

Staff Summary for August 12-13, 2026

9B. Marine Resources Committee (MRC)**Today's Item****Information** ☐**Action** ☒

Receive summary and consider approving recommendations from the July 16, 2026 committee meeting. Discuss referred topics and consider revisions to topics and timing.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

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|--|---------------------------|
| • Previous MRC meeting | July 16, 2026; MRC |
| • Today, consider MRC recommendations | August 12-13, 2026 |
| • Next MRC meeting | November 12, 2026; MRC |

Background

MRC works under Commission direction to set and carry out its work plan (Exhibit 1). Today, the Commission will receive a report on the most recent MRC meeting and recommendations, and is asked to provide direction on any referred topics or revisions to MRC topics and timing.

Previous Committee Meeting

MRC met on July 16 via teleconference, with options for the public to participate in person in Sacramento and La Jolla. Meeting minutes (video) are posted on the [Commission's YouTube channel](#) and a link is also available on the Commission's website (fgc.ca.gov/Meetings/2026). Detailed overviews, exhibits, and presentations are available in the [MRC meeting materials](#); an abbreviated summary is included in this document.

White Seabass Fishery Management Review

The Department recommended increasing the size limit for recreational take of white seabass from 28 to 35 inches as an interim management measure based on updated maturity data, and presented alternative options requested by industry. Discussion centered on environmental justice concerns, outreach needs, and balancing biological considerations with recreational access. MRC developed a recommendation to support the Department-proposed size limit.

Recreational Gear Restrictions for White Shark

The Department reviewed the emergency recreational gear restrictions for white shark adopted by the Commission in June, and implications for anglers targeting other shark species. Discussion emphasized improving outreach to shore-based fishing groups and the broader community, concerns about biological impacts of gear restrictions, enforcement needs, and better data on shark hotspots.

MRC recommended scheduling readoption of the emergency regulations without modification and asked that the Department return in November 2026 to discuss whether a regular rulemaking should be initiated and, if so, which measures to incorporate.

Commercial Spiny Lobster Fishery

MRC received public input on a potential commercial lobster tailing option proposed in Regulation Change Petition 2026-02. The Department summarized previous tailing exploration,

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including outreach, enforcement considerations, analysis, and updated fleet feedback from a petitioner-developed survey. The petitioner cited both tariff-driven instability in international markets for whole California lobster and more frequent domoic acid outbreaks as limiting factors in whole-lobster sales; the ability to tail lobster could allow local marketing and continued sales, similar to approaches used in the Dungeness crab fishery.

Discussion focused on expanding local tail market options, enforcement challenges, and reducing reliance on imported tails. Some participants raised interest in tribal access to commercial fishing permits.

MRC requested that the Department continue exploring the tailing option with fishermen and buyers; staff identified March 2027 for follow-up discussion.

Commercial Coonstripe Shrimp Fishery Management

The Department outlined longer-term options to further reduce whale entanglement risk, including gear modifications, reducing co-occurrence with whales, in-season response tools, and improved entanglement identification. Discussion focused on potential in-season authority for Department director action, feasibility of mandatory pop-up gear, and regional differences in the fishery, with fishermen emphasizing practical gear challenges with pop-up gear in the northern fishery. Environmental organization representatives agreed that mandatory pop-up gear is a priority for the southern fishery and emphasized the need for additional risk-reduction measures in both management areas.

MRC supported the Department's recommended focus on developing three core management measures, conducting outreach through summer and fall 2026, and returning to MRC in November 2026 with potential final recommendations.

Kelp Restoration and Management Plan (KRMP) Development

The Department presented an update on recent KRMP development progress, including scientific advisory committee guidance, community working group recommendations, tribal engagement, and a project timeline, and shared a report on the Tanker Reef urchin-culling project. Discussion highlighted differing interpretations regarding kelp recovery at Tanker Reef, the role of community-driven urchin removal, and the need to incorporate MPA considerations and broad community engagement. MRC supported reviewing a draft KRMP framework at the November MRC meeting prior to advancing the draft plan for peer review.

Committee Work Plan

The updated MRC work plan (Exhibit 1) removes three completed topics that moved from MRC to the Commission (*Recreational Use of Handheld Harpoons and Flying Gaffs*; *Methods of Determining Recreational Legal Size*; and *State Aquaculture Action Plan*) and adds *KRMP Development* for discussion in November 2026, per MRC's request.

To address workload concerns for the November MRC meeting, the Department recommends shifting two discussion topics to March 2027: *Recreational Take of Pismo Clam (Petition 2025-14)* and *Nearshore Groundfish Management Process*.

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MRC Recommendations

There are four MRC recommendations for Commission consideration today:

1. *White Seabass Recreational Fishery Regulations*

Advance to rulemaking the proposed increase in the recreational white seabass size limit to 35 inches, as recommended by the Department, and schedule the public notice hearing for October 2026.

2. *Recreational Gear Restrictions for White Shark*

Schedule readoption of the emergency white shark regulations for October 2026 with the same emergency measures, and request that the Department return to the November 2026 MRC meeting with an update, recommendation regarding any need for a regular rulemaking, and, if so, which revised measures to incorporate.

3. *Commercial Coonstripe Shrimp Fishery Management*

Request that the Department: (1) focus on three core management measures — develop a gear endorsement tied to the control date, transition to pop-up fishing gear (especially in the southern fishery), and establish Department director authority for in-season action — for further discussion and exploration in a rulemaking; (2) conduct outreach during the summer and fall of 2026 with the fleet and other stakeholders; and (3) bring a final recommendation for discussion and potential MRC recommendation in November 2026.

4. *Work Plan Updates*

Schedule *KRMP Development* discussion for November 2026 and *Commercial Lobster Tailing (Petition 2026-02)* discussion for March 2027. Approve rescheduling select November topics (*Recreational Take of Pismo Clam* and *Nearshore Groundfish Management Process*) to March 2027 as recommended by staff and the Department.

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

Commission staff: Approve the MRC recommendations and proposed changes to the MRC work plan recommended by the Department.

Department: Delay discussion of *Recreational Take of Pismo Clam (Petition 2025-14)* and *Nearshore Groundfish Management Process* from November 2026 to March 2027.

Exhibits

1. [MRC work plan](#), updated August 3, 2026

Motion

Moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that the Commission approves the recommendations from the July 2026 Marine Resources Committee meeting and approves the changes to the work plan as proposed in Exhibit 1.

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

Updated August 3, 2026

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

Topics	Category	Jul 2026	Nov 2026	Mar 2027
Planning Documents, Fishery Management Plans (FMP)				
MLMA Master Plan for Fisheries – Implementation Updates	Plan Implementation			
Red Abalone Restoration Plan (statewide) Development	Restoration Plan			
CA Halibut Review – Bycatch Evaluation for Trawl Gear	Management Review		X	
Kelp Restoration and Management Plan (KRMP) Development	Restoration/ Management Plan	X	<u>X</u>	
White Seabass Fishery Management Review	Management Review	X/R		
Regulations				
Commercial Coonstripe Shrimp Fishery Management, Phase 2	Commercial Take	X	X/R	
<u>Recreational Use of Hand-Held Harpoons and Flying Gaffs to Assist Anglers with Landing Tuna</u>	<u>Recreational Take</u>			
<u>Method of Determining Recreational Legal Size</u>	<u>Recreational Take</u>			
Recreational Take of Pismo Clam (Petition 2025-14; granted for further consideration)	Recreational Take		X	<u>X</u>
Tidal Invertebrates Regulations	Recreational Take		*	
Commercial Lobster Tailing (Petition 2026-02; referred to MRC)	Commercial Take	X		<u>X</u>
Marine Aquaculture and State Water Bottom Leases				
<u>Statewide Aquaculture Action Plan</u>	<u>Planning Document</u>	X		
Status of Existing Leases and Leaseholder Requests	Current Leases	X		
Applications for New Leases - San Andreas Shellfish Company (Tomaes Bay)	Lease Applications			
Lease Best Management Practices Plans (Hold, TBD)	Leases – Regulatory	X/R		
Special Projects, Informational Topics, and Emerging Management Issues				
Coastal Fishing Communities Project	MRC Project		X/R	
Kelp Restoration and Recovery Tracking	Kelp			
Barred Sand Bass Working Group	Informal Advisory Body			
Nearshore Groundfish Management Process	State/Federal Fisheries		X	<u>X</u>
Experimental Fishing Permit (EFP) Program				
Box Crab Exploratory Fishing EFP – Project Outcomes	EFP		X	
Pop-Up Gear in State-Managed Fisheries EFP	EFP			

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