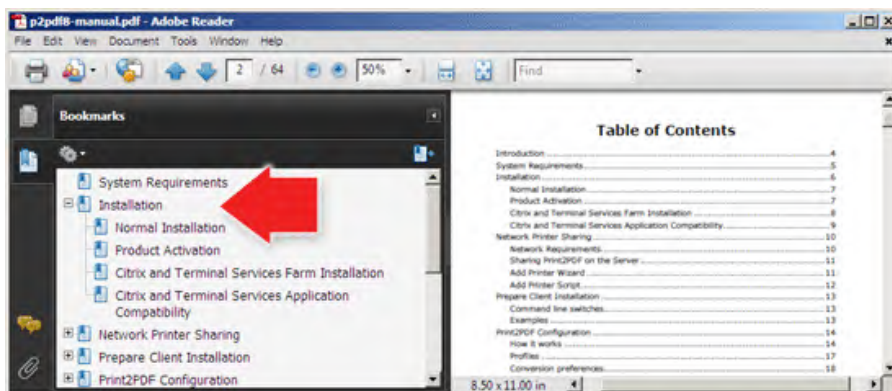
Last updated: through April 21, 2026 FGC

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3. To make adjustments to the view, use the Page Display option in the View tab. You should see something like:



4. We suggest leaving open the bookmark panel to help you move efficiently among the comments in the packet. It's helpful to think of these bookmarks as a table of contents that allows you to go to specific points in the packet without having to scroll through hundreds of pages.
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From: Aubrie Fowler <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 5:12 PM
To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>; Ashcraft, Susan@FGC <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Calla Allison <[REDACTED]>; Claire Arre <[REDACTED]>; Jamie Blatter <[REDACTED]>
Subject: FGC Meeting Binder Submission

Hi Susan and Commission staff,

Please see the attached exhibit (saved as a PDF and Excel sheet, whichever formatting is preferred) to please be added to the meeting binder for the February Fish and Game Commission meeting on 2/14-2/15/2024.

The link to the Google sheet can be found [here](#) as well; this was the format that the MPA Collaborative Vetted Regulation Recommendations was previously shared with Commission and Department staff.

Please let me know if there's more context you need from me.

Thank you,
Aubrie

Aubrie Fowler (she/her)
South Coast Specialist
[MPA Collaborative Network](#)
cell: [REDACTED]
[Sign-up for our Quarterly Newsletter](#)
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County	MPA	Current Regs Summarized	Compliance concerns and/or management problem identified	Regulation Recommendation for Adaptive Management	Consensus?	Justification	Supporting Management Suggestion	Petitioner Lead	Contact Information	Recommendation Category	Designation Change?
Del Norte	Pyramid Point SMCA	Rec take of surf smelt by dip net or Hawaiian type throw net. Tolowa Dee-ni' exempt	Onshore and offshore hook and line fishing, collecting sand crabs as bait, kayak fishers, violations from boaters registered in both CA and OR	Remove allowance for surf smelt by dip net or Hawaiian type throw net; Change to No-Take SMCA with Tribal exemption for Tolowa Dee-ni'	Yes	Smelt is culturally important species to Tolowa and No Take designation will be clearer to public, reducing violations	Signs being vandalized, ripped out. Outreach to gain compliance needed (Guardian Watchmen)	Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation		Take Allowance Change	Yes, from SMCA to No-Take SMCA with Tribal exemption
Del Norte	Pyramid Point SMCA	Rec take of surf smelt by dip net or Hawaiian type throw net. Tolowa Dee-ni' exempt	Elk Valley Rancheria is interested in exploring the possibility of being included in exempt status	Add Elk Valley Rancheria to exempt Tribes if requested by Tribal Council	Yes	Elk Valley Rancheria has ancestral ties to the area				Take Allowance Change	
Del Norte	Pyramid Point SMCA	Rec take of surf smelt by dip net or Hawaiian type throw net. Tolowa Dee-ni' exempt	Boundary is in Oregon	Change northern boundary to align with recognized California/Oregon state line	Yes	Original boundary used a mapping system that does not align with on-the-ground state line.		Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation		Boundary Change	
Del Norte	Point St. George Offshore Reef SMCA	Rec take of salmon by trolling and Dungeness crab by trap. Commercial take of salmon with troll fishing gear and Dungeness crab by trap. Elk Valley and Tolowa Dee-ni' exempt		No change	Yes						
Del Norte	Sea Lion Rock Special Closure	300'	No data	No change	Yes						
Del Norte	Castle Rock Special Closure	300'	Poke poling at Preston Island and Battery Point and Hook Finger Point during extremely low tides. Kayaks near closure	No change	Yes						
Del Norte	False Klamath Rock Special Closure	300' from 3/1-8/31	Low flyovers by US Coast Guard helicopter. Kayaks near closure, kaking kelp. Dogs off leash	No change	Yes		Signs needed at Wilson Creek. Potential site for CoastSnap to crowdsource changes around rock				
Humboldt	Reading Rock SMCA	Rec take of salmon by trolling; surf smelt by dip net or Hawaiian type throw net; Dungeness crab by trap, hoop net or hand. Commercial take of salmon with troll fishing gear; surf smelt by dip net; Dungeness crab by trap. Trinidad, Resighini and Yurok exempt	Hook and line fishing and take of sand crabs regularly occur, especially at southern boundary Gold Bluffs beach traditional smelt camp Track amount of surf smelt taken (25 lbs current limit). Hawaiian Type throw net inappropriate	Work with California Tribes and indigenous people to change "Hawaiian type throw net" to a term that is more reflective of Indigenous Californian net based take methods	Yes	Reference to Hawaiian nets when indigenous terms exist for this take type is inappropriate and disrespectful	Monitor Surf smelt as a part of state monitoring plan.			Language Change	

Humboldt	Reading Rock SMCA	Rec take of salmon by trolling; surf smelt by dip net or Hawaiian type throw net; Dungeness crab by trap, hoop net or hand. Commercial take of salmon with troll fishing gear; surf smelt by dip net; Dungeness crab by trap. Trinidad, Resighini and Yurok exempt		Recommend implementing limits on commercial take of surf smelt	Yes	Culturally important species				Take Allowance Change	
Humboldt	Reading Rock SMR	No Take	Drifting commercial crab pots	No change	Yes						
Humboldt	Samoa SMCA	Rec take of salmon by trolling; surf smelt by dip net or Hawaiian type throw net; Dungeness crab by trap, hoop net or hand. Commercial take of salmon with troll fishing gear; surf smelt by dip net; Dungeness crab by trap. Wiyot exempt	Difficult to determine boundaries	Work with California Tribes and indigenous people to change "Hawaiian type throw net" to a term that is more reflective of Indigenous Californian net based take methods	Yes	Reference to Hawaiian nets when indigenous terms exist for this take type is inappropriate and disrespectful	Monitor recreational and commercial (through landing/block reports) take of salmon by troll and surf smelt by dip net and assess effect on population; Signs with you are here map at Mad River			Language Change	
Humboldt	South Humboldt Bay SMRMA	No Take except waterfowl may be taken. Wiyot exempt	Invasive grasses, loss of eelgrass, general threats to habitat. Non Tribal members clamming. Difficult to identify boundaries within South Humboldt Bay	Determine reason it does not extend to southern water's edge and extend if no reason	Yes	Clearer for outreach purposes to say from southern end of bay to 2nd hunter pull out	Direct enforcement to look for unlawful clamming			Boundary Change	
Humboldt	Sugarloaf Island Special Closure	300'		No change	Yes						
Humboldt	South Cape Mendocino SMR	No Take	Minimal patrol	No change	Yes		Develop a plan for evaluating remote area MPAs to determine impact, such as temporary M2 radar/drone surveillance; support southern Humboldt patrol by LED				
Humboldt	Steamboat Rock Special Closure	300' 3/1-8/31	Confusion on when it is open to swim out to and when it is closed	No change	Yes		Sign that highlights special closure and closure dates				
Humboldt	Mattole Canyon SMR	No Take	Minimal patrol. Some commercial crab pots observed during USCG flyover	No change	Yes		Develop a plan for evaluating remote area MPAs to determine impact, such as temporary M2 radar/drone surveillance; support southern Humboldt patrol by law enforcement division				
Humboldt	Sea Lion Gulch SMR	No Take	Backpackers harvest mussels along entire Lost Coast Trail; people getting too close to new elephant seal colony. No cell connectivity to determine boundaries of MPA	Move southern boundary south to Cooskie Creek	BLM support but need fisher input	Creek is more identifiable feature for land based outreach to fishers hiking the Lost Coast Trail				Boundary Change	

Humboldt	Big Flat SMCA	Rec take of salmon by trolling and Dungeness crab by trap, hoop net or hand. Commercial take of salmon with troll fishing gear and Dungeness crab by trap. Multiple Tribes exempt	Backpackers harvest mussels along entire Lost Coast Trail; surf fishing occurs at Miller Flat. No cell connectivity to determine boundaries of MPA	No change	Yes		More outreach needed for fishers hiking lost coast. Include more detailed information in BLM Lost Coast map				
Mendocino	Double Cone Rock SMCA	Rec take of salmon by trolling; Dungeness crab by trap, hoop net or hand. Commercial take of salmon with troll fishing gear and Dungeness crab by trap	Unknown. Limited patrol. Report of excessive urchin and need for grazer suppression.	Reassess restoration policy in SMCAs impacted by climate change/kelp loss	Yes	Loss of kelp habitat needs to be addressed in this SMCA	Allow for restoration work/grazer suppression to address urchin barrens (reds and purples)	California Sea Urchin Commission - allow for commercial take of urchin		Other	
Mendocino	Vizcaino Rock Special Closure	300' 3/1-8/31		No change	Yes						
Mendocino	Ten Mile SMR	No Take	Primary concern is shore-based fishing (rod and reel at seaside creek beach). Recreational fishers take rockfish and lingcod, crab pots "walk themselves" into MPA at southern boundary. Dogs off leash	No change	Yes		OK/boundary sign needed at northern boundary. Simplify outreach language around MPA clusters				
Mendocino	Ten Mile Beach SMCA	Rec take of Dungeness crab by trap, hoop net or hand. Commercial take of Dungeness crab by trap. Many Tribes exempt	Unlawful take of fish (rockfish, lingcod); dogs off leash in snowy plover habitat. Potential sand dump site south side of Ten Mile Beach	No change	Yes		Simplify outreach language around MPA clusters				
Mendocino	Ten Mile Estuary SMCA	Waterfowl may be taken. Many Tribes exempt	Limited access for fishers	No change	Yes		Simplify outreach language around MPA clusters				
Mendocino	MacKerricher SMCA	All rec take allowed. Commercial take allowed except for bull kelp and giant kelp	Multiple violations occur daily since closest to Fort Bragg city center (general fish and game code violations). North boundary (Laguna Point) hotspot for intertidal take	Add protection for intertidal zone, per State Parks, in support for protection of the resource and ease of enforcement/outreach	Many in support but no full consensus	There are limited areas in the county to lawfully take intertidal animals such as mussels, turban snails, limpets, etc.	More enforcement support needed due to limited State Parks personnel. Focus on tidepool education. Intertidal specific take signs are needed	State Parks pending review		Take Allowance Change	
Mendocino	Point Cabrillo SMR	No Take	Lighthouse sees lots of boats fishing offshore of Frolic Cove on northern end of Point Cabrillo SMR or inside	No change	Yes		OK boundary signs would be beneficial on both boundaries for kayak fishing				
Mendocino	Russian Gulch SMCA	All rec take allowed. Commercial take allowed except for bull kelp and giant kelp	General fish and game code violations	No change	Yes						

Mendocino	Big River Estuary SMCA	Rec take of surfperch by hook and line from shore only and Dungeness crab by hoop net or hand. Many Tribes exempt. Waterfowl may be taken	Increased use for swimming and recreation has led to safety concerns, including close calls between swimmers and hunters. Swimmers mixing with motorized boats may lead to accidents	Hunting should be prohibited due to high public use/public safety issues, per State Parks	Yes	Community reported incidents of near misses between hunters/boaters and swimmers		State Parks pending review		Allowed Activity Change	
Mendocino	Big River Estuary SMCA	Rec take of surfperch by hook and line from shore only and Dungeness crab by hoop net or hand. Many Tribes exempt. Waterfowl may be taken	Can MPA restrict motorized vessels if not ecological reserve?	Restrict all motorized vessels with allowance for public safety, per State Parks	Yes, with clarification that motorized vessels are only restricted going east (up river)	West access from launch should be allowed for boaters going out to ocean	Data on crab fishery is needed to determine whether allowance is sustainable. Need clear signage restricting snare traps. Pick up after dog signs needed	State Parks pending review		Allowed Activity Change	
Mendocino	Van Damme SMCA	All rec take allowed. Commercial take allowed except for bull kelp and giant kelp	Overtake and take of undersize fish	No change	Yes						
Mendocino	Navarro River Estuary SMCA	Rec take of salmonoids by hook and line. Many Tribes exempt. Waterfowl may be taken	People illegally breach sandbar (but outside MPA?)	No change	Yes						
Mendocino	Point Arena SMR	No Take	Fishing in SMR reported by lighthouse manager	No change	Yes		OK boundary signs needed				
Mendocino	Point Arena SMCA	Rec take of salmon by trolling. Commercial take of salmon with troll fishing gear		No change	Yes						
Mendocino	Sea Lion Cove	Rec and commercial take of finfish	Urchin barrens	Reassess restoration policy in SMCAs impacted by climate change/kelp loss	Yes		Allow for restoration work/grazer suppression to address urchin barrens (reds and purples)	California Sea Urchin Commission - allow for commercial take of urchin		Other	
Mendocino	Saunders Reef SMCA	Rec take of salmon by trolling. Commercial take of salmon with troll fishing gear and urchin	Citations issued for people diving and taking at Schooner Gulch; illegal shore fishing from Hearn Gulch	No change	Yes		Additional enforcement personnel/efforts are needed				
Sonoma	Del Mar Landing SMR	No Take	Fishing at north end	No change	Yes		Trail pamphlets with MPA information				
Sonoma	Stewarts Point SMR	No Take	Poaching at 3 mile line. Difficult for fishers to determine where 3 mile line is and difficult to enforce from land	Allow for trolling of salmon. Change to SMCA?	No. Discussed with no strong opposition but more info needed	Impact to commercial salmon fishing can be addressed with minimal impact to other resources	More signage needed at public access points			Take Allowance Change	Yes, would change SMR to SMCA. No consensus
Sonoma	Stewarts Point SMCA	Rec take from shore only of marine aquatic plants other than sea palm, marine invertebrates, finfish by hook and line, surf smelt by beach net, species authorized by hand-held dip net	Tribal based MPA	Prohibit all take and add Kashia Pomo to Tribal exemptions to make affirmative rights of Tribal Members re: collection, harvesting, and research	Yes	MPA is only accessed by Kashia Tribal members from shore (owned by Tribe) so would be same protection while acknowledging Tribal rights				Take Allowance Change	Yes, change from SMCA to No-Take SMCA with Tribal exemption

Sonoma	Salt Point SMCA	Recreational take of abalone and finfish allowed	Take of abalone during closure; poaching of intertidal species. Confusion regarding intertidal take	No change	Yes		Needs more signage on collecting/take of shellfish and other non finfish				
Sonoma	Gerstle Cove SMR	No Take	Excessive intertidal take. Rec fishers fishing the line	No change	Yes		Need for good tidepooler rules signs to address harmful tidepooling				
Sonoma	Russian River SMRMA	No take except waterfowl may be taken	Marine mammal disturbance occurring. County of Sonoma needs to conduct restoration work as part of management plan	Allow for restoration work in SMRMA	Yes	Restoration will not impact haul out sites, marine mammals or birds				Other	
Sonoma	Russian River SMCA	Rec take of Dungeness crab by trap, and surf smelt by hand-held dip net or beach net. Commercial take of Dungeness crab by trap	Illegal onshore and offshore fishing; seal disturbance "seal selfies" near Goat Rock. Trash/dogs off leash	No change	Yes		More outreach for out of town fishers/permanent signage				
Sonoma	Bodega Head SMR	No Take	Take of rockfish and trolling for salmon; fishing on northern boundary off rocks Difficult "fan" shape and hard to identify northern boundary makes enforcement difficult	No change	Yes	Would require new outreach					
Sonoma/Marin	Bodega Head SMCA	Rec take of pelagic finfish by trolling, Dungeness crab by trap, and market squid by hand-held dip net. Commercial take of pelagic finfish by troll fishing gear and round haul net, Dungeness crab by trap, and market squid by round haul net	Take of rockfish and trolling for salmon; fishing on northern boundary off rocks Difficult "fan" shape and hard to identify northern boundary makes enforcement difficult	No change	Yes						
Sonoma/Marin	Estero Americano SMRMA	No take except waterfowl may be taken	Confusion as to boundary "high tide line" and who manages strip of beach between ocean and estuary that is often closed; Difficulty identifying eastern boundary. No way to see boundary from shore	No change	Yes		More signs needed at access points here to address compliance concerns				
Marin	Estero de San Antonio SMRMA	No take except waterfowl may be taken	Some take (animal remains) and illegal fishing	No change	Yes						
Marin	Point Reyes SMR	No take	Sand dollar and fossil take, rod and reel fishing from vessels, party boats troll for salmon; violations are limited offshore	No change	Yes		Signage and more enforcement needed, especially at Drakes Beach and Coast Guard Station. Consolidated mixed messaging signs, with dog information.				

Marin	Point Reyes SMCA	Rec take of salmon by trolling and Dungeness crab by trap. Commercial take of salmon with troll fishing gear and Dungeness crab by trap	Commercial crabbers set coonstripe shrimp traps on top of crab traps; Boundaries in MPA cluster hard to identify; NPS jurisdiction limited to	No change	Yes						
Marin	Point Reyes Headlands Special Closure	No access from mean high tide line to a distance of 1000 feet seaward	Recreational vessels fishing in summer; Disturbance spiked in 2020; USFW continues to monitor this area	No change at this time	Yes	Might need to revisit making adjustments in the future if data shows changes/increases in disturbance					
Marin	Estero de Limantour SMR	No take	Difficult to determine boundary between SMR and Drakes Estero SMCA makes enforcement difficult. There are suspicions that poaching of clams occurs in the SMR from people on kayaks from Drakes Estero	Extend SMR designation all the way into Drakes Estero	Yes	NPS in support of expanding SMR because federally designated wilderness, major harbor seal haul out, and critical nursery habitat for leopard shark and bay rays		EAC Marin with NPS letter of support		Boundary Change	
Marin	Drakes Estero SMCA	The recreational take of clams is allowed	Difficult to determine boundary line between Drakes Estero SMCA and Estero de Limantour SMR leading to poaching. Cows accessing/pooping from NPS ranch leased land	Prohibit clamming in Drakes Estero SMCA. Merge with Estero de Limantour SMR.	Yes	SMCA designation was originally due to oyster farm that is no longer there. NPS in support of making into a SMR due to federally designated wilderness area	Give people direction/ outreach materials on where they CAN clam safely	EAC Marin with NPS letter of support		Take Allowance Change	Yes, change from SMCA to SMR
Marin	Point Resistance Rock Special Closure	No access from mean high tide line to a distance of 300 feet seaward of rock	Seabird flushing by vessels. USFW monitoring area.	No change	Yes	GFNMS thinks current regulations are good, very important to their mission and public outreach					
Marin	Double Point/Stormy Stack Special Closure	No access from mean high tide line to a distance of 300 feet seaward of rock	Seabird flushing by vessels and surfers, who enter harbor seal rookery. Increased visitation due to people hiking to Alamere Falls	No change	Yes	GFNMS thinks current regulations are good, very important to their mission and public outreach and don't want to extend to shore to allow shore access	Put signs with regulations and text about importance of special closure at trailhead; more outreach to boaters about special closures needed				

Marin	Duxbury Reef SMCA	Recreational take of finfish from shore and abalone* is allowed	Difficult to enforce and outreach about why you can take finfish but not invertebrates. Beach Watch data at this site for 30 years show slight decrease in activities in last 10 years, but take of invertebrates has been observed, and the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Superintendent has provided information about the need to consider additional conservation measures at Duxbury Reef. Maria Brown (NMS) submitted a letter saying Duxbury Reef would benefit from increased protection of unique and important habitat of entire reef (largest shale reef in N. America). EAC MPA Watch data shows	Change to SMR because of difficulty of interpretation and enforcement. Extend southern boundary further out to sea (south) and northern boundary to Double Point to fully cover reef	No	No agreement on extending boundaries to cover the reef and changing to SMR. More research needed on benefits of changing existing ribbon from SMCA to SMR; Might be important fishing access point for public	More signs needed and more support for onsite education and enforcement from CDFW to agate beach and land-side terrestrial Duxbury	EAC Marin		Take Allowance Change	Yes, would change SMCA to SMR. No consensus
Marin	Duxbury Reef SMCA	Recreational take of finfish from shore and abalone* is allowed	Heavy use and impacts, intertidal take – buckets and tools (e.g., crow bars, tire jacks) used to take black turban snails and purple urchin that are nestled into cracks. People need to break the reef to get to purple urchin	Potential compromise would be to add specific tidepool protections, similar to OC	TBD	NMS would like to continue conversation to explore potential compromises	Research other tidepool docent programs in MPAs with mixed use of allowed fishing/tidepool protections			Language Change	
San Francisco	North Farallon Islands SMR	No Take	Commercial crab case here	No change	Yes	More data needed for this MPA cluster	Increase CDFW LED patrols during peak months. Need for CCFRP program here				
San Francisco	North Farallon Islands Special Closure	No vessel shall be operated or anchored at any time from the mean high tide line to a distance of 1000 feet seaward of the mean lower low tide line of any shoreline of North Farallon Island, or to a distance of 300 feet seaward of the mean lower low tide line of any shoreline of the remaining three southern islets		No change	Yes						

San Francisco	Southeast Farallon Islands SMR	No Take	Small recreational boats. A number of encroachments occur into SMR during better weather months	No change	Yes		Increase patrols from LED and consider M2 radar at this location				
San Francisco	Southeast Farallon Islands SMCA	Recreational take of salmon by trolling and commercial take of salmon by troll fishing gear	Salmon fishers use salmon gear to fish for halibut	No change	Yes						
San Francisco	Southeast Farallon Islands Special Closure	Closed 300 feet seaward year-round, except Fisherman's Bay to East Landing, southeastern tip of the island and southeastern side of Saddle (Seal) Rock, which is closed from December 1 through September 14. 5 mile per hour speed limit 1000 ft seaward of mean lower low tide of any shoreline Exhaust system requirements for commercial dive boats	Boats cut across the special closure	No change	Yes	Predates MLPA process, careful consideration went into crafting special closure regulations					
San Mateo	Egg (Devil's Slide) Rock to Devil's Slide Special Closure	A special closure is designated from the mean high tide line to a distance of 300 feet seaward of the mean lower low tide line of any shoreline of any of the three rocks comprising Egg (Devil's Slide) Rock; Transit in between the rock and the mainland between these points is prohibited at any time.	Reported violations include fishing boats inside boundaries and low flying aircraft/drones	Change name to "Devil's Slide Special Closure"	Yes	Egg rock is no longer a name used/recognized locally. Devil's Slide is more appropriate and simpler for outreach				Language Change	
San Mateo	Montara SMR	No Take	A top cited MPA in Central Coast, highest in San Mateo; fishing offshore and tidepool take; Difficulty interpreting southern boundary	Move Montara SMR onshore southern boundary to current Pillar Point SMCA southern boundary (north end of Maverick's Beach), then extending out to current offshore southern SMR boundary point	Yes	Easier for enforcement and makes SMR boundaries consistent with Fitzgerald Marine Reserve boundaries				Boundary Change	

San Mateo	Pillar Point SMCA	The recreational take of pelagic finfish by trolling, Dungeness crab by trap, and market squid by hand-held dip net is allowed. The commercial take of pelagic finfish by troll or round haul net Dungeness crab by trap, and market squid by round haul net is allowed.	Unclear boundary leads to poaching in intertidal Difficult for local law enforcement to ensure compliance of tidepool take regulations due to high volume of consumptive visitors	Extend southern SMCA boundary further south to edge of harbor jetty, extending out to existing offshore southern point. Onshore northern boundary would be same as Montara SMR onshore southern boundary	Yes	Would cover entire reef in MPA for ease of allied agency outreach and enforcement.				Boundary Change	
San Mateo	Pillar Point SMCA	The recreational take of pelagic finfish by trolling, Dungeness crab by trap, and market squid by hand-held dip net is allowed. The commercial take of pelagic finfish by troll or round haul net Dungeness crab by trap, and market squid by round haul net is allowed.		Change regulations to allow for recreational hook and line take of finfish from shore and take of mussels, crabs, snails and seaweeds for equity and access purposes	Yes	Allowing for shore based hook and line and some intertidal take maintains access for consumptive users while applying some protection for a heavily impacted habitat				Take Allowance Change	
San Mateo/Santa Cruz	Año Nuevo SMR	No Take	Unlawful take of snails; fishing; wildlife disturbance. Boats driving squid out of MPA. Confusion because sign at top of trail to Greyhound Rock says fishing beach but must go left at bottom to legally fish	Move southern boundary line to have whole of Greyhound Rock in SMR	Yes, at both Santa Cruz and San Mateo Collaborative meetings	Clearer boundary makes enforcement easier	Ensure sign with map at bottom of trail. Utilize social/digital/traditional media for public outreach	State Parks pending review		Boundary Change	
San Mateo/Santa Cruz	Greyhound Rock SMCA	Rec take of giant kelp by hand harvest only, market squid, salmon. Other finfish by hook and line only from shore. Commercial take of giant kelp by hand harvest only, salmon and market squid	Take of mussels at southern boundary Confusion with Año Nuevo SMR boundary/whether fishing is allowed at Greyhound Rock Split between 2 counties	Move northern boundary line to have whole of Greyhound Rock outside of SMCA and in SMR; Move southern boundary south to beginning of Scott Creek bridge	Yes, at both Santa Cruz and San Mateo Collaborative meetings	Reef should be fully protected or fully open. Preference to cover reef but either way will have clearer boundary for outreach/enforcement. Move of southern boundary would cover reef to address intertidal impacts	Need for sign with map at Scotts Creek	State Parks pending review		Boundary Change	
San Mateo/Santa Cruz	Greyhound Rock SMCA	Rec take of giant kelp by hand harvest only, market squid, salmon. Other finfish by hook and line only from shore. Commercial take of giant kelp by hand harvest only, salmon and market squid	Confusing regulations	Replace comma with semi-colon in regulations after "giant kelp by hand harvest only", or otherwise edit	Yes	Clearer language needed to clarify you are not required to catch salmon and squid by hand harvest only		State Parks pending review		Language Change	Section 100 change
Santa Cruz	Natural Bridges SMR	No Take	Hard to identify boundaries; safety concerns with fishers and swimmers at Natural Bridges State Park beach	Shift both boundaries south to more identifiable features (4 mile point and Natural Bridge)	Yes	State Parks would like SMR to cover the beach at Natural Bridges SP for public safety reasons	Need for interpretive signs with maps/good tidepooler rules, why MPAs, etc.	State Parks pending review		Boundary Change	
Santa Cruz	Soquel Canyon SMCA	Rec and commercial take of pelagic finfish	Split between 2 counties	No change	Yes						

Monterey	Elkhorn Slough SMR	No Take	Fishing occurs regularly at Kirby Park pier/dock, was originally built for fishers with disabilities with SFRA grant. Inconsistent enforcement.	Move northern boundary south of Kirby Park pier/dock. Shift entire MPA to maintain size	Yes, at both Santa Cruz and Monterey Collaborative meetings	Opens fishing area as originally intended to limit poaching; supports increased enforcement presence in area	If Kirby is open, must be concerted cross-jurisdictional effort to enforce shore waste of fish/debris and other F&G Code violations. Need for good fishing practices outreach	Elkhorn Slough Foundation		Boundary Change	
Monterey	Elkhorn Slough SMCA	The recreational take of finfish by hook and line only and clams is allowed. Clams may only be taken on the north shore of the slough in the area adjacent to the Moss Landing State Wildlife Area [subsection 550(a)].	Difficult to determine where SMR/SMCA boundary is (i.e., where kayak fishers can no longer fish).	Move SMR line to bird watching platform (eastern side)	Yes, at both Santa Cruz and Monterey Collaborative meetings	Bird watching platform provides a clear boundary for shore and kayak fishers and would maintain size of SMR with shift off Kirby		Elkhorn Slough Foundation		Boundary Change	
Monterey	Elkhorn Slough SMCA	The recreational take of finfish by hook and line only and clams is allowed. Clams may only be taken on the north shore of the slough in the area adjacent to the Moss Landing State Wildlife Area [subsection 550(a)].	Clamming disturbs sea otter rafts. Huge amounts of trash (fishing receptacles full)	Removing allowance for clamming to address impact to otters and human health considerations	Maybe?	Need more info on impact to recreational clambers and safety of consuming clams	Need for more trash receptacles/removal	Elkhorn Slough Foundation		Take Allowance Change	
Monterey	Moro Cojo Slough State Marine Reserve	No take	Some access on eastern end. Agricultural influence. Elkhorn Slough NERR in support of no change	No change	Yes						
Monterey/Santa Cruz	Soquel Canyon State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational and commercial take of pelagic finfish is allowed	Many violations, especially illegally set crab traps (commercial) and rockfish take (recreational). Whale disturbance. More impact due to depth restrictions lifted	No change	Yes						
Monterey	Portuguese Ledge State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational and commercial take of pelagic finfish is allowed	Many violations, especially rockfish take (recreational). Whale disturbance	No change	Yes						
Monterey	Edward F. Ricketts State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational take of finfish by hook and line. Commercial take of giant kelp and bull kelp by hand	Fishing debris from Coast Guard pier. Abalone and other intertidal poaching at breakwater	Explore regulations to limit fishing gear loss from Coast Guard pier (such as requiring use of breakaway leaders or no braided line)	Yes	Fishing gear loss impacts wildlife, habitat, and safety of divers due to entanglement	Partner with MBNMS on outreach of litter/delict fishing gear			Language Change	
Monterey	Edward F. Ricketts State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational take of finfish by hook and line. Commercial take of giant kelp and bull kelp by hand	New regulations may restrict fishing for rockfish from boat close to shore after October 1	Change to SMR and join with Lovers Point Julia Platt SMR	Maybe	No strong opposition but no fishing reps present		Giant Giant Kelp Restoration Project (G2KR)		Take Allowance Change	Yes, would change from SMCA to SMR

Monterey	Edward F. Ricketts State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational take of finfish by hook and line. Commercial take of giant kelp and bull kelp by hand		Allow restoration/urchin culling without requiring SCP	No	May lead to destruction of healthy urchins		Giant Giant Kelp Restoration Project (G2KR) - applies to Ed Ricketts, PG Gardens, and Carmel Bay SMCAs, and will include suggestion for buoys on sites		Other	
Monterey	Lovers Point- Julia Platt State Marine Reserve	No Take	Fishing off Lovers Point rocks, undersize and immature fish, spearfishers and fishing boats catch halibut, illegal tidepool take; confusion around northern boundary line	Move southern boundary line so Lovers Point is either all in or all out (with preference for all in reserve)	No	Disagreement about where to move line	Boundary marker or fishing/no fishing arrow sign needed if boundary doesn't change			Boundary Change	
Monterey	Lovers Point- Julia Platt State Marine Reserve	No Take		Move southern boundary to end of Lovers Point, splitting point equally in half	Yes	Fishing/No fishing arrow signs would make sense/be more accurate	Fishing/no fishing arrow sign needed at Lovers Point			Boundary Change	
Monterey	Pacific Grove Marine Gardens State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational take of finfish. Commercial take of giant kelp and bull kelp by hand	Spearfishing violations, especially from kayaks and dinghies; illegal take of scallops and crustaceans; undersize and immature fish taken Point Pinos is key oystercatcher nesting habitat	Move both boundary lines so Lovers Point and Point Pinos are all out of SMCA and in SMRs because both are key oystercatcher nesting sites	No	Rock outcropping and buoy at Point Pinos (southern boundary) are currently good boundary indicators for boaters				Boundary Change	
Monterey	Pacific Grove Marine Gardens State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational take of finfish. Commercial take of giant kelp and bull kelp by hand		Move northern boundary to end of Lovers Point	Yes	Fishing/No fishing arrow signs would make sense/be more accurate	Fishing/no fishing arrow sign needed at Lovers Point and Point Pinos			Boundary Change	
Monterey	Pacific Grove Marine Gardens State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational take of finfish. Commercial take of giant kelp and bull kelp by hand	New regulations may restrict fishing for rockfish from boat close to shore after October 1	Change to SMR, join with Lovers Point SMR	Maybe	No strong opposition but no fishing reps present		Giant Giant Kelp Restoration Project (G2KR)		Take Allowance Change	Yes, would change from SMCA to SMR
Monterey	Asilomar State Marine Reserve	No Take	Onshore and offshore fishing common, hook and line from nooks and crannies; harmful tidepooling, tidepool take; wildlife disturbance common Northern boundary at Point Pinos is confusing, splits rocks in half	No change	Yes		Fishing/No Fishing arrow signs needed at Point Pinos				
Monterey	Carmel Pinnacles State Marine Reserve	No Take	Offshore violations common	No change	Yes						
Monterey	Carmel Bay State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational take of finfish. Commercial take of giant kelp and bull kelp by hand	Intertidal take common, including abalone and mussels. Golf balls go into MPA and are not collected. Some kelp take at Stillwater Cove	No change	Yes		Work with Pebble Beach on reducing golf ball litter either through requiring biodegradable balls at key holes or ensuring balls are collected by divers				
Monterey	Point Lobos State Marine Reserve	No Take	Take occurs. Boundaries are confusing	No change	Yes						

Monterey	Point Lobos State Marine Reserve	No Take		Allow restoration/urchin culling	No	Difficult for enforcement/interpretation in no-take area		Giant Kelp Restoration Project (G2KR)		Other	
Monterey	Point Lobos State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational take of salmon and albacore and the commercial take of salmon, albacore, and spot prawn is allowed		No change	Yes						
Monterey	Point Sur State Marine Reserve	No Take	Violations common between SMR and SMCA, southern corner is hard to enforce. Abalone case reported	Encompass the whole coastline of Point Sur in MPA	No	Keep boundaries as is				Boundary Change	
Monterey	Point Sur State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational and commercial take of salmon and albacore		Add bluefin tuna to list of species allowed for take	No	Lessens protection				Take Allowance Change	
Monterey	Big Creek State Marine Reserve	No Take	L-shape of SMR within SMCA is confusing	No change	Yes						
Monterey	Big Creek State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational take of salmon and albacore. Commercial take of salmon, albacore	Potential unlawful fishing off Marine Lab	No change	Yes						
San Luis Obispo	Piedras Blancas State Marine Reserve	No take	Missing signs. Onshore fishing violations (poaching mussels at Point Sierra Nevada). Wildlife disturbance. Extreme angle makes kayak fishers look like they are fishing in SMR	No change	Yes		Use boundary images on signs to help reference angle at pullout.				
San Luis Obispo	Piedras Blancas State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational and commercial take of salmon and albacore	Occasional poaching observed. Fishing for rockfish. No albacore, limited salmon observed by fishers/wardens	No change	Yes						
San Luis Obispo	Cambria State Marine Conservation Area	All recreational take is allowed	Harmful tidepooling occurring throughout MPA. Difficult to message good tidepooler rules without designated protections	Add tidepool protection language similar to Crystal Cove and Dana Point SMCA's	Yes	Would make it easier to message about responsible tidepooling and reduce inadvertent take	Tools for existing SP tidepool docent program needed here, such as Natural Bridges State Park tidepool cart	State Parks pending review; Environment California?		Take Allowance Change	
San Luis Obispo	Cambria State Marine Conservation Area	All recreational take is allowed	Boundary between Cambria SMCA and White Rock SMCA is confusing, leading to accidental poaching by kayak fishers putting in at boundary at Wedgewood	Shift White Rock SMCA northern boundary to end of neighborhood at Lampton Park. Shift southern boundary south 1/2 mile accordingly to not lose any protection and cover some kelp habitat	Yes	May be some pushback from commercial live rockfish fishery for southern shift but recreational anglers in support		Environment California?		Boundary Change	
San Luis Obispo	Cambria State Marine Conservation Area	All recreational take is allowed	No commercial take allowed but there is an existing kelp lease?	Remove kelp lease 209 OR clarify that lease holder cannot harvest within Cambria SMCA	Yes	Commercial harvest of kelp is incompatible with MPA regulations that allow recreational take only		Environment California?		Other	

San Luis Obispo	White Rock State Marine Conservation Area	Commercial take of giant kelp and bull kelp with valid lease	Boundary between Cambria SMCA and White Rock SMCA is confusing, leading to accidental poaching of kayak fishers putting in at boundary at Wedgewood	Shift White Rock SMCA northern boundary to end of neighborhood at Lampton Park. Shift southern boundary south 1/2 mile accordingly to not lose any protection	Yes	May be some pushback from commercial live rockfish fishery for southern shift but recreational anglers in support		Environment California?		Boundary Change	
San Luis Obispo	White Rock State Marine Conservation Area	Commercial take of giant kelp and bull kelp with valid lease		Prohibit commercial take of giant kelp and bull kelp with valid lease and change to an SMR	Yes	Original intent was a reserve but there was existing kelp lease. Current lease holder is fine with relinquishing/ disallowing take of kelp		Environment California?		Take Allowance Change	Yes, would change from SMCA to SMR
San Luis Obispo	Morro Bay State Marine Recreational Management Area	Waterfowl hunting allowed. Recreational take of finfish north of line at Pasadena Point. Aquaculture allowed	Poaching occurs at southern side that does not allow take of finfish. Line is confusing and unclear on maps and outreach materials. Illegal invertebrate take (e.g., sea stars at jetty, ghost shrimp at Windy Cove). Signs needed at blue pier	Shift no fishing boundary 150 yds north to public access at Pasadena Park (between Santa Ysabel and Baywood Way)	Yes	Makes it easier for county to manage and educate more accurately about fishing/no fishing line	Signs needed, especially at Blue Pier. County can install sign at Pasadena Park			Boundary Change	
San Luis Obispo	Morro Bay State Marine Recreational Management Area	Waterfowl hunting allowed. Recreational take of finfish north of line at Pasadena Point. Aquaculture allowed	Hunting "within" a bird sanctuary (City of Morro Bay) is confusing, safety concerns for paddlers with increased visitors who are unaware hunting is allowed. Concern about safety issues around hunting around neighborhoods. Trampling of plants occur on shoreline in Baywood Park.	No change to regulations at this time	Yes	Important hunting area. Confusion should be addressed through outreach	Overlay hunting map on SMRMA for outreach purposes Mixed message signs/more education needed about estuary impacts/erosion: "tread lightly" in Los Osos				
San Luis Obispo	Morro Bay State Marine Reserve	No Take	Some hunting violations, hugging line; Boardwalks work to protect birds! Might be good to have one at Baywood Park at 1st Street	No change (reluctantly)	Yes	Some desire to extend SMR west and into bottom part of bay beneath Baywood Peninsula but do not want to impede on aquaculture	More education and outreach needed				
San Luis Obispo	Point Buchon State Marine Reserve	No Take	Regular poaching offshore, trolling, and stopping to drop a line in water. Busiest MPA in SLO, most violations observed/cited	Move northern boundary to actual Point Buchon	Yes	Clearer boundary for fishers coming from Port San Luis	Boundary marker needed here. Make "flagpole" more visible (hang flag?) if boundary doesn't change	State Parks pending review		Boundary Change	
San Luis Obispo	Point Buchon State Marine Conservation Area	Recreational and commercial take of salmon and albacore allowed	Regular poaching, rockfish and lingcod, maybe some squid boats?	No change	Yes						

Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Vandenberg SMR	No Take	Vandenberg Space Force Base (VSFB) allows active-duty officers, their dependents/families, and guests to fish off Vandenberg. Leads to confusion since officially a no-take area. Regulations should match take allowed. Petition has been submitted by City of Lompoc to allow shore fishing at Surf Beach	Change designation to SMCA that allows hook and line for finfish from shore only	Yes	Would increase actual protection due to past 5 Base Commanders' decision to allow all legal take on base and would address equity concerns by allowing access for non-military at Surf Beach		Greg Helms to propose intertidal ribbon		Take Allowance Change	Yes, would change from SMR to SMCA
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Vandenberg SMR	No Take		Reevaluate MOA with VSFB that is being interpreted as allowing for full military recreational take in a no-take SMR	No, not needed if designation is changed to SMCA	Vandenberg conservation officer will enforce updated take regs on military personnel				Other	
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Point Conception SMR	No Take	Recent groundfish case. Difficult for enforcement to access from land through Dangermond Preserve. M2 radar at Pt. Conception shows a lot of boating activity, may	No change	Yes		Provide continued support for M2 radar with ground truthing and continued coordination/info sharing between agencies				
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Kashlayit SMCA	Rec take of finfish, invertebrates (except rock scallops and mussels) and giant kelp by hand harvest. Santa Ynez band of Chumash exempt	Illegal and dangerous access down the bluffs on Gaviota. Fishing without a license. Access issues for pier fishers with Gaviota pier closed. Difficult to interpret	Reword regulations for clarity of outreach: "Recreational take of finfish, invertebrates, and giant kelp allowed"	Yes	Simpler regulations will make outreach easier, increasing compliance, with minimal impacts to the resources	Have FGC/State push for pier repair at Gaviota Pier (SB County/State Parks) for safety/access reasons	State Parks pending review/Greg Helms		Language Change	Section 100 change
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Naples SMCA	Rec take by spearfishing of white seabass and pelagic finfish. Commercial take of giant kelp by hand or mechanical harvest. Santa Ynez Band of Chumash exempt	Hook and line fishing and access issues occur here, and most days there are at least two vehicles for fishing or surfing parked near Naples. Impact to hook and line fishers	Add hook and line to allowed method of take	No	Numbers/impact/level of take different between hook and line and spearfishing. Would drastically reduce protection				Take Allowance Change	
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Campus Point No-Take SMCA	No Take	Onshore and offshore hook and line fishing continues to be observed	Change purple to red for outreach purposes	Yes	Easier to explain "no take" if consistent with red SMR		Greg Helms		Other	
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Goleta Slough No-Take SMCA	No Take	Trespassing (e.g., illegal swimming, dogs). People occasionally use nets to fish here and/or fish off bridges at the finger boundaries of the slough. Dumping of sediment still occurs in Goleta Bay	Consider water quality designation for Goleta Bay	Yes	Goleta Bay is between two MPAs and there is a need to address impacts of sediment dumping to subsistence fishers off Goleta Pier		Greg Helms		Other	
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Goleta Slough No-Take SMCA	No Take		Change purple to red for outreach purposes	Yes	Easier to explain "no take" if consistent with red SMR		Greg Helms		Other	

Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Richardson Rock SFMR	No Take		No change	Yes						
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	San Miguel Island Special Closure	Allowance for sea urchin divers between Castle Rock and Judith Rock SMR western boundary (Point Bennet) between 3/15-4/30 and 10/1-12/15.	Commercial urchin poaching. Purpose to reduce disturbance to pinniped populations. Is closure still necessary? Point Bennet has one of the largest pinniped (six species) rookeries on the West Coast of North America	Reevaluate need for special closure (SC); Clean up language to address confusion between 300 yards describing SC and 100 yards keeping boats from whole Island 102 A.1.(a)	Yes		M2 radar at NMFS marine mammal station	Greg Helms		Language Change	
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Harris Point SFMR	No Take	CDFW sees some fishers that are taking from shore, although it is not common	No change	Yes		Use land-based range markers (e.g., O & K) to mark boundaries				
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Judith Rock SFMR	No Take		No change	Yes		Use land-based range markers (e.g., O & K) to mark boundaries				
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Carrington Point SMR	No Take	Confusing angle relative to pier	No change	Yes	NPS outreach on angle has been good	More permanent boundary markers/signage is needed				
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Skunk Point SMR	No Take	Difficult to determine how far offshore boats are (in or out)	No change	Yes						
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	South Point SFMR	No Take		No change	Yes						
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Painted Cave SMCA	Rec take of spiny lobster and pelagic finfish	People are taking non-pelagic fish species, rockfish, California sheephead, and live fish	No change	Yes						
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Gull Island SFMR	No Take		Have state discuss with NMS changing federal area to FMCA to allow for take of pelagics	No	More data/justification needed				Take Allowance Change	Yes, would turn federal MRs into federal MCAs. No consensus
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Scorpion SFMR	No Take	Fishing/take in little coves at eastern boundaries. Lobster traps	No change	Yes		More on-island enforcement presence needed				
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Anacapa Island Special Closure	No net or trap may be used in waters less than 20 feet deep. Brown Pelican closure from Portuguese Rock to Frenchy's Cove 1/1-10/31	Brown pelican area makes it difficult for Island Packers and others to land legally at Frenchy's	Add exemption to allow access/landing Frenchy's Cove	Yes	Intent was to allow landing at Frenchy's Cove but aligning brown pelican closure with SMR/SMCA boundary closed off access to safe landing		Greg Helms		Allowed Activity Change	
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Anacapa Island Special Closure	No net or trap may be used in waters less than 20 feet deep. Brown Pelican closure from Portuguese Rock to Frenchy's Cove 1/1-10/32	Depth hard to enforce due to sheer drop off from island	Reassess need for Special Closure and consider removing if not justified	Yes	May only need brown pelican closure rather than full island special closure to protect seabirds		Greg Helms		Allowed Activity Change	Yes, would remove special closure

Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Anacapa Island SFMCA	Rec take of spiny lobster and pelagic finfish. Commercial take of spiny lobster. Santa Ynez Band of Chumash exempt	Confusion regarding what "pelagic" means may lead to unlawful take	No change	Yes		Outreach needed around pelagics				
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Anacapa Island SFMR	No Take	Violations for unlawful take	No change	Yes						
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Footprint SFMR	No Take	Lots of violations. Boats drift in because they cannot anchor	Have state discuss with NMS changing federal area to FMCA to allow for take of pelagics	No	More data/justification needed			Take Allowance Change	Yes, would turn federal MRs into federal MCAs. No consensus	
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Begg Rock SMR	No Take	The MPA violations here are commercial and come from experienced	No change	Yes						
Santa Barbara and Ventura (Santa Barbara Channel)	Santa Barbara Island SFMR	No Take	Osborne Bank. CPFV/commercial lobster poaching. Overlapping jurisdictions	Have state discuss with NMS changing federal area to FMCA to allow for take of pelagics	No	More data/justification needed	M2 radar needed to monitor remote MPA		Take Allowance Change	Yes, would turn federal MRs into federal MCAs. No consensus	
Los Angeles (Mainland)	Point Dume SMCA	Rec take by spearfishing of white seabass and pelagic finfish. Commercial take of swordfish by harpoon and coastal pelagic species by round haul net, brail gear, and light boat. Santa Ynez band exempt	Frequent noncompliance with MPAs and limited enforcement	Delete allowance for commercial take of Swordfish by harpoon	Yes	Swordfish fishing does not occur that close to shore	Additional enforcement personnel/efforts are needed	State Parks pending review; Heal the Bay	Take Allowance Change		
Los Angeles (Mainland)	Point Dume SMCA	Rec take by spearfishing of white seabass and pelagic finfish. Commercial take of swordfish by harpoon and coastal pelagic species by round haul net, brail gear, and light boat. Santa Ynez band exempt		Allow hook and line fishing for allowed method of take of white seabass and pelagic finfish	No	Lessening of protection/unclear impacts			Take Allowance Change		
Los Angeles (Mainland)	Point Dume SMR	No Take	Angle of eastern boundary is confusing/extends due west and is close to shore	No change	Yes		Use of surveyed boundary images in outreach can help address confusion with eastern boundary at Paradise Cove				
Los Angeles (Mainland)	Point Vicente No-Take SMCA	No Take	Frequent noncompliance with MPAs and limited enforcement	No change	Yes		Additional enforcement personnel/efforts are needed				
Los Angeles (Mainland)	Point Vicente No-Take SMCA	No Take	Confusion of significance of purple designation	Keep allowance for maintenance but change color from purple to red for ease of public interpretation	Yes	Easier to explain "no take" if consistent with red SMR			Other		

Los Angeles (Mainland)	Abalone Cove SMCA	Rec take by spearfishing of white seabass and pelagic finfish; and market squid by hand-held dip net. Commercial take of swordfish by harpoon and coastal pelagic species by round haul net, brail gear, and light boat	Harmful tidepooling impacts/take from tidepools. Frequent noncompliance with MPAs and limited enforcement	Delete allowance for commercial take of swordfish by harpoon	Yes	Swordfish fishing does not occur that close to shore	Additional enforcement personnel/efforts are needed	Heal the Bay		Take Allowance Change	
Los Angeles (Mainland)	Abalone Cove SMCA	Rec take by spearfishing of white seabass and pelagic finfish; and market squid by hand-held dip net. Commercial take of swordfish by harpoon and coastal pelagic species by round haul net, brail gear, and light boat		Allow hook and line fishing for allowed method of take of white seabass and pelagic finfish	No	Lessening of protection/unclear impacts				Take Allowance Change	
Los Angeles (Catalina Island)	Arrow Point to Lion Head Point SMCA	All rec and commercial take allowed. Take of invertebrates prohibited	Poaching lobster and abalone. Hoop nets. Difficult to identify 1,000 feet from shore at Indian/Endemic Rock	No change	Yes		Need for a locally managed (research) buoy to mark 1,000 feet point				
Los Angeles (Catalina Island)	Blue Cavern Onshore No-Take SMCA	No Take. No anchor area in original refuge boundaries	Fishing/using hoop nets close to shore at Big Fisherman Cove. Poaching at Yellowtail Point and Bird Rock; Confusion around no anchor zone	Change purple to red for outreach purposes	Yes, only if all current maintenance/access activities are still allowed	Easier to explain "no take" if consistent with red SMR	Need for some boundary marker at Yellowtail Point. MPA Watch transect would help identify use/ compliance issues here			Other	
Los Angeles (Catalina Island)	Blue Cavern Offshore SMCA	Rec take of pelagic finfish by hook and line and spearfishing and white seabass by spearfishing and market squid by hand held dip net. Commercial take of pelagic finfish by hook and line and swordfish by harpoon	Take via illegal gear types	No change	Yes						
Los Angeles (Catalina Island)	Long Point SMR	No Take	Trolling through MPA occurs. Misconception that MPA is only close to shore. Rental boats go past Long Point and fish	Make a distance from shore rather than lat/long for ease of outreach. Cut off corner and flip and move west (offshore) to maintain size	Yes	Clearer outreach to trollers to stay certain distance from shore, IF maintains size				Boundary Change	
Los Angeles (Catalina Island)	Lover's Cove SMCA	Rec take by hook and line from the Cabrillo Mole is allowed. Feeding fish allowed	Fishing from shore at the ramp near the Mole. Angle is difficult at eastern boundary. Food torpedoes are shot from tourist subs to attract fish to windows	Remove allowance for feeding of fish	Yes	Against intent of MLPA, affecting behavior of fish/habitat; public safety issue as fish become more aggressive and bite				Allowed Activity Change	
Los Angeles (Catalina Island)	Casino Point No-Take SMCA	No Take. Feeding fish allowed	Boundaries don't match dive park buoys. Feeding fish may be incompatible use. 40-50' depth at MPA line.	Remove allowance for feeding of fish.	Yes	Against intent of MLPA, affecting behavior of fish/habitat; public safety issue as fish become more aggressive and bite	Might need to utilize a weaning off process for fish used to being fed			Allowed Activity Change	

Los Angeles (Catalina Island)	Casino Point No-Take SMCA	No Take. Feeding fish allowed		Change purple to red for outreach purposes for outreach	Yes	Easier to explain "no take" if consistent with red SMR				Other	
Los Angeles (Catalina Island)	Farnsworth Onshore SMCA	Rec take by spearfishing of white seabass and pelagic finfish; marline, tunas and dorado by trolling and market squid by hand held dip net. Commercial take of swordfish by harpoon, coastal pelagics by roundhaul net, brail gear and light boat	More difficult to assess whether poaching is occurring on the backside. Challenging/confusing for fishers	No change	Yes		More outreach to fishers needed on why deep habitat/fish are protected here				
Los Angeles (Catalina Island)	Farnsworth Offshore SMCA	Rec take of pelagic finfish by hook and line or by spearfishing; white seabass by spearfishing; marlin, tunas and dorado by trolling and market squid by hand held dip net. Commercial take of swordfish by harpoon, coastal pelagics by roundhaul net, brail gear and light boat	CPFVs (party boats) are seen illegally fishing in Farnsworth Offshore SMCA, moving out if they see the CDFW patrol boat approaching. Regs restricting take of rockfish can be confusing for fishers/challenging to prove rockfish on board was taken outside	No change	Yes						
Los Angeles (Catalina Island)	Cat Harbor SMCA	Rec take of finfish by hook and line or by spearfishing, market squid by hook and line, and spiny lobster and sea urchin. Commercial take of sea cucumbers by diving only and spiny lobster and sea urchin. Aquaculture of finfish	Some take of undersized fish	No change	Yes						
Orange	Bolsa Bay SMCA	Rec take of finfish by hook and line from shore in designated areas only	Confusion between Bolsa Bay and Bolsa Chica Basin MPAs	Potentially combine Bolsa Bay with Bolsa Chica Basin MPAs?	No	State Lands requirement to have fishing				Boundary Change	Yes, would change from SMCA to SMR. No consensus
Orange	Bolsa Chica Basin No-Take SMCA	No Take. Allows for maintenance of artificial structures	Water management infrastructure is failing - needs management and repairs. Shoaling and potential closing of inlet - need cost effective alternative to dredging and \$ to implement. Could ultimately change boundaries of MPAs	MPA should cover all waters in ecological reserve. Move northeastern boundary to Graham	Yes	Makes enforcement easier so CDFW can cite for unlawful fishing using 632 instead of no trespassing		OC Coastkeeper	Wendy Berube	Boundary Change	
Orange	Bolsa Chica Basin No-Take SMCA	No Take. Allows for maintenance of artificial structures	Confusion between Bolsa Bay and Bolsa Chica Basin MPA regulations and whether take is allowed. Bridge inconsistency	Change purple to red for outreach purposes	Yes	Easier to explain "no take" if consistent with red SMR		OC Coastkeeper	Wendy Berube	Other	

Orange	Upper Newport Bay SMCA	Rec take of finfish by hook and line from shore in designated areas only	Ecological Reserve and MPA overlapping jurisdiction. Fishing from floats by PCH bridge and using gill nets at Jamboree	No change	Yes		Harbor and estuary signs needed at Newport Dunes. Additional enforcement personnel/efforts are needed				
Orange	Crystal Cove SMCA	Rec take of finfish by hook and line or by spearfishing and spiny lobster and sea urchin. Commercial take of sea urchin, spiny lobster by trap, and coastal pelagic species by round haul net, brail gear and light boat	Harmful tidepooling and undersized lobster. Nighttime poaching. Angle is difficult at southern boundary	Better define tidepool definition to encompass rocky intertidal habitat	Yes	"Area encompassing the rocky pools" is confusing, makes it sounds like it is only the pools, not intertidal zone when dry	Night vision for State Parks officers to address nighttime poaching	State Parks pending review; OC Coastkeeper	Wendy Berube	Language Change	
Orange	Crystal Cove SMCA	Rec take of finfish by hook and line or by spearfishing and spiny lobster and sea urchin. Commercial take of sea urchin, spiny lobster by trap, and coastal pelagic species by round haul net, brail gear and light boat		Add "non-living, geological or cultural" marine resource to tidepool take prohibition for consistency with 632(a)1(C)	Yes	Clarifies tidepool protections to include rocks and shells		State Parks pending review; OC Coastkeeper	Wendy Berube	Language Change	
Orange	Laguna Beach SMR	No Take	Poaching in gated/private communities; angle is difficult at northern boundary	No change	Yes		More enforcement needed in private community. Bring back community scientist/anglers (i.e., CCFRP) to OC				
Orange	Laguna Beach No-Take SMCA	No Take. Maintenance allowed	Angle is difficult at southern boundary	Change purple to red for outreach purposes	Yes	Easier to explain "no take" if consistent with red SMR	Produce map that has layer that shows allowed maintenance/artificial structures and scientific take	OC Coastkeeper	Wendy Berube	Other	
Orange	Dana Point SMCA	Rec take of finfish by hook and line or by spearfishing and spiny lobster and sea urchin. Commercial take of sea urchin, spiny lobster by trap, and coastal pelagic species by round haul net, brail gear and light boat. Tidepools protected	Fishing without a license. Night poaching at 3 Arch. Take of limpets at north end. Shift in fishing pressure. Angle is difficult at southern boundary. Harmful tidepooling	Add "non-living, geological or cultural" marine resource to tidepool take prohibition for consistency with 632(a)1(C)	Yes	Clarifies tidepool protections to include rocks and shells		OC Coastkeeper	Wendy Berube	Language Change	
Orange	Dana Point SMCA	Rec take of finfish by hook and line or by spearfishing and spiny lobster and sea urchin. Commercial take of sea urchin, spiny lobster by trap, and coastal pelagic species by round haul net, brail gear and light boat. Tidepools protected		Better define tidepool definition to encompass rocky intertidal habitat or utilize a different term.	Yes	Tidepools are specific to pools but intertidal habitats protected can be free of pools in some cases. "Area encompassing the rocky pools" is unclear whether all rocky intertidal habitat is included here.		OC Coastkeeper	Wendy Berube	Language Change	
San Diego	Batiquitos Lagoon No-Take SMCA	No take. Boating, swimming, wading and diving prohibited	Confusion between ecological reserve regulations west of 5 and MPA regulations east of 5	Expand SMCA west of I-5 bridge to encompass all of ecological reserve	No	Expands MPA size, unclear on impacts to recreational fishing				Boundary Change	

San Diego	Batiquitos Lagoon No-Take SMCA	No take. Boating, swimming, wading and diving prohibited		Change to blue SMCA with designated fishing areas	Maybe	If does not reduce fishing opportunities under I-5 and 101 bridges, or lessen existing protections				Take Allowance Change	Yes, would change from No-Take SMCA to SMCA
San Diego	Batiquitos Lagoon No-Take SMCA	No take. Boating, swimming, wading and diving prohibited		Change purple to red for outreach purposes if boundaries remain the same	Yes	Easier to explain "no take" if consistent with red SMR				Other	
San Diego	Swami's SMCA	Rec take by hook and line from shore and rec take by spearfishing of white seabass and pelagic finfish	Harmful tidepooling, especially at Seaside reef. Enforcement for take of lobster is hard at southern boundary since it splits 2 jurisdictions and the reef (hard to know where they are actually taking from and who is responsible for enforcing what.)	Move southern boundary to jurisdictional boundary between State Parks and City of Solana Beach for full tidepool protection of reef	No	Increases size of MPA, reducing fishing access, and may impact take of halibut				Boundary Change	
San Diego	Swami's SMCA	Rec take by hook and line from shore and rec take by spearfishing of white seabass and pelagic finfish		Shift entire shape south (lifeguard tower to state/Solana Beach line to cover tidepool on south side)	Yes	Compromise. Keeps same size MPA but covers impacted tidepool area on southern boundary. Lifeguard tower clear boundary at north end		State Parks pending review; Wildcoast		Boundary Change	
San Diego	San Elijo Lagoon No Take SMCA	No take. Boating, swimming, wading and diving prohibited	Lots of people fishing at entrance to San Elijo lagoon under bridge and in channel	Move boundary to west side of the bridge (prohibiting fishing under the bridge) as long as accommodations are allowed for dredging	Yes	Signs are currently posted on west side of bridge to prohibit people from entering the San Elijo Lagoon. Makes outreach clearer		State Parks pending review; Wildcoast		Boundary Change	
San Diego	San Elijo Lagoon No Take SMCA	No take. Boating, swimming, wading and diving prohibited		Change purple to red for outreach purposes	Yes	Easier to explain "no take" if consistent with red SMR				Other	
San Diego	San Dieguito Lagoon SMCA	Rec take of finfish by hook and line from shore. Boating, swimming, wading and diving prohibited	Confusion between ecological reserve boundaries and regulations and MPA boundaries and regulations. Speculation that extent of water has changed since restoration. Original intent of 632 was to align with 630 in overlapping waters. Non-MPA areas are more restrictive which leads to confusion	Have MPA cover all water within ecological reserve.	Need more information	Check with Joint Power authority because would lessen protections if SMCA (that allows fishing) is expanded to all state waters	Sea level rise impacts should be considered			Boundary Change	
San Diego	San Diego-Scripps Coastal SMCA	Rec take of coastal pelagic species, except market squid, by hook and line only	Harmful tidepooling. People using gear types for fishing for species other than coastal pelagics but gear type cannot assume intent. Makes enforcement difficult. Also safety concerns with surf casters into high use swim/surf area	Add, "except from shore" to prohibit surf hook and line	Yes	Surf fishing from shore causes safety concerns (hooks getting caught on surfers/swimmers). Still allows kayakers to fish for bait fish on way out, which was original intent				Take Allowance Change	

San Diego	Matlahuayl SMR	No Take	Harmful tidepooling. Kayak fishing. Caves are being defaced/graffitied	Add place name (La Jolla) to traditional Kumeyaay name (Matlahuayl)	No	Keep Kumeyaay name only for Tribal acknowledgement. Would also add confusion between other La Jolla MPAs	More focused patrols on caves in La Jolla to address littering/defacement of MPA			Language Change	
San Diego	South La Jolla SMR	No Take	Most highly cited MPA. Poaching of lobster and offshore fishing. Harmful tidepooling. Challenges of parking and access (coastline related challenges due to sea level rise, climate disturbance)	No change	Yes	Focus on local management/outreach/enforcement	Need for more focus on tidepools (outreach/enforcement). More staff for allied agencies to help enforce. Encourage city to maintain safe accessways and deal with coastal erosion problems. More education on marine mammal disturbance				
San Diego	South La Jolla SMCA	Rec take of pelagic finfish by hook and line only		No change	Yes						
San Diego	Famosa Slough No Take SMCA	No Take	Homeless encampments. Construction run-off. Dogs and cats disturbing birds	Change purple to red for outreach purposes	Yes	Easier to explain "no take" if consistent with red SMR				Other	
San Diego	Cabrillo SMR	No Take	Harmful tidepooling. Offshore boats but NPS unable to contact other than through megaphone	Work with Kumeyaay to rename MPA to traditional Kumeyaay name	Yes	Kumeyaay name exists for this location. Need to confirm spelling	Additional enforcement personnel/efforts are needed			Language Change	
San Diego	Tijuana River Estuary SMCA	Rec take of coastal pelagic species, except market squid, by hand held dip net. Commercial take of coastal pelagics, except market squid by round haul net	Difficult take regulations to interpret in the field and take by hand held dip net not really occurring, per Imperial Beach lifeguards	No change							

Cell: K138

Note: was not sure about this categorization

-MPA Collaborative

From: Devin O'Dea <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 1, 2024 04:10 PM
To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>
Cc: Mark Smith <[REDACTED]>; Wayne Kotow <[REDACTED]>; Keely Hopkins <[REDACTED]>; California Chapter <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Discussion Item 10 - Regulation change petitions (marine)

Dear Commission Staff,

Please accept the attached comment letter on behalf of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, the Coastal Conservation Association of California, and the Congressional Sportsman's Foundation pertaining to Discussion Item 10 at the upcoming Fish & Game Commission meeting.

Thank you,



Devin O'Dea | Western Policy & Conservation Manager

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

Phone: (415) 246-5329

www.backcountryhunters.org





**BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS
CALIFORNIA**



February 1, 2024

California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor,
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Discussion Item 10 - Regulation change petitions (marine)

Dear President Sklar, Vice President Zavaleta & Commissioners,

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the numerous petitions under consideration at the February meeting of the California Fish & Game Commission, and we offer the perspective of the many hundred thousand supporters of our organizations to the Commission. We express grave concerns regarding several of the proposals to eliminate fishing access along large stretches of the California coast and argue that many of the petitions lack adequate scientific support and documentation to substantiate their positions.

The Decadal Management Review (DMR) of the Marine Protected Area Network (MPA) has offered important insights for MPA managers to help shape the adaptive management of MPA regulations, including promising research that MPAs may increase biomass and provide resiliency against the impacts of a changing climate for some species. The intent of the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) and the stewardship of our coastal resources are of paramount importance to California's heritage. However, these laudable goals and conservation benchmarks should not preclude access to harvest coastal foods where state and federal fisheries managers have demonstrated robust and resilient fish stocks without any current threat of overfishing, nor for those species where targeted fishing and active management would benefit the overall ecosystem balance.

There are numerous, seemingly well-intentioned petitions currently before the Fish & Game Commission that seek to preserve California's coastal waters citing anthropogenic impacts to biodiversity and ecosystems such as pollution, rising sea temperatures, disease, development and overfishing. While we support the intent to safeguard our fish stocks, biodiversity, and ecosystem integrity, we strongly disagree with the all-or-nothing approach adopted by many of the petitioners who proffer the wholesale elimination of fishing access without adequate scientific rationale or the acknowledgement of regulatory mechanisms already in place such as those established by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act working through the Pacific Fisheries Management Council, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), the Fish & Game Commission, and the additional state/federal laws and agencies dedicated to this task. Simply put, many of the petitions referenced below seek to advance preservation at all costs, pushing for wholesale closures that circumvent the regulatory processes already in place, ultimately bludgeoning access for the diverse angling communities that have revered these coastal traditions for generations.

Anglers and consumptive users will often be the first and loudest voices to advocate for restrictions or even closures to ensure the sustainability of a fishery, as evidenced by the numerous fishing groups and organizations advocating for the closure of the 2023 salmon season following the data and dismal projections provided by the Pacific Fisheries Management Council and CDFW. However, a Californian

constitutional right to fish seems to stand in conflict with the presumption that restriction of access is permissible where there is a lack of scientific evidence or data to justify the closure. Section 1, Article 25 of the California Constitution states, “the people shall have the right to fish upon and from the public lands of the State and in the waters thereof,” and the courts in *re Quinn* (1973) defined “public lands of the state” referenced in this article to include “access to fish in the inland streams and coastal waters of the state.”

Shore fishing, diving/spearfishing, kayak/boat fishing and coastal gathering are low impact activities that reflect the broad spectrum of California’s diverse community and constitute a valuable resource for individuals across the economic divide to access nature and provide food for their families. We encourage the Commission and MPA managers to consider the numerous communities that enjoy the state’s many sustainable food resources when considering protections and recommendations that might unnecessarily exclude these groups. We feel that these considerations are in line with the California Natural Resources Agency’s Outdoors for All initiative and its commitment in the Pathways to 30x30 document to “implement projects that do no further harm or pose unintended consequences to historically marginalized communities.”¹ Specifically, we wish to highlight this issue with regards to the expansion of California’s MPA network which restricts shore-based diving, foraging, and fishing access for all Californians – especially historically marginalized communities, communities of color and Native American tribes. From California’s Constitutional Right to Fish:

Anglers from historically marginalized communities may be less able to travel to fishing locations and are more likely to require shore access, as opposed to access from a boat. Anglers in communities like this need accessible shore-fishing, particularly given the importance of subsistence fishing in poorer communities. Moreover, fishing opportunities offer physical and psychological benefits to disadvantaged communities, not just access to fish as food.²

It is within this context that we urge the Commission to take the following actions with regards to the petitions they have received.

Petition 2023-14MPA: *Allow commercial take of red sea urchins in nine state marine conservation areas (SMCAs)*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation.

Petition 2023-15MPA: *Reclassify three northern Channel Islands state marine reserves (SMRs) to SMCAs and allow take of highly migratory species, pelagic finfish, and/or coastal pelagic finfish*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation, but are encouraged by the proposal and the potential opportunity to gather more data on limited take MPAs and long-term MPA monitoring at the Channels Islands.

¹ https://resources.ca.gov/-/media/CNRA-Website/Files/Initiatives/30-by-30/Final_Pathwaysto30x30_042022_508.pdf

² Coats, Francis, and Karrigan Bork. “CALIFORNIA’S CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO FISH.” *Environmental Law*, vol. 51, no. 4, 2021, pp. 1085–147. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48647570>. Accessed 22 Mar. 2023.

Petition 2023-16MPA: *Reclassify Stewarts Point and Bodega Head SMRs to SMCAs and allow commercial take of salmon.*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation.

Petition 2023-18MPA: *Modify allowed uses for four marine protected areas (MPAs) in Santa Barbara Channel and eliminate two special closures.*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation.

Petition 2023-19MPA: *Designate new "Chitqawi" SMCA near Morro Bay for California-Chumash co-management*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation.

Petition 2023-20MPA: *Reclassify and rename Point Buchon SMR to "Chumash SMCA" for co-management with tribal take exemption.*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation.

Petition 2023-21MPA: *Modify Pyramid Point SMCA to remove recreational take of surf smelt and allow tribal take exemption for Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation.*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation.

Petition 2023-22MPA: *Define "rocky intertidal zone," add research, monitoring, restoration and education allowance, and clarify protections in several Orange County MPAs.*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation.

Petition 2023-23MPA: *Reclassify three SMCAs to SMRs, designate one new SMR in Monterey, and make various changes related to kelp restoration.*

We recommend the Commission deny this petition.

While the petitioner's intent to restore kelp forests and ecosystem integrity at tankers reef and in the surrounding waters is laudable, this broadly proscriptive petition would unnecessarily restrict access for anglers where there is no clear scientific rationale. In fact, the petitioner submitted a very similar petition seeking to close access for groundfish along a large stretch of the coast in this region in 2023 which the Department of Fish & Wildlife rejected citing a lack of scientific evidence to support the claim. We support the ongoing efforts to restore kelp forests through urchin culling and other means, however we oppose reclassifying these SMCAs to SMRs and the establishment of a new SMR in Monterey.

Petition 2023-24MPA: *Expand Laguna Beach no-take SMCA southward to border of City of Laguna Beach and modify Dana Point SMCA boundaries*

We recommend the Commission deny this petition.

We oppose this petition on the basis that it lacks scientific documentation or justification to eliminate fishing access in the proposed area. The petitioner argues primarily for administrative ease that the no-take closure be extended to the edge of city limits. During the implementation of the MLPA, MPAs were sited utilizing careful selection criteria based on habitat type, proximity from other MPAs, impact to communities and more. The petitioner argues that all beaches within the City of Laguna Beach should be no-take MPAs in order to streamline enforcement and that homeowners “feel that it is not equitable to have only the north and central beaches protected.” It should be noted that the petitioner also states clearly in the Economic or Fiscal Impact section of the petition that “estimated resident property values gain an increase of 20% from proximity to a fully protected MPA” which may explain more robust support from the city and homeowners.

The petitioner also cites kelp forest health as justification for eliminating fishing access, however the 100 + page report included with the petition doesn’t reference fishing pressure or boat activity with regards to kelp forest health and instead focuses on water temperature, nutrients, wave height, upwelling, rainfall and other stressors. As such, we recommend the Commission deny this petition since there is no scientific documentation to support its claims, and it would only negatively impact anglers who would be forced to travel further to reach fishing grounds.

Petition 2023-27MPA: *Reclassify a portion or all of Anacapa SMCA to an SMR to protect eelgrass*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation. We recognize the value of eelgrass beds for overall ecosystem health and habitat; however, it should be noted that many recreational anglers who target pelagic fish do not anchor and instead prefer to drift fish or troll instead which would have zero impact on the bottom habitat and eelgrass.

Petition 2023-28MPA: *Designate a new SMR at Point Sal, or designate as an SMCA with a tribal take exemption based on tribal consultation*

We recommend the Commission deny this petition.

While the petitioner takes time to identify the important habitat types, larval transport zones, and cultural significance of the Point Sal area, and they reference potential threats to the region from coastal development and industry, they fail to elaborate in any substantive way why fishing access should be removed from this wild and iconic central coast fishing destination. The petitioner states: “current [commercial] fishing in the proposed area is limited, likely due to its considerable distance from nearest port areas of Morro Bay and Santa Barbara.” They also admit that they have no data or analysis with regards to recreational fishing and state, “our request to CDFW for recreational fishing data from this area was being processed at time of submission; we will evaluate the potential impact to recreational fishers and submit it to the state following receipt of the requested data.”

A limited google search of “Point Sal fishing” also uncovers a large number of recreational fishing blogs and videos detailing the remote and adventurous hike to fish this area from a diverse population of anglers. In 2023 one blogger wrote, “had a great time hiking miles and miles and miles to fish Point Sal with Martin Mansera from Mansera Outdoors...It's such a remote location and so difficult to access, it

makes for a really rad adventure.” Recreational fishing trips to the area by boat are also common, and fishing is noted in nearly every travel guide or city/county website that talks about visiting Point Sal.

Regarding access and disadvantaged communities, the petitioner writes, “the California Environmental Protection Agency identifies the adjacent city of Guadalupe as “disadvantaged” under CA Senate Bill 535, and their synthesis of environmental and socioeconomic indicators further reveals that Guadalupe – alongside Santa Maria and Lompoc – are underprivileged communities that experience significant cumulative impacts from pollution. Given these communities’ close proximity to Point Sal, implementing an SMR at the proposed site could enhance access for disadvantaged populations to valuable coastal resources and fishing opportunities.”

To justify this confounding claim that removing fishing access could somehow *enhance fishing opportunities* for disadvantaged communities, the petitioner cites a study of commercial lobster fishing and the concept of “spillover.” They write, “California’s MPAs have been shown to increase the biomass of fishery-targeted species and promote “spillover” into nearby coastal areas, benefitting nearby fishing grounds.”

Spillover and the positive impacts to fisheries located in waters adjacent to MPAs are often referenced in association with the MPA network, and the limited, initial science has demonstrated some positive correlations with spillover of invertebrates like lobsters to adjacent fishing grounds in select study areas and commercial fishing for tuna in Hawaii. However, there remains an opportunity to further study this hypothesis and to promote scientific research that successfully documents spillover of targeted finfish across the MPA network in California. Some data from MPA monitoring along the Central California Coast indicated limited evidence of spillover from targeted finfish that were tagged and recaptured at a later point during the study period as evidenced from the Starr et al study: Variation in Responses of Fishes across Multiple Reserves within a Network of Marine Protected Areas in Temperate Waters:

As of July 2014, a total of 251 individual tag recaptures have been reported (Table 8). Tagged fishes were recaptured by commercial and recreational hook-and-line fishermen, commercial trap fishermen, SCUBA divers, and during our fishing surveys. Of all the tagged fishes recapture and reported, 71% were recaptured in the same site and grid cell as they were released, and 22% of recaptured fishes were caught within the same site but outside the original grid cell where they were released. Only 18 fish, or 7% of the recaptured fishes, were recaptured beyond the boundaries of the MPA or REF site in which they were released. The mean net distance moved by eight of nine species recaptured was less than half the length of the MPAs we studied.³

While we do not seek to draw conclusions regarding the overall merits of spillover to adjacent fisheries from the results of one study, we do encourage additional research to evaluate the impacts that MPAs have on local fisheries and fisheries as a whole, especially within the context of varied siting and disparate habitat types evidenced across the MPA network. As the Forcada study indicated, “We conclude that spillover effects are not a universal consequence of siting MPAs in temperate waters and they are related to the distribution of habitats inside and around MPAs.” (Forcada et al., 2009).

Due to the limited scientific understanding of spillover as it relates to the Marine Protected Area Network as a whole, especially with regards to finfish which would be the primary target of recreational shore and

³ 4 Starr RM, Wendt DE, Barnes CL, Marks CI, Malone D, et al. (2015) Variation in Responses of Fishes across Multiple Reserves within a Network of Marine Protected Areas in Temperate Waters. PLOS ONE 10(3): e0118502. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0118502>

boat-based anglers at Point Sal, we disagree with the petitioner's logical assumptions and the argument as a whole. In fact, when considered in the context presented from the *Constitutional Right to Fish* article, the discussion is turned on its head entirely. "Anglers from historically marginalized communities may be less able to travel to fishing locations and are more likely to require shore access, as opposed to access from a boat. Anglers in communities like this need accessible shore-fishing, particularly given the importance of subsistence fishing in poorer communities."⁴

With the two large no-take SMRs located just South of this newly proposed MPA (Vandenberg SMR & Point Conception SMR) and Point Buchon to the North, it would seem the opportunities to fish and forage the coast for residents of Guadalupe, Lompoc and Santa Maria are already few and far between. In fact, in 2022 the City of Lompoc petitioned the Fish & Game Commission to allow for shore-fishing access along a ½ mile stretch of beach within the Vandenberg SMR, citing a lack of access to historic fishing grounds for the local communities.

We share the petitioner's concerns regarding habitat disruption from off-shore energy production and the associated infrastructure, however, we note the likely establishment of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS) designation which would effectively curtail any development or offshore energy production in this region. Planning for the CHNMS has included fishing access as a key component of the proposed designation.

As a result, we recommend the Commission deny this petition.

Petition 2023-29MPA: *Designate a new SMCA with a tribal take exemption for and co-management with Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians in Santa Barbara*

We recommend the Commission deny this petition.

We oppose the petitioner's request to designate a new, no-take SMCA in Carpinteria for several reasons. First, the petitioner argues that spacing and connectivity is a key concern in this location with the distance between the Campus Point and Point Dume SMCAs at 64 nautical miles (nm) instead of the recommended 54 nm to ensure ecological connectivity. When this request is examined within the broader context of MPA siting, it is clear that the target spacing between MPAs could be easily achieved by moving the Campus Point SMCA South or the Point Dume SMCA North, since both are located well within the recommended 54nm from adjacent MPAs on either side.

Additionally, the petitioner cites the location as important nursery habitat for juvenile great white sharks as justification for establishing a no-take SMR. They write, "Research conducted in the Southern California Bight has found that fisheries bycatch is likely the main source of mortality for JWS." However, the article they cite to support this claim, John F. Benson et. al., discloses that for great white sharks they captured and tagged, "mortality risk was substantially greater off the coast of Baja, Mexico compared with California." Importantly, the research paper also states, "that incidental gillnet capture continues to be the primary source of mortality for juveniles. The lower mortality risk we documented in California waters suggests that full closure of gillnet fishing close to shore is a more effective management strategy than simply banning targeted fishing to reduce mortality risk due to bycatch."⁵

⁴ Coats, Francis, and Karrigan Bork. "CALIFORNIA'S CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO FISH." *Environmental Law*, vol. 51, no. 4, 2021, pp. 1085–147. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48647570>. Accessed 22 Mar. 2023.

⁵ Benson JF, Jorgensen SJ, O'Sullivan JB, et al. Juvenile survival, competing risks, and spatial variation in mortality risk of a marine apex predator. *J Appl Ecol*. 2018; 55: 2888–2897. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2664.13158>

As the petitioner is undoubtedly aware, gillnet fishing is banned in state waters and therefore the proposed MPA would have no impact on the gillnet fishery or likely the mortality risk to great white sharks.

The petitioner notes the location's popularity with recreational lobster divers and the likely opposition from stakeholders who would oppose the additional loss of access. The mortality risk to great white sharks from the recreational lobster fishery is zero, similar to the risk from spearfishing, yet the petitioner seeks to eliminate access entirely without providing any scientific rationale for the closure. As a result, we request that the Commission deny this petition.

Petition 2023-31MPA: *Reclassify Drakes Estero SMCA to an SMR and combine with Estero de Limantour SMR as a single SMR:*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation but encourage the Commission to maintain access for clamming unless there is a clear threat to the fishery or surrounding ecosystem.

It is worth noting that the National Park Service mentions in their comment letter that the area is now Congressionally Designated Wilderness and that "recreational take of shellfish appears to be very rare, [and] requires long kayak trips in wilderness area." Just because something is difficult doesn't mean it should be illegal.

Petition 2023-32MPA: *Reclassify Duxbury Reef SMCA as an SMR and expand northern and southern boundaries*

We recommend that the Commission deny or refer this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation but emphasize maintaining fishing access for local communities at Duxbury Reef. The vast majority of complaints regarding Duxbury reef are related to enforcement and compliance, rather than a scientific justification for eliminating access. Shore fishing is an important past-time for the diverse communities that comprise the North Bay Area, and removing access to a popular fishing destination should not be justified simply based on the actions of a few bad apples.

Petition 2023-33MPA: *Expand the boundaries of five SMRs and one SMCA, and designate a new SMR off Pleasure Point, in Santa Cruz*

We recommend that this petition be denied or referred to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation due to its broad scope and complexity. The petitioner seeks to enhance protections for kelp forests, but does so with an overly broad brush. Rather than advocating for reducing fishing pressure for predators of kelp grazers, like lobster and sheepshead, the petition advocates for the closure of all fishing, including the harvest of grazer species like urchins that have been documented to decimate kelp forests.

The petitioner argues that eliminating fishing pressure within the proposed MPA areas would somehow bolster kelp populations, but the claim is not well documented by scientific research in this petition. A noteworthy case study, by comparison, is the ongoing Tanker's Reef kelp restoration project, where volunteers have been culling purple urchins within study plots and tracking kelp recovery within the study area and a control site nearby. The initial data for the last three years shows a clear correlation between the removal of purple urchins and kelp recovery in the study plot with no kelp recovery in the adjacent control where urchins were not removed. Fishing is permitted in the Tanker's reef area, however, in adjacent MPA's that have not permitted active restoration and where fishing is not allowed, urchin barons persist and kelp recovery remains minimal.

Kelp forest health and resiliency is a complex and multi-variable equation that can be impacted by numerous factors including water temperature, disease, pollution, algal blooms, wave energy, commercial harvest and more. We support efforts to restore kelp forests across the coast and recognize the role they play in the overall ecosystem health of fisheries, especially the abalone fishery that remains closed until 2026. We urge caution, however where broad fishing closures are enacted in the attempt to solve a problem that requires a more nuanced and carefully crafted multidisciplinary approach.

It should also be noted that the petitioner indicates support for recreational hook and line fishing and spearfishing as an acceptable alternative in several of the MPAs referenced in the petition.

Petition 2023-34MPA: *Reclassify Point Buchon SMCA to an SMR and modify take at Farnsworth Onshore and Offshore SMCAs to only allow recreational spearfishing.*

We recommend that the Commission deny this petition and we emphasize the substantial impacts to current fishing access. The petitioner argues that since the salmon season was closed in 2023 it will likely be closed in perpetuity, which would justify eliminating salmon and albacore fishing access at the Point Buchon SMCA. Salmon populations often decrease during drought years and can rebound with increased precipitation or water allocation as was the case in 2008 and 2009 when the fishery was closed and then reopened. We are cautiously optimistic that the salmon numbers will once again bounce back following the increased precipitation received over the past two years.

In the draft Pathways to 30x30 document, the CNRA writes: “It should be noted that limited-take State MPAs provide an excellent model for other jurisdictions looking to balance biodiversity conservation with sustainable well-managed commercial and recreational fishing.” We feel that reclassifying the Point Buchon SMCA as an SMR and eliminating fishing in this area would be inappropriate; however, we support any attempts to improve enforcement and compliance with existing regulations.

Furthermore, the proposal to modify take at Farnsworth Onshore and Offshore SMCAs would disproportionately impact a broad variety and collection of user groups who may not be physically able or inclined to spearfish. For this reason and the lack of concrete scientific data to justify the additional restrictions, we recommend the Commission deny this petition.

Sincerely,

Devin O’Dea
Western Policy & Conservation Manager
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

Wayne Kotow
Executive Director
Coastal Conservation Association California

Keely Hopkins
Western States Manager
Congressional Sportsman’s Foundation

From: Vergara, Rob <rvergara@nrdc.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 1, 2024 5:10 PM
To: FGC
Cc: Suatoni, Lisa
Subject: Point Sal SMR Supplemental Materials
Attachments: Appendix A_Point Sal Letter_CDFW Fishing Data.pdf; Appendix B_Lobster_CDFW_Data_Request_231214.pdf; Point Sal SMR Supplemental Fishing Data Summary (1).pdf

Hello,

Attached to this email are supplemental materials associated with petition 2023-28MPA for the proposed Point Sal SMR. Please let me know if anything else is needed from our end on this matter.

Thank you for your time and consideration!
Rob

ROBERT VERGARA

Roger Arliner Young (RAY) Ocean Conservation Fellow

NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

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February 1, 2024

Eric Sklar, President
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Supplemental Fishing Data Summary for 2023-28MPA

Dear President Sklar and Honorable Commissioners,

Thank you for receiving petition 2023-28MPA for regulatory changes to the Marine Protected Area (MPA) network. Petition 2023-28MPA proposes to designate a new State Marine Reserve (SMR) or a State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) with exception for cultural and subsistence take by local Indigenous communities and/or Tribes around Point Sal in Santa Barbara County. Over the last few months, NRDC has obtained data from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and utilized publicly available databases to better understand recreational and commercial fishing practices within the proposed MPA boundaries. This supplemental document summarizes our findings thus far.

According to data provided by the Marine Fisheries Data Explorer and by CDFW staff, very low levels of commercial fishing occur around Point Sal. The proposed Point Sal MPA accounts for 14% of California fishing block 631 and 11% of California fishing block 632. As stated in petition 2023-28MPA at the time of submission, annual landings reported from these blocks over a ten year period from 2012 to 2022 represent just 0.11% of total landings by weight, and 1.1% of total landings by value, reported for the Central Coast region over the same 10 year period.^{1,2} Additional data received from CDFW staff after the petition's submission shows that an average of 49 fishers, 15 businesses, and 50 vessels use the area within these two fishing blocks per year.³ In 2023, the latest year with data available, only 3 fishers, 3 businesses, and 3 vessels fished in block 631 and 28 fishers from 27 vessels representing 7 businesses fished in block 632. The majority of reported fishing activity took place within fishing block 632, of which the proposed MPA covers only 11% of area. In light of this data, we continue to believe the establishment of an SMR or SMCA in this area would have minimal economic impact to commercial fisheries.

¹ We defined the Central Coast region as all fishing blocks from Point Año Nuevo to Point Conception: <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=144496&inline>

² California Department of Fish and Wildlife, "Marine Fisheries Data Explorer," database, MFDE, accessed November 21, 2023, <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Data-Management-Research/MFDE>.

³ See Appendix A provided by CDFW on February 1, 2024.

The limited recreational fishing data available⁴ shows similarly low levels of recreational fishing taking place. Lobster Report Cards submitted over the last 10 years (2012-early 2023) report a total of only 123 lobster fishing trips and a total of 132 lobster retained from the area stretching between Surf Beach, Santa Barbara County up to the San Luis Obispo County line⁵. These very low numbers are unsurprising, as this species is primarily found in warmer waters, and Point Conception marks the northern limit of the California spiny lobster's core range ([CDFW California Spiny Lobster Enhanced Status Report](#)). We acknowledge that there are recreational fishing data limitations and encourage CDFW to do further analysis to supplement these findings.

For all the reasons stated above, we anticipate the proposed Point Sal SMR would create minimal displacement of commercial and recreational fishers. Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on the adaptive management of California's MPA network.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lisa Suatoni
Deputy Director, Oceans
Natural Resources Defense Council

⁴ While other recreational fishing data are available via the Recreational Fisheries Information Network (RecFIN) database, the spatial scale at which it is reported (combined Santa Barbara and Ventura County-level) was too large to be useful for this purpose.

⁵ See Appendix B provided by CDFW on December 14, 2023.

Title: Fishers/Vessels/Businesses by Block and Year (2012-2023)

Summary

This table contains a summary of the distinct count of unique fisher IDs, unique business IDs, and unique vessel IDs with recorded landings within CDFW Commercial Fishing Blocks 631, 632, 651, and 665 separated by Year from 2012 through 2023.

Description

These data were extracted from the Marine Landings Database System (MLDS) using Microsoft Power BI. In order to meet requirements specified in [FGC 8022](#), records that are confidential have been redacted (shown as NULL) from the summary output. The threshold for determining confidentiality is termed the "Rule-of-Three." All records provided must be the aggregate of at least three fishers, three vessels, and three businesses. The basis in summarizing California fisheries data using this method is to maintain confidentiality such that there is not disclosure of the proprietary business information from any individual. Individuals in this context refers to individual fishers, individual fishing vessels, and individual fish receiving businesses.

Attributes:

CDFW Block ID: CDFW Commercial Fishing Block ID number

Year: The year the records are summed from

Fisher Count: Distinct count of unique fisher IDs from commercial landings receipts

Business Count: Distinct count of unique business IDs from commercial landings receipts

Vessel Count: Distinct count of unique vessel IDs from commercial landings receipts

Credits

Georgia Martel, Environmental Scientist, Data Management Project, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Disclaimer:

CDFW collects data from various sources for fisheries management purposes, and data may be modified at any time to improve accuracy and as new data are acquired. CDFW may provide data upon request under a formal agreement. Data are provided as-is and in good faith, but CDFW does not endorse any particular analytical methods, interpretations, or conclusions based upon the data it provides. Unless otherwise stated, use of CDFW's data does not constitute CDFW's professional advice or formal recommendation of any given analysis. CDFW recommends users consult with CDFW prior to data use regarding known limitations of certain data sets.

CDFW Block ID	Year	Fisher Count	Business Count	Vessel Count
631	2012	12	5	12
631	2013	11	9	12
631	2014	5	4	4
631	2015	15	6	14
631	2016	15	5	16
631	2017	10	4	9
631	2018	11	3	12
631	2019	NULL	NULL	NULL
631	2020	3	3	3
631	2021	5	5	6
631	2022	NULL	NULL	NULL
631	2023	3	3	3
632	2012	38	11	37
632	2013	39	10	42
632	2014	43	12	46
632	2015	54	21	55
632	2016	40	13	43
632	2017	43	6	46
632	2018	46	6	41
632	2019	56	11	54
632	2020	38	9	39
632	2021	27	10	32
632	2022	28	8	26
632	2023	28	7	27

Dataset Summary

This summary includes information from California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Automated Licencing Database System (ALDS). Data have not undergone extensive QA/QC and may contain errors. Report card information is self-reported by the report card holder. The recreational fishing season for spiny lobster runs from the first Saturday preceding the first Wednesday of October (until the 2023-24 season) to the first Wednesday after March 15 of the following year.

Datafield Descriptions:

<u>Field Name</u>	<u>Field Type</u>	<u>Description</u>
DocumentNumber	Text	Unique number for each report card
Month	Number	Month as a number
Day	Number	Day as a number
LocCode	Number	Number of the location as listed at the end of the printed report card
GearCode	Number	Number of the gear type used where 1 = traditional hoopnet (lays flat), 2 = rigid hoop net, 3 = SCUBA diving, and 4 = free diving
LobsterRetained	Number	Number of lobsters kept by the report card holder. Cannot exceed 7.
Season/Year	Number	For the full season format report cards = the year the season started and the year the season ended. For the split season report cards = the calendar year the report card was valid for.
CardFormat	Text	

Dataset Processing Notes

Each row is one trip. There is not a 100% return rate on report cards, so the reported data do not represent every fishing trip. In 2013, report cards changed from being valid for a calendar year (i.e., split season) to being valid for an entire lobster season (which spans two calendar years).

QAQC Notes

A single person can purchase more than one report card

There may be dates that fall outside of the season; these are likely data errors.

There may be dates that fall outside of the season; these are likely data errors.

Report card holders do not record the year of their catch, only the month and day. To determine the year, look at the month relative to the season. For example, catch completed on January 10 during the 2014-2015 season would be January 10, 2015.

DocumentNumber	Month	Day	LocCode	GearCode	LobsterRetained	Season	CardFormat
			(91 = "Surf Beach up to SLO County Line")				
D-0006109804-8	10	27	91	1	1.00	2012	Split Season
D-0006612635-9	10	5	91	4	0.00	2013	Split Season
D-0012156754-1	10	1	91	2	0.00	2014-15	Full Season
D-0012416045-3	1	3	91	1	0.00	2014-15	Full Season
D-0012416045-3	1	3	91	2	0.00	2014-15	Full Season
D-0012198921-3	9	30	91	1	0.00	2014-15	Full Season
D-0012053748-0	2	17	91	4	0.00	2014-15	Full Season
D-0012053748-0	2	18	91	4	0.00	2014-15	Full Season
D-0012053748-0	2	20	91	4	0.00	2014-15	Full Season
D-0012053748-0	2	24	91	4	0.00	2014-15	Full Season
D-0012053748-0	2	28	91	4	0.00	2014-15	Full Season
D-0012053748-0	3	2	91	4	0.00	2014-15	Full Season
D-0012053748-0	3	9	91	4	0.00	2014-15	Full Season
D-0012053748-0	3	15	91	4	0.00	2014-15	Full Season
D-0012053748-0	3	16	91	4	0.00	2014-15	Full Season
D-0012230662-2	3	1	91	3	7.00	2014-15	Full Season
D-0012149326-8	3	3	91	2	6.00	2014-15	Full Season
D-0012726828-6	1	2	91	2	0.00	2014-15	Full Season
D-0015431570-6	10	31	91	1	5.00	2015-16	Full Season
D-0015334022-0	10	31	91	1	7.00	2015-16	Full Season
D-0015408015-4	11	2	91	4	4.00	2015-16	Full Season
D-0015332100-5	10	31	91	1	6.00	2015-16	Full Season
D-0018338906-8	10	2	91	4	0.00	2016-17	Full Season
D-0018363695-1	10	4	91	1	0.00	2016-17	Full Season
D-0018298698-1	11	5	91	3	7.00	2016-17	Full Season
D-0018298698-1	11	6	91	3	6.00	2016-17	Full Season
D-0018298698-1	11	11	91	3	6.00	2016-17	Full Season
D-0018298698-1	11	12	91	3	5.00	2016-17	Full Season
D-0018298698-1	1	1	91	3	5.00	2016-17	Full Season
D-0018477500-2	12	12	91	1	1.00	2016-17	Full Season

			LocCode					
			(91 = "Surf Beach up to SLO County Line")	GearCode	LobsterRetained	Season	CardFormat	
DocumentNumber	Month	Day						
D-0021351533-3	9	30	91	3	3.00	2017-18	Full Season	
D-0021391997-1	10	7	91	1	0.00	2017-18	Full Season	
D-0021420340-6	9	30	91	2	1.00	2017-18	Full Season	
D-0021386570-2	11	30	91	2	0.00	2017-18	Full Season	
D-0021429495-6	10	3	91	2	0.00	2017-18	Full Season	
D-0021429495-6	10	4	91	2	0.00	2017-18	Full Season	
D-0021429495-6	10	5	91	2	NA	2017-18	Full Season	
D-0024443916-3	11	11	91	1	0.00	2018-19	Full Season	
D-0024436589-1	11	3	91	3	6.00	2018-19	Full Season	
D-0024510000-2	10	6	91	1	0.00	2018-19	Full Season	
D-0024510000-2	10	20	91	1	0.00	2018-19	Full Season	
D-0024377281-4	9	29	91	2	0.00	2018-19	Full Season	
D-0024377281-4	9	29	91	2	0.00	2018-19	Full Season	
D-0024377281-4	9	29	91	2	0.00	2018-19	Full Season	
D-0024377281-4	10	25	91	2	0.00	2018-19	Full Season	
D-0024377281-4	11	4	91	2	0.00	2018-19	Full Season	
D-0024477563-8	10	1	91	2	0.00	2018-19	Full Season	
D-0024477563-8	10	2	91	2	0.00	2018-19	Full Season	
D-0024477563-8	11	4	91	2	0.00	2018-19	Full Season	
D-0024479256-9	10	3	91	2	0.00	2018-19	Full Season	
D-0024479256-9	10	10	91	2	0.00	2018-19	Full Season	
D-0024479256-9	10	19	91	2	0.00	2018-19	Full Season	
D-0024479256-9	10	27	91	2	0.00	2018-19	Full Season	
D-0024479256-9	10	28	91	2	0.00	2018-19	Full Season	
D-0024785258-1	12	9	91	1	0.00	2018-19	Full Season	
D-0027487523-8	11	13	91	2	1.00	2019-20	Full Season	
D-0027772578-5	11	25	91	2	1.00	2019-20	Full Season	
D-0027772580-8	11	25	91	2	2.00	2019-20	Full Season	
D-0027772577-4	11	25	91	2	3.00	2019-20	Full Season	
D-0027462675-9	10	10	91	2	0.00	2019-20	Full Season	

DocumentNumber	Month	Day	LocCode	GearCode	LobsterRetained	Season	CardFormat
			(91 = "Surf Beach up to SLO County Line")				
D-0027475729-3	11	6	91	4	0.00	2019-20	Full Season
D-0027410185-8	11	9	91	3	0.00	2019-20	Full Season
D-0027410185-8	11	10	91	3	1.00	2019-20	Full Season
D-0030786737-1	10	23	91	2	0.00	2020-21	Full Season
D-0030898140-3	10	23	91	2	0.00	2020-21	Full Season
D-0030898140-3	3	2	91	2	1.00	2020-21	Full Season
D-0030737141-6	11	20	91	3	1.00	2020-21	Full Season
D-0030737141-6	11	21	91	3	0.00	2020-21	Full Season
D-0030744104-3	10	17	91	2	5.00	2020-21	Full Season
D-0030744104-3	12	20	91	2	0.00	2020-21	Full Season
D-0030918790-7	11	3	91	2	0.00	2020-21	Full Season
D-0030637845-6	3	5	91	2	0.00	2020-21	Full Season
D-0030637845-6	3	5	91	1	0.00	2020-21	Full Season
D-0030759004-8	10	10	91	2	0.00	2020-21	Full Season
D-0030759004-8	11	8	91	2	0.00	2020-21	Full Season
D-0030758944-0	10	5	91	2	0.00	2020-21	Full Season
D-0030758944-0	10	10	91	2	1.00	2020-21	Full Season
D-0030758944-0	10	16	91	2	0.00	2020-21	Full Season
D-0034047025-5	11	8	91	2	0.00	2021-22	Full Season
D-0034047025-5	11	15	91	2	0.00	2021-22	Full Season
D-0034075126-8	10	19	91	1	0.00	2021-22	Full Season
D-0034052471-6	11	23	91	4	0.00	2021-22	Full Season
D-0034052471-6	12	7	91	4	0.00	2021-22	Full Season
D-0034052471-6	12	21	91	4	4.00	2021-22	Full Season
D-0034052471-6	12	30	91	4	1.00	2021-22	Full Season
D-0034052471-6	3	12	91	4	4.00	2021-22	Full Season
D-0034026720-4	12	22	91	4	4.00	2021-22	Full Season
D-0034537104-7	1	8	91	1	0.00	2021-22	Full Season
D-0034003380-1	11	8	91	2	0.00	2021-22	Full Season
D-0034003380-1	2	18	91	2	1.00	2021-22	Full Season

DocumentNumber	Month	Day	LocCode	GearCode	LobsterRetained	Season	CardFormat
			(91 = "Surf Beach up to SLO County Line")				
D-0033969023-5	1	29	91	4	0.00	2021-22	Full Season
D-0033943000-2	1	29	91	4	7.00	2021-22	Full Season
D-0034003659-0	11	13	91	2	0.00	2021-22	Full Season
D-0034415287-4	3	9	91	4	2.00	2021-22	Full Season
D-0034415287-4	3	10	91	4	1.00	2021-22	Full Season
D-0036943000-5	12	18	91	4	1.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0037022772-0	11	8	91	4	3.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0037022772-0	10	25	91	4	3.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0037022772-0	10	23	91	4	0.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0037022772-0	3	8	91	4	0.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0037022815-8	11	9	91	1	3.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0037022815-8	12	22	91	1	0.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0037022815-8	3	15	91	1	0.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0036825453-6	10	19	91	4	0.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0036825453-6	11	6	91	4	2.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0036825453-6	11	9	91	4	4.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0036825453-6	3	8	91	4	0.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0036972626-1	3	8	91	2	0.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0037329111-7	12	23	91	1	0.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0037329111-7	12	23	91	2	0.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0036944949-8	10	15	91	2	0.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0036991957-9	10	7	91	4	0.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0036997253-4	10	27	91	4	0.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0036997253-4	12	21	91	4	1.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0036997253-4	12	22	91	4	0.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0037014276-0	10	9	91	4	1.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0037014276-0	10	26	91	4	0.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0037037636-5	11	7	91	2	0.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0037037636-5	11	15	91	2	0.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0037037616-3	11	7	91	2	0.00	2022-23	Full Season

DocumentNumber	Month	Day	LocCode	GearCode	LobsterRetained	Season	CardFormat
			(91 = "Surf Beach up to SLO County Line")				
D-0036959730-2	11	20	91	4	0.00	2022-23	Full Season
D-0036988345-6	11	11	91	2	0.00	2022-23	Full Season



**BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS**
CALIFORNIA



February 8, 2024

California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor,
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Discussion Item 10 - Regulation change petitions (marine)

Dear President Sklar, Vice President Zavaleta & Commissioners,

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the numerous petitions under consideration at the February meeting of the California Fish & Game Commission, and we offer the perspective of the many hundred thousand supporters of our organizations to the Commission. We express grave concerns regarding several of the proposals to eliminate fishing access along large stretches of the California coast and argue that many of the petitions lack adequate scientific support and documentation to substantiate their positions.

The Decadal Management Review (DMR) of the Marine Protected Area Network (MPA) has offered important insights for MPA managers to help shape the adaptive management of MPA regulations, including promising research that MPAs may increase biomass and provide resiliency against the impacts of a changing climate for some species. The intent of the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) and the stewardship of our coastal resources are of paramount importance to California's heritage. However, these laudable goals and conservation benchmarks should not preclude access to harvest coastal foods where state and federal fisheries managers have demonstrated robust and resilient fish stocks without any current threat of overfishing, nor for those species where targeted fishing and active management would benefit the overall ecosystem balance.

There are numerous, seemingly well-intentioned petitions currently before the Fish & Game Commission that seek to preserve California's coastal waters citing anthropogenic impacts to biodiversity and ecosystems such as pollution, rising sea temperatures, disease, development and overfishing. While we support the intent to safeguard our fish stocks, biodiversity, and ecosystem integrity, we strongly disagree with the all-or-nothing approach adopted by many of the petitioners who proffer the wholesale elimination of fishing access without adequate scientific rationale or the acknowledgement of regulatory mechanisms already in place such as those established by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act working through the Pacific Fisheries Management Council, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), the Fish & Game Commission, and the additional state/federal laws and agencies dedicated to this task. Simply put, many of the petitions referenced below seek to advance preservation at all costs, pushing for wholesale closures that circumvent the regulatory processes already in place, ultimately bludgeoning access for the diverse angling communities that have revered these coastal traditions for generations.

Anglers and consumptive users will often be the first and loudest voices to advocate for restrictions or even closures to ensure the sustainability of a fishery, as evidenced by the numerous fishing groups and organizations advocating for the closure of the 2023 salmon season following the data and dismal projections provided by the Pacific Fisheries Management Council and CDFW. However, a Californian

constitutional right to fish seems to stand in conflict with the presumption that restriction of access is permissible where there is a lack of scientific evidence or data to justify the closure. Section 1, Article 25 of the California Constitution states, “the people shall have the right to fish upon and from the public lands of the State and in the waters thereof,” and the courts in *re Quinn* (1973) defined “public lands of the state” referenced in this article to include “access to fish in the inland streams and coastal waters of the state.”

Shore fishing, diving/spearfishing, kayak/boat fishing and coastal gathering are low impact activities that reflect the broad spectrum of California’s diverse community and constitute a valuable resource for individuals across the economic divide to access nature and provide food for their families. We encourage the Commission and MPA managers to consider the numerous communities that enjoy the state’s many sustainable food resources when considering protections and recommendations that might unnecessarily exclude these groups. We feel that these considerations are in line with the California Natural Resources Agency’s Outdoors for All initiative and its commitment in the Pathways to 30x30 document to “implement projects that do no further harm or pose unintended consequences to historically marginalized communities.”¹ Specifically, we wish to highlight this issue with regards to the expansion of California’s MPA network which restricts shore-based diving, foraging, and fishing access for all Californians – especially historically marginalized communities, communities of color and Native American tribes. From California’s Constitutional Right to Fish:

Anglers from historically marginalized communities may be less able to travel to fishing locations and are more likely to require shore access, as opposed to access from a boat. Anglers in communities like this need accessible shore-fishing, particularly given the importance of subsistence fishing in poorer communities. Moreover, fishing opportunities offer physical and psychological benefits to disadvantaged communities, not just access to fish as food.²

It is within this context that we urge the Commission to take the following actions with regards to the petitions they have received.

Petition 2023-14MPA: *Allow commercial take of red sea urchins in nine state marine conservation areas (SMCAs)*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation.

Petition 2023-15MPA: *Reclassify three northern Channel Islands state marine reserves (SMRs) to SMCAs and allow take of highly migratory species, pelagic finfish, and/or coastal pelagic finfish*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation, but are encouraged by the proposal and the potential opportunity to gather more data on limited take MPAs and long-term MPA monitoring at the Channels Islands.

¹ https://resources.ca.gov/-/media/CNRA-Website/Files/Initiatives/30-by-30/Final_Pathwaysto30x30_042022_508.pdf

² Coats, Francis, and Karrigan Bork. “CALIFORNIA’S CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO FISH.” *Environmental Law*, vol. 51, no. 4, 2021, pp. 1085–147. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48647570>. Accessed 22 Mar. 2023.

Petition 2023-16MPA: *Reclassify Stewarts Point and Bodega Head SMRs to SMCAs and allow commercial take of salmon.*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation.

Petition 2023-18MPA: *Modify allowed uses for four marine protected areas (MPAs) in Santa Barbara Channel and eliminate two special closures.*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation.

Petition 2023-19MPA: *Designate new "Chitqawi" SMCA near Morro Bay for California-Chumash co-management*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation.

Petition 2023-20MPA: *Reclassify and rename Point Buchon SMR to "Chumash SMCA" for co-management with tribal take exemption.*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation.

Petition 2023-21MPA: *Modify Pyramid Point SMCA to remove recreational take of surf smelt and allow tribal take exemption for Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation.*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation.

Petition 2023-22MPA: *Define "rocky intertidal zone," add research, monitoring, restoration and education allowance, and clarify protections in several Orange County MPAs.*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation.

Petition 2023-23MPA: *Reclassify three SMCAs to SMRs, designate one new SMR in Monterey, and make various changes related to kelp restoration.*

We recommend the Commission deny this petition.

While the petitioner's intent to restore kelp forests and ecosystem integrity at tankers reef and in the surrounding waters is laudable, this broadly proscriptive petition would unnecessarily restrict access for anglers where there is no clear scientific rationale. In fact, the petitioner submitted a very similar petition seeking to close access for groundfish along a large stretch of the coast in this region in 2023 which the Department of Fish & Wildlife rejected citing a lack of scientific evidence to support the claim. We support the ongoing efforts to restore kelp forests through urchin culling and other means, however we oppose reclassifying these SMCAs to SMRs and the establishment of a new SMR in Monterey.

Petition 2023-24MPA: *Expand Laguna Beach no-take SMCA southward to border of City of Laguna Beach and modify Dana Point SMCA boundaries*

We recommend the Commission deny this petition.

We oppose this petition on the basis that it lacks scientific documentation or justification to eliminate fishing access in the proposed area. The petitioner argues primarily for administrative ease that the no-take closure be extended to the edge of city limits. During the implementation of the MLPA, MPAs were sited utilizing careful selection criteria based on habitat type, proximity from other MPAs, impact to communities and more. The petitioner argues that all beaches within the City of Laguna Beach should be no-take MPAs in order to streamline enforcement and that homeowners “feel that it is not equitable to have only the north and central beaches protected.” It should be noted that the petitioner also states clearly in the Economic or Fiscal Impact section of the petition that “estimated resident property values gain an increase of 20% from proximity to a fully protected MPA” which may explain more robust support from the city and homeowners.

The petitioner also cites kelp forest health as justification for eliminating fishing access, however the 100 + page report included with the petition doesn’t reference fishing pressure or boat activity with regards to kelp forest health and instead focuses on water temperature, nutrients, wave height, upwelling, rainfall and other stressors. As such, we recommend the Commission deny this petition since there is no scientific documentation to support its claims, and it would only negatively impact anglers who would be forced to travel further to reach fishing grounds.

Petition 2023-27MPA: *Reclassify a portion or all of Anacapa SMCA to an SMR to protect eelgrass*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation. We recognize the value of eelgrass beds for overall ecosystem health and habitat; however, it should be noted that many recreational anglers who target pelagic fish do not anchor and instead prefer to drift fish or troll instead which would have zero impact on the bottom habitat and eelgrass.

Petition 2023-28MPA: *Designate a new SMR at Point Sal, or designate as an SMCA with a tribal take exemption based on tribal consultation*

We recommend the Commission deny this petition.

While the petitioner takes time to identify the important habitat types, larval transport zones, and cultural significance of the Point Sal area, and they reference potential threats to the region from coastal development and industry, they fail to elaborate in any substantive way why fishing access should be removed from this wild and iconic central coast fishing destination. The petitioner states: “current [commercial] fishing in the proposed area is limited, likely due to its considerable distance from nearest port areas of Morro Bay and Santa Barbara.” They also admit that they have no data or analysis with regards to recreational fishing and state, “our request to CDFW for recreational fishing data from this area was being processed at time of submission; we will evaluate the potential impact to recreational fishers and submit it to the state following receipt of the requested data.”

A limited google search of “Point Sal fishing” also uncovers a large number of recreational fishing blogs and videos detailing the remote and adventurous hike to fish this area from a diverse population of anglers. In 2023 one blogger wrote, “had a great time hiking miles and miles and miles to fish Point Sal with Martin Mansera from Mansera Outdoors...It's such a remote location and so difficult to access, it

makes for a really rad adventure.” Recreational fishing trips to the area by boat are also common, and fishing is noted in nearly every travel guide or city/county website that talks about visiting Point Sal.

Regarding access and disadvantaged communities, the petitioner writes, “the California Environmental Protection Agency identifies the adjacent city of Guadalupe as “disadvantaged” under CA Senate Bill 535, and their synthesis of environmental and socioeconomic indicators further reveals that Guadalupe – alongside Santa Maria and Lompoc – are underprivileged communities that experience significant cumulative impacts from pollution. Given these communities’ close proximity to Point Sal, implementing an SMR at the proposed site could enhance access for disadvantaged populations to valuable coastal resources and fishing opportunities.”

To justify this confounding claim that removing fishing access could somehow *enhance fishing opportunities* for disadvantaged communities, the petitioner cites a study of commercial lobster fishing and the concept of “spillover.” They write, “California’s MPAs have been shown to increase the biomass of fishery-targeted species and promote “spillover” into nearby coastal areas, benefitting nearby fishing grounds.”

Spillover and the positive impacts to fisheries located in waters adjacent to MPAs are often referenced in association with the MPA network, and the limited, initial science has demonstrated some positive correlations with spillover of invertebrates like lobsters to adjacent fishing grounds in select study areas and commercial fishing for tuna in Hawaii. However, there remains an opportunity to further study this hypothesis and to promote scientific research that successfully documents spillover of targeted finfish across the MPA network in California. Some data from MPA monitoring along the Central California Coast indicated limited evidence of spillover from targeted finfish that were tagged and recaptured at a later point during the study period as evidenced from the Starr et al study: Variation in Responses of Fishes across Multiple Reserves within a Network of Marine Protected Areas in Temperate Waters:

As of July 2014, a total of 251 individual tag recaptures have been reported (Table 8). Tagged fishes were recaptured by commercial and recreational hook-and-line fishermen, commercial trap fishermen, SCUBA divers, and during our fishing surveys. Of all the tagged fishes recapture and reported, 71% were recaptured in the same site and grid cell as they were released, and 22% of recaptured fishes were caught within the same site but outside the original grid cell where they were released. Only 18 fish, or 7% of the recaptured fishes, were recaptured beyond the boundaries of the MPA or REF site in which they were released. The mean net distance moved by eight of nine species recaptured was less than half the length of the MPAs we studied.³

While we do not seek to draw conclusions regarding the overall merits of spillover to adjacent fisheries from the results of one study, we do encourage additional research to evaluate the impacts that MPAs have on local fisheries and fisheries as a whole, especially within the context of varied siting and disparate habitat types evidenced across the MPA network. As the Forcada study indicated, “We conclude that spillover effects are not a universal consequence of siting MPAs in temperate waters and they are related to the distribution of habitats inside and around MPAs.” (Forcada et al., 2009).

Due to the limited scientific understanding of spillover as it relates to the Marine Protected Area Network as a whole, especially with regards to finfish which would be the primary target of recreational shore and

³ 4 Starr RM, Wendt DE, Barnes CL, Marks CI, Malone D, et al. (2015) Variation in Responses of Fishes across Multiple Reserves within a Network of Marine Protected Areas in Temperate Waters. PLOS ONE 10(3): e0118502. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0118502>

boat-based anglers at Point Sal, we disagree with the petitioner's logical assumptions and the argument as a whole. In fact, when considered in the context presented from the *Constitutional Right to Fish* article, the discussion is turned on its head entirely. "Anglers from historically marginalized communities may be less able to travel to fishing locations and are more likely to require shore access, as opposed to access from a boat. Anglers in communities like this need accessible shore-fishing, particularly given the importance of subsistence fishing in poorer communities."⁴

With the two large no-take SMRs located just South of this newly proposed MPA (Vandenberg SMR & Point Conception SMR) and Point Buchon to the North, it would seem the opportunities to fish and forage the coast for residents of Guadalupe, Lompoc and Santa Maria are already few and far between. In fact, in 2022 the City of Lompoc petitioned the Fish & Game Commission to allow for shore-fishing access along a ½ mile stretch of beach within the Vandenberg SMR, citing a lack of access to historic fishing grounds for the local communities.

We share the petitioner's concerns regarding habitat disruption from off-shore energy production and the associated infrastructure, however, we note the likely establishment of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS) designation which would effectively curtail any development or offshore energy production in this region. Planning for the CHNMS has included fishing access as a key component of the proposed designation.

As a result, we recommend the Commission deny this petition.

Petition 2023-29MPA: *Designate a new SMCA with a tribal take exemption for and co-management with Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians in Santa Barbara*

We recommend the Commission deny this petition.

We oppose the petitioner's request to designate a new, no-take SMCA in Carpinteria for several reasons. First, the petitioner argues that spacing and connectivity is a key concern in this location with the distance between the Campus Point and Point Dume SMCAs at 64 nautical miles (nm) instead of the recommended 54 nm to ensure ecological connectivity. When this request is examined within the broader context of MPA siting, it is clear that the target spacing between MPAs could be easily achieved by moving the Campus Point SMCA South or the Point Dume SMCA North, since both are located well-within the recommended 54nm from adjacent MPAs on either side.

Additionally, the petitioner cites the location as important nursery habitat for juvenile great white sharks as justification for establishing a no-take SMR. They write, "Research conducted in the Southern California Bight has found that fisheries bycatch is likely the main source of mortality for JWS." However, the article they cite to support this claim, John F. Benson et. al., discloses that for great white sharks they captured and tagged, "mortality risk was substantially greater off the coast of Baja, Mexico compared with California." Importantly, the research paper also states, "that incidental gillnet capture continues to be the primary source of mortality for juveniles. The lower mortality risk we documented in California waters suggests that full closure of gillnet fishing close to shore is a more effective management strategy than simply banning targeted fishing to reduce mortality risk due to bycatch."⁵

⁴ Coats, Francis, and Karrigan Bork. "CALIFORNIA'S CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO FISH." *Environmental Law*, vol. 51, no. 4, 2021, pp. 1085–147. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48647570>. Accessed 22 Mar. 2023.

⁵ Benson JF, Jorgensen SJ, O'Sullivan JB, et al. Juvenile survival, competing risks, and spatial variation in mortality risk of a marine apex predator. *J Appl Ecol*. 2018; 55: 2888–2897. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2664.13158>

As the petitioner is undoubtedly aware, gillnet fishing is banned in state waters and therefore the proposed MPA would have no impact on the gillnet fishery or likely the mortality risk to great white sharks.

The petitioner notes the location's popularity with recreational lobster divers and the likely opposition from stakeholders who would oppose the additional loss of access. The mortality risk to great white sharks from the recreational lobster fishery is zero, similar to the risk from spearfishing, yet the petitioner seeks to eliminate access entirely without providing any scientific rationale for the closure. As a result, we request that the Commission deny this petition.

Petition 2023-31MPA: *Reclassify Drakes Estero SMCA to an SMR and combine with Estero de Limantour SMR as a single SMR:*

We recommend referring this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation but encourage the Commission to maintain access for clamming unless there is a clear threat to the fishery or surrounding ecosystem.

It is worth noting that the National Park Service mentions in their comment letter that the area is now Congressionally Designated Wilderness and that "recreational take of shellfish appears to be very rare, [and] requires long kayak trips in wilderness area." Just because something is difficult doesn't mean it should be illegal.

Petition 2023-32MPA: *Reclassify Duxbury Reef SMCA as an SMR and expand northern and southern boundaries*

We recommend that the Commission deny or refer this petition to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation but emphasize maintaining fishing access for local communities at Duxbury Reef. The vast majority of complaints regarding Duxbury reef are related to enforcement and compliance, rather than a scientific justification for eliminating access. Shore fishing is an important past-time for the diverse communities that comprise the North Bay Area, and removing access to a popular fishing destination should not be justified simply based on the actions of a few bad apples.

Petition 2023-33MPA: *Expand the boundaries of five SMRs and one SMCA, and designate a new SMR off Pleasure Point, in Santa Cruz*

We recommend that this petition be denied or referred to the Department of Fish & Wildlife for review and recommendation due to its broad scope and complexity. The petitioner seeks to enhance protections for kelp forests, but does so with an overly broad brush. Rather than advocating for reducing fishing pressure for predators of kelp grazers, like lobster and sheepshead, the petition advocates for the closure of all fishing, including the harvest of grazer species like urchins that have been documented to decimate kelp forests.

The petitioner argues that eliminating fishing pressure within the proposed MPA areas would somehow bolster kelp populations, but the claim is not well documented by scientific research in this petition. A noteworthy case study, by comparison, is the ongoing Tanker's Reef kelp restoration project, where volunteers have been culling purple urchins within study plots and tracking kelp recovery within the study area and a control site nearby. The initial data for the last three years shows a clear correlation between the removal of purple urchins and kelp recovery in the study plot with no kelp recovery in the adjacent control where urchins were not removed. Fishing is permitted in the Tanker's reef area, however, in adjacent MPA's that have not permitted active restoration and where fishing is not allowed, urchin barons persist and kelp recovery remains minimal.

Kelp forest health and resiliency is a complex and multi-variable equation that can be impacted by numerous factors including water temperature, disease, pollution, algal blooms, wave energy, commercial harvest and more. We support efforts to restore kelp forests across the coast and recognize the role they play in the overall ecosystem health of fisheries, especially the abalone fishery that remains closed until 2026. We urge caution, however where broad fishing closures are enacted in the attempt to solve a problem that requires a more nuanced and carefully crafted multidisciplinary approach.

It should also be noted that the petitioner indicates support for recreational hook and line fishing and spearfishing as an acceptable alternative in several of the MPAs referenced in the petition.

Petition 2023-34MPA: *Reclassify Point Buchon SMCA to an SMR and modify take at Farnsworth Onshore and Offshore SMCAs to only allow recreational spearfishing.*

We recommend that the Commission deny this petition and we emphasize the substantial impacts to current fishing access. The petitioner argues that since the salmon season was closed in 2023 it will likely be closed in perpetuity, which would justify eliminating salmon and albacore fishing access at the Point Buchon SMCA. Salmon populations often decrease during drought years and can rebound with increased precipitation or water allocation as was the case in 2008 and 2009 when the fishery was closed and then reopened. We are cautiously optimistic that the salmon numbers will once again bounce back following the increased precipitation received over the past two years.

In the draft Pathways to 30x30 document, the CNRA writes: “It should be noted that limited-take State MPAs provide an excellent model for other jurisdictions looking to balance biodiversity conservation with sustainable well-managed commercial and recreational fishing.” We feel that reclassifying the Point Buchon SMCA as an SMR and eliminating fishing in this area would be inappropriate; however, we support any attempts to improve enforcement and compliance with existing regulations.

Furthermore, the proposal to modify take at Farnsworth Onshore and Offshore SMCAs would disproportionately impact a broad variety and collection of user groups who may not be physically able or inclined to spearfish. For this reason and the lack of concrete scientific data to justify the additional restrictions, we recommend the Commission deny this petition.

Sincerely,

Devin O’Dea
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

Rachel Fischer
National Marine Manufacturers Association

Wayne Kotow
Coastal Conservation Association California

James Stone
Nor-Cal Guides & Sportsman’s Association

Keely Hopkins
Congressional Sportsman’s Foundation

Larry Phillips
American Sportfishing Association

February 8, 2024

California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor,
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Discussion Item 10 - Regulation change petitions (marine)

Dear President Sklar, Vice President Zavaleta & Commissioners,

As an organization dedicated to ensuring our North American heritage of hunting and fishing in a natural setting with over 350,000 supporters, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers expresses serious concerns regarding several of the petitions currently before the California Fish & Game Commission that would eliminate fishing access along large stretches of the California coast.

The intent of the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) and the stewardship of our coastal resources are of paramount importance to California's heritage. However, these laudable goals and conservation benchmarks should not preclude access to harvest coastal foods where state and federal fisheries managers have demonstrated robust and resilient fish stocks without any current threat of overfishing, nor for those species where targeted fishing and active management would benefit the overall ecosystem balance.

There are numerous, seemingly well-intentioned petitions currently before the Fish & Game Commission that seek to preserve California's coastal waters citing anthropogenic impacts to biodiversity and ecosystems, such as pollution, rising sea temperatures, disease, development and fishing. While we support the intent to safeguard our fish stocks, biodiversity, and ecosystem integrity, we strongly disagree with the all-or-nothing approach adopted by many of the petitioners who proffer the wholesale elimination of fishing access without adequate scientific rationale.

Simply put, many of the petitions seek to advance preservation at all costs, pushing for wholesale closures that circumvent the regulatory processes already in place, ultimately bludgeoning access for the diverse angling communities that have revered these coastal traditions for generations.

Shore fishing, diving/spearfishing, kayak/boat fishing and coastal gathering are low impact activities that reflect the broad spectrum of California's diverse community and constitute a valuable resource for individuals across the economic divide to access nature and provide food for their families at the same time. We encourage the Commission and MPA managers to consider the numerous communities that enjoy the state's many sustainable food resources when considering protections and recommendations that might unnecessarily exclude these groups.

It is within this context that we urge the Commission to deny those petitions (outlined in our detailed letter to the Commission on 2/1/24) that would unnecessarily erode our longstanding coastal fishing and foraging traditions.

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2024-02-05 23:50:53.107		Bob	Nelson						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-05 23:27:03.35	Mr.	Christopher	Reiger			Santa Rosa	CA		US	Petition Signed
2024-02-05 23:20:30.843		Fredrick	Robinson						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-05 23:18:20.8		Michael	Snyder						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-05 22:57:33.25		jeremy	mcmillin						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-05 21:12:35.05	Mr.	Nick	Zagaris			Auburn	CA		US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-05 16:00:41.42		James	Peifer						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-05 16:00:23.037		Blake	Anderson						US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-05 15:54:33.543		Matthew	Nurisso			Belmont	CA		US	Petition Signed

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2024-02-04 01:22:59.597		Jason	Fitzgibbon						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-04 01:21:34.463		Ed	Hobbs						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-04 00:39:37.56		James	Tregembo						US	Petition Signed

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2024-02-03 22:36:47.323		Kyle	Rempe						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-03 22:13:07.423		Michael	Skehen			Arroyo Grande	CA		US	Petition Signed
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2024-02-02 19:15:32.903		SynKae	NG						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 19:15:13.213		Daniel	Silveira						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 19:06:32.177		Matthew	Bond						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 18:56:00.567		Cole	Pickford						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 18:55:34.027		Nick	DeFerrari						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 18:43:33.243		Cecilia	Giddings						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 18:05:26.83		Isaac	Beck						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 17:46:21.643		Clayton	Beaver						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 17:45:06.907		Travis	Craven						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 17:30:47.033		Eric	Tye						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 17:16:16.94		Benjamin	Kaslin						US	Petition Signed

2024-02-02 16:25:01.977		Matt	Rose						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 16:10:12.253		Kevin	Vella						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 15:56:10.45		Charlie	de la Rosa						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 15:55:01.117		Nicholas	Angus						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 15:38:15.073		Nick	Ippolito						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 15:34:39.867		Artin	Marootian						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 14:57:10.573		Sam	Narveson						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 14:52:04.667		Jacob	Morris						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 14:48:19.837		Jonathan	Hoang						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 14:44:36.137		Mitchell	Ward						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 14:40:14.187		Logan	Little						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 14:29:39.883		Josef	Sanchez						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 14:25:41.613		Leif	Bierer						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 14:09:39.14		JESSE	STOVALL			Fiddletown	CA		US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 14:09:23.547		Mike	Costello						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 14:03:34.583	Mr.	Hunter	Miller			Kuna	ID		US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 14:02:35.91		Jordan	Germyn						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:58:56.873		Gilberto	Garcia						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:58:51.957		Rod	Kazempour						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:56:33.713		Andrew	Miller						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:55:22.597		Micah	Dungey						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:51:26.967		Jacob	Weber						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:50:04.897		Chris	Chun						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:48:43.423		Jerry	Chang						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:48:06.903		Clayton	Thornton						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:47:17.947		Christopher	James						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:45:51.557		John	Phillips						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:45:40.09		James	Killiany						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:40:12.057		Richard	Owens						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:37:41.607	Mr.	Blane	Markham			Carmel	CA		US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:36:49.903		Connor	Weber						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:35:29.397		Logan	Gillingham						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:31:21.977		Dennis	Kilian						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:29:17.553		Daniel	Collins						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:23:58.117		Phillip	Sanders						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:17:26.583		Derrik	Kapalla						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:16:58.097		Craig	Simes						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:15:13.017		Valerie	Bednarski						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:14:01.07		Elijah	Black						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:12:08.623		Philip	Adornato						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:10:44.163		owen	shapiro						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:10:37.263		Steve	Dolan						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-02 13:09:39.617		Nick	Garcia						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-01 21:14:07.19		Keynan	Hobbs						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-01 19:52:19.6		Allen	Noren						US	Petition Signed
2024-02-01 19:31:26.837		Devin	O'Dea						US	Petition Signed

From: California Fishermens Resiliency Association <californiafishermensresiliency@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, July 3, 2024 06:44 PM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Cc: [REDACTED] Steve Scheiblaue

<[REDACTED]>; Dave Colker

<[REDACTED]>; Jake Mitchell <[REDACTED]>;

Subject: MPA Petitions Support/Object

CALIFORNIA FISHERMEN'S RESILIENCY ASSOCIATION

1118 6th St.
Eureka, CA 95501

California Fish and Game Commission
PO Box 944209
1416 Ninth Street Suite 1320
Sacramento, California 94244-2090

July 3, 2024

Re: MPA Petitions/Support/Object

Commissioners:

The California Fisherman's Resiliency Association (CFRA) expresses its support for the following Marine Protected Area (MPA) petitions:

2023 - 14 MPA

2023 - 15 MPA

2023 - 16 MPA

2023 - 18 MPA

2023 - 30 MPA

Our support is based on research conducted by the University of Washington (sustainable fisheries- us.org) which exactly states that MPA's have no positive affect on threats to marine life posed by ocean acidification, global warming, coastal development, terrestrial and urban run-off and human pollution of the world environment. "Recent reviews of the extensive MPA network in California have concluded there is no evidence for a regional increase in biodiversity, or targeted fish abundance, nor is there evidence for MPA's providing climate resiliency"

We provide no support for the following MPA petitions:

2023 - 19 MPA
2023 - 20 MPA
2023 - 21 MPA
2023 - 22 MPA
2023 - 23 MPA
2023 - 24 MPA
2023 - 25 MPA
2023 - 26 MPA
2023 - 28 MPA
2023 - 29 MPA
2023 - 31 MPA
2023 - 32 MPA
2023 - 33 MPA
2023 - 34 MPA

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Ken Bates, Executive Director
California Fishermen's Resiliency Association Member Associations

Crescent City Commercial Fishermen's Association
Trinidad Bay Fishermen's Association
Shelter Cove Fishermen's Preservation, Inc.
Salmon Troller's Marketing Association of Noyo
Bodega Bay Commercial Fishermen's Association
San Francisco Crab Boat Owners Association
Half Moon Bay Commercial Fishermen's Association
The Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries
Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara
Santa Cruz Commercial Fishermen's Association
Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations

Cc: Dave Colker
Peter Halmay
Steve Scheiblauber
Jake Mitchell

Please Strengthen And Expand California's Marine Protected Area Network

David Jens Thomas Pedersen <[REDACTED]>

Sat 08/03/2024 10:00 PM

To:FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Dear California Fish and Game Commission,

I respectfully submit these comments to urge you to strengthen California's network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Specifically, I ask that you please add two new MPAs to the existing network: Point Sal State Marine Reserve, and Mishopshno State Marine Conservation Area. These two areas are ecologically rich and would provide significant science-based benefits to the overall health of our marine areas. The Mishopshno MPA would be strategically located in order to create greater connectivity for the whole network. In addition, both proposed MPAs have historic cultural significance for the Chumash people. On top of creating these new MPAs, I also ask that you please strengthen protections for and in the existing network by restricting or prohibiting activities that are shown to harm or risk harming the health of the network to ensure its longevity and availability as a resource to all.

Research on California's MPA network shows fish are larger and more abundant inside many of the protected areas, four-fifths (of the ones analyzed in the studies) had healthier populations than compared to unprotected areas, and the overall network had more coral, sponges, and other animals that are significantly associated with thriving habitats. While It is clear that we're seeing initial progress and that the existing protections are effective and work to benefit the overall health of our ocean, we must protect the existing network and go further to unlock the full potential benefits of the network.

Accordingly, I respectfully you to maintain California's status as an ocean conservation champion, especially in the face of ocean industrialization, marine crowding, and climate change. The ocean is a dynamic, constantly changing system with a bevy of uncertainties, which necessitates the adaptive management of MPAs to durably protect our shared marine resources.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,

David Pedersen

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

From: Corie Erskine <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Tuesday, November 5, 2024 10:32 PM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Subject: Point Sal SMR 2023-28MPA & MPA 2023-19MPA Public Comment PSLCFA

Hello,

Please see the attached comment from the Port San Luis Commercial Fishermen's Association in Avila Beach, CA concerning the agenda items below.

Point Sal SMR 2023-28MPA

MPA 2023-19MPA

Thank you,

Corie Erskine

Board Member, PSLCFA



PORT SAN LUIS COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 513
AVILA, CA 93424

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President
Vice President
Secretary/Treasurer

Attn: California Fish & Game Commission's Marine Resources Committee (MRC)
RE: Point Sal SMR 2023-28MPA (termed SMCA)
SUBJECT: PSLCFA's Opposition to Proposed SMR
Oct. 26, 2024

The Port San Luis Commercial Fishermen's Association (PSLCFA) was established in 1964 as a 501(c)6 nonprofit organization. PSLCFA members generate millions of dollars in local community revenue each year. We currently have 75 registered members. However, our unregistered numbers greatly exceed 100 as fishing in our community continues to be a family affair, passing along this time-honored tradition to future generations. Our PSLCFA members participate in groundfish, coastal pelagic species, halibut, crab, highly migratory species such as albacore, salmon, and/or hagfish fisheries, both commercially and recreationally (outside our association). The PSLCFA represents a significantly vested interest in fishery activities on the California coast. Our central coast fishermen land the most live fish on the West Coast. At least 65% of fishermen in our area rely on the live fish market for their main income source, fishing mostly through nearshore groundfish permits inside 3 miles with the primary take method being hook and line.

Contrary to the petitioner claims, the proposed SMR around Point Sal in central California poses a threat to the livelihood of California fishermen specifically the members of the PSLCFA. The area identified for proposal encompasses fruitful fishing grounds where our members' harvest activities occur.

The PSLCFA urges the California Fish and Game Commission's Marine Resources Committee to consider the dire consequences to our local commercial fishermen from enacting a Point Sal SMR. While the petition states the data from the overlapping commercial fishing blocks contributes to 1.1% of the central coast's landings by value, it fails to look at the local effects that 1.1% actually has. In the same dataset timeframe on the MFDE, 2012-2022, the local port to the MPA, Port San Luis/Avila had 28.12% of its commercial revenue alone come from the overlapping blocks, 631 and 632. More specifically 25.92% of the port's groundfish revenue



PORT SAN LUIS COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 513
AVILA, CA 93424

and 57.79% of the port's crab revenue based on the dataset referenced. Further, upon speaking with our members, we have identified that many members have inadvertently misclassified their reported catch block which should have fallen under 631 and 632. Therefore, due to this, we anticipate the catch rate and revenue accumulated from this area to be significantly larger than shown in the dataset used for justification of this SMR proposal. Our members are making adjustments for future landings, but this will not be reflected in historical data and should be considered in this SMR's determination.

Further, disproportionate management such as enacting the proposed Point Sal SMR will undoubtedly result in the systemic dismantling of fishery culture on the California Coast and the economic ramifications will be felt far beyond.

The west coast fishing industry and coastal community businesses who normally benefit from derived demand are already facing economic decline directly related to the regulatory restrictions limiting the Dungeness crab season by 3 months and the inadvertent creation of a uniform west coast season opener date. The PFMC's decision for salmon season closures the last two years exacerbated this downward trend. The fishermen who would normally depend on one or both of those fishers for their livelihood have now expanded into the sablefish, groundfish, and albacore fisheries or the recreational sector in order to compensate for their lack of income. A preexisting high level of market competition from unregulated seafood importers and aquaculture production already presents downward pressure on the price of fish. This shift in the dedicated labor harvesting local wild fish has led to an influx of fish supply and market saturation wherein the price of fish sold off the boat has plummeted creating instability in other fisheries. Once again, in order to compensate for their income deficiency at this lowered price of goods, fishermen have been forced to increase catch volumes in these alternative fisheries. The government possess the power to waive permit fees, temporarily suspend fishery related taxes, issue financial relief, subsidize marine fuel, and/ or limit imported seafood from countries known for practicing unsustainable fishing but there has been zero regulatory reprieve to assist fishermen through this hardship. Closure of nearshore fruitful fishing grounds imposed by this SMR will place further unnecessary pressure on our local industry. By limiting This unfairly confines the potential income of fishermen involved in the commercial and recreational fisheries on the coast of California. The proposed SMR will especially harm the PSLCFA as many of our members are relatively new fishermen who have over \$100k invested in assets and depend on this location to support their sole income.

Due to the already negatively impacted state of fisheries our fishermen frequently venture along the California Coast specifically North to the Morro Bay area and just South to Santa Barbara. Therefore, we stand in solidarity and brotherhood with the Morro Bay Commercial



PORT SAN LUIS COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 513
AVILA, CA 93424

Fisherman's Association and the Santa Barbara Commercial Fisherman's Association against further MPA creation in this coastal region especial, MPA 2023-19MPA. The commercial blocks overlapping the proposed SMCA account for 6.2% of Morro Bay's landing revenue alone. More specifically, these blocks represent 25% of the area's squid landings, 8.8% of the groundfish landings, and 15% of the area's salmon landings per the MFDE. Closing this area to exclusively commercial fishermen would only continue to reduce fishable area for a shrinking industry and offer no benefits of the so-called "spillover effect" to restricted fisheries due to the still-allowed recreational take. There is zero public benefit which would come from MPA closures and restrictions but the impact to the livelihood of fishermen families would be devastating.

We urge you to question the policy methodology of MPA's along our coast- are these protective measures truly addressing a threat worth sacrificing the livelihood of us hardworking Americans?

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,

Chris Pavone
President, PSLCFA

From: Erin Eastwood <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 4:21:06 PM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Subject: Written Comment for March 13 MRC Meeting

Hello,

Please see the written comment from the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, Environmental Defense Center, and the Natural Resources Defense Council, attached. Thank you for your consideration.

--

Erin Eastwood

Founder and Principal

Blue Spark Strategies, LLC

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



February 28, 2025

Samantha Murray, Vice President
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95817

Submitted electronically to fgc@fgc.ca.gov

**RE: Comments on Fish and Game Commission Marine Resources Committee March 2025 Meeting
Agenda Item 5 A II: MPA Regulation Change Petitions**

Dear Vice President Murray and Commissioner Sklar:

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) submitted two petitions to designate new Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Santa Barbara County:

- Petition 2023-28-MPA proposes a new MPA in the waters surrounding Point Sal.
- Petition 2023-29MPA, submitted with the co-sponsors, Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians (SYBCI) and Environmental Defense Center (EDC), proposes a California-Chumash co-managed MPA off the coast of Carpinteria to be named Mishopshno.

For each petition, we conducted initial outreach during late Summer and Fall 2023 before submission to the Commission. More sustained outreach efforts began upon the petitions' formal acceptance by the Commission in December 2023. We provided an update on our outreach in July 2024, and this letter will describe our subsequent outreach efforts.

Since January 2024, our two organizations and Tribal nation have conducted over 100 meetings and phone calls with stakeholders and community members. Many of the meetings since July 2024 are follow up meetings where we have solicited feedback on the proposed boundaries and regulations and worked to build support for the petitions and address concerns with the proposals. Since the July update, we have conducted additional outreach to local Tribal members and organizations, local fishing representatives, elected officials, and local businesses and community members. We have attended community meetings, fishing association meetings, and hosted public webinars to reach and hear from as many stakeholders as possible. We plan to submit amendments for both of our petitions to the Fish & Game Commission by the March deadline. These amendments will reflect the discussions we have had with Tribes and fishers.

Throughout this process, we have prioritized 1) connecting with the local community, 2) responding to questions, ideas, and concerns, and 3) sharing information as broadly as possible so all interested parties can come to the table to inform upcoming decision-making moments. For the Mishopshno petition in particular, SYBCI, EDC, and NRDC have undertaken our outreach efforts as a team.

We have shared the following types of information throughout our outreach efforts:

- Background on the MPA Network, Marine Life Protection Act goals, Decadal Management Review and its findings, and the latest science

- Fish and Game Commission meeting updates
- MPA petition evaluation timeline and process updates
- Opportunities for public participation
- Research and outreach findings
- MPA petition details

Throughout our outreach, our organizations and Tribal nation have connected with hundreds of interested individuals via email, phone calls, and virtual and in-person meetings, including:

- Federally and non-federally recognized Tribes
- Tribal non-profit organizations
- City Council members, District Supervisors, Mayors, city staff
- Congressional, Assembly, and Senate offices and district staff
- Local and State agencies (i.e., Santa Barbara Flood Control District, Santa Barbara County Parks, State Parks, etc.)
- Local businesses
- Local scientists
- Commercial fishing representatives
- Local recreational fishers (e.g., spearfishers, catch-and-release fishers)
- Local homeowners
- Local, state, and national non-profit organizations
- Youth
- Community centers

These conversations have improved our understanding of the Carpinteria and Point Sal regions, highlighted community support for protecting the coastal waters in those areas and concerns about how it is done, shaped our supplemental site-specific research, and informed our verbal and written public comments to the Commission. We hope the insight and supplemental information gathered through our outreach efforts maximize each petition's potential to strengthen our MPA Network.

In the coming months, we hope to build on the connections we've made thus far and to engage with key stakeholders and members of Tribal nations we haven't yet reached. We look forward to sharing our outreach and supplemental research findings with the CDFW and FGC teams to inform the evaluation of petitions 2023-28MPA and 2023-29MPA.

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on the adaptive management of California's MPA Network.

Sincerely,

Sandy Aylesworth
 Director, Pacific Initiative, Nature
 Natural Resources Defense Council

Sam Cohen
 Government Affairs and Legal Officer

Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians

Azsha Hudson

Marine Conservation Analyst & Program Manager

Environmental Defense Center



City of Guadalupe
Administration Department
918 Obispo Street
P.O. Box 908
Guadalupe, CA 93434

Rec'd
CALIFORNIA
FISH AND GAME
COMMISSION
4/3/2025

March 18, 2025

Erika Zavaleta, President
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95817

Re: Letter of Support for Petition 2023-28-MPA

Dear President Zavaleta and Honorable Commissioners,

I am writing to express my support for Petition 2023-28-MPA, which would designate a new marine protected area (MPA) off the coast of Point Sal. As a lifelong resident and current mayor of Guadalupe, the closest city to Point Sal, I believe this new MPA will benefit our community and safeguard a cherished natural space for the residents of Guadalupe and visitors to our area.

I have been coming to Point Sal since I was a young boy. Like many other community residents within the Santa Maria Valley, the Point Sal area and the waters identified in the proposed Point Sal Area, believe that this protection is necessary to protect and enhance the waters residents have enjoyed for decades. This designation will protect the Point Sal MPA for generations to come. Located at the convergence of two major ocean currents, the highly productive waters around Point Sal are home to kelp beds, rich tidepools, and a diversity of marine life including humpback whales, gray whales, sea lions, seals, sea otters, seabirds, and more. Many residents of Guadalupe frequent the trails to Point Sal overlooking the coast to view wildlife, relax at the beach, and enjoy the remote and pristine area. When it was accessible, many in our community would visit Point Sal State Beach to spend time with family and enjoy the shore. This area is important to my community, my neighbors, and my constituents. Ensuring that we protect it for future generations aligns deeply with the City of Guadalupe's values.

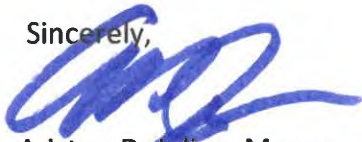
The Central Coast's world-famous coastline is a biodiversity hotspot for marine life and attracts visitors from around the world. In 2023, tourism brought just over \$2 billion (about \$6.2 per person in the US) in travel-related spending to Santa Barbara County and supported more than 20,000 jobs. Continuing to build and strengthen our tradition of ecotourism is a priority of the City of Guadalupe. Our local economy believes that this MPA designation will enhance tourism for our area in collaboration with the Guadalupe Dunes Non-Profit, the Guadalupe Business

Association, Inc., as well as the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce. Acting to secure ocean protections now will help our local economy stay vibrant in the long run – ultimately supporting the many local businesses and tourism operations that rely on healthy landscapes and seascapes.

Further, the City of Guadalupe acknowledges and supports the importance of Chumash people's historic and contemporary connection to this place. Historically, Point Sal holds cultural significance for the Chumash people, with evidence of habitation as far back as 4,800 years ago. Chumash artifacts are visible throughout Point Sal, and analyses of burial sites from the area demonstrate the rich cultural ties to the traditional stewards of this land. The city was proud to support the recent designation of the Chumash Heritage Marine National Sanctuary, and we are pleased to support this proposal that honors and protects culturally significant waters for the Chumash people.

We commend the continued work of the Commission to advance the conservation of our state's valuable and unique marine resources. Designating a protected area at Point Sal will further bolster the strength of California's MPA network, support local communities and businesses, and safeguard our coastal ecosystems for future generations. Thank you for your consideration of this petition, and the opportunity to submit recommendations for the adaptive management of California's MPA network as part of the Decadal Management Review process.

Sincerely,



Ariston D. Julian, Mayor
City of Guadalupe

From: Jeanne Sparks <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2025 07:08 PM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Cc: Sandy Aylesworth <[REDACTED]>; SBCAN <[REDACTED]>

Subject: SUPPORT FOR PETITION 2023-28MPA

I am sending a letter from Santa Barbara County Action Network supporting the proposed Pt. Sal State Marine Reserve. Please distribute to the commission.

Thank you,

Jeanne Sparks

Co-Executive Director

Santa Barbara County Action Network

[REDACTED]

www.sbcan.org

[REDACTED]





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SANTA BARBARA COUNTY ACTION NETWORK

P.O. Box 6174
Santa Maria, CA 93456
info@sbcان.org
www.sbcان.org
Facebook.com/SBCANorg
805.563.0463

March 14, 2025

Erika Zavaleta, President
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814
fgc@fgc.ca.gov

Re: Support for Petition 2023-28MPA

Dear President Zavaleta and Honorable Commissioners:

Santa Barbara County Action Network supports the proposed Point Sal State Marine Reserve (Petition 2023-28MPA) near the city of Guadalupe. Conserving this special area will help protect and restore ocean health, enhance coastal recreation experiences, and help ensure Santa Barbara County's coastal economy thrives for decades to come. SBCAN urges you to approve this proposal.

The Point Sal MPA would conserve an important habitat that supports rich biodiversity, such as kelp forests, rocky reefs, tidepools, sandy beaches, migratory whale corridors, an important larval retention zone, and a seabird and sea lion rookery. Protecting this area would have positive impacts that spread beyond its boundary, bolstering ocean resilience and keeping our coastal waters healthy. This area holds cultural significance for several Indigenous communities in our region. Designating this MPA would honor and strengthen the Chumash peoples' stewardship of the area and elevate their historical and present-day connection to the region.

In addition, this area holds special importance for ocean and coastal recreation communities. Point Sal is home to stunning coastal bluff trails that are frequented by local hikers and tourists to view wildlife, relax at the beach and enjoy the remote and pristine area. By making the ocean healthier and more resilient to climate change, strong marine protections help preserve everyone's ability to enjoy these areas through a variety of recreational activities, far into the future. This also benefits our economy – collectively, ocean-based recreational activities contribute to our state's \$28 billion ocean tourism and recreation economy. In 2023, coastal tourism brought just over \$2 billion in travel-related spending to Santa Barbara County and supported more than 20,000 jobs.

The Commission's continued work to protect our state's biodiversity is critical at a time when ocean conservation is more important than ever. Thank you for the opportunity to express our strong support for these proposals that aim to fill a current gap in network design to improve ecological connectivity throughout the region, provide additional resilience in the face of climate change, and protect critical marine habitats.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Sparks, Co-Executive Director

Ken Hough, Co-Executive Director

ROY LEE
First District Supervisor



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

County Administration Building
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
Telephone: (805) 568-2190
www.countyofsb.org

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

April 15, 2025

Erika Zavaleta, President
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for Petitions 2023-28MPA and 2023-29MPA

Dear President Zavaleta and Honorable Commissioners:

I am writing in support of the proposed Point Sal State Marine Reserve (Petition 2023-28MPA) near the city of Guadalupe, and the Mishopshno State Marine Conservation Area (Petition 2023-29MPA) off the coast of Carpinteria. A healthy ocean is the heartbeat of Santa Barbara County – residents, and visitors alike rely on our pristine waters, inviting beaches, and safe and accessible recreation. Conserving these two special areas will help protect and restore ocean health, enhance coastal recreation experiences, and help ensure Santa Barbara County’s coastal economy thrives for decades to come. I urge you to approve these proposals.

Conserving Point Sal and Mishopshno MPAs will have powerful ripple effects:

- Conserve important habitats that support rich biodiversity such as kelp forests, rocky reefs, tidepools, sandy beaches, migratory whale corridors, important larval retention zones, and a seabird and sea lion rookeries.
- Bolster ocean resilience to keep our coastal waters healthy
- Encourage accessible recreation by local and visiting hikers, surfers, shore fishers, swimmers, kayakers, birdwatchers, beach walkers, and families of all ages.
- Create safe and sustainable conditions for commercial fishers
- Honor and strengthen the Chumash peoples’ stewardship of the area and elevate their historical and present-day connection to the region.

The support for these two MPAs is well researched and representative of many interests. The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), alongside the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians and the Environmental Defense Center, conducted extensive outreach and research regarding the MPAs throughout Santa Barbara County. Since December 2023, the coalition has held over 100 meetings with Tribes, fishers, scientists, local leaders, and community members to gather input, share information, and refine proposals. Their outreach included webinars, public meetings, and direct engagement, emphasizing transparency and collaboration. These efforts

have informed petition amendments and supplemental research, ensuring both ecological goals and community priorities are reflected.

In response to feedback, the coalition modified proposed boundaries and regulations to address fishing concerns, Tribal perspectives, and local economic impacts—ensuring the petitions reflect both science and community values.

By making the ocean healthier and more resilient to climate change, strong marine protections help preserve everyone’s ability to enjoy these areas through a variety of recreational activities, far into the future. And that’s a huge boon to the economy – collectively, ocean-based recreational activities contribute to our state’s \$28 billion ocean tourism and recreation economy.¹ In 2023, coastal tourism brought just over \$2 billion in travel-related spending to Santa Barbara County, and supported more than 20,000 jobs.²

The Commission’s continued work to protect our state’s biodiversity is critical, at a time when ocean conservation is more important than ever. Thank you for the opportunity to express our strong support for these proposals that aim to fill a current gap in network design to improve ecological connectivity throughout the region, provide additional resilience in the face of climate change, and protect critical marine habitats.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roy Lee', with a stylized, cursive script.

Roy Lee
Supervisor, First District
Santa Barbara County

¹ NOAA 2016, The National Significance of California’s Ocean Economy <https://coast.noaa.gov/data/digitalcoast/pdf/california-ocean-economy.pdf>

² Visit California, 2024. The Economic Impact of Travel in California. <https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/research/economic-impact>

Expansion of State Marine Conservation Area

From mckennal@onecoolearth.org <[REDACTED]>

Date Wed 06/18/2025 09:25 PM

To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Dear California Fish & Game Commission,

As a Californian from **Los Osos**, I support the expansion of California's Marine Protected Area Network, including the designation of the proposed State Marine Conservation Area off Point Sal. I support the MPA network because the coastline here is what makes my home, my home. My family surfs and swims and we depend on our beaches for community connections. Please keep our coastlines protected.

Sincerely,

McKenna Lenhart

Phone: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Los Osos CA [REDACTED]



Northern Chumash Tribal Council

northernchumash.org chumashsanctuary.org



October 13, 2025

Dear Fish and Game Commission and CDFW staff,

I am writing to notify you that the Northern Chumash Tribal Council (NCTC) is in the process of finalizing formal co-sponsorship of Petition 2023-28MPA with the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). Petition 2023-28 MPA would create a new State Marine Conservation Area off of Point Sal in state waters within the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS). NRDC initially contacted us in the fall of 2023 before the petition was written, however we did not have the capacity to be involved at that time due to the designation process of CHNMS. Now that the CHNMS has been designated, I am eager to continue garnering strong protections to the sacred and culturally important waters of Point Sal, as part of NCTC's ongoing leadership in Chumash stewardship of California's marine resources.

We are in the final stages of formalizing the co-sponsorship agreement and will submit an amended petition form and narrative that details our Chumash collaborative co-stewardship approach and goals as a Tribally co-sponsored petition within the next couple of weeks. We would like Petition 2023-28MPA to be reclassified as a Tribal petition. We recognize that this is a significant change during the review process and appreciate your understanding that we had limited capacity to engage earlier. Please let us know if you have any questions or would like to schedule a meeting to discuss this addition in sponsorship.

Sincerely,


Violet Sage Walker

Nominator, Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary

Chairwoman, Northern Chumash Tribal Council



Planning and Development

Lisa Plowman, Director
Jeff Wilson, Assistant Director
Elise Dale, Assistant Director

Dear Ms. Miller-Henson,

As Secretary of the Santa Barbara County Fish and Wildlife Commission, I am submitting the attached letter containing formal comments regarding the current Marine Protected Area (MPA) petitions under consideration. This letter reflects the collective position of the full Commission, which includes signatures from all nine appointed members, representing diverse stakeholder groups within Santa Barbara County.

Our Commission has thoroughly reviewed the details of Petitions 2023-14MPA, 2023-15MPA-AM, 2023-18MPA, 2023-28MPA-AM, 2023-29MPA-AM, and 2023-33MPA-AM. As outlined in the attached document, our positions and recommendations were developed through numerous public meetings and extensive local input, based on decades of combined experience in fish and wildlife matters across the county.

We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the discussion surrounding MPA management and thank the California Fish and Game Commission for its continued commitment to public engagement and science-informed decision-making. Should you or your staff require any further clarification or supporting materials, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Secretary, Santa Barbara County Fish and Wildlife Commission

Phone: 805-934-6297

Email: castrot@countyofsb.org





Planning and Development

Lisa Plowman, Director

Jeff Wilson, Assistant Director

Elise Dale, Assistant Director

October 20, 2025

To: Ms. Melissa Miller-Henson

Executive Director

California Fish and Game Commission

715 "P" St. 16th Floor Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Santa Barbara County Fish and Wildlife Commission

c/o Santa Barbara County Planning and Development

624 W. Foster Road. Santa Maria, CA 93455

Dear Ms. Miller-Henson,

The Santa Barbara Fish and Wildlife Commission is a county commission consisting of nine members appointed by the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors. The commission, among other things, aids the county board on active fish and wildlife related matters with our combined hundreds of years of local fish and wildlife experience between our fellow commissioners.

This comment letter serves to provide our input regarding the current MPA petitions requesting changes be made to the MPA network specifically around the Santa Barbara Channel and Channel Islands. We feel our county fish and wildlife commission's input on the MPA petition process may prove especially valuable due to our local experiences and local understanding of the ecosystem, as well as our variety of backgrounds, consisting of non-consumptive users, fishermen, and biological scientists. This letter serves as a culmination of many public meetings learning about the MPA petitions that have been proposed as well as fellow commissioners observations being involved in local discussions about the petitions outside of official meetings to gauge public input and sentiment. This county commission appreciates the opportunity to provide the following feedback on these local MPA petitions.

Petition2023-14MPA

Petition2023-14MPA requests changes to several State Marine Conservation Areas (SMCAs), one of which, the Naples SMCA, is within the County. Generally, SMCAs already allow for some form of limited take, this petition requests adding commercial take of sea urchins to the allowable methods list inside of the SMCAs in the petition.

123 E. Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101 • (805) 568-2000 • Fax (805) 568-2030

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Sea urchins are primarily taken commercially and are a core part of the County's commercial fishing sector. Urchins, and their tendency to graze on the root systems of local kelp forests, have recently posed problems with kelp rebuilding efforts after El Niños in the 2010's reduced kelp forest size noticeably. Local fishermen cite urchin barrens inside of MPAs that cannot be touched and continue to spread to the surrounding area with no possible measures existing to remove the main mass from the MPA.

Recommendation: While cases may vary across different MPAs and counties, for the above reasons, this commission finds it reasonable to allow the proposed change and supports the petition for allowed sea urchin take at the Naples SMCA to help facilitate kelp forest regrowth. We kindly recommend this change be allowed at Naples.

Petition2023-15MPA-AM

Petition2023-15MPA requests changes to three joint State and Federal Marine Reserves (SMRs/FMRs), all of which, the Footprint SMR/FMR, Gull Island SMR/FMR, and Santa Barbara Island SMR/FMR, border the county. These MPAs, and others around the Channel Islands, are unique to the State network in that they were established through a joint process between State and Federal agencies before the coastal MLPA under the CINMS. The resulting network was a series of state and federal MPAs at the Channel Islands that covers federal water up to 6 nautical miles from the islands. All SMRs and FMRs the petition addresses are currently no-take areas.

The petition requests changing these areas to joint State and Federal Marine Conservation Areas, SMCAs and FMCAs, and proposes several options that allow for various forms of the limited take of pelagic finfish or highly migratory species recreationally and commercially. In addition, the petition provides possible sub-divisions of the Gull Island and Santa Barbara Island State MPAs into nearshore and offshore areas, similar to other State MPAs elsewhere. The primary arguments of the petition are the minimal impact pelagic fishing effort has on the local MPA ecosystem and goals, and the support of pelagic areas in the State's MPA Master Plans and other documents seen in the broader coastal network but apparent lack thereof in the pre-Master Plan Channel Islands network.

Several members of this commission were part of the original process at the Channel Islands over 20 years ago and the southern MLPA in 2012. We all understand that the primary factor for the MPA implementation at these island sites offshore was to originally protect species like groundfish and structure groundfish live on to rebuild overfished populations at the time. While MPA goals have changed since the 2000s, this fact is still key to understanding why these areas are the way they are today.

Pelagic fish, and the methods used to target them, are predominantly fished near the surface of the water column, offshore, and off the bottom. This type of effort avoids the nearshore or offshore rocky-bottom ecosystems local nearshore species or groundfish are predominantly found in. In addition, the pelagic species that would be taken in these areas are significantly less affected by these MPAs and the broader network due to them being very mobile, their relative abundance is not concentrated in an MPA compared to out of one. The MPA Master Plans from 2008 and 2016 discuss this, citing the lower effects that MPAs have on pelagic species and the need to have areas that allow for some form of limited pelagic take, aligning the petitioner's arguments with the Master Plans. In addition, the petition does point out an imbalance in pelagic allowed areas between the MLPA's coastal implementation phases that came after the first MPA Master Plan in 2008 and the Channel Islands Network implementation that came well before the first MPA Master Plan in the early 2000's.

Outside the Channel Islands, in the coastal network that came afterwards, most MPAs that overlap deeper waters pelagic species pass through allow for some form of take of pelagic finfish. Observing the Channel Islands, we can see a significantly higher overlap with offshore waters, namely due to the federal sections

of these MPAs. However, even with this significantly larger offshore encroachment, almost no pelagic allowed areas exist. Whether this difference was due to the Channel Islands process pre-dating the coastal process and the 2008 MPA Master Plan's outlook on pelagic species is up to debate, but the fact of the matter is the difference is noticeably present, and for no abundantly clear reason.

Recommendation: The subject of island MPAs allowing pelagic take, specifically these three, has been raised by the public several times prior at our meetings, and local MPA collaboratives our commissioners have attended. For these reasons, and those above, this commission supports this petition, and believes it should be accepted by the State Commission through one of the proposed "options" the petition lists that best fits the existing network.

Petition2023-18MPA

Petition2023-18MPA requests multiple changes to a variety of coastal and island MPAs within the county. Some of the changes are listed as "non-regulatory requests" by the Department while others make modifications to, or remove existing MPAs. All but one of the MPAs in the petition are within the County, they are the: Vandenberg SMR, Point Conception SMR, Kashtayit SMCA, Campus Point SMCA, and San Miguel Island Special Closure.

Of the changes, the proposal at Vandenberg SMR and San Miguel Island Special Closure are the two MPAs that would have the largest regulatory changes. At Vandenberg the petition requests a coastal SMCA be made that allows for only shore-based fishing by hook-and-line, citing an equity and enforcement concern between military base personnel and members of the public. Because military personnel are allowed to fish the shore of the SMR while members of the public outside the base cannot due to the SMR, both the equity and enforcement concerns are certainly present and should be addressed. The proposed solution of a shore based SMCA does seem to be a reasonable way to correct this problem.

At San Miguel and Anacapa (outside of the county) the petition requests the Special Closure(s) be removed in its entirety citing its original goal being to reduce disturbance to pinniped rookeries and seabird populations has been far exceeded and better methods have been developed on-site.

The remaining MPA requests are non-regulatory and include supported use for M2 radar monitoring at Point Conception SMR for better enforcement, a refined regulatory language for allowances at the Kashtayit SMCA, and using the color red instead of purple for distinguishing the Campus Point No-Take SMCA.

Recommendation: This commission finds all of the above modifications and requests more than reasonable, gives its support for them all. We recommend the FGC accept the petition in full.

Petition2023-28MPA-AM

Petition2023-28MPA requests to create a new MPA around Point Sal, designating it the Point Sal SMCA or a Tribally named SMCA, and listing it as a limited-take area with only an exception of a shore based finfish take allowance and tribal take allowance. The petitions driving reasons for the new MPA are that the area is ecologically significant in terms of local upwelling and relative to the landings that occur there the area is a small fraction of the State's commercial output, under 1%. The petition also cites tribal inclusivity and significance in the area as justification for its closure.

While the petition is accurate in the broader economic analysis, locally Point Sal is a very important area for both recreational and commercial operations out of Port San Luis (Avila), the local port to Point Sal.

Point Sal, and its surrounding waters, are essential for year-round and seasonal fisheries such as salmon, dungeness crab, groundfish, and halibut. This new MPA in addition to the existing network will significantly affect the local port's economic health due to Point Sal's being a significant fishing area for local commercial and recreational anglers. Namely, crab and groundfish boats out of Avila would be significantly affected by this change as per their testimony, over half their time is spent in the proposed area.

Recommendation: While the shore-based allowance is a welcome allowance, we believe this is still too costly on the local economy of Avila and its recreational and commercial fisheries to warrant its allowance. For this reason this commission has decided to be against this petition, and recommends the FGC deny it.

Petition2023-29MPA-AM

Petition2023-29MPA requests to create a new MPA around Carpinteria, designating it the Mishopshno SMCA. The petition asks to make take regulations for the area the same as the Point Sal petition, with an allowance of shore fishing of finfish and a tribal exception for those in the federally recognized Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians which would be able to still use tribal take methods inside of the SMCA. The proposed area's size was reduced when the petition was amended to include the shore allowance.

The petition's primary reasons for this MPA include this tribal allowance and co-management model along with the added reasons of MPA connectivity, spacing, and protecting juvenile great white shark nursery grounds. While this commission does agree that Tribal inclusion is a warranted piece of MPA and coastal management, we do not believe that a new MPA altogether is needed to accomplish this. MPAs across the coast can be modified themselves to allow for such co-management but the existing area offshore Carpinteria is currently open to the entire public, Tribes included.

Carpinteria's coast has been the subject of several MPA proposals over the years. During the MLPA the same area was looked into but was ultimately not selected, trading off two other SMCAs instead of establishing one at Carpinteria in a separate MLPA planning alternative. In 2020 this commission also followed a similar MPA petition in a smaller area to the current proposal that similarly advocated to protect juvenile great white sharks. That petition was ultimately rejected by CDFW due to the larger footprint white sharks, a pelagic species, covered relative to the coast of Carpinteria/California in general, and we believe the same reasons from 2020 are still relevant in 2024 against the petitioner's arguments.

Additionally, it should be said that Carpinteria Reef, the reef that would be almost entirely inside the MPA, is one of the last open reef areas to the fishing community. Removing this reef will see the end of local fishing access to coastal reefs, forcing anglers to travel further, coastally or to the islands, and burning more fuel to have similar opportunities. Commercial members of this commission are concerned for the areas of the proposed MPA that overlap the state halibut trawl grounds. These grounds are minimal already and have been reduced continuously over the years. This proposed MPA would cut a significant portion of the current open trawl area harming this unique fishery that the commission has repeatedly stated is well managed. Lastly, there is an overwhelming amount of public outcry on this petition specifically citing lost access to one of the last open reefs on the coast by boat and especially kayak.

Recommendation: For all of these reasons this commission has decided to be against this petition, and requests the FGC deny it.

Petition2023-33MPA-AM

Petition 2023-33 MPA requests for multiple MPA expansions and one MPA creation throughout the California coast, of which, three MPA expansions are within Santa Barbara at the Point Conception SMR, the Gull Island SMR, and the South Point SMR. Of the three expansions the South Point SMR expansion would be the largest, including all of the southwest side of Santa Rosa Island in the MPA and adding over 27.5 square miles to the SMR. This is followed by Point Conception SMR's expansion eastward adding over 14 more square miles to the SMR, and lastly by Gull Island SMR's smaller northward expansion adding over 1.5 square miles to the closure.

The driving force behind Petition 2023-33 MPA is kelp restoration. The petition claims growing these MPAs would allow for the now protected areas to rebuild their kelp forests under no fishing pressure which would also mean less traffic in general. Kelp restoration is a very important subject in Santa Barbara County as several sectors, consumptive and non-consumptive, depend on healthy levels of kelp for commercial and recreational use. That being said, this commission believes removing fishing access in these areas will do little to nothing to promote kelp regrowth and more-likely prevent kelp rebuilding projects (seeding, artificial reefs, and sea urchin removal programs) from directly assisting in the rebuilding of our kelp forests. Besides fishing, factors such as water quality, water temperature, storms, and swell need to be considered as larger drivers of kelp loss, not larger closed areas. There are several active projects locally and statewide dedicated to kelp rebuilding, none of which remove fishing access from areas in order to rebuild the kelp because there is no reason to. We believe the same applies in the areas this petition looks at. There are no reasons these specific areas need a fishing closure to help kelp forests regrow; therefore, there is no justification for their expansion, especially into waters predominantly too deep for kelp to root and grow. Similar to petition 29, there has been specific public outcry against this petition for all of the above reasons at MPA collaboratives, and public meetings.

Recommendation: For these reasons this commission has decided to be against this petition and recommends the FGC deny it.

Signed, the Santa Barbara County Fish and Wildlife Commission,

Phil Beguhl (Chair) - 2nd District

Scott Cooper (Vice Chair) - 3rd District

Frank Abatemarco - 1st District

Chad Thomas - 4th District

David Morgan - 5th District

Jeff Landers - Santa Maria Sportsman's Association Representative

Whitney Uyeda - Santa Barbara Sport Fishing Representative

Jeff Maassen - Commercial Fisherman Representative

Steve Adam - Santa Ynez Valley Pistol and Bow Club Representative

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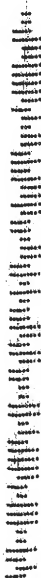
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Ms. Melissa Miller-Henson Executive
Director
California Fish and Game Commission

715 "P" St. 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

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**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
AIR FORCE CIVIL ENGINEER CENTER
JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO LACKLAND TEXAS**

Dec 8, 2025

California Fish and Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

via e-mail to fgc@fgc.ca.gov

Subject: DEPARTMENT OF AIR FORCE SUPPORT FOR 2023-28MPA-AM Point Sal SMCA

Dear Dr. Zavaleta, President
California Fish and Game Commission

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2023-28MPA-AM Point Sal petition submitted by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). As the Department of the Air Force (DAF) Regional Environmental Coordinator (REC) in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 9, I provide coordinated responses to various environmental policies and regulatory matters for the DAF.

Petition 2023-28 MPA-AM proposes to establish a new marine protected area (MPA) or State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) off the coast of Point Sal. The original petition did not account for the Vandenberg Space Force Base (VSFB) space launch facilities and operations. Upon conferring with representatives from the NRDC the MPA boundary was adjusted to deconflict with VSFB assets while still enabling protection of marine life and respecting culturally important waters of Point Sal. The attached graphic reflects the boundary that VSFB concurs with. We want to thank the NRDC for this adjustment and thus can support 2023-28MPA-AM.

Sincerely,

DAVID C. BELL, PhD
DAF REC Region 9

Cc:

Darryl York, SLD 30 Environmental Chief
Jason Golumbskie-Jones, DOD REC 9
Karla Meyer, AFCEC /CZTQ
Sandy Aylesworth, NRDC



0 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

- VSFB Launch Facility
- 239 to 275 degree flight path
- New Proposed Pt Sal Boundary (V2)
- Original Proposed Pt Sal MPA
- Vandenberg SFB
- State Marine Protected Areas

10/22/2025
NAD83 California (Teale) Albers

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LF-10
LF-23
LF-08
LF-22

California
Coastal National
Monument

STATE CAPITOL
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SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0038
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FAX (916) 319-2138

DISTRICT OFFICE
300 E. ESPLANADE DRIVE, SUITE 1790
OXNARD, CA 93036
(805) 485-4745
FAX (805) 485-4779

E-MAIL
Assemblymember.Bennett@assembly.ca.gov



COMMITTEES
CHAIR: BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 4 ON
CLIMATE CRISIS, RESOURCES, ENERGY,
AND TRANSPORTATION
BUDGET
ELECTIONS
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
WATER, PARKS AND WILDLIFE

December 10, 2025

Erika Zavaleta, President
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for Petitions 2023-28MPA and 2023-29MPA

Dear President Zavaleta and Honorable Commissioners:

I am writing in support of the proposed Point Sal State Marine Reserve (Petition 2023-28MPA) near the city of Guadalupe, and the Mishopshno State Marine Conservation Area (Petition 2023-29MPA) off the coast of Carpinteria. Conserving these two special areas will help protect and restore ocean health, enhance coastal recreation experiences, and help ensure the Central Coast region's ocean-based economy thrives for decades to come. I urge you to approve these proposals.

Both the proposed Point Sal and Mishopshno MPAs would conserve important habitats that support rich biodiversity, such as kelp forests, rocky reefs, tidepools, sandy beaches, migratory whale corridors, an important larval retention zone, and a seabird and sea lion rookery. Protecting these areas would have positive impacts that spread beyond their boundaries, bolstering ocean resilience and keeping our coastal waters healthy. These two areas hold cultural significance for several Indigenous communities in our region. Designating these MPAs would honor and strengthen the Chumash peoples' stewardship of the area, and elevate their historical and present-day connection to the region.

In addition, these areas hold special importance for ocean and coastal recreation communities. Point Sal is home to stunning coastal bluff trails that are frequented by local hikers and tourists to view wildlife, relax at the beach, and enjoy the remote and pristine area. Carpinteria is a popular area for surfers, shore fishers, swimmers, kayakers, birdwatchers, and beach walkers. By making the ocean healthier and more resilient to climate change, strong marine protections help preserve everyone's ability to enjoy these areas through a variety of recreational activities, far into the future.

This also benefits our economy – collectively, ocean-based recreational activities contribute to our state's \$28 billion ocean tourism and recreation economy¹. In 2024,

¹ NOAA 2016, The National Significance of California's Ocean Economy
<https://coast.noaa.gov/data/digitalcoast/pdf/california-ocean-economy.pdf>

coastal tourism brought just over \$1.7 billion in travel-related spending to Ventura County, directly supporting no less than 16,600 jobs². Ventura Harbor is home-base for Island Packers Cruises: the go-to transport company between the mainland and Channel Islands National Park (CINP). CINP officials reported that in 2022, 323,000 tourists visited the National Park, spending almost \$22 million in neighboring communities, with a cumulative benefit to the local regional economy of \$31.9 million³.

The Commission's continued work to protect our state's biodiversity is critical, at a time when ocean conservation is more important than ever. Thank you for the opportunity to express our strong support for these proposals that aim to fill a current gap in network design to improve ecological connectivity throughout the region, provide additional resilience in the face of climate change, and protect critical marine habitats.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Bennett". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Steve" and "Bennett" being capitalized and prominent.

Assemblymember Steve Bennett
38th Assembly District

² Visit California, 2024. The Economic Impact of Travel in California.
<https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/research/economic-impact>

³ Tourism to Channel Islands National Park Contributes \$31.9 million to Local Economy
<https://www.nps.gov/chis/learn/news/pr082523.htm>

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California State Senate

SENATOR
MONIQUE LIMÓN
TWENTY-FIRST SENATE DISTRICT



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VICE CHAIR
CENTRAL COAST CAUCUS
VICE CHAIR
COMMITTEES
NATURAL RESOURCES & WATER
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BANKING & FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS
ELECTIONS & CONSTITUTIONAL
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TRANSPORTATION
JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON
CLIMATE CHANGE
JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
JOINT COMMITTEE
ON RULES

December 12, 2025

Erika Zavaleta, President
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for Petitions 2023-28MPA

Dear President Zavaleta and Honorable Commissioners:

I am writing in support of the proposed Point Sal State Marine Reserve (Petition 2023-28MPA) near the city of Guadalupe. Conserving this area will help protect and restore ocean health, enhance coastal recreation, and support the coastal economy of Santa Barbara County thrives for decades to come.

The proposed Point Sal Marine Protected Area (MPA) would conserve habitats that support rich biodiversity, such as kelp forests, tidepools, migratory whale corridors, a larval retention zone, and a seabird and sea lion rookery. Protecting these areas would have positive impacts that spread beyond their boundaries, bolstering ocean resilience and keeping our coastal waters healthy.

This area also holds cultural significance for several Indigenous communities in our region. Designating this MPA would honor and strengthen the Indigenous stewardship of the area and elevate their historical and present-day connection to the region.

Additionally, this area is important for ocean and coastal recreation activities. Public access to coastal recreation is limited along this area of the Central Coast. Point Sal is home to coastal bluff trails frequented by local hikers and tourists who come to view wildlife, relax at the beach, and enjoy this remote and pristine area. This also benefits our economy – collectively, ocean-based recreational activities contribute to the \$28 billion ocean tourism and recreation economy of our state.

The continued work of the Commission to protect the biodiversity of our state is critical. As such, I request your full and fair consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,

MONIQUE LIMÓN
Senator, 21st District

From: Matthew Bond <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Monday, January 19, 2026 8:11 AM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Cc: Tonie Bangos <[REDACTED]>; Devin O'Dea

<[REDACTED]>; Christopher Killen <[REDACTED]>

Subject: Comment Regarding MPA Petitions for the February 11-12, 2026 Commission Meeting

Dear members and staff of the California Fish and Game Commission,

Please find attached our letter representing the voice of a broad coalition of individuals, organizations, businesses, and scientists with opinions and related rationale on each of the Bin 2 MPA petitions.

Thank you for your time and service,

Matt Bond

Allwaters Protection and Access Coalition

January 2026
Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions



Santa Barbara Freedivers



GET
HOOKED



January 2026

Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions

To the California Fish and Game Commission (FGC) and Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW),

This letter serves as a joint comment, representing a mass consensus reached by the undersigned groups and individuals representing tens of thousands of stakeholders from recreational, commercial, and scientific backgrounds on all of the Bin 2 MPA petitions. While some of us may submit our own individual comments in addition, or have already, we would like the FGC and CDFW to understand that this diverse community of statewide stakeholders are all united regarding the following comments on these petitions. We all would like to share our common beliefs outlined in the below letter to you as this united group. With the adaptive management process of our MPA network underway, we ask to please take the below input deeply into account when determining the outcomes of the following bin 2 MPA petitions.

Petition 2023-14 MPA – Accept

Petition 14 proposes the allowance of commercial urchin take inside of a group of SMCAs that already have allowable limited-take restrictions, with the exception of one no-take SMCA. This petition has not been amended since submission. We believe this petition's rationale to have enough merit to warrant its acceptance in part or in full.

At a time where there are mass interests in helping kelp forests regrow, allowing sea urchin take in areas already partially open to other fisheries is a minimally invasive step we can take, especially in SMCAs that already allow some forms of take. By being allowed to harvest and remove sea urchins that are currently protected in these areas, we allow the kelp the chance to grow back. While we cannot locally control global factors affecting kelp growth such as water temperature or swell meaningfully, we can still promote regrowth of kelp by being allowed to at least remove one of kelp's largest predators, the sea urchin.

Per SeaSketch, we may accept this petition whilst also maintaining the same relative level of protection (LOP) in six of the eight total SMCAs in the proposal: Double Cone, Salt Point, Stewarts Point, Sea Lion Cove, Naples, and Anacapa. This means any MPA connectivity benefits will be maintained as is in the current network. For the Point Dume and Point Vicente SMCAs, while the MPA LOP does drop, we believe the allowance of sea urchin take in these SMCAs will greatly benefit the entire area through restored kelp growth, and additional workable area for local urchin divers. However, we understand if a loss in connectivity for these two areas is something the commission is against, that just these two MPA be excluded. At a minimum, this petition should be granted for the SMCAs where the network as a whole does not lose any existing connectivity benefits.

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Petition2023-15MPA-AM2 – Accept

Petition 15 proposes allowing limited take of pelagic or highly migratory species at three joint State-Federal MPAs at the Channel Islands. The petition was amended twice, and proposes several possible options for limited-take of pelagic finfish or highly migratory species (HMS). The petition brings forward three gear types: hook-and-line, spear, and harpoon swordfish; additionally, it includes possible nearshore-offshore MPA options to mitigate bycatch in the more biodiverse nearshore areas and maintain high MPA LOPs for network connectivity. While it is up to the commission and department to determine what the best combination of choices may be, we all believe this petition should be accepted under a preferred option that retains a high LOP for these MPAs, maintaining existing ecosystem level protection/connectivity, that consists of an offshore SMCA and nearshore SMCA or SMR.

The petition is founded on a longstanding scientific basis and MLPA goals that the MPAs in our network are primarily intended to benefit our nearshore waters and non-pelagic species the most. This has been established since the MLPA MPA Master Plan (MMP) in 2008 where MPA benefits to pelagic species were explained to be weak at best, rather focusing the network toward non-pelagic species that benefit the most from MPAs per the MMP documents. This led to the coastal network outside of the Islands process allowing some form of pelagic access in over 40% of our existing MPAs, and no-take in the remaining 60%. Of the currently 60% of MPAs that are no-take, most areas are nearshore, cover predominantly shallow water, and would not provide much pelagic benefits if they were even partially open. The approximately remaining 40% of the network that is limited take, most of which is pelagic take, are set in areas where pelagic effort is reasonable enough to avoid any nearshore or bottom interactions, or does not allow hook-and-line, just spear.

This sets a clear precedent, based on the science, that we can allow reasonable pelagic fishing access in the areas where it makes sense to allow it, and fully protect areas where pelagic fishing is less realistic or interferes too much with nearshore areas. This precedent was again reiterated in the 2016 MMP in a regional objective that explicitly states to allow for forms of pelagic take across the network in all bioregions, something the coastal MPA phases included but the Channel Islands network specifically lacks. The commission then upheld this mass precedent in 2020 when it denied a petition to create an MPA for white sharks, citing specifically that MPAs in our network are not meant for highly migratory or pelagic species, they are for ecosystem level protections, which can still exist in pelagic allowed MPAs. We simply ask that this precedent continue to be upheld for the MPAs that can reasonably allow for pelagic or HMS take and network maintain connectivity. This has no better use case to be applied than at the Channel Islands. That region of the network was designated prior to all of the primary MPA guiding documents, covers mostly offshore waters, and provides the least pelagic access of all the MPA designation regions, a clear case of adaptive management.

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Because the Channel Islands MPA network is the oldest region in the modern network, designated now over 20 years ago in 2002, it pre-dates the coastal MLPA implementation phases, the MLPA LOP frameworks, both MPA Master Plans, and all other frameworks and processes that established this pelagic allowance elsewhere during the 4 coastal phases. In the early 2000s during the Channel Islands process, the primary concerns driving the island MPAs involved groundfish species and recovering their overfished populations. This fact was a main driver in justifying the federal sections of the island MPAs, as the federal expansions cover deep water rocky bottom or reefs where groundfish frequent. Today, federal outlooks of no-take MPAs are almost non-existent. With the exception of the Channel Islands, federal protected areas off the west coast only protect non-pelagic bottom dwelling species (groundfish), and allow pelagic fishing access, aligning exactly to what the petition proposes.

We believe this to be an adaptive management case of modernizing MPAs that predate all guidance documents, and updating them to better align to these well established frameworks in the same way the rest of the network already has. In the case of pelagic access, this shift is clearly seen as the more-modern coastal MPAs allow significantly more pelagics access (40%), compared to the Channel Islands MPAs (3%). In the case of The Footprint MPA specifically, it is the only MPA in the State that is disconnected from land, is entirely deeper than 50m, and has no limited take allowance for pelagics. The Channel Islands MPAs as a whole are justifiably the most equipped to handle pelagic allowance in them, especially offshore, due to the depths covered allowing a massive buffer between pelagic fisheries in the mid to upper water column and non-pelagic fisheries on the bottom. Any take beyond State waters in the federal portions of these MPAs would affect the nearshore region even less than already existing State pelagic allowances present in the current coastal network. Most of the federal portions of these MPAs are well over 1000 feet in depth, and in some cases over 4000 ft in depth.

Per SeaSketch, LOP tiers from the original MLPA state pelagic take maintains MPA connectivity due to the take allowance's high LOP in offshore waters. At the islands specifically this is seen as only allowing hook-and-line take in waters deeper than 50 meters (164ft), with harpoon or spear gears allowed anywhere due to their high selectivity and lack of any bycatch. A high LOP can be maintained and connectivity still upheld if the petition is accepted with the proposed "nearshore" SMCAs or SMRs at Gull Island and Santa Barbara Island that restrict nearshore hook-and-line, along with any SMCA option in The Footprint and the proposed "offshore" sections of Gull Island and Santa Barbara Island. With all of this precedent and SeaSketch LOP information in mind we believe there is more than sufficient rationale, federal and state evidence, and MLPA/MMP support to allow for this adaptive management change.

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Petition2023-16MPA – Modify then Accept

Petition 16 requests the allowance of the commercial take of salmon by troll in two SMRs in the northern bioregion, Bodega Head and Stewarts Point, making them SMCAs. The petition argues similarly to petition 15, on the lack of interference allowed pelagic access would cause. While we do stand by this petition's core arguments, we also believe that this allowance should be accompanied with a similar recreational allowance of salmon by troll in these MPAs too.

Recreationally or commercially the salmon troll fisheries mirror each other with similar gear use, lack of gear conflicts with unintended species, and lack of interactions with the bottom environment due to the nature of the troll gear always moving and being in the upper section of the water column. There are no reasons to not allow recreational troll access in these areas as well because of this. This is further supported by the bordering and nearby pelagic allowed SMCAs in the area giving both recreational and commercial allowance for salmon trolling. A joint allowance would also help to solve any possible confusion on the water of only a specific group being able to troll in the area while others may not, reducing any possible enforcement problems.

Per SeaSketch, the LOPs of these areas as SMCAs allowing any kind of salmon trolling retains existing MPA protections for their respective connectivity benefits. While these MPAs in the northern bioregion are more-modern of MPAs, coming after initial MMPs, MPA frameworks, and processes, unlike those in Petition 15, we see this change allowance as reasonable for consideration. With the recreational troll allowance added to this petition, we see its arguments as more equitable and in-line with existing MPAs in the surrounding northern bioregion of the network.

Petition2023-18MPA – Accept

Petition 18 makes several requests across the Santa Barbara Channel to 6 MPAs in total, and some requests were non-regulatory requests. We support all of the prescribed changes in the petition to better regulatory language, provide better MPA regulation clarity through color corrections, and to make fine tune changes to better the overall MPA network. Of all the requests in petition 18, the most controversial is the creation of a shore region SMCA in the Vandenburg SMR. This would be called the Vandenburg SMCA and would allow shoretake of finfish. This case of a shore allowance is a unique case for our MPA network, as the bordering military base with the SMR allows shore fishing already anyway. This shoretake allowance would clear up any enforcement confusion by the public for the SMR and give some access back to the public in general. We believe this petition's regulatory and non-regulatory requests should be accepted in full.

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Petition2023-19MPA – Reject or Modify

Petition 19 requests the creation of a tribal co-managed SMCA at Morro Bay that only allows for the recreational take of finfish and invertebrates except rock scallops and mussels by hand harvest, also including a tribal take exemption within the SMCA. We believe the petition should be either rejected or amended to allow for more general recreational and commercial take as well.

We believe tribal co-management to be a great step forward in managing California's waters and should be present in all MPAs; however, creating a new MPA that restricts exclusively commercial groups and most recreational fishing access from such an essential area should not be warranted. The commercial blocks overlapping the proposed SMCA account for 6.2% of Morro Bay's landing revenue alone. More specifically, these blocks represent 25% of the area's squid landings, 8.8% of the groundfish landings, and 15% of the area's salmon landings, per the MFDE. While not an exact correlation, recreational access in the area is likely comparable (with the exception of squid) and will likely be equally affected in the MPA regions, as this petition affects all fisheries not involving direct hand harvesting.

Additionally, there is concern that the proposed offshore wind energy program has its proposed electrical lines connecting the Morro Bay power bank stations to the offshore array crossing through the SMCA. If passed, this would need to be addressed and an additional allowance added.

Petition2023-20MPA – Reject Nearshore and Clarify/Accept Offshore

Petition 20 requests changes to the MPA cluster, the nearshore and offshore MPAs, at Point Buchon. The petition requests the offshore SMCA allow the hand harvest of finfish and invertebrates except rock scallops and mussels, allow the maintenance of artificial structures under the correct permits, and provide a tribal take exemption for federally recognized tribes. However, it is unclear if these requested allowances to the offshore SMCA at point Buchon are replacing or adding to existing recreational and commercial allowance for the take of albacore and salmon. Pursuant to the allowances being additive and not replacing the existing take allowances in the offshore MPA we support the request for the offshore region of the MPA cluster to have the added take allowances. This example in the offshore region is a clear example of how tribal components can be added to the existing network, not requiring creation of more MPAs to involve tribes.

Regarding the petitioner's request to the nearshore SMR being expanded, we believe this request should be rejected. The expansion of only the SMR section of the Point Buchon nearshore/offshore cluster would unnecessarily remove all access from the added area. The justification for this addition comes from MPA Collaborative meetings citing enforcement concerns, stating that moving the northern boundary to the physical

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point will provide a better reference for enforcement. The core reason the existing MPA does not go to the physical point on land is because the nearest whole decimal degree value was used as the northern boundary instead, following MLPA guidelines. This usage of a round Lat/Long number for an MPA that does not experience much shore fishing opportunity is supported by the MLPA MPA design criteria to explicitly help, not hurt, enforcement. The current northern boundary gives those fishing beyond shore an easy to understand GPS reference point to know where the boundary is. Additionally, expanding only the nearshore SMR may cause further enforcement problems with the offshore SMCA remaining its original size. The expansion of the nearshore only leads to a case of an unevenly sized MPA in the nearshore and offshore regions.

Petition2023-21MPA – Accept

Petition 21 requests the Pyramid Point SMCA in the northern bioregion be modified to remove its existing recreational allowances for take of surf smelt and give additional tribal exemption to the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation on top of its existing tribal exemption. The petition also requests the border of the MPA be moved south to the true CA-OR state boundary line, slightly shrinking the MPA.

While this petition does remove some recreational access to take surf smelt, that access was already relatively limited and small scale. The change to the border to shrink the SMCA to align to the actual state border clears up any possible confusion or issues the overlap currently causes. Overall we are supportive of this change, and addition of another Tribal component to the existing Pyramid Point SMCA.

Petition2023-23MPA-AM1 – Reject or Modify

Petition 23 requests multiple changes to 3 existing SMCAs, the Carmel Bay SMCA, Pacific Grove SMCA, and the Edward F. Ricketts SMCA, requesting all three SMCAs become closed to take of finfish during “active kelp restoration permits” and to create a new SMR at Tankers Reef, the area of this SMR was reduced during amendments.

We believe the petition has reasonable goals, restoring kelp, but goes about this in the incorrect way. Regarding the specific MPA changes requested, we believe this petition should be rejected or modified. Acceptance would come at the additional loss of recreational fishing access to these SMCAs. Fishing has no significant impact on kelp restoration compared to environmental factors (e.g., water quality, water temperature, swell) and would be closed when a “kelp restoration permit is active.” This also raises further enforcement concerns as regulations would effectively be in constant flux depending if a permit is active or not, there would need to be new paths created to inform all on the water when said permit is active or not. Additionally, existing restoration efforts at Tankers Reef would immediately stop if an SMR is designated there for the lack of allowable take inside of an SMR, even the reduced in size SMR.

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If the petitioner wishes to accomplish the outstanding goals of this petition, then a similar approach to that in Petition2023-14MPA should be considered. Such an approach could consist of keeping the 3 SMCAs as SMCAs with the same allowable take regulations, but only adding a new allowance for the recreational and commercial take of sea urchins, removing the finfish closures during “active permits.” Regarding Tankers Reef, we believe no MPA, SMR or SMCA, should be designated there as existing restoration efforts would be able to continue there without requiring any closures or special allowances be made inside of a new MPA. Leaving Tankers Reef as is will also allow any future restoration methods to be deployed at the location without having to modify the SMCA allowances again as we continue to learn how to restore our kelp forests.

Petition2023-24MPA – Reject

Petition 24 requests expanding the existing Laguna Beach SMCA into the Dana Point SMCA. We believe Petition 24 should be rejected for several reasons. Petition 24’s core argument claims enforcement concerns of the MPAs by lifeguards, when in fact, the primary enforcement of the MPAs is warden officers. Wardens are the only individuals that may issue citations for MPA compliance and are most notably, not bound by city limits. The idea of moving this border to allow for better enforcement will only create more of an enforcement problem due to where the proposed border lies versus the existing one. The existing border of the Laguna SMCA and Dana Point SMCA is a rocky point, a physical barrier between two areas. This allows the border to be clear as it is marked by an obvious, physical landmark, this is a guiding objective of the MLPA in MPAs that justifiably have a large shore fishing presence. The proposed new border would sit along the mean high tide line in the middle of a rocky beach. Simply put, removal of a physical barrier landmark to an invisible line on a public beach would only create more of an enforcement compliance problem, not reduce it along shore. (See Below images)



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Approximate new boundary (revised)

Nearest HPAC (NOAA GIS map) showing no overlap with expanded area

Habitat areas of particular concern (HPACs), as the name implies, are sections of the EFH

The petition additionally presents a rationale similar to that of Petition 2023-33 regarding the protection of kelp beds. It claims that conserving these areas is essential for the health of kelp forests. However, like the counterarguments we will see in Petition 2023-33, it is important to note again that fishing effort and so-called “anchor drag” does not significantly reduce kelp biomass; rather, factors such as water temperature, water quality, and swell conditions primarily drive changes in the kelp population. Additionally, any concerns raised in the petition about “anchor drag” damaging kelp beds would equally apply to non-consumptive vessels, not just fishing boats.

The petition references the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) concerning potential marine mammal entanglements from lobster traps in the area. While recreational and commercial lobster fishing occurs in the region, there have been little to no reported entanglement incidents involving whales or dolphins locally, showing in reality there is little need for concern. While it's important to acknowledge the possibility of such events, the absence of previous occurrences suggests that the likelihood of entanglements is extremely low. Furthermore, if the area were to be protected, lobster traps would simply be relocated, meaning the risk of entanglement would persist

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regardless of where the traps are ultimately placed. Lastly, the adoption of ropeless fishing technologies, such as those developed by Sea Sonics, indicates a future where entanglement issues could be further mitigated.

Concerning the MLPA itself, it should be noted that the proposed expanded area would give the MPA an “L-shape.” This shape is specifically called out in the MLPA as a poor MPA design for enforcement and is just another reason we have concerns for this petition.

Petition2023-27MPA-AM1 – Reject

The original petition 27 and its amendments only look at lobster taken from the Anacapa SMCA. We believe this request should be rejected. Petition 27, similar to petitions calling for protections to increase kelp beds, calls for additional protections at the Anacapa Island SMCA, the difference being that 2023-27’s focus is on eelgrass, not kelp. While a trap sitting on the bottom does have a larger footprint than a pelagic hook and line configuration which is also allowed in the SMCA, traps fished in the area are not significantly impacting eelgrass beds due to there already being a 20 foot depth closure for traps around Anacapa in its Special Closure. This area contains already a large amount of the existing eelgrass beds as the SMCA and special closure overlap making the key rationale of this petition redundant as protections are effectively already in effect.

Petition2023-28MPA-AM1 – Reject

Petition 28 requests the establishment of a new MPA around Point Sal. This MPA would significantly impact local fisheries, recreational and commercial, despite the petitioner's claim that the effects would be minimal. For this primary reason we believe the petition should be rejected, even as amended to allow for shore based take of finfish.

The petition includes an economic analysis of the proposed area but overlooks the devastating local impacts this MPA would have economically. While the petition accurately states that the overlapping commercial fishing blocks contribute to 1.1% of the central coast's total landings by value, it fails to consider the actual local implications of that 1.1% and what it represents. Using the same time range (2012 to 2022) on the MFDE, the local port nearest to the proposed MPA, Port San Luis/Avila, derived 28.12% of its total commercial revenue from the overlapping blocks 631 and 632. More specifically, 25.92% of the port's groundfish revenue and 57.79%, over half, of its crab revenue came from these areas. If recreational effort even somewhat mirrors commercial effort in the area, not only is Point Sal relevant commercially, but recreationally too offshore. Establishing an MPA at Point Sal will significantly harm the community of Avila and other nearby ports, threaten local businesses, harm or remove

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people's sources of income, and remove recreational and subsistence access to the area by boat.

Providing shore based take of finfish would allow for beach anglers to continue fishing as they have been, but would do so at the loss of all offshore activity. More notably, this also results in a drop of the LOP of the SMCA to moderate-low. This LOP ranking per the MLPA fails any connectivity requirements making the final proposed SMCA a protected area that does not add to total MPA network connectivity. This brings into question the main argument of the petitioner to add this MPA in order to maintain MPA connectivity, as the final amended SMCA would not accomplish this.

Petition2023-29MPA-AM1 – Reject

Petition 29 requests a new MPA be created at Carpinteria. This MPA would be a tribally allowed SMCA that would be closed to non-federally recognized tribal fishing (general recreational and commercial fishing); the petition was amended to reduce its overall size and allow shore-based take of finfish. The petition's three primary arguments for the new SMCA are to meet habitat connectivity/MPA spacing requirements, to protect habitat surrounding juvenile white shark grounds, and to allow for tribal access. While tribal co-management of all California MPAs should be considered, we believe for the following reasons this specific MPA proposal should be rejected.

Regarding habitat connectivity, the petition asserts that the spacing of the existing MPA network exceeds the recommendations set by the MLPA scientific advisory team, which suggests a minimum spacing of 31 to 62 miles. The petition argues that the nearest coastal MPAs, Campus Point and Point Dume, are too far apart, claiming they are separated by 63.8 nautical miles or 73.4 miles (Image 1).

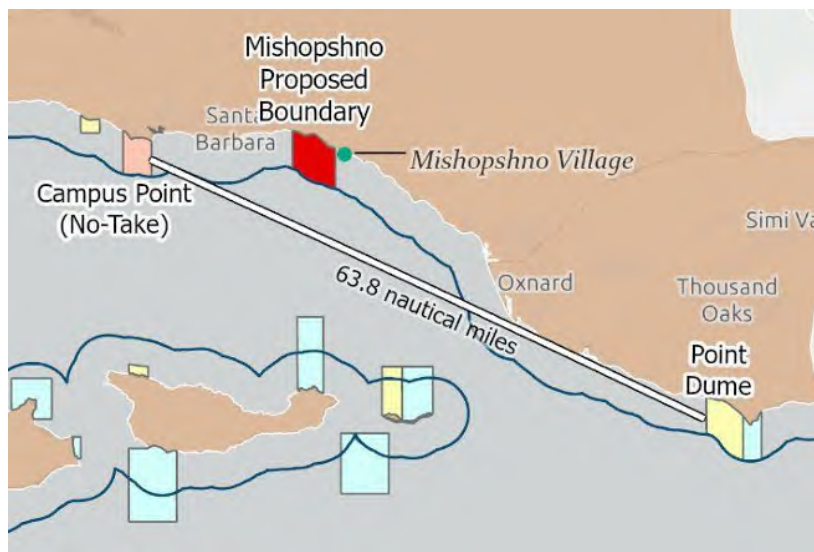


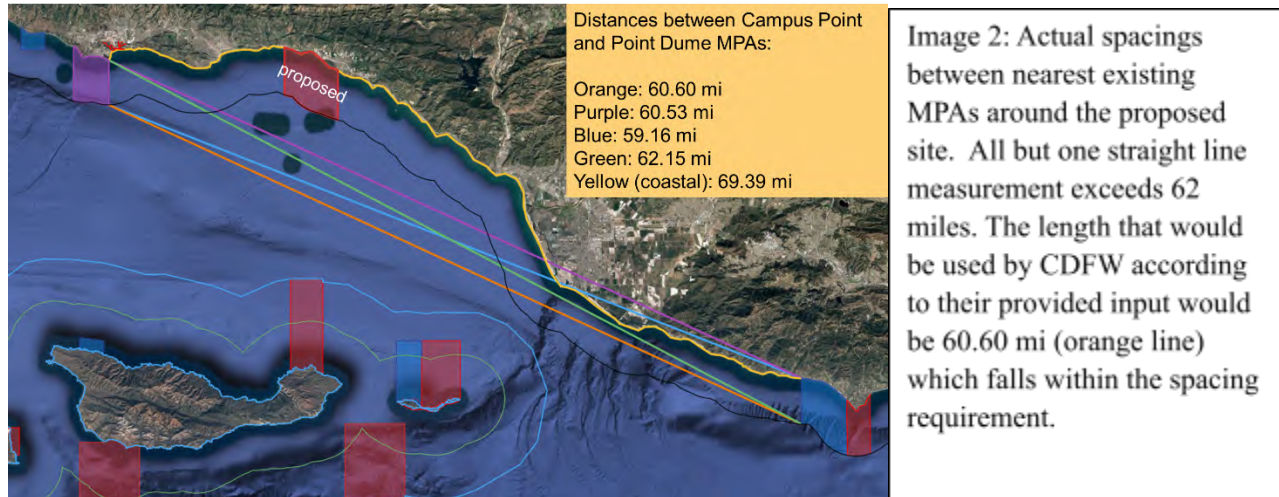
Image 1: Petition 29's image displaying proposed area and claimed spacing between existing Pt. Dume and Campus Point SMAs to be 63.8 nm (73.4 mi), which, if true, would exceed the southern MLPA MPA spacing requirements.

Note: the shown MPA is the original, pre-amendment size.

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Discussions with the CDFW clarified that MPA spacing is measured by the, “shortest distance over water between two MPAs.” When measuring the distance between Campus Point and Point Dume, we find that it is in fact less than 62 miles, indicating that the current spacing distribution is adequate along the coast (see below Image 2).



Following the CDFW and MLPA guidelines, the shortest water distance between the two existing MPAs is ~60.60 miles, viewable by the orange line. This distance falls within the 31–62-mile MLPA spacing requirement. None of the provided measurements, including a measurement along the coastline (yellow) exceeded 73.4 miles of separation as the petitioner claims, again bringing into question the purpose for the new MPA if connectivity is already met.

In addition, the provided shore based take of finfish does allow for some form of recreational take but this now raises connectivity concerns. As mentioned in previous petitions, allowance of shore fishing of finfish reduces an MPAs LOP to moderate-low, losing its MPA connectivity with the network, this is confirmed by SeaSketch. Connectivity was a major reason for this MPAs proposal. With connectivity now lost due to these allowed take methods begs to question the purpose for this implementation in the first place if its foundational goals are not even accomplished. The LOP chart for the southern bioregion, moderate low protection is provided below.

Mod-low	SMCA SMP	Shore fishing (H&L, hoop net); kelp bass, barred sand bass, lingcod, cabezon, and rockfish (H&L, spearfishing); sheephead (H&L, spearfishing, trap); spotted sand bass and halibut (H&L); lobster (trap, hoop net, diving); urchin (diving); rock crab and Kellet's whelk (trap); catch and release (H&L-general)
		In water depth <10m: Catch and release (H&L-single barbless hooks and artificial lures)
		In water depth <50m at islands and <30m on mainland: pelagic finfish, bonito and white seabass (H&L);

Regarding the protection of juvenile white shark nursery grounds, a similar petition was submitted in 2020 (Petition 2020-012 AM1) to close off a smaller section of beach at Carpinteria for the same purpose. Like Petition 29, this earlier petition aimed to protect

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juvenile white sharks within the currently proposed area. This 2020 petition was rejected by the Department and the Fish and Game Commission (FGC), which stated that MPAs are designed to protect nearshore ecosystems rather than individual species, especially highly migratory species like white sharks. Given that this issue was previously addressed at the same location just four years ago, the same arguments against the current petition apply today regarding white sharks.



Lastly, regarding the tribal access portions of the petition, while tribal access and co-management should be explored across the entire MPA network, current access to the area by tribes is not limited in any way. Regardless of a tribal MPA designation or not, federally recognized tribes will have access in the area just like the public. Closing this area off to all groups except those of the federally recognized Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians would have the additional side effect of restricting any non-federally recognized tribes, as the petition does mention. In addition to the above counter reasons of the petition's primary claims, there exists additional effects to be considered at the proposed MPA site. The proposed area was considered during the MLPA for the southern section but was

traded off for two other SMCAs on the coast, Naples and Kashtayit that were present in different MPA alternatives that Carpinteria was not in. If allowed, the new MPA would essentially break the agreements struck during the MLPA. Lastly, the pre- and post-amended boundaries overlap existing oil infrastructure that is maintained year round, no existing exemptions or conversations have been had regarding this infrastructure overlap. For these reasons we believe the petition should be denied.

Petition 2023-32 MPA – Reject

Petition 32 requests expanding the Duxbury Reef SMCA north, south and converting the SMCA into an SMR. The petition cites apparent drops in biodiversity in the areas, confusion on take regulations, and, as a result, high incidence of accidental poaching.



We believe this petition to be well intentioned but do not believe it should be accepted. The petition's claims that there was a local drop in biodiversity are all based on local surveys on no actual data displaying a measurable drop in the biodiversity in the area.

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Observations by MPA Watch on potential MPA violations comes from observers seeing “anyone with buckets,” citing even children with buckets counting as a possible violation. While it is understandable to ascertain data this way, we would like the commission to understand that someone simply with a bucket on one of the most popular beaches in the area does not mean they are violating MPA take regulations. This method of data collection possibly is why the self-reported values of possible violations at Duxbury are so high, when actual enforcement reports show infractions at Duxbury being so low they do not even make it to the yearly MRC report. Enforcement reports on MPAs from the yearly March MRC give insight into MPA violations in the state, of which Duxbury Reef never was in the top MPAs in violation (top 35) or top 5 in the northern region specifically in 2024 or 2025. Letters from partner agencies such as state and national parks as well as national marine sanctuaries all cite possible issues with the SMCA, all requesting it expand, but no agency goes so far as to support making the area an SMR. No hard data whatsoever has been provided to demonstrate a need to expand the SMCA to include these highly inaccessible areas in the north or south as well. The petitioner’s claim that visitors walking through the existing southern border with legal catch from outside the SMCA is merely speculative. Access to the reef in this southern section is blocked by an inside channel except during extreme low tides, making further regulatory protection unnecessary and a niche case at best.

Regarding the original MPA expansion proposals, and even specifically the southern expansion (image above), the new covered area has a very asymmetric shape. This goes directly against MLPA guidelines for designating MPAs which state that MPAs with odd-asymmetric shapes are difficult to enforce and confusing to the public, possibly even adding to the confusions the petitioner claims is present at Duxbury. At the bare minimum, this border must be modified in a way that adheres to the MLPA MPA design guidelines before even being considered for final action. Because any possible additional area included or removed from the proposed expansion needs to be considered by all stakeholders, we must see what this final border actually is before providing further input. In December 2025, the petitioner did submit an informal request (“informal” was tagged by FGC staff) to change the border post-petition deadline, which could solve this odd shape issue. It is currently not known whether amendments like this can be considered. If the informal request is ultimately considered, the existing counter arguments still exist with exception of course of the expansion border shape.

Petition2023-33MPA – Reject

Several groups and individuals have expressed opposition to this petition, and we all stand by the majority of their comments, even after the limited number of amendments to certain MPAs in petition 33. While there are various pathways for kelp restoration, the establishment of new or larger MPAs is not one of them. It is widely accepted that the growth and abundance of kelp are dependent on water quality and temperature. Even under ideal growing conditions, a large swell can damage kelp forests, ripping the

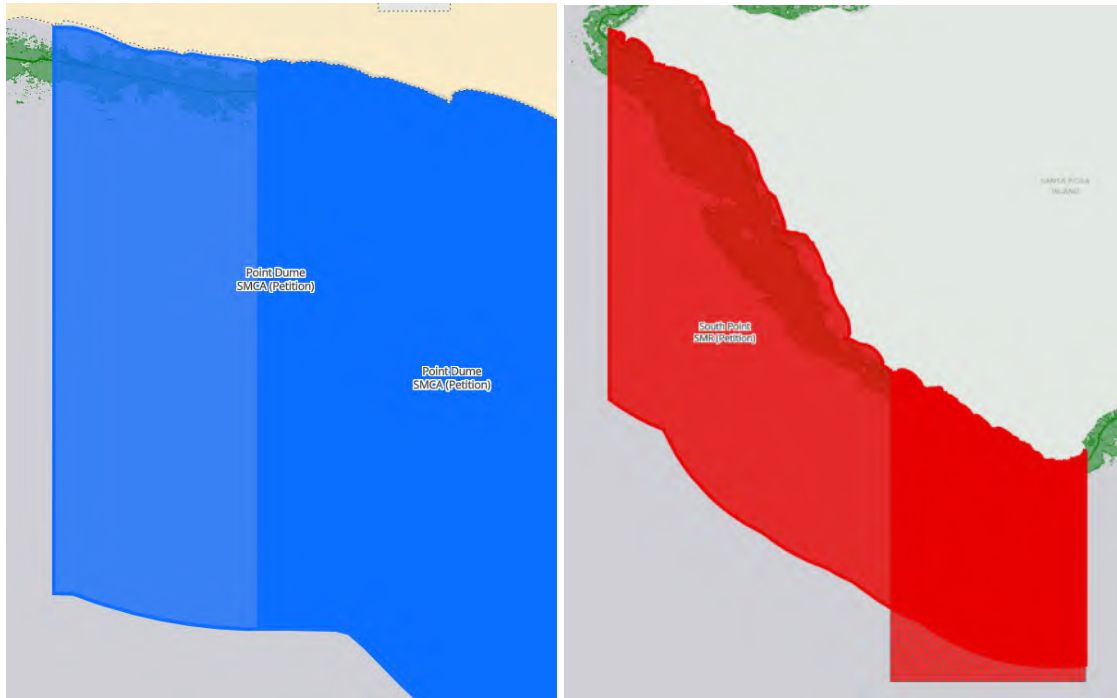
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largest, most buoyant, stalks off the seafloor. Fishing activities have little to no impact on kelp health as seen by thriving kelp populations throughout history pre-dating even the MLPA when fishing access was less restrictive. It is well documented how we came to this spot in the first place for our kelp, the rolling El Ninos in the mid-2010s removed a substantial amount of our state's kelp forests, not fishing, and fishing restrictions are not what it will take for the forests to regrow. The creation or expansion of MPAs resulting from this petition will have a negligible effect on the recovery of kelp forests, but a permanent and lasting effect on those that have a livelihood on the water or those that want to simply fish and enjoy a day on the water. In some instances, such expansions may hinder restoration efforts by obstructing human interventions aimed at encouraging kelp growth, such as seeding areas or urchin barren removal efforts.

Furthermore, the petition does not adequately explain why most of the proposed expansion areas cover waters that are simply too deep for kelp to grow. All but one of its expansions (Gull Island) have this problem, covering waters well beyond kelp's natural growing depth. Many of the proposed expansions extend to the state line, covering areas with depths exceeding 1,000 feet when kelp cannot grow any deeper than 150ft. For a petition focused on kelp restoration, this deepwater coverage is illogical and appears to be an attempt to limit area access to our already managed fisheries while protecting an area outside of the scope of the petition. Below are some of the petition's proposed expansions on SeaSketch with the kelp max extent per landsat and flyovers enabled (green layer under proposed expansions). This shows most of the expansion area does not even cover the absolute maximum kelp could grow. Any justifiable MPA expansions regarding kelp recovery at the bare minimum should be more targeted, covering specifically areas kelp can grow, not mass areas covering mostly water kelp cannot grow.

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Lastly, the added amendments only pull back on one expansion, the Cabrillo SMR, and add in shore based take of finfish and general spearfishing of finfish at the proposed Pleasure Point SMCA and Point Dume SMCA. As mentioned previously, the shorebased allowance would reduce Pleasure Point and Point Dume to moderate-low levels of protection per the MLPA, losing their local MPA connectivity, making the proposed expansions weaken MPA connectivity rather than strengthen them. Specifically for Point Dume, that MPAs connectivity appears centrally important under the SeaSketch model and should be maintained. While the reduction in size at the Cabrillo expansion is a positive, we still believe any expansion in the first place is not warranted, especially for kelp restoration purposes.

Petition2023-34MPA – Reject

Petition 34 requests the redesignation of one offshore SMCA to a no-take SMR, merging it with the nearshore SMR at Point Buchon to make one no-take SMR. The petition also requests combining the nearshore and offshore SMCAs at Farnsworth into a single SMCA that would permit only pelagic finfish spearfishing, removing various pelagic fishing allowances existing there. The primary justification for these changes is enforcement concerns. Enforcement has effectively managed the existing MPA network without significant issues which already contains nearly 40% limited take SMCAs. The situations at Farnsworth and Point Buchon are similar to several other MPAs along the coast that successfully integrate nearshore and offshore components. The concept of allowing pelagic finfish targeting offshore—where interactions with the MPA's intended

January 2026

Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions

protections are minimal—has been recognized since the first and second MPA Master Plans where it explicitly states the lesser effect pelagic fish have on themselves and the MPA ecosystem, and to allow for areas that have pelagic take respectively. Pelagic fishing should be permitted in MPAs that overlap with offshore waters, provided that fishing practices minimize interactions with local and nearshore species, which they inherently do. Additionally, if enforcement was truly the only concern, commercial harpoon at Farnsworth is just as enforceable, if not easier to enforce than recreational spear methods, and should be left in as an allowance in the SMCA. This petition also conflicts with Petition 20 and its requests at Point Bucheon.

The two MPA systems at Farnsworth and Point Bucheon are no different from other nearshore/offshore configurations, so-called “MPA clusters”, and we see no compelling reason to change them specifically. Both MPA clusters currently meet regional sizing guidelines for the total cluster area and LOP requirement to count them both for connectivity as is, with their current access. For these reasons, we believe this petition should be rejected.

Thank you,

AllWaters - AWPAC *(recreational)*

-Chris Killean (President)

-Matt Bond (Board Member)

Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara - CFSB *(commercial)*

-Chris Voss (President)

-Ava Schulenberg (Assistant Director)

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers - BHA *(recreational)*

-Devin O'Dea (Western Policy & Conservation Manager)

Coastal Conservation Association California - CCA Cal *(recreational)*

-Chris Arechaederra (Executive Director)

-Tonie Bagnos (Assistant Director)

Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association - VCCFA *(commercial)*

-Dave Colker (Executive Director)

-Jason Woods (President)

-Eric Hodge, Mike Kenny, Tim Athens (Board Members)

LA Rod and Reel Club *(recreational)*

-John Ballotti (President)

January 2026

Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions

Port San Luis Commercial Fishermen's Association *(commercial)*

-Chris Pavone (President)

Santa Barbara Sportfishing Club *(recreational)*

-Whitney Uyeda (President)

Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries *(recreational/commercial)*

-Alan Alward (Co-Chair)

San Diego Fishermen's Working Group *(commercial)*

-Pete Halmay (President)

Morro Bay Commercial Fishermen's Organization *(commercial)*

-Bill Blue (President)

-Tom Hafer (Secretary)

The Tuna Club Foundation *(recreational)*

-Chase Offield (Board Member)

Santa Barbara FreeDivers Club *(recreational)*

-Dave Huebner (President)

-Bradley Pirmen (Chair)

BD Outdoors *(recreational business)*

-Ali Hussainy (President)

The California Association of Harbor Masters and Port Captains *(commercial)*

-Tim Petrick (President)

Dana Wharf Sportfishing and Whale Watching *(recreational)*

-Donna Kalez (Co-Owner)

Santa Barbara Landing and Stardust Sportfishing *(recreational business)*

-Jamie Diamond (CEO/owner)

Monterey Bay Tritons *(recreational)*

-Brandon Burke (President)

NorCal Underwater Hunters *(recreational)*

-Matt Mattison (President)

January 2026

Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions

Fathomiers *(recreational)*

-Paul Romanowski (Conservation Officer)

The Catalina Seabass Fund *(recreational/commercial)*

-Jock Albright (Director)

The Laguna Maritime Alliance *(recreational/commercial)*

-Chase Offield (Chair)

Santa Cruz Kelp Stalker *(recreational)*

-Hans Haveman (Chair)

San Diego Freedivers *(recreational)*

-Ryan Moore (President)

OC Spearos *(recreational)*

-Hidenori Iwagami (president)

Long Beach Neptunes *(recreational)*

-Terry Maas (Chair)

Save Duxbury Access *(grassroots recreational/commercial)*

-Chris Martinelli (Local Lead)

American Fishing Tackle Company - AFTCO *(recreational/commercial business)*

-Bill Shedd (CEO)

-Casey Shedd (President)

Get Hooked Seafood *(commercial business)*

-Kim Selkoe and Victoria Voss (Co-Founders)

Pacific Coast Sportfishing *(recreational business)*

-Bill DePriest (Publisher / Editor)

January 2026

Coalition Letter on Bin 2 MPA Petitions

Dedicated Researchers/Scientists:

UCSB Bren School of Environmental Science & Management

-Dr. Dawn A. Murray (PhD. Ocean Sciences - UCSC)

UCSB & UCSC Conservation Scientist

-Dr. Jason Johns (PhD. Ecology and Evolutionary Biology - UCSB)

UCSB Marine Scientist

-Dr. Kim Selkoe (PhD. Ecology and Evolutionary Biology - UCSB)

Private Marine Scientist

-Ethan Estess (M.S. Earth Systems (Marine) - Stanford University)

Senior Marine Scientist and previous marine biologist for the Channel Islands NPS

-Derek Lerma (B.S. Biological Oceanography - Humboldt State University)



01/26/2026

California Fish and Game Commission
California Fish and Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209, Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Subject: Bin 2 MPA Petitions

Dear Melissa Miller-Henson,

Please add the San Diego County Wildlife Federation (SDCWF) to the CCA Coalition letter regarding Bin 2 MPA petitions being considered. We were unfortunately a bit late getting our logo and signature added to the letter represented below. The San Diego County Wildlife Federation represents over 20,000 sportsmen and women in San Diego County, and we are active in conserving our inland and aquatic habitats in a manner which allows both conservation protection with consumptive use of the waters of our state.

The SDCWF agrees with the recommendations of Coalition listed below.

Thank you for the work you and the Commissioners do for California outdoorsmen and women.

Respectfully,

Gary F. Brennan
President, San Diego County Wildlife Federation
P.O. Box 3886
Ramona, CA. 92065

Copy to: CCA California



29 January 2026

Re: Comments from Marine Conservation Institute for consideration during the February 11-12, 2026 meeting on petitions to amend the state's MPA network.

(submitted via email to fgc@fgc.ca.gov)

Dear California Fish and Game Commission,

As California works to protect 30% of state waters by 2030 (30 x 30) to fight climate change, protect biodiversity, and expand access to nature for all Californians, the implementation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) that provide tangible benefits to marine biodiversity requires an understanding of effective conservation and knowledge of which MPAs meet that threshold.

Since 2012, Marine Conservation Institute's Marine Protection Atlas (MPAtlas) has brought a focused lens to the quality of marine protections in MPAs around the world. MPAtlas (mpatlas.org) is the largest global repository of MPA assessments using The MPA Guide¹. The MPA Guide is a peer-reviewed scientific framework published in *Science* in 2021 that evaluates an MPA's stage of establishment and level of protection by looking at the management of mining, dredging & dumping, anchoring, infrastructure, aquaculture, fishing, and non-extractive recreational activities. Both management regulations and in situ activity data specific to each individual MPA are analyzed to determine the actual outcomes provided by a given MPA. Ecological evidence² from as recently as 2025 suggests that the best conservation outcomes are seen when MPAs are implemented or actively managed, and fully³ or highly⁴ protected from these seven activities.

Scientists from MPAtlas evaluated the 20 petitions proposing changes to California's MPA Network submitted to the California Fish and Game Commission by the public and Tribes in 2023 using The MPA Guide. Our preliminary analysis suggests that the following petitions would improve the level of protection for existing MPAs or designate new MPAs, expanding and strengthening the California State MPA Network's overall ability to achieve conservation benefits:

<u>Petition</u>	<u>Marine Protected Area</u>
2023-19MPA	Chitqawi SMCA
2023-20MPA	Point Buchon SMR
2023-23MPA-AM	Carmel Bay SMCA
	Pacific Grove Marine Gardens SMCA
	Tanker's Reef SMR
2023-24MPA-AM	Laguna Beach SMCA

2023-27MPA-AM	Anacapa Island SMCA
2023-28MPA-AM	Point Sal SMCA
2023-29MPA-AM	Mishopshno SMCA
2023-32MPA	Duxbury Reef SMR
2023-33MPA-AM	Cabrillo SMR
	Gull Island SMR
	Natural Bridges SMR
	Pleasure Point SMCA
	Point Conception SMR
	Point Dume SMCA
	South Point SMR
2023-34MPA	Farnsworth Offshore SMCA
	Farnsworth Onshore SMCA
	Point Buchon SMCA

With critical tipping points approaching ocean biodiversity, the opportunity to align California's MPA network with the best and most up-to-date understanding of MPA science is incumbent on the Commission. We urge the Commission to adopt the petitions that serve to advance conservation and keep the State of California moving forward with a world-leading example of marine conservation, creating an effective MPA network, and progressing towards the State's commitment to 30 x 30.

Sincerely,

Lance Morgan, PhD, President, Sonoma County
Nikki Harasta, Marine Conservation Scientist, Ventura County

1 Grorud-Colvert, K., et al. (2021). The MPA guide: A framework to achieve global goals for the ocean. Science. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abf0861>

2 Horta e Costa, B., et al. (2025). Marine protected areas' stage of establishment and level of protection are good predictors of their conservation outcomes. Cell Reports Sustainability. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crsus.2025.100345>

3 No impact from extractive or destructive activities is allowed and all abatable impacts are minimized. Non-extractive activities may include recreational, traditional, cultural, or spiritual activities. Examples include minimal impact snorkeling, swimming and SCUBA, tidepooling, cultural/ceremonial gatherings, education, knowledge transmission, and motorized or non-motorized vessels associated with the previously mentioned activities.

4 Only light extractive activities are allowed that have low impact, and all other abatable impacts are minimized. If any anchoring is allowed, it is small scale and for a short duration with a low impact. If any infrastructure is allowed, it is small scale with low impact. Any aquaculture must be low impact, small scale, low density, and unfed. If fishing occurs, it is infrequent and only five or fewer gear types are used that are highly selective and low-impact. Any non-extractive activities are regulated and restricted and of low impact, low density, and small scale.

From: Jennifer Sahn <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Sunday, February 1, 2026 9:59 AM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Subject: Point Sal and Mishopshno State Marine Conservation Areas

February 1, 2026

Erika Zavaleta, President
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for Petitions 2023-28MPA and 2023-29MPA

Dear President Zavaleta and Honorable Commissioners:

I am writing to express my strong support of the proposed Point Sal State Marine Reserve (Petition 2023-28MPA) near the city of Guadalupe, and the Mishopshno State Marine Conservation Area (Petition 2023-29MPA) off the coast of Carpinteria. Conserving these two special areas will help protect and restore ocean health, enhance coastal recreation experiences, and help ensure Santa Barbara County's coastal economy thrives for decades to come.

Both the proposed Point Sal and Mishopshno MPAs would conserve essential habitats that support rich biodiversity, such as kelp forests, rocky reefs, tidepools, sandy beaches, migratory whale corridors, a larval retention zone, and a seabird and sea lion rookery. Protecting these areas would have positive impacts that spread well beyond their boundaries, bolstering ocean resilience and keeping our coastal waters healthy. These two areas hold cultural significance for several Indigenous communities in our region. Designating these MPAs would honor and strengthen the Chumash peoples' stewardship of the area, and elevate their historical and present-day connection to the region. What would be even better would be co-management agreements with the tribes.

In addition, these areas are treasured by ocean and coastal recreation communities. Point Sal is home to stunning coastal bluff trails frequented by local hikers. Carpinteria is a popular area for surfers, shore fishers, swimmers, kayakers, birdwatchers, and beach walkers. By making the ocean healthier and more resilient to climate change, strong marine protections help preserve everyone's ability to enjoy these areas through a variety of recreational activities, far into the future. This also benefits our economy – collectively, ocean-based recreational activities contribute to our state's \$28 billion ocean tourism and recreation economy. In 2023, coastal tourism brought just over \$2 billion in travel-related spending to Santa Barbara County, and supported more than 20,000 jobs.

The Commission's continued work to protect California's biodiversity is critical. And ocean

conservation is more important than ever, given escalating threats to our marine ecosystems. Thank you for the opportunity to express our strong support for these proposals that aim to fill a current gap in network design to improve ecological connectivity throughout the region, boost resilience in the face of climate change, and protect critical marine habitats and ocean wildlife.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Sahn

Santa Barbara, CA

California Fish and Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

February 6, 2026

Re: Retraction of signature and clarification of position on California MPA petitions

Dear President Zavaleta and Honorable Commissioners,

I am a marine scientist and environmental studies professor advising graduate students at Antioch University and teaching undergraduate courses in the Environmental Studies Department at UC Santa Barbara. I work in resource management and conservation realms to protect habitats and to amplify Indigenous voices in conservation initiatives. I also work locally with NOAA on intertidal marine sampling and support locally-rooted conservation efforts, including curriculum development and weaving Indigenous and Western Scientific Knowledge into system solutions. I have worked with the Northern Chumash Tribal Council (NCTC) supporting the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS) designation and Chumash cultural values, wisdom, and traditions in marine and land management practices. I currently serve on the NOAA CHNMS Advisory Committee as a Research Seat Alternate.

My research focuses on participatory conservation and co-designing conservation methods that equitably integrate local communities in multi-pronged conservation solutions. I value coalition-building, listening to and incorporating multiple perspectives in conservation planning. I work with fishermen around the world, including supporting the Miloli'i Community-Based Subsistence Fishing Area (CBSFA), south of Kona, Hawai'i, which includes the waters and submerged lands from the shoreline to the 100-fathom depth contour. The Miloli'i community leads the regulation creation and enforcement in their "last Hawaiian fishing village". In addition, I support the Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara in their continued efforts to practice local eco-friendly, sustainable fishing, sell locally caught fish in the Saturday market to our community, promote science and monitoring, and their stewardship of our coast via numerous annual beach and island clean-ups.

Over a year ago, I was asked to add my name to a joint letter about the MPA adaptive management proposals from commercial and recreational fishermen. I did so because of my relationships with many in the California fishing community. Recently, [the letter](#) was submitted to the Fish & Game Commission. Unfortunately, I had not kept up with the revisions, updates, or additions to the letter in the last 13 months and the in-depth amendments to each MPA petition. The letter contains recommendations that I am unable to endorse due to my expertise as a marine scientist. I need to retract my signature from that letter and clarify my position.

Clarifying my current perspectives on the MPA petitions:

- I submitted a letter in November 2023 endorsing Petition 2023-33MPA, and I am a supporter of protecting California's kelp forests because they provide invaluable ecological and environmental benefits. These dynamic and biodiverse ecosystems serve as critical nurseries for a wide variety of marine species, providing shelter and food for numerous fish, invertebrates, and marine mammals. Healthy kelp forests support thriving commercial and recreational fisheries and can help dampen the impacts of coastal erosion and storm impacts. With the declines in kelp forest cover across the Pacific West Coast, including California, from natural and human-induced factors, MPAs are a critical tool for supplying the population of recruits and supporting the resilience of kelp ecosystems in the face of these stressors.
- To achieve the stated goals of conserving biodiversity and ecosystem health, I encourage the state to consider increasing protections for MPAs that are currently only lightly or minimally protected as defined by The MPA Guide,¹ especially in places where weaker or more complicated regulations lead to poor compliance and enforcement. An example of what I support are the clarifications on Kashtayit regulation language and Campus Point SMCA color coding (Petition 2023-18MPA).
- I support strengthening the MPA network through the addition of new MPAs where they would protect critical habitat and advance Tribal co-stewardship. To that end, I endorse Petition 2023-28MPA designating Point Sal SMCA, which provides an opportunity to strengthen protections within the CHNMS and offers a pathway for meaningful co-stewardship between the state and NCTC. In addition, I support Petition 2023-29MPA designating Mishopshno SMCA, which would protect a special place culturally and ecologically, and similarly offer a pathway for meaningful co-stewardship between the state, Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, and potentially other Tribes. I appreciate that the petitioners were responsive to feedback from the local community, including recreational and commercial fishers, cutting the size of the proposal in half.
- Finally, I do not support weakening MPA protections off the California coast in any capacity. For example, to open recreational fishing opportunities to non-Base fishers, Petition 2023-18MPA would create a narrow alongshore State Marine Conservation Area within the existing SMR that would allow all people to fish for finfish by hook and line. This change would weaken the MPA network by officially downgrading the protections within the state's largest fully protected MPA. Instead, I support the state ensuring current Vandenberg SMR restrictions are enforced and applied to Base personnel and dependents, so that it is not only non-military community members who must comply.

California's MPA network is imperative for maintaining healthy ocean habitats, biodiversity along the California coast, and ecosystem resilience. Management of MPAs can also honor numerous knowledge systems - commercial fishers, recreational fishers, Indigenous peoples, local communities, and Western scientific knowledge systems. The adaptive management process offers a pathway to improve, and build on the successes of our globally-recognized MPA network.

¹ Grorud-Colvert, Kirsten, Jenna Sullivan-Stack, Callum Roberts, et al. 2021. "The MPA Guide: A Framework to Achieve Global Goals for the Ocean." *Science*, ahead of print, September 10. World. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abf0861>.

Thank you for the opportunity to clarify my position. I appreciate your leadership and your commitment to a healthy and vibrant ocean for all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn A. Murray', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dr. Dawn A. Murray
Professor Environmental Studies, Antioch University
Lecturer Environmental Studies Department, UC Santa Barbara

February 10, 2026

Mr. Erika Zavaleta, President
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for Petition 2023-28MPA

Dear President Zavaleta and Honorable Commissioners:

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed Point Sal State Marine Reserve (Petition 2023-28MPA) near the city of Guadalupe in Santa Barbara County. Conserving this special area will help protect and restore ocean health, enhance coastal recreation experiences, and help ensure Santa Barbara County's coastal economy thrives for decades to come. I have been a professional marine biologist who has worked for over 40 years along the California central coast and am knowledgeable of the value of this area to the conservation of the coast. Therefore, I strongly urge you to approve this proposal.

Point Sal MPA would conserve important habitats that support rich biodiversity, such as kelp forests, rocky reefs, tidepools, sandy beaches, migratory whale corridors, an important larval retention zone, and a seabird and sea lion rookery. Protecting these areas would have positive impacts that spread beyond their boundaries, bolstering ocean resilience and keeping our coastal waters healthy. This area holds cultural significance for several Indigenous communities in our region. Designating this MPA would honor and strengthen the Chumash peoples' stewardship of the area and elevate their historical and present-day connection to the region.

In addition, this area holds special importance for ocean and coastal recreation communities. Point Sal is home to stunning coastal bluff trails that are frequented by local hikers and tourists to view wildlife, relax at the beach, and enjoy the remote and pristine area. By making the ocean healthier and more resilient to climate change, strong marine protections help preserve everyone's ability to enjoy these areas through a variety of recreational activities, far into the future. This also benefits our economy – collectively, ocean-based recreational activities contribute to our state's \$28 billion ocean tourism and recreation economy.¹ In 2023, coastal tourism brought just over \$2 billion in travel-related spending to Santa Barbara County and supported more than 20,000 jobs.²

¹ NOAA 2016, The National Significance of California's Ocean Economy
<https://coast.noaa.gov/data/digitalcoast/pdf/california-ocean-economy.pdf>

² Visit California, 2024. The Economic Impact of Travel in California.
<https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/research/economic-impact>

Although retired from my previous position as the president and principal scientist at Tenera Environmental where I managed the marine environmental monitoring studies at the Diablo Canyon Power Plant, I am now volunteering with NOAA as one of the scientists working on the recovery of the black abalone. The Point Sal MPA would provide an ideal location for future restoration efforts for black abalone as it is isolated from high levels of public access. It is also the first stretch of intertidal rocky south of Shell Beach and likely experiences high levels of upwelling and currents that could help distribute any larvae produced from restoration efforts.

The Commission's continued work to protect our state's biodiversity is critical, at a time when ocean conservation is more important than ever. Thank you for the opportunity to express my strong support for this proposal that aims to fill a current gap in network design to improve ecological connectivity throughout the region, provide additional resilience in the face of climate change, and protect critical marine habitats.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Steinbeck", with a stylized, cursive script.

John Steinbeck
Retired Marine Biologist





The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County

OUR MISSION

THE LAND TRUST FOR
SANTA BARBARA
COUNTY CONSERVES
NATURAL RESOURCES,
AGRICULTURAL LAND
AND OPEN SPACES FOR
THE BENEFIT OF
PRESENT AND FUTURE
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February 17, 2026

Erika Zavaleta, President
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814
fgc@fgc.ca.gov

Re: Support for Petition 2023-28MPA, proposed Point Sal State Marine Reserve

Dear President Zavaleta and Honorable Commissioners,

On behalf of The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County (Land Trust), I would like to express support for Petition 2023-28MPA to designate the Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area off the coast of Point Sal in Santa Barbara County. The Land Trust is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization with a mission to conserve natural resources, agricultural land, and open spaces for the benefit of present and future generations. Over its 40-year history, the Land Trust has served Santa Barbara County by partnering with landowners and communities to conserve thousands of acres of agricultural land, natural resources and open spaces. We support the proposed Point Sal SMCA to protect the natural resources and wildlife habitats of this area, and the central coast communities that rely on these waters for economic and climate resilience.

Point Sal supports significant coastal ecosystems, rich cultural resources, and Chumash heritage. The Land Trust has partnered with the County of Santa Barbara to protect the Point Sal Reserve, an area of special recreational importance to the communities of the Santa Maria Valley. Through development of the Santa Barbara County Conservation Blueprint and our ongoing work, the Land Trust has identified the stretch of coastline from Point Sal to the Guadalupe-Nipomo dunes that abuts the proposed SMCA as among the highest priority areas for conservation in our County.

Numerous sensitive species use these coastal and near shore habitats including snowy plover and Southern California steelhead, among others. Climate change impacts, such as sea-level rise, intensified storms, and altered precipitation patterns, threaten this delicate landscape. This area simultaneously faces mounting challenges from escalating development pressures, rapid urbanization, infrastructure projects, and tourism, all of which jeopardize its resilience. The proposed sanctuary would be dedicated to preserving the unique coastal ecosystems, rich cultural resources, and Chumash heritage of these regions,

marking a key step in the resilience of this essential stretch of California coast.

Importantly, the SMCA is supported by Chumash bands from this region. Tribes have played a critical role in stewardship of this region for at least the past 10,000 years, and Chumash communities remain leaders in efforts to protect and maintain their natural and cultural heritage. Elevating the role of Chumash bands in both the naming and on-going management of the proposed sanctuary is an important step in recognizing and empowering Chumash communities as central to the protection of these coasts and waters.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this designation process.

Sincerely,



Meredith Hendricks, Executive Director



February 20, 2026

California Fish and Game Commission

RE: Petition 2023-28MPA to create the Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area

Dear President Sklar and Honorable Commissioners,

I am writing on behalf of Point Blue Conservation Science (Point Blue) to support the proposed designation of the Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) and to provide biological information relevant to this important section of central California. I am writing this letter from a biodiversity conservation perspective and citing Point Blue's scientific studies to demonstrate that establishing an SMCA in the area around Point Sal is warranted for the following reasons:

- 1) The waters and offshore islet called Lion Rock within the proposed SMCA boundaries provide important habitat for seabird nesting, roosting, and foraging as well as an important marine mammal haul out area
- 2) As a headland, Point Sal creates recirculating currents, and thus larval retention, in its lee and enhances juvenile fish and invertebrate recruitment to habitats that will be protected by the proposed SMCA
- 3) Habitats in the lee of Point Sal and on the shelf adjacent to Point Sal have been demonstrated to be persistent feeding hot spots for breeding and migratory seabirds
- 4) The location of the proposed SMCA will fill a spacing gap within the California MPA network

At Point Blue, we advance conservation of birds, other wildlife, and ecosystems through science, partnerships, and outreach. Our scientists work to reduce the impacts of climate change and other environmental threats, including shipping, fishing, and habitat loss while promoting nature-based solutions for wildlife and people, on land and at sea.

Point Blue is an independent, scientific research non-profit. We conduct research to support marine wildlife conservation and healthy marine ecosystems. One of our priority initiatives is to conduct applied science to guide ocean management to reduce threats to wildlife and support sustainable human uses. We conduct research on the Farallon Islands and throughout coastal California that helps state and federal agencies manage priority species, and we conduct at-sea research in collaboration with NOAA's National Marine Sanctuaries to provide information that helps manage threats to marine life within the Sanctuaries.

I served on the Science Advisory Team for the South Coast Study Region of the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative (MLPAI) and my coastal team at Point Blue has collected data on breeding and roosting seabird abundance, reproductive success, foraging habitat use, and rates

of human-caused disturbance within and adjacent to the proposed Point Sal SMCA for over 20 years. Additionally, our coastal program biologists collected baseline data on these same seabird metrics throughout all four study regions of the MLPAL. Citations for these studies are listed below. Results from these studies support the justifications mentioned within the petition to establish the Point Sal SMCA. Point Sal is within a remote area of the California coast that currently experiences little to no human-caused disturbance to wildlife. Lion Rock, a small islet in the lee of Point Sal and within the proposed SMCA boundaries, is a significant roosting site for Brandt's cormorants (*Urile penicillatus*) and recently delisted California brown pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis californicus*) and a significant haul-out site for California sea lions (*Zalophus californianus*) (Robinette et al. 2015). Furthermore, Brandt's cormorants have recently started nesting on Lion Rock (Point Blue unpublished data). The waters in the lee of Point Sal provide important foraging habitat to numerous species of seabirds, likely due to the headland's role in creating a larval retention zone (Robinette et al. 2019). Our research has shown that seabirds are attracted to retention zones in the lee of coastal headlands as they create hotspots for the recruitment of juvenile fishes, and important prey for seabirds (Robinette et al. 2007, 2012, 2018, and 2019).

According to CDFW, barred surfperch (*Amphistichus argenteus*) is the most common species harvested recreationally along sandy beaches in this region. It is our understanding that the majority of fish caught from surf zone fishing within the proposed SMCA are barred surfperch, which are viviparous – meaning they give live birth to juvenile fish, and do not broadcast spawn eggs. As such, these juvenile fish are not widely distributed by ocean currents and, unlike planktonic fish eggs and larvae, are less likely to be distributed to other MPAs within the California MPA network. Because the Point Sal SMCA will protect most other species of broadcast spawning fishes and invertebrates, its spacing between the Vandenberg SMR and Point Buchon SMR will improve the overall connectivity among MPAs within the network.

In addition to our coastal studies, Point Blue has conducted analyses on seabird and marine mammal abundance and distribution throughout state and federal waters along the west coast, and has conducted an assessment that identifies opportunities to improve ocean conservation throughout the California Current System (Vancouver to Baja California). Results from these analyses show that the proposed SMCA resides in an area of high biological importance (Elliott et al. 2020) and that the waters over the shelf support a high abundance of foraging and migrating seabirds and that this hotspot is persistent from year to year (Nur et al. 2011).

Point Blue supports the creation of the Point Sal SMCA and we hope you will consider our research and expertise in your assessment and final decision. If you would like further information, please contact me at drobinette@pointblue.org or 805-757-0838.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Robinette". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dan" being more prominent than the last name "Robinette".

Dan Robinette, Coastal Program Leader

Cc: Melissa Pitkin, Chief Executive Officer
Catherine Hickey, Acting Chief of Staff and Director of the Pacific Coast and Central Valley Group
Liz Chamberlin, Director of Innovation
Grant Ballard, Chief Science Officer
Jaime Jahncke, Director of the California Current Group

Literature Cited:

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Nur, N., J. Jahncke, M.P. Herzog, J. Howar, K.D. Hyrenbach, J.E. Zamon, D.G. Ainley, et al. 2011. Where the wild things are: Predicting hotspots of seabird aggregations in the California Current System. *Ecological Applications* 21 (6): 2241–57.

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Fw: Support for Petitions 2023-28MPA and 2023-29MPA

From: BILL WOODBRIDGE [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 4, 2026 04:39 PM
To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>
Subject: Support for Petitions 2023-28MPA and 2023-29MPA

Dear President Zavaleta and Honorable Commissioners:

I am writing to express my strong support of the proposed Point Sal State Marine Reserve (Petition 2023-28MPA) near the city of Guadalupe, and the Mishopshno State Marine Conservation Area (Petition 2023-29MPA) off the coast of Carpinteria. Conserving these two special areas will help protect and restore ocean health, enhance coastal recreation experiences, and help ensure Santa Barbara County's coastal economy thrives for decades to come. I urge you to approve these proposals.

Both the proposed Point Sal and Mishopshno MPAs would conserve essential habitats that support rich biodiversity, such as kelp forests, rocky reefs, tidepools, sandy beaches, migratory whale corridors, a larval retention zone, and a seabird and sea lion rookery. Protecting these areas would have positive impacts that spread well beyond their boundaries, bolstering ocean resilience and keeping our coastal waters healthy. These two areas hold cultural significance for several Indigenous communities in our region. Designating these MPAs would honor and strengthen the Chumash peoples' stewardship of the area, and elevate their historical and present-day connection to the region.

In addition, these areas are treasured by ocean and coastal recreation communities. Point Sal is home to stunning coastal bluff trails frequented by local hikers and tourists to view wildlife, relax at the beach, and enjoy the remote, pristine area. Carpinteria is a popular area for surfers, shore fishers, swimmers, kayakers, birdwatchers, and beach walkers. By making the ocean healthier and more resilient to climate change, strong marine protections help preserve everyone's ability to enjoy these areas through a variety of recreational activities, far into the future. This also benefits our economy – collectively, ocean-based recreational activities contribute to our state's \$28 billion ocean tourism and recreation economy. In 2023, coastal tourism brought just over \$2 billion in travel-related spending to Santa Barbara County, and supported more than 20,000 jobs.

The Commission's continued work to protect California's biodiversity is critical. And ocean conservation is more important than ever, given escalating threats to our marine ecosystems. Thank you for the opportunity to express our strong support for these proposals that aim to fill a current gap in network design to improve ecological connectivity throughout the region, boost resilience in the face of climate change, and protect critical marine habitats and ocean wildlife.

Sincerely,

Bill Woodbridge
Santa Barbara

From: Joanne Dean-Freemire <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2026 9:54 PM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Subject: Point Sal proposed Marine protected area

Please create a marine protected area at point Sal. These areas produce more fish for fishermen in unprotected areas.

And protect many more Marine species.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Jennifer Bauer <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Friday, March 20, 2026 1:01 PM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Subject: In support of MPA Network expansion

Dear California Fish & Game Commission,

As a Californian from San Luis Obispo, I support the expansion of the California's Marine Protected Area Network, including the designation of the proposed State Marine Conservation Area off Point Sal. I support the MPA network because I have lived my whole life (60 years) near the ocean and know the importance of keeping our oceans healthy. I love to surf, paddle board, and explore my local beaches. The health of the ocean reflects the health of our earth and its people.

Point Sal is particularly important because of its rich biodiversity and cultural significance to the Chumash people. Preserving this unique coastal area will draw visitors seeking healthy outdoor places of recreation and give a boost to the local economy. Last, designating Point Sal as an MPA will help in California's goal to preserve and protect 30% of lands and coastal waters by 2030.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Bauer

[REDACTED]

San Luis Obispo, CA [REDACTED]



Outlook

Marine Conservation Institute Comments on CDFW Recommendations for MPA Petitions

From Ali Rubin <ali.rubin@marine-conservation.org>

Date Tue 03/31/2026 03:02 PM

To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of Marine Conservation Institute, please find attached our comments on the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Evaluations and Recommendations for the ten non-Tribally-led Marine Protected Area (MPA) petitions released on March 20, 2026 .

We appreciate your consideration of these comments and your continued work to advance effective marine conservation in California.

Sincerely,
Ali Rubin

Ali Rubin
Marine Conservation Scientist



ali.rubin@marine-conservation.org
marine-conservation.org





March 31, 2026

President Eric Sklar
California Fish and Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090
Submitted electronically to: fgc@fgc.ca.gov

Re: Comments from Marine Conservation Institute on petitions to amend the State's MPA network.

Dear California Fish and Game Commission,

On behalf of Marine Conservation Institute, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments following the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Evaluations and Recommendations for the ten non-Tribally-led Marine Protected Area (MPA) petitions released on March 20, 2026.

Marine Conservation Institute works to secure strong protection for the ocean's most important places. Through our Marine Protection Atlas (MPAtlas), we assess marine protected areas globally using The MPA Guide, a peer-reviewed framework that evaluates the level of protection and expected conservation outcomes of MPAs. Our work supports governments and partners, including in California, in advancing effective, science-based marine conservation and achieving 30x30 goals.

We recognize the significant effort undertaken by CDFW to evaluate these petitions based on the information available as of March 2025, and we appreciate the Department's acknowledgment that additional information may continue to inform Commission deliberations. As California works toward protecting 30% of state waters by 2030, maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of the existing MPA network is essential to achieving meaningful conservation outcomes.

As part of this effort, we conducted an analysis to determine the likely biodiversity outcomes of the petitions submitted to the State using The MPA Guide framework. This approach applies a consistent, science-based method to evaluate how proposed changes would affect protection levels and conservation outcomes across California's MPA network.

We strongly support CDFW's recommendations to deny petitions that would lower protection levels within California's MPA network by allowing additional recreational or commercial take of marine life. Scientific evidence consistently demonstrates that the greatest ecological benefits such as increased biomass, biodiversity, and ecosystem resilience are achieved in MPAs that are fully or highly protected from extractive activities.

We also acknowledge that localized ecological pressures, such as sea urchin overpopulation and kelp loss, may require active management. In these cases, we encourage the Commission to explore adaptive, site-specific management strategies that address these threats without reducing protection levels or opening extractive fisheries within MPAs.

In particular, we support the recommendations to deny the following petitions:

- Modify Take in 9 SMCAs to Allow Commercial Take of Sea Urchins (2023-14MPA)¹
- Reclassify Footprint, Gull Island, and Santa Barbara Island SMRs to SMCAs to Allow Take of Highly Migratory Species (2023-15MPA_AM)
- Reclassify Stewarts Point and Bodega Head SMRs to SMCAs to Allow Commercial Salmon Trolling (2023-16MPA)
- Modify Allowed Uses at Several Santa Barbara Channel MPAs and Special Closures: Vandenberg SMR, Kashtayit SMCA, and San Miguel and Anacapa Special Closures (2023-18MPA)

1: With the exception of the Point Vicente no-take SMCA, petition 2023-14MPA does not lower the Highly Protected status of the named MPAs per our MPA Guide analysis, and may provide ecological benefits through the restoration effort of urchin culling. However, while ecosystem restoration and conservation may be complementary, they are non-substitutable actions where priority should be given to preventing the degradation of intact ecosystems.

These petitions propose changes that would reduce the level of protection in areas that currently contribute to the ecological performance of California's MPA network. Downgrading protections risks undermining biodiversity gains, weakening ecosystem resilience in the face of climate change, and compromising California's leadership in marine conservation.

To advance the state's goal of protecting 30% of nature by 2030, we do believe that the following proposals will modestly strengthen the network and urge the commission to support them:

- Designate new MPA as Chitqawi SMCA (2023-19MPA)
- Redesignate Point Buchon SMCA as Chumash SMCA to support tribal co-management and take provisions; extend northern boundary of Point Buchon SMR (2023-20MPA)
- Multiple changes to Pyramid Point SMCA (2023-21MPA)
- Reclassify all or part of Anacapa Island SMR (2023-27MPA)
- Designate new MPA as Point Sal SMR (2023-28MPA)
- Add new MPA as Mishopshno SMCA near Carpinteria (2023-29MPA)
- Reclassify and expand Duxbury Reef SMCA (2023-32MPA)
- Reclassify Point Buchon SMCA and modify regulations in Farnsworth MPAs (2023-34MPA)

California's MPA network is widely recognized as a global model for science-based ocean protection. Maintaining strong protections within this network is critical not only for achieving the State's 30x30 commitments, but also for ensuring long-term conservation benefits for marine ecosystems and coastal communities.

We respectfully urge the Commission to uphold CDFW's recommendations to deny these petitions and to continue advancing policies that strengthen, rather than diminish, the effectiveness of California's MPA network.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Lance E. Morgan, President

Nikki Harasta, Marine Conservation Scientist I

Alexandra Rubin, Marine Conservation Scientist I



GOLDEN GATE FISHERMANS ASSOCIATION

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of the Golden Gate Fishermen's Association (GGFA), I write to express our strong opposition to proposed Tribal Marine Protected Area (MPA) expansions and additional fishing restrictions in the Morro Bay region, specifically Tribal MPA Petition 2023-19 (proposing a new MPA near Morro Bay), 2023-28MPA-AM (proposing a new MPA near Point Sal), and 2023-34MPA (proposing the reclassification of Point Buchon SMCA and modification of regulations within the Farnsworth MPA).

The Golden Gate Fishermen's Association represents the Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel (CPFV) fleet from Morro Bay to the Oregon–California border. Our members rely on access to California's coastal waters to sustainably harvest species such as rockfish, salmon, halibut, and Dungeness crab. Any further reduction in available fishing grounds directly impacts the ability of our fleet to operate and remain economically viable.

While we respect the importance of cultural resources and recognize the role that Tribal communities play in the stewardship of marine ecosystems, we are deeply concerned that additional MPA designations or regulatory changes—particularly in already constrained areas like Morro Bay and along the Central Coast—will further limit access to critical fishing grounds. Over the past several years, our fleet has already endured significant regulatory restrictions, seasonal closures, and shifting management measures across multiple fisheries.

At a time when many of our members are still recovering from consecutive salmon closures and increasingly restrictive groundfish regulations, the addition of new spatial closures or further regulatory modifications will only compound the challenges facing our fleet. The proposals identified in Petition 2023-19, 2023-28MPA-AM, and 2023-34MPA represent not just isolated actions, but part of a broader trend of increasing spatial and regulatory constraints that collectively reduce viable fishing opportunities.

Each loss of fishing access reduces opportunity, increases pressure on remaining open areas, and threatens the long-term sustainability of small businesses that depend on these fisheries.

These proposed actions risk setting a precedent for continued expansion of restrictions without fully accounting for cumulative impacts to the fishing industry.

The impacts extend far beyond the vessels themselves. Harbors, fuel docks, tackle shops, processors, restaurants, and coastal tourism economies all rely on a functioning and accessible fishing fleet. When access is restricted, the economic ripple effect is felt throughout entire coastal communities.

GGFA strongly believes that any new management measures should prioritize balanced, science-based approaches that consider both conservation goals and the socioeconomic realities of working waterfronts. We urge the Commission to carefully evaluate the cumulative impacts of Petition 2023-19, 2023-28MPA-AM, and 2023-34MPA, and to avoid further restricting access to already limited fishing grounds.

We respectfully request that the Commission oppose or reconsider these proposed Tribal MPA expansions and regulatory changes in the Morro Bay, Point Sal, and Point Buchon regions that would further limit fishing access.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our concerns, and for your continued work on behalf of California's marine resources and coastal communities.

Sincerely,

Michael Rescino
President
Golden Gate Fishermen's Association

From: Matthew Bond

Sent: Saturday, April 4, 2026 4:56 PM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Subject: April 14 Tribal Committee Meeting Comment From Allwaters Re Tribal MPA
Petition Review Process and Tribal MPA Petitions

Hello,

Please find our comment attached.

Thank you.

Matt Bond

Allwaters.

March 30, 2026

California Fish and Game Commission

P.O. Box 944209

Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Submitted electronically to fgc@fgc.ca.gov

Re: 04/14/2026 Fish and Game Commission Tribal Committee Meeting Agenda Item 4

Dear Commissioner Hostler-Carmesin and Members of the Tribal Committee,

My name is Matt Bond and I'm commenting on behalf of Allwaters Protection and Access Coalition. Please accept our thoughts on the Tribally led or co-led MPA petitions being evaluated by the Commission.

Because we are now unclear as to the process being used to evaluate these petitions and it doesn't seem we will be able to comment on them at the bio regional meetings, we are taking this opportunity to share our recommendations and supporting analysis with the Commission. We are equally uncertain if the guidelines we have been working with for the past two and a half years are still valid for this set of petitions. Stakeholders, The Commission and The Department were working with the understanding that petition analysis and decisions would be based on SAT guidelines from original MLPA, The Master Plan for MPAs, as much as possible site specific or at least locally relevant scientific analysis, and other historically relevant information. We are no longer sure this is the case. We strongly encourage this Committee to recommend to the full Commission that these petitions continue to be evaluated by the Department in the same manner the non-tribal petitions were. Creating a separate framework, outside of what is called for by the MLPA, potentially serves as a barrier to trust and participation and may result in outcomes that harm both the marine resources you are charged with managing as well as the people who depend on them for health, recreation, and sustenance. The following are our opinions and corresponding rationale, based on the original, agreed upon process.

Petition2023-19MPA – Reject or Modify

Petition 19 requests the creation of a tribal co-managed SMCA at Morro Bay that only allows for the recreational take of finfish and invertebrates except rock scallops and mussels by hand harvest, also including a tribal take exemption within the SMCA. We believe the petition should be either rejected or amended to allow for more general recreational and commercial take as well.

We believe tribal co-management to be a great step forward in managing California's waters and should be present in all MPAs; however, creating a new MPA that restricts

exclusively commercial groups and most recreational fishing access from such an essential area should not be warranted. The commercial blocks overlapping the proposed SMCA account for 6.2% of Morro Bay's landing revenue alone. More specifically, these blocks represent 25% of the area's squid landings, 8.8% of the groundfish landings, and 15% of the area's salmon landings, per the MFDE. While not an exact correlation, recreational access in the area is likely comparable (with the exception of squid) and will likely be equally affected in the MPA regions, as this petition affects all fisheries not involving direct hand harvesting.

Additionally, there is concern that the proposed offshore wind energy program has its proposed electrical lines connecting the Morro Bay power bank stations to the offshore array crossing through the SMCA. If passed, this would need to be addressed and an additional allowance added.

Petition 2023-20 MPA – Reject Nearshore and Clarify/Accept Offshore

Petition 20 requests changes to the MPA cluster, the nearshore and offshore MPAs, at Point Buchon. The petition requests the offshore SMCA allow the hand harvest of finfish and invertebrates except rock scallops and mussels, allow the maintenance of artificial structures under the correct permits, and provide a tribal take exemption for federally recognized tribes. However, it is unclear if these requested allowances to the offshore SMCA at point Buchon are replacing or adding to existing recreational and commercial allowance for the take of albacore and salmon. Pursuant to the allowances being additive and not replacing the existing take allowances in the offshore MPA we support the request for the offshore region of the MPA cluster to have the added take allowances. This example in the offshore region is a clear example of how tribal components can be added to the existing network, not requiring creation of more MPAs to involve tribes.

Regarding the petitioner's request to the nearshore SMR being expanded, we believe this request should be rejected. The expansion of only the SMR section of the Point Buchon nearshore/offshore cluster would unnecessarily remove all access from the added area. The justification for this addition comes from MPA Collaborative meetings citing enforcement concerns, stating that moving the northern boundary to the physical point will provide a better reference for enforcement. The core reason the existing MPA does not go to the physical point on land is because the nearest whole decimal degree value was used as the northern boundary instead, following MLPA guidelines. This usage of a round Lat/Long number for an MPA that does not experience much shore fishing opportunity is supported by the MLPA MPA design criteria to explicitly help, not hurt, enforcement. The current northern boundary gives those fishing beyond shore an easy to understand GPS reference point to know where the boundary is. Additionally, expanding only the nearshore SMR may cause further enforcement problems with the offshore SMCA remaining its original size. The expansion of the nearshore only leads to a case of an unevenly sized MPA in the nearshore and offshore regions.

Petition2023-21MPA – Accept

Petition 21 requests the Pyramid Point SMCA in the northern bioregion be modified to remove its existing recreational allowances for take of surf smelt and give additional tribal exemption to the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation on top of its existing tribal exemption. The petition also requests the border of the MPA be moved south to the true CA-OR state boundary line, slightly shrinking the MPA.

While this petition does remove some recreational access to take surf smelt, that access was already relatively limited and small scale. The change to the border to shrink the SMCA to align to the actual state border clears up any possible confusion or issues the overlap currently causes. Overall we are supportive of this change, and addition of another Tribal component to the existing Pyramid Point SMCA.

Petition2023-28MPA-AM1 – Reject

Petition 28 requests the establishment of a new MPA around Point Sal. This MPA would significantly impact local fisheries, recreational and commercial, despite the petitioner's claim that the effects would be minimal. For this primary reason we believe the petition should be rejected, even as amended to allow for shore based take of finfish.

The petition includes an economic analysis of the proposed area but overlooks the devastating local impacts this MPA would have economically. While the petition accurately states that the overlapping commercial fishing blocks contribute to 1.1% of the central coast's total landings by value, it fails to consider the actual local implications of that 1.1% and what it represents. Using the same time range (2012 to 2022) on the MFDE, the local port nearest to the proposed MPA, Port San Luis/Avila, derived 28.12% of its total commercial revenue from the overlapping blocks 631 and 632. More specifically, 25.92% of the port's groundfish revenue and 57.79%, over half, of its crab revenue came from these areas. If recreational effort even somewhat mirrors commercial effort in the area, not only is Point Sal relevant commercially, but recreationally too offshore. Establishing an MPA at Point Sal will significantly harm the community of Avila and other nearby ports, threaten local businesses, harm or remove people's sources of income, and remove recreational and subsistence access to the area by boat.

Providing shore based take of finfish would allow for beach anglers to continue fishing as they have been, but would do so at the loss of all offshore activity. More notably, this also results in a drop of the LOP of the SMCA to moderate-low. This LOP ranking per the MLPA fails any connectivity requirements making the final proposed SMCA a protected area that does not add to total MPA network connectivity. This brings into question the main argument of the petitioner to add this MPA in order to maintain MPA connectivity, as the final amended SMCA would not accomplish this.

Petition2023-29MPA-AM1 – Reject

Petition 29 requests a new MPA be created at Carpinteria. This MPA would be a tribally allowed SMCA that would be closed to non-federally recognized tribal fishing (general recreational and commercial fishing); the petition was amended to reduce its overall size and allow shore-based take of finfish. The petition's three primary arguments for the new SMCA are to meet habitat connectivity/MPA spacing requirements, to protect habitat surrounding juvenile white shark grounds, and to allow for tribal access. While tribal co-management of all California MPAs should be considered, we believe for the following reasons this specific MPA proposal should be rejected.

Regarding habitat connectivity, the petition asserts that the spacing of the existing MPA network exceeds the recommendations set by the MLPA scientific advisory team, which suggests a minimum spacing of 31 to 62 miles. The petition argues that the nearest coastal MPAs, Campus Point and Point Dume, are too far apart, claiming they are separated by 63.8 nautical miles or 73.4 miles (Image 1).

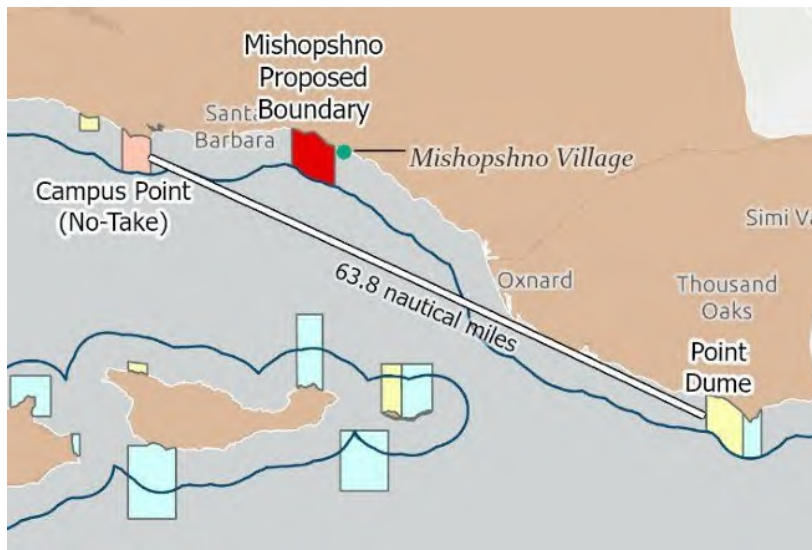


Image 1: Petition 29's image displaying proposed area and claimed spacing between existing Pt. Dume and Campus Point SMAs to be 63.8 nm (73.4 mi), which, if true, would exceed the southern MLPA MPA spacing requirements.

Note: the shown MPA is the original, pre-amendment size.

Discussions with the CDFW clarified that MPA spacing is measured by the, "shortest distance over water between two MPAs." When measuring the distance between Campus Point and Point Dume, we find that it is in fact less than 62 miles, indicating that the current spacing distribution is adequate along the coast (see below Image 2).

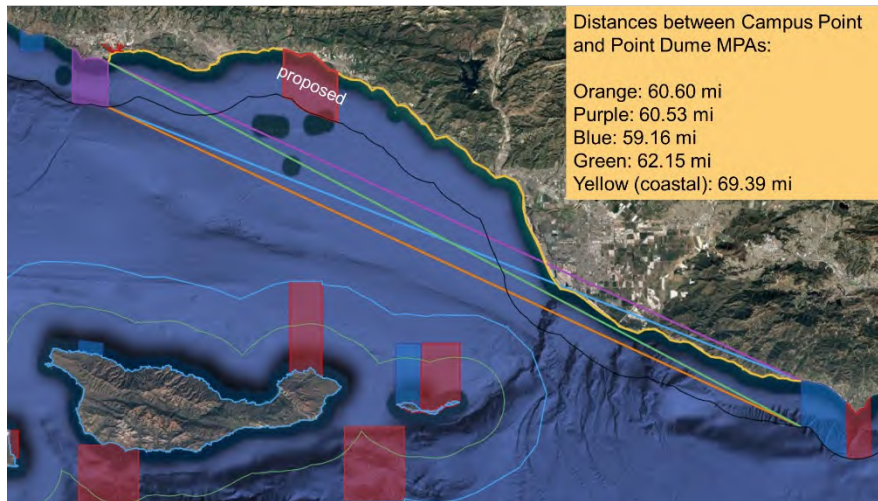


Image 2: Actual spacings between nearest existing MPAs around the proposed site. All but one straight line measurement exceeds 62 miles. The length that would be used by CDFW according to their provided input would be 60.60 mi (orange line) which falls within the spacing requirement.

Following the CDFW and MLPA guidelines, the shortest water distance between the two existing MPAs is ~60.60 miles, viewable by the orange line. This distance falls within the 31–62-mile MLPA spacing requirement. None of the provided measurements, including a measurement along the coastline (yellow) exceeded 73.4 miles of separation as the petitioner claims, again bringing into question the purpose for the new MPA if connectivity is already met.

In addition, the provided shore based take of finfish does allow for some form of recreational take but this now raises connectivity concerns. As mentioned in previous petitions, allowance of shore fishing of finfish reduces an MPAs LOP to moderate-low, losing its MPA connectivity with the network, this is confirmed by SeaSketch. Connectivity was a major reason for this MPAs proposal. With connectivity now lost due to these allowed take methods begs to question the purpose for this implementation in the first place if its foundational goals are not even accomplished. The LOP chart for the southern bioregion, moderate low protection is provided below.

Mod-low	SMCA SMP	Shore fishing (H&L, hoop net); kelp bass, barred sand bass, lingcod, cabezon, and rockfish (H&L, spearfishing); sheephead (H&L, spearfishing, trap); spotted sand bass and halibut (H&L); lobster (trap, hoop net, diving); urchin (diving); rock crab and Kellet's whelk (trap); catch and release (H&L-general) In water depth <10m: Catch and release (H&L-single barbless hooks and artificial lures) In water depth <50m at islands and <30m on mainland: pelagic finfish, bonito and white seabass (H&L);
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Regarding the protection of juvenile white shark nursery grounds, a similar petition was submitted in 2020 (Petition 2020-012 AM1) to close off a smaller section of beach at Carpinteria for the same purpose. Like Petition 29, this earlier petition aimed to protect juvenile white sharks within the currently proposed area. This 2020 petition was rejected by the Department and the Fish and Game Commission (FGC), which stated that MPAs are designed to protect nearshore ecosystems rather than individual species, especially

highly migratory species like white sharks. Given that this issue was previously addressed at the same location just four years ago, the same arguments against the current petition apply today regarding white sharks.



Lastly, regarding the tribal access portions of the petition, while tribal access and co-management should be explored across the entire MPA network, current access to the area by tribes is not limited in any way. Regardless of a tribal MPA designation or not, federally recognized tribes will have access in the area just like the public. Closing this area off to all groups except those of the federally recognized Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians would have the additional side effect of restricting any non-federally recognized tribes, as the petition does mention. In addition to the above counter reasons of the petition's primary claims, there exists additional effects to be considered at the proposed MPA site. The proposed area was considered during the MLPA for the southern section but was

traded off for two other SMCAs on the coast, Naples and Kashtayit that were present in different MPA alternatives that Carpinteria was not in. If allowed, the new MPA would essentially break the agreements struck during the MLPA. Lastly, the pre- and post-amended boundaries overlap existing oil infrastructure that is maintained year round, no existing exemptions or conversations have been had regarding this infrastructure overlap. For these reasons we believe the petition should be denied.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to comment and for your dedicated work in supporting both the interests of California's Tribal People as well as the health and perseverance of the natural resources shared in trust by all Californians.

Respectfully,

Matt Bond

Allwaters Protection and Access Coalition

From: John Hood
Sent: Monday, April 6, 2026 1:53 PM
To: FGC
Subject: Expanding California's Marine Protected Area

Categories: Exhibit

April 6, 2026

Erika Zavaleta, President
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for Petitions 2023-28MPA and 2023-29MPA

Dear President Zavaleta and Honorable Commissioners:

I am writing to express my family's strong support of the proposed Point Sal State Marine Reserve (Petition 2023-28MPA) near the city of Guadalupe, and the Mishopshno State Marine Conservation Area (Petition 2023-29MPA) off the coast of Carpinteria. As a family with longstanding roots with these coastal regions, conserving these two special areas will help protect and restore ocean health. It will enhance coastal recreation experiences and help ensure Santa Barbara County's coastal economy thrives for decades to come. The Hood family urges you to approve these proposals.

Both the proposed Point Sal and Mishopshno MPAs would conserve essential habitats that support rich biodiversity, such as kelp forests, rocky reefs, tidepools, sandy beaches, migratory whale corridors, a larval retention zone, and a seabird and sea lion rookery. Protecting these areas would have positive impacts that spread well beyond their boundaries, bolstering ocean resilience, and keeping our coastal waters healthy. These two areas hold cultural significance for several Indigenous communities in our region. Designating these MPAs would honor and strengthen the Chumash peoples' stewardship of the area, and elevate their historical and present-day connection to the region.

In addition, these areas are treasured by ocean and coastal recreation communities. Point Sal is home to stunning coastal bluff trails frequented by local hikers and tourists to view wildlife, relax at the beach, and enjoy the remote, pristine area. Carpinteria is a popular area for surfers, shore fishers, swimmers, kayakers, birdwatchers, and beach walkers. By making the ocean healthier and more resilient to climate change, strong marine protections help preserve everyone's ability to enjoy these areas through a variety of recreational activities, far into the future. This also benefits our economy – collectively, ocean-based

recreational activities contribute to our state's \$28 billion ocean tourism and recreation economy. In 2023, coastal tourism brought just over \$2 billion in travel-related spending to Santa Barbara County and supported more than 20,000 jobs.

The Commission's continued work to protect California's biodiversity is critical. And ocean conservation is more important than ever, given escalating threats to our marine ecosystems. Thank you for the opportunity to express our strong support for these proposals that aim to fill a current gap in network design to improve ecological connectivity throughout the region, boost resilience in the face of climate change, and protect critical marine habitats and ocean wildlife.

Sincerely,

John Hood

From: Lisa Damrosch-PCFFA <lisa@pcffa.org>

Sent: Thursday, April 9, 2026 05:08 PM

To: California Fish and Game Commission

Subject: RE: Agenda Item 4 – Tribally Led and Co-Led MPA Petitions (April 14, 2026 Tribal Committee)

Attached please find PCFFA's public comment on Agenda Item 4 regarding tribally led and co-led MPA petitions for the April 14, 2026 Tribal Committee meeting.

Thank you,
Lisa

--





April 14, 2026

The Honorable Jacque Hostler-Carmesin
Chair, Tribal Committee
California Fish and Game Commission

RE: Agenda item 4- Tribally Led and Co-Led Marine Protected Area (MPA) Petitions

Dear Chair Hostler-Carmesin and Members of the Tribal Committee,

On behalf of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations (PCFFA), we appreciate the opportunity to provide input regarding Marine Protected Area (MPA) petitions scheduled for discussion at the April 14 Tribal Committee meeting.

PCFFA is a statewide organization of commercial fishing associations from San Diego to Crescent City and represents the majority of active commercial fishermen in California. Our members fish across multiple regions, fisheries, and gear types, supporting working waterfronts and the production of locally sourced seafood. At a time when the U.S. relies on imports for more than 80% of the seafood it consumes, decisions that reduce access to sustainably harvested domestic seafood directly undermine food security and increase dependence on foreign supply chains with lower environmental and labor standards. We have a direct stake in decisions that change access to fishing grounds, including the use of the State's MPA network to impose additional closures within an already highly regulated and actively managed system.

We recognize the importance of Tribal stewardship and the cultural connections between Tribal communities and marine resources. We support collaborative approaches to co-management where they are grounded in meaningful engagement, sound science, and transparency. Commercial fishermen are not separate from conservation. We have been ocean stewards for generations. Our businesses depend on healthy ocean ecosystems, and we have a direct, daily stake in how those systems function in the real world, not just in theory. We have seen the consequences of these decisions play out in our coastal communities. The fleet disappears, businesses shut down, and consumers are pushed toward imported seafood with fewer protections and a much larger carbon footprint, undermining the climate goals these policies claim to support.

The current consideration of these petitions highlights broader issues with process, standards, and how decisions regarding additional permanent closures are being made. Petitions affecting the same statewide MPA network are being advanced through separate venues, rather than evaluated within a single, consistent framework. Decisions of this scale carry long-term ecological, economic, and social implications and should be subject to clear, comparable standards. As structured, there is a risk that similar proposals will not receive the same level of analysis, comparison, and scrutiny.



Across these petitions, in both the Tribal and non-Tribal pathways, there is a pattern of petitions seeking additional restrictions without demonstrating they will produce a measurable benefit. There is little clarity on what specific problem is being solved, or whether the proposed tool matches that problem at the scale being proposed.

We need to be clear about whether these petitions are actually solving a problem, or simply creating the appearance of action while imposing real costs on working food producers and coastal communities. These closures remove access to active fishing grounds that support ongoing commercial activity and cannot be replaced by shifting effort elsewhere, with direct consequences for fishing families, processors, distributors, and working waterfronts.

Commercial fishing has become a convenient target for additional restrictions, not because it is always the primary driver of the issue, but because it is one of the easiest sectors to regulate.

PCFFA will continue to engage in these processes and work toward solutions that are grounded in sound science and real outcomes. We will not support actions that restrict domestic food production and damage coastal communities without a clear, demonstrated benefit.

We respectfully ask the Tribal Committee to ensure that any recommendations to the Commission reflect the need for a clear, consistent standard for evaluating MPA petitions. That standard should include a clear definition of the problem being addressed, evidence that the proposed closure is necessary to address that problem, and an evaluation of the resulting impacts to food production and coastal economies. Petitions that would result in additional closures to commercial fishing should not move forward. We provide more petition-specific comments in Appendix A.

Sincerely,

Lisa Damrosch
Executive Director



APPENDIX A – Petition-Specific Comments

Petition 2023-29 – Mishopshno (Carpinteria Reef)

This petition targets Carpinteria Reef, one of the most heavily utilized nearshore fishing areas in the Santa Barbara Channel. The Carpinteria Reef / Block 652 area has produced more than 200,000 pounds of trap-caught landings over the past decade, with 100–200 vessels and up to 2,500 landing receipts recorded.

SeaSketch mapping conducted with 53 commercial fishermen identified this area as high to maximum value for trap fisheries. This is not marginal habitat. It is core working ground that supports ongoing fishing activity and cannot be replaced by shifting effort elsewhere.

The proposal would remove access to this area without demonstrating a clear ecological need or showing that a permanent closure at this scale is necessary. It also does not address how displaced fishing effort will be redistributed or what the resulting economic and operational impacts will be.

This applies a broad, permanent closure to a core fishing area and reflects a level of overreach that is not supported. This petition should not move forward.

Petition 2023-27 – Anacapa Island (Frenchy's Cove)

This petition proposes expanded MPA protections at Anacapa Island, including areas currently used by commercial trap fisheries. These grounds are actively fished and part of the working footprint of the fleet in the Santa Barbara Channel. The stated concern relates to eelgrass habitat, which available information indicates is concentrated in the 20–45 ft depth range.

The proposed closure extends well beyond that range in both depth and geographic scope. That mismatch between the identified issue and the scale of the closure raises a basic question of fit.

A broad, permanent closure is being applied where a more targeted approach could address the stated concern without removing access to the surrounding fishing grounds. This petition should not be advanced as proposed.

Petition 2023-28 – Point Sal

This petition proposes expanded MPA protections along the Point Sal coastline, covering active fishing areas used by multiple gear types. Unlike other proposals that at least point to a defined resource concern, this petition does not clearly identify a site-specific condition that requires permanent closure.

Instead, it applies a broad spatial restriction across working fishing grounds without establishing why this location, at this scale, requires that level of action. In the absence of a defined problem tied to the footprint of the closure, the proposal reads as a blanket restriction rather than a targeted response. This petition should not move forward.



Petition 2023-21 – Pyramid Point (Big Sur)

This petition proposes additional MPA protections in the Big Sur region, including areas used by commercial fisheries operating along the Central Coast. The proposal introduces additional closures without demonstrating that permanent restrictions are necessary at this location. There is no clear showing of why existing conditions cannot be addressed through current management tools or why a closure at this scale would produce a measurable benefit. Without that connection, the proposal extends the use of MPAs beyond a clearly defined need and should not move forward.

Petition 2023-20 – Central Coast (Chumash-related proposals)

This petition proposes changes to how MPAs are structured and applied along the Central Coast. Unlike the other petitions, this proposal focuses on structural changes rather than clearly defined new closures. However, changes to how MPAs function can affect access depending on how they are implemented. Evaluating these changes through a separate pathway raises concerns about consistency, particularly if modifications to the MPA network that affect access are not held to the same standards applied elsewhere. That issue is not about any one location, but about how decisions affecting the same system are being made. Changes to the MPA network that affect access should not move forward through a separate pathway.



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916.541.0582

April 9, 2026

Erika Zavaleta, President
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for Petitions 2023-28MPA and 2023-29MPA

Dear President Zavaleta and Honorable Commissioners:

Santa Barbara County Action Network strongly supports the proposed Point Sal State Marine Reserve (Petition 2023-28MPA) near the city of Guadalupe, and the Mishopshno State Marine Conservation Area (Petition 2023-29MPA) off the coast of Carpinteria. Conserving these areas will help protect and restore ocean health, enhance coastal recreation experiences, and help ensure Santa Barbara County's coastal economy thrives for decades to come. We urge you to approve these proposals.

Both the proposed Point Sal and Mishopshno MPAs would conserve essential habitats that support rich biodiversity, such as kelp forests, rocky reefs, tidepools, sandy beaches, migratory whale corridors, a larval retention zone, and a seabird and sea lion rookery. Protecting these areas would have positive impacts that spread well beyond their boundaries, bolstering ocean resilience and keeping our coastal waters healthy. These two areas hold cultural significance for several Indigenous communities in our region. Designating these MPAs would honor and strengthen the Chumash peoples' stewardship of the area, and elevate their historical and present-day connection to the region.

In addition, these areas are treasured by ocean and coastal recreation communities. Point Sal is home to stunning coastal bluff trails frequented by local hikers and tourists to view wildlife, relax at the beach, and enjoy the remote, pristine area. Carpinteria is a popular area for surfers, shore fishers, swimmers, kayakers, birdwatchers, and beach walkers. By making the ocean healthier and more resilient to climate change, strong marine protections help preserve everyone's ability to enjoy these areas through a variety of recreational activities, far into the future. This also benefits our economy – collectively, ocean-based recreational activities contribute to our state's \$28 billion ocean tourism and recreation economy. In 2023, coastal tourism brought just over \$2 billion in travel-related spending to Santa Barbara County, and supported more than 20,000 jobs.

The Commission's continued work to protect California's biodiversity is critical. And ocean conservation is more important than ever, given escalating threats to our marine ecosystems. Thank you for the opportunity to express our strong support for these proposals that aim to fill a current gap in network design to improve ecological connectivity throughout the region, boost resilience in the face of climate change, and protect critical marine habitats and ocean wildlife.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Sparks, Co-Executive Director

Ken Hough, Co-Executive Director

From: Saule Baipsys <outreach@dunescenter.org>
Sent: Wednesday, April 15, 2026 11:03 AM
To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>
Subject: Point Sal Support from Guadalupe Students

Good morning, President Sklar and Honorable Commissioners,

I am Saule Baipsys the Outreach Coordinator and Educator at the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Center. I am emailing to share our local students support of the Point Sal MPA. Through lessons, discussions, and activities, our students have cultivated a great love for this area and are eagerly anticipating its designation as a State Marine Protected Area. Please see their letters and drawings of support attached in this email.

Thank you for your commitment to serving the natural resources of our state and sowing hope for California's next generation of ocean advocates.

With gratitude,

Saule Baipsys

Outreach Coordinator

Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Center

1065 Guadalupe Street

Guadalupe, CA 93434

www.dunescenter.org

805-343-2455 phone

310-844-2369 cell

Promoting the conservation of the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes ecosystem through education, research, and the support of cooperative stewardship.

POINT SAL WITH STATE MARINE
CONSERVATION AREA

UNPROTECTED POINT SAL

protect the turtles
because if they die
that's 1 animal out
of the food chain
so it will affect
the ecosystem

POINT SAL WITH STATE MARINE
CONSERVATION AREA

UNPROTECTED POINT SAL

I think that Protection for
Point Sal is important
because I want the sea
life that live there to have
a safe and clean place
to live, birth, and raise their
young. I hope that they
get the protection that they
deserve and get to live
longer and stronger
lives.

-Elyse Avila

Ariana Santos

POINT SAL WITH STATE MARINE CONSERVATION AREA

UNPROTECTED POINT SAL

*If we do not protect Point
Sal then we might lose some
of the animals who live there.
That would be terrible.
if we lost animals to some
cruel people so from the
bottom of my heart please
protect this ecosystem.*



POINT SAL WITH STATE MARINE
CONSERVATION AREA

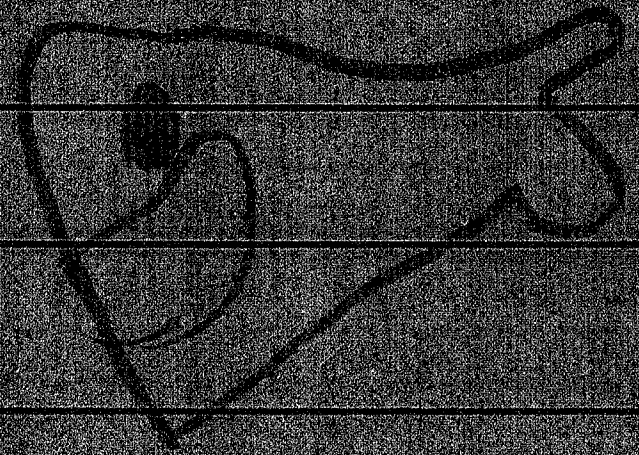
belva
UNPROTECTED POINT SAL

This area should
be ~~for~~ protected ~~area~~
so that animals have
a safe ~~place~~ place
to live.

POINT SAL WITH STATE MARINE
CONSERVATION AREA

UNPROTECTED POINT SAL

WELLSIDE
MAY BUREN
POINT SAL IS
BEAUTIFUL
WHALE



POINT SAL WITH STATE MARINE
CONSERVATION AREA

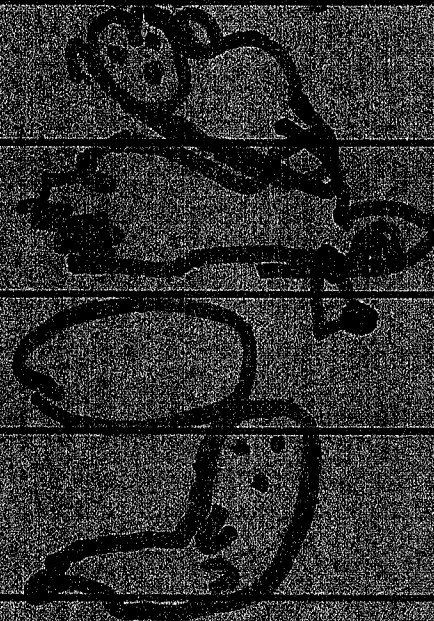
UNPROTECTED POINT SAL

Gerardo Angeles

Mary Burren

SEA OTTER

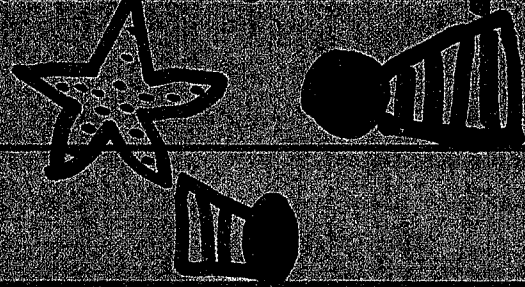
I love Point Sal



POINT SAL WITH STATE MARINE
CONSERVATION AREA

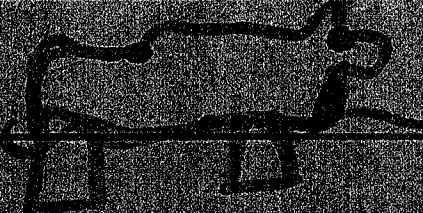
My name is Camila
UNPROTECTED POINT SAL

Camila
I go to Mary
Buren Point
Sal. Help Keep
Point Sal beautiful!



POINT SAL WITH STATE MARINE
CONSERVATION AREA

UNPROTECTED POINT SAL

Isiah Rivera
Mark Anderson
my favorite
animal is a fox


POINT SAL WITH STATE MARINE
CONSERVATION AREA

UNPROTECTED POINT SAL

Olivia Lopez Avrey Garcia
thank you

thank you for everything

Thank you for everything - thank you

thank you for protecting our ocean

thank you for protecting our environment

Thank you for protecting the Pacific.

Thank you for protecting our wildlife



POINT SAL WITH STATE MARINE
CONSERVATION AREA

UNPROTECTED POINT SAL

Bryce

Jaumin

Thank you for Protect

Thank you for
Protecting the
Pacific

Thank you for
evoting



POINT SAL WITH STATE MARINE
CONSERVATION AREA

NAME: Jordan Bernal

GRADE &

SCHOOL: Fair Lawn Mr Stephenson

Point Sal is important
because they protect
turtles and turtles
are threatened



POINT SAL WITH STATE MARINE
CONSERVATION AREA

NAME: Catia Hernandez

GRADE & 6th

SCHOOL: Fairlawn

I want to save the
sea otters because they
keep the ecosystem
intact



POINT SAL WITH STATE MARINE
CONSERVATION AREA

NAME: Alena

GRADE & 6th

SCHOOL: Fairlawn Mr. Stephenson

Sea otters should be protected because
people kill them for their soft fur which
leads to a risk of extinction.

POINT SAL WITH STATE MARINE
CONSERVATION AREA

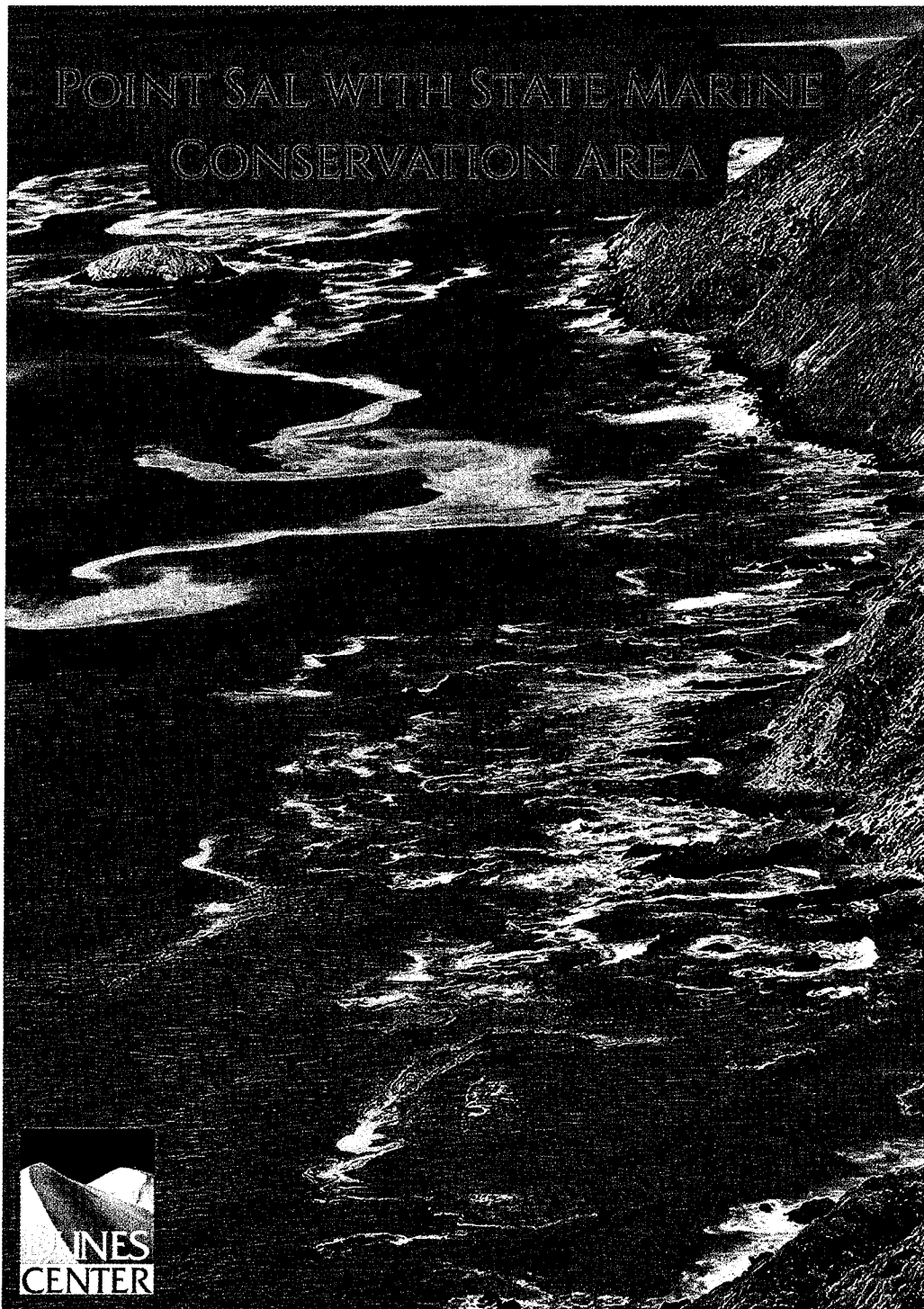
NAME: Nery Lopez

GRADE &

SCHOOL: 6 Grade Stephenson

Bat rays are in
D and plz protect
them





NAME: Amaris Hernandez

GRADE & 6th / Mr. Stephenson

SCHOOL: Fairlawn elementary School

Dear, Dunes Center

I want to save the sea otters
because the people are killing
them for their fur and keeping
them away from their environment.

!!
😊

POINT SAL WITH STATE MARINE
CONSERVATION AREA

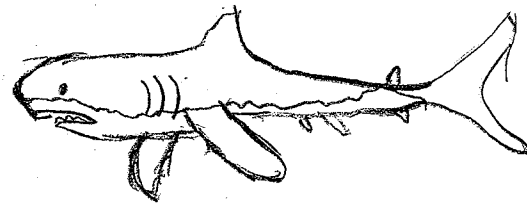
NAME: Brandon castillo mezon

GRADE &

SCHOOL: 6th grade fairlawn stephenson Mr teacher

Plz save this shark

Because I like sharks



POINT SAL WITH STATE MARINE
CONSERVATION AREA

NAME: Jayden m

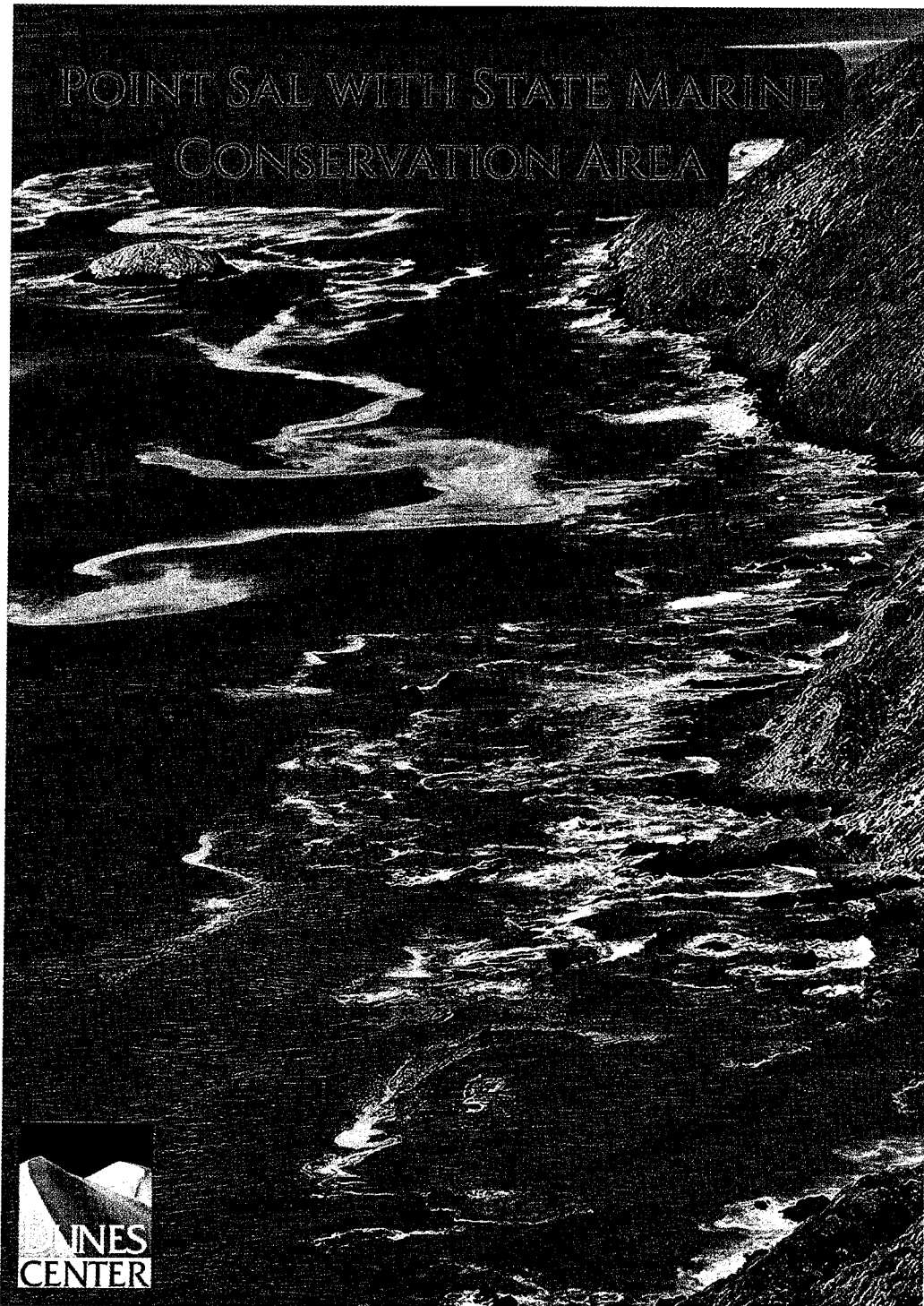
GRADE &

SCHOOL: 6-STEPHENSON - FAIRLAWN

ORCA

Save the ORCAS



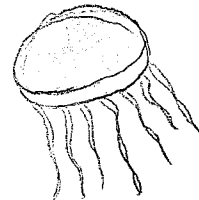
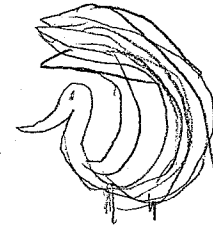
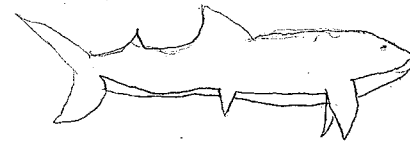


NAME: Dafne Lopez

GRADE &: 4th 6

SCHOOL: MS. Lee

Saf me

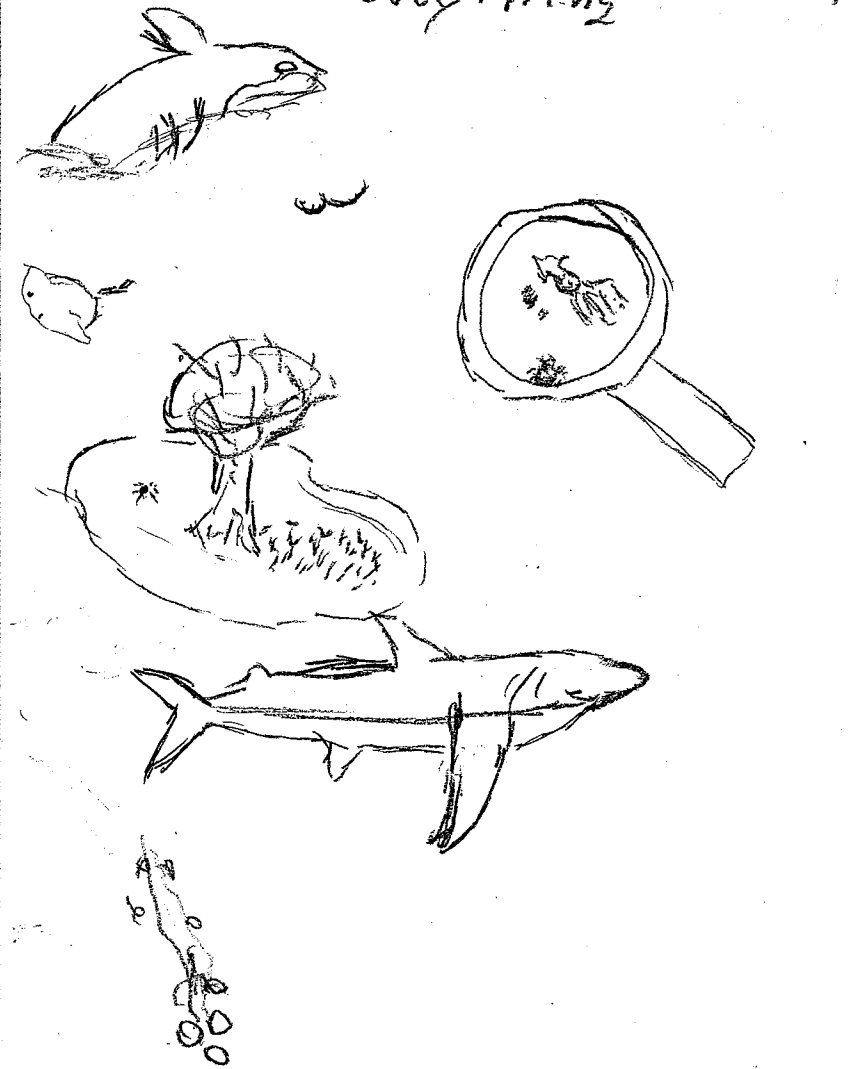




NAME: Reynaldo Ordaz

GRADE &
SCHOOL: 6th grade Fairlawn
ms. Lee

save everything



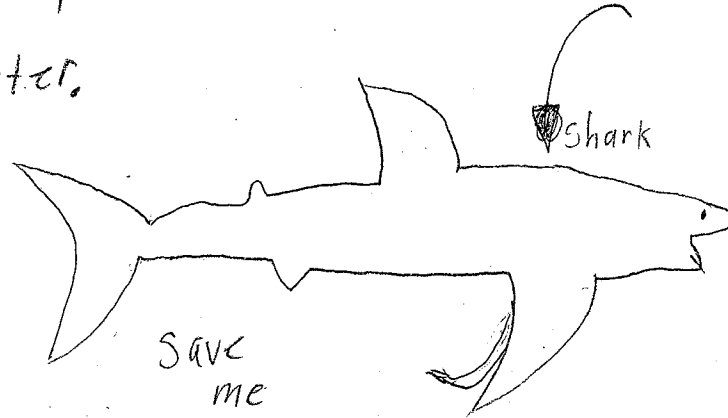


NAME: Krystal

GRADE &

SCHOOL: 6th fairlawn Ms. Lee

Point Sal should be protected
because one day me and my
family want to visit Dunes
Center.



20 April 2026

California Fish and Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Submitted electronically to fgc@fgc.ca.gov

Re: Proposed Changes to California's Marine Protected Area Network

Dear President Sklar and Honorable Commissioners,

We respectfully submit this letter for consideration in the decision making process for the petitions submitted in response to the adaptive management process following the Decadal Review of the California Marine Protected Area (MPA) Network. As marine scientists at the University of California, we are writing to highlight the myriad demonstrated benefits of MPAs documented in the scientific literature that we are confident support maintaining the existing MPA network and provide evidence for the value of expanding protections in California's marine and coastal areas.

MPAs Offer Diverse, Proven Benefits to California's Coast and Ocean

One of the primary benefits of MPAs is **fisheries spillover**. This has been documented in many other ecological contexts (Lynham & Villaseñor-Derbez 2024, Di Lorenzo et al. 2020), but specifically in California has been observed as **a boon to the California commercial and recreational spiny lobster fisheries** (Lenihan et al. 2021, Kay et al. 2012). The recreational fishery has been valued at \$40 million (CDFW 2016) and the commercial fishery is among the top commercial fisheries by ex-vessel value in the state (CDFW 2021). Research has demonstrated that in Southern California, a 35% reduction in fishing area resulting from MPA designation was compensated for by a 225% increase in total lobster catch after 6-years, thus indicating at a local scale that the trade-off of fishing ground for no-fishing zones benefitted the fishery (Lenihan et al. 2021). Analysis of SCUBA diving charter boat data in the Northern Channel Islands demonstrated the significant preference of recreational lobster hunting for the border zones of MPAs (Morse et al. 2024).

Beyond fisheries, there are myriad non-extractive benefits of MPAs in California. The first is **biodiversity and ecosystem health**. To reiterate the findings of science conducted as part of the Decadal Review, Smith et al. (2025) concluded that **MPAs increased fish biomass across the whole California MPA network**. Older MPAs, and those with a greater diversity of habitats, showed the highest amount of fish biomass, especially in fishery-targeted species, like rockfishes. This suggests that the protection from fishing really does help boost these populations' health (Spiecker et al. 2025). Stronger protections also correlated with more pronounced results: MPAs with more stringent protections saw greater gains, as did areas that had previously experienced heavy fishing. Older and larger MPAs also produced more significant results (Ziegler et al. 2024).

Although older MPAs generally realize greater biodiversity benefits, Caselle et al. (2015) evaluated the impacts of the Northern Channel Islands MPAs in the 10 years after their designation in 2003. Here, **biomass of targeted fish species increased significantly inside all MPAs, with a rate approximately four times faster than outside MPAs.**

MPAs provide significant benefits to **recreation and California's marine ecotourism industry.** Marine and coastal ecotourism is one of the largest sectors in the ocean economy, accounting for 50% of all global tourism. In California, marine and coastal tourism contributes approximately \$26 billion in GDP per year (NOAA 2018). Research from our lab analyzed millions of data points on where SCUBA diving charter boats put divers in the water in the Northern Channel Islands and found that these **SCUBA charters significantly prefer visiting MPA dive sites over non-MPA dive sites** (Morse et al. 2024). Dive vessels engaged in ecotourism activities (e.g., wildlife viewing, underwater photography) prefer areas protected inside MPAs, and dive vessels primarily taking clients recreational lobster hunting prefer MPA border zones where the spillover effect is occurring (Lenihan et al. 2021). When asked about their reasons for targeting the MPAs, boat captains cited higher abundance of big fish and marine megafauna like giant sea bass and sheephead, and the health of the kelp forests in these areas.

MPAs offer **ecosystem resilience to environmental perturbations such as ocean warming and marine heat waves.** By removing one source of stress in fishing, this allows ecosystems to have a healthier baseline and increase their likelihood of withstanding or recovering quickly from extreme conditions. Fully protected MPAs significantly enhance kelp forests' resistance to and recovery from marine heatwaves, particularly in Southern California (Kumagai et al. 2024). In this region specifically, this is likely driven by the high densities of urchin predators (lobster and sheephead) inside fully protected MPAs, which keep urchins in check and prevent excessive kelp predation (Caselle et al. 2015). Additionally, Ortiz-Villa et al. (2025) found that California MPA implementation led to a 8.5% increase in kelp coverage compared to reference areas.

MPAs – particularly larger MPAs or well-connected networks of MPAs – can also provide **population resilience by enhancing genetic diversity.** Because fecundity increases with maternal age and size, protecting older, larger individuals in a given population within MPAs contributes to increased overall reproductive output and ensures the necessary supply of recruits to maintain healthy population sizes and genetic diversity (Koeck et al. 2024). Larger population sizes with a broader age distribution, as commonly found in fully and highly protected MPAs, may speed up recovery following disturbance through maintenance of greater demographic and genetic diversity and reproductive output and juvenile recruitment (Baskett & Barnett 2015).

Taken individually, we believe that these benefits of MPAs make a strong case for the value of maintaining the existing network and taking advantage of opportunities to establish new ones. Particularly in the face of climate change, pollution, and coastal development, the combined positive benefits of MPAs will position California's invaluable coastal and marine areas to achieve the resilience necessary to weather these now inevitable stressors.

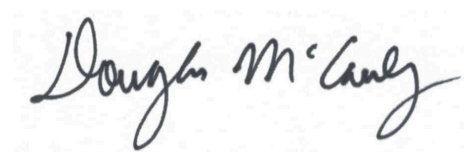
We Support the Mishopshno SMCA and Point Sal SMCA Petitions

We would like to conclude this letter with an endorsement of two of our local petitions: Mishopshno SMCA and Point Sal SMCA. The Mishopshno SMCA would help advance California's Tribal Marine Stewardship goals, increase overall MPA network connectivity, add habitat replicates to the South Coast MPAs, and create a conservation corridor for coastal wildlife that spans from land to sea. Specifically, our lab's research has demonstrated that the proposed area is an important habitat for the North Pacific population of white sharks, and that juvenile white sharks have site loyalty to Carpinteria and specific habitat needs that are present in the Carpinteria waters (McCauley et al. 2024).

The Point Sal SMCA would protect important marine life and habitats, advance the state's goals toward Tribal co-stewardship of California's coastal waters, create an area where both land and sea are conserved, and support local and network-wide resilience to the impacts of climate change and growing ocean threats into the future. As California's coastal waters face the mounting pressures of increased warming and coastal development, a new MPA at Point Sal would protect habitats in the region that are less exposed to local stressors than the closest nearby MPAs (Vandenberg SMR and Point Buchon SMR/SMCA), strengthening the state's MPA network by adding a critical replicate site—an ecological safeguard or "insurance policy"—that enhances resilience and reduces risk across California's broader MPA system.

We thank you for your work to thoughtfully consider the adaptive management of California's MPA Network and appreciate your consideration of the evidence contained in this letter for strengthening the Network.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas McCauley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Douglas" and last name "McCauley" clearly legible.

Douglas McCauley, PhD
Professor, Ecology, Evolution and Marine Biology
Director, Benioff Ocean Science Laboratory
UC Santa Barbara

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Molly Morse". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Molly" and last name "Morse" clearly legible.

Molly Morse, MS
Senior Manager, Benioff Ocean Science Laboratory
UC Santa Barbara

The viewpoints expressed in the preceding letter represent our personal perspectives and do not represent the viewpoints of the UCSB Marine Science Institute, UC Santa Barbara, or the University of California system.

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From: BILL WOODBRIDGE <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Tuesday, April 21, 2026 03:12 PM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Subject: Please support the Pt. Sal Marine Protected Area

This area is exceptionally rich ecologically and supports diverse ocean wildlife and habitats, including kelp beds, rocky reefs, tide pools, sandy beaches, a migratory whale corridor, a critical larval retention zone, and a seabird and sea lion rookery.

It is an ancestral Chumash territory. Designating this MPA would honor and strengthen Chumash stewardship of their ancestral waters, and elevate historical and present-day Chuash connections to the region.

I implore you add this MPA to help close the missing links to other MPAs.

Thank you!

Bill Woodbridge

Santa Barbara



Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association

1237 S. Victoria Ave #284
Oxnard, CA 93035
(805) 663-2152
venturacountyfishermen@gmail.com

21st April, 2026

California Fish and Game Commission

P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Subject: **Opposition to Petition 2023-28MPA – Point Sal SMCA**

Dear California Fish and Game Commission,

My name is Dave Colker, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association (VCCFA). Through my role with VCCFA, I represent a growing network of commercial fishermen, industry partners, and stakeholders who are directly connected to and dependent upon access to California's coastal resources.

Our association has been actively engaged throughout the Marine Protected Area (MPA) petition process, carefully reviewing proposals, participating in meetings, and working to ensure that the voices of the commercial fishing community are heard and considered. We are committed to responsible ocean stewardship, sustainable fisheries, and collaborative management approaches that are grounded in sound science, practical application, and a full understanding of both ecological and socioeconomic impacts.

On behalf of the Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association (VCCFA), I respectfully submit comments regarding Petition 2023-28MPA proposing a new State Marine Conservation Area at Point Sal.

While we recognize the ecological value of the Point Sal region, our concerns center on the **lack of a comprehensive socioeconomic analysis** and the failure to evaluate **regional impacts—particularly effort displacement—across the Morro Bay to Los Angeles fishing corridor**.

The petition concludes that economic impacts would be minimal based on the relatively small percentage of reported landings within the affected fishing blocks. However, this conclusion does not reflect how fisheries operate in reality along the Central and Southern California coast.

Fishermen operating out of **Morro Bay, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Channel Islands Harbor, and Los Angeles/Long Beach** rely on access to a network of fishing grounds that shift seasonally, environmentally, and economically. Areas like Point Sal are not isolated—they are part of a broader working system that allows fishermen to distribute effort, manage risk, and maintain viable operations.

When access to one area is removed, fishing effort does not disappear—it is **redistributed**.

This petition does not adequately analyze what happens when that effort is displaced into surrounding open areas, including:

- Waters off **Point Conception and Santa Barbara Channel**
- Fishing grounds off **Ventura and the Northern Channel Islands**
- Already constrained areas accessible to fleets working out of **Los Angeles and Long Beach**

The result of this displacement is predictable and already observed in other regions:

- Increased competition in remaining open areas
- Crowding of productive fishing grounds
- Gear conflicts between fishermen
- Reduced catch efficiency and increased operating costs
- Greater pressure on fish stocks in open-access areas

These are not theoretical impacts—they are **direct socioeconomic consequences** that affect the viability of commercial fishing businesses and the communities that depend on them.

Additionally, the petition acknowledges that recreational fishing data was not available at the time of submission . This highlights that the socioeconomic analysis is incomplete. Recreational and commercial fisheries both contribute to pressure on open areas, and without a full accounting, the Commission is not being provided with a complete picture of cumulative impacts.

The economic analysis presented is also insufficient. By focusing narrowly on reported landings within the proposed footprint, the petition fails to account for:

- The economic role of **mobility and access** in fishing operations
- The dependence of fishermen on **alternative grounds when conditions change**
- The broader economic ripple effects on **processors, suppliers, fuel docks, and working waterfronts** from Morro Bay through Los Angeles

In short, the analysis does not capture the **regional economic system** that this closure would affect.

While the petition emphasizes ecological benefits within the proposed boundaries, it does not adequately consider the **trade-offs outside those boundaries**, where displaced fishing pressure will concentrate. This imbalance is a critical omission.

For these reasons, VCCFA urges the Commission to proceed with caution. At a minimum, we recommend:

1. A full regional socioeconomic analysis from **Morro Bay to Los Angeles**, including fleet behavior and mobility
2. A detailed evaluation of **effort displacement and its impacts on open areas**
3. Inclusion of **complete recreational fishing data** before any determination is made
4. A broader economic impact assessment that reflects the **true operational realities of California's commercial fisheries**

We appreciate the Commission's work in navigating these complex petitions and respectfully

request that these critical gaps be addressed to ensure balanced, informed decision-making.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Colker', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dave Colker
Executive Director
Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association (VCCFA)

From: Rick Duenas <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2026 09:56 AM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Subject: Public comment: May 5-6, 2026: Central Region Petitions

Dear President Sklar and Members of the Commission,

My name is Rick Duenas and I am a recreational angler and diver in Northern California who often recreates on the central coast. I am writing regarding the MPA petitions for San Luis Obispo through Santa Barbara County including the Northern Channel Islands. I urge you to deny most of these petitions or encourage petitioners to carve out recreational access as noted below.

2023-28: **Deny.** The remoteness and aspect of this location serve as refuge as it is fishable only in calmer weather patterns already. Also, this location is already inside the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary and therefore already counted in 30x30. I would prefer that any new MPAs contribute to increasing the 30x30 percentage.

2023-29: **Deny or revise.** This area provides important near-shore access for divers and small-craft anglers. I would like to see spearfishing, spiny lobster, and boat-based hook-and-line finfish take allowance. From the Tribal Committee Meeting, it was not clear to me what cultural activities would be supported by this MPA that are not already allowed. I recognize the importance of protecting submerged ancestral sites, so I would prefer that restrictions be tailored to barring the use of destructive bottom gear or anchoring instead of restricting lower impact gear types.

2023-19: **Accept with revision.** I appreciate that the petitioner allowed for the take of finfish as the location is one of the better areas for salmon and halibut trolling in the region. However, this area is also important to the commercial sector, particularly for market squid, so I would like to see commercial access with low impact gear preserved as well.

2023-20: **Accept** as clarified in Tribal Committee Meeting. I appreciate the petitioner not changing general public fishing access to salmon and albacore while allowing for tribal take and co-management.

2023-34: **Deny.** I support CDFW's recommendation. I appreciate allowance for low impact pelagic take wherever possible.

2023-33: **Deny.** I support CDFW's recommendation. The proposed actions would severely limit in-shore recreation access.

2023-18: **Deny.** I support CDFW's recommendation. I appreciate opportunities for more access but I am okay with the status quo and do not wish to trade access elsewhere in the network in order to balance this change.

2023-27: **Deny.** I dive Anacapa every fall and the amended 0-30m proposal seemed like one of the more reasonable and targeted petitions but I support CDFW's recommendation.

2023-14: **Deny.** I support CDFW's recommendation. I believe that these reserves should serve as control treatment groups relative to urchin barren mitigation being done outside of reserves.

2023-15: **Deny.** I support CDFW's recommendation. I appreciate opportunities for more access but I am okay with the status quo and do not wish to trade access elsewhere in the network in order to balance this change.

In short, please consider denying or requesting revision to the vast majority of the central region bin-2 petitions. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Rick Duenas



April 22, 2026

Eric Sklar, President
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for designating a new State Marine Conservation Area at Point Sal (Petition 2023-28MPA)

Dear President Sklar and Honorable Commissioners:

The undersigned organizations write to express our strong support for designating a new Tribally co-managed State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) protecting the waters around Point Sal. This designation would protect important marine life and habitats, advance the state's goals toward Tribal co-stewardship of California's coastal waters, create an area where both land and sea are conserved, and support local and network-wide resilience to the impacts of climate change and growing ocean threats into the future.

Point Sal is an ecologically rich headland along the Santa Barbara County coastline that supports a diversity of ocean life. Its waters contain kelp forests, tidepools, soft and hard bottom habitat, sandy beaches, and supports iconic marine mammals such as humpback whales, gray whales, sea otters, sea lions, and elephant seals. A small islet off the point called Lion Rock provides important habitat for seabird nesting, roosting, and foraging as well as an important marine mammal haul out area. Point Sal holds historical and cultural significance for Chumash people, who have inhabited this area and lived in close connection with its lands and waters for millennia. Historical villages called Atajes and Lopse were located nearby, and abundant evidence of Chumash inhabitation has been found on the point itself.

California's coastal waters are facing mounting pressures, such as warming waters, increasingly frequent marine heatwaves, and the potential expansion of industrial uses like offshore oil and gas drilling, offshore wind energy, coastal desalination, and aquaculture. The two nearest MPAs to the Point Sal proposal—Vandenberg State Marine Reserve (SMR), located 17 km to the south of this proposed area, and the Point Buchon SMR/SMCA complex, located 50 km to the north—are both sited near potential future offshore wind development projects, and may experience adverse impacts related to the development of industrialized renewable energy projects in the coming decade. In addition, the Point Buchon SMR/SMCA complex is located just north of the Diablo Canyon Power Plant, which still uses seawater for its once-through cooling process, estimated to kill roughly 1.5 billion marine organisms in early life stages each year. A new MPA at Point Sal would protect comparable habitats in the region that are less exposed to local stressors, strengthening the state's marine protected area (MPA) network by adding a critical replicate site—an ecological safeguard or "insurance policy"—that enhances resilience and reduces risk across California's broader MPA system.

In addition, Point Sal is a beloved wild space for local community members and visitors alike – many of whom hike the 11-mile round-trip trail to the point and its beaches to gaze upon panoramic vistas, experience land and sea in its natural state, and fish from its undeveloped shores. Safeguarding Point Sal's relatively undisturbed waters now will help bolster ocean health in the face of impacts, promoting ecological resilience into the future while still supporting important recreational, cultural, and subsistence uses.

The designation of a new MPA at this site could also bring additional educational, outreach, and research opportunities to local Tribal members and nearby disadvantaged communities of Guadalupe, Santa Maria, and Lompoc¹ via the state's MPA Management Program. Importantly, the MPA Management Program's activities are supported by funds generated by the Ocean Protection Council's Once-Through Cooling Interim Mitigation Program, which collects mitigation payments from California power plants not compliant with state standards—including the nearby Diablo Canyon plant.² A new SMCA at Point Sal would offer a powerful opportunity to reinvest mitigation funds into the local communities and marine ecosystems most affected by the ecological impacts of nearby coastal power plant operations.

¹ As defined by CA Senate Bill 535. OEHHA, "CalEnviroScreen 4.0," Text, CA.Gov, September 20, 2021, <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-40>; OEHHA, "Final Designation of Disadvantaged Communities Pursuant to Senate Bill 535" (CalEPA, May 2022).

² <https://opc.ca.gov/once-through-cooling-interim-mitigation-program/>

Finally, coastal marine ecosystems are influenced by both ocean- and land-based activities. This proposal presents a unique possibility for the state to advance a holistic, ridge-to-reef, seascape-level approach to conservation. The majority of the lands directly adjacent to the proposed SMCA are protected by Santa Barbara County, the Bureau of Land Management, and California State Parks, thanks to extensive, community-led, terrestrial conservation efforts that took place over the past two decades. If designated, this SMCA would be free of negative impacts from incompatible land-use changes and pollution from upstream sources. Protected waves would crash upon protected shores.

We deeply appreciate the Commission's continued efforts to promote and champion the conservation of California's precious marine resources. Accepting this petition will promote a thriving and healthy ocean, protect important marine habitat, enhance ecosystem-level resilience, and advance Tribal co-stewardship of California's coastal waters. We respectfully urge the Commission to pursue ambitious ocean conservation actions like this petition as this process moves forward. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Azul

California Coastal Protection Network

California Environmental Voters

California Marine Sanctuary Foundation

California Native Plant Society Alta Peak Chapter

CleanEarth4Kids.org

Center for Biological Diversity

Defenders of Wildlife

Endangered Habitats League

Environment California Research and Policy Center

Environmental Center of San Diego

Environmental Defense Center

EPIC (Environmental Protection Information Center)

FishOn

Guadalupe Dunes Center

Heal the Ocean

Hispanic Access Foundation

Inland Ocean Coalition

Latino Outdoors

LIFT Economy

Marine Conservation Institute

Monterey Waterkeeper

Morongo Basin Conservation Association

National Ocean Protection Coalition

National Parks Conservation Association

Native Coast Action Network

Ocean Defense Initiative

Patagonia

Point Blue Conservation

Salted Roots

SBCAN

SeaChange Scientific Consulting, LLC

Sierra Club California

Sierra Club Santa Barbara-Ventura Chapter

Sierra Club Santa Lucia Chapter

The Ocean Project

The Wilderness Society

Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation Natural Resources Dept.

Tuleyome

Turtle Island Restoration Network

Western Watersheds Project

WILDCOAST