Committee Staff Summary for November 12, 2026 MRC

3. Coastal Fishing Communities Project

Today's Item **Information ☐** **Action ☒**

Receive and discuss a staff update on advancing the coastal fishing communities project objectives and recommendations, and pathways to implement the Commission's Coastal Fishing Communities Policy, including collaboration with the California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) on its drafting of a climate-ready fisheries strategy; and potential committee recommendation.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

• Topic referred to MRC; Commission hosted coastal fishing community meetings; MRC reviewed staff synthesis and recommendations	2015-2020
• Commission approved MRC recommendation to develop a Coastal Fishing Communities (CFC) Policy	April 2021
• CFC Policy development	2021-2023
• Commission adopted the CFC Policy	February 2024
• MRC received implementation updates and community input	2024-2025; MRC
• MRC reviewed potential areas for advancing CFC Policy implementation and requested staff options	November 6, 2025; MRC
• **Today, receive staff update on implementation options and project priorities, including coordination with OPC climate-ready fisheries efforts**	**November 12, 2026; MRC**

Background

The CFC Project was initiated through regional community meetings beginning in 2016, and culminated in a document, "Staff Synthesis Report on California Coastal Fishing Communities Meetings, 2016-2018." The report synthesized the key themes, concerns, and priorities raised by fishing communities across the California coast and identified ten staff recommendations (SRs; Exhibit 1) for Commission consideration to help address those needs and support the long-term vitality and resilience of California's fishing communities.

Following deeper review and analysis of the recommendations in 2020 and 2021 the Commission prioritized development of SR 1, "Develop a policy and definition for coastal fishing communities," as the highest priority for advancing future efforts, which staff pursued through extensive engagement with regional fishing community members and organizations, and other interested stakeholders.

The Commission Coastal Fishing Communities Policy was adopted in February 2024, establishing a framework for considering the potential effects of Commission actions and decisions on California's fishing communities and guiding future consideration of the remaining SRs. Since adoption of the policy, MRC has continued to discuss issues affecting coastal fishing communities and potential pathways for implementing policy strategies. For additional background on the CFC Project, including its development, community engagement process,

SRs, policy adoption, and implementation approaches, see the Commission's CFC Project Story Map.

In July 2025, MRC requested that staff assess the SRs in the context of the adopted policy and recommend priority opportunities where Commission action could meaningfully advance policy implementation.

November 2025 MRC Meeting

Consistent with MRC's request, in November 2025 Commission staff presented a review of the ten SRs and summarized progress made to date. The review was prompted by renewed interest from MRC and the Commission in identifying priority areas for future action following adoption of the CFC Policy. For additional background and progress highlighted during last year's meeting, see the staff summary and staff presentation.

Public and committee discussion highlighted several topics of continued importance to coastal fishing communities and emphasized the need to identify practical pathways for implementing priority SRs. MRC expressed interest in receiving more specific options and associated resource considerations. Accordingly, MRC recommended and the Commission subsequently directed staff to develop implementation options and associated resource considerations for priority SRs; today's reporting responds to that direction.

Implementation Considerations

Since November 2025, staff have evaluated potential pathways for selecting and advancing priority SRs and assessed the anticipated benefits, staffing needs, and other resource requirements associated with different implementation approaches. Staff found that multiple SRs remain relevant and continue to reflect priorities commonly raised by fishing communities and stakeholders.

The Commission and its staff's ability to undertake substantial new implementation efforts beyond existing identified priorities has been constrained by resource limitations. As a result, staff focused on identifying opportunities to advance SRs through existing partnerships, ongoing initiatives, and related efforts already underway.

Notable Updates

Over the past year, several internal and external efforts have supported application of the CFC Policy in Commission activities, continued to advance the CFC Project SRs, and aided in staff's considerations for priority SRs. Notable updates include the first formal application of the CFC Policy to a suite of Commission decisions, OPC investments to help advance project SRs, collaborating with OPC in developing a climate-ready fisheries strategy, and staff's review of the draft strategy elements and their relationship to the CFC Project SRs.

- *First Formal Application of the CFC Policy to Commission Decision-Making*

  Further advancing SR 1 (CFC Policy), staff conducted the first formal effort to incorporate the CFC Policy into Commission decision-making through review of marine protected area (MPA) petitions and consideration of how the policy may conceptually inform MPA petition decisions (found in responses to question 17 of the MPA Petition Evaluation Framework,

which were integrated into individual Department petition evaluations and the evaluations companion document). The analysis focused on whether proposed actions could increase, decrease, or have no direct effect on commercial and recreational fishing opportunities, as well as identifying coastal fishing communities located near the affected area.

This pilot effort highlighted a number of implementation challenges and areas requiring additional clarification, including approaches for identifying potentially affected fishing communities, assessing impacts on fishing opportunities, and determining how CFC Policy considerations may be incorporated into Commission decisions. These lessons will help inform future applications of the policy, potential implementation actions, and development of a more consistent framework for incorporating the CFC Policy into Commission decision-making.

- *OPC Strategic Plan Investments Advancing SRs*

  OPC's 2026–2030 Strategic Plan, adopted in December 2025, continues to prioritize support for coastal fishing communities through an objective of supporting thriving fishing communities, climate-resilient fisheries, and sustainable aquaculture. During 2026, OPC has funded several projects that align with the CFC Project SRs. For example:

  - In alignment with SR 7 (explore filling data needs through collaborative research and data collection), OPC authorized $295,000 for the University of California Davis to test gear modifications and evaluate bycatch in the California halibut fishery.
  - In support of SR 9 (explore a model of fishing community sustainability plans, OPC provided support to the Monterey Bay Fisheries Trust to develop a community-informed working waterfront sustainability plan for Moss Landing Harbor, including actionable recommendations to guide future feasibility studies, funding opportunities, and implementation efforts.

- *Development of OPC's Draft Climate-Ready Fisheries Strategy*

  Collaboration with OPC in developing a draft climate-ready fisheries strategy (Strategy) has been the most significant area of progress since the Commission adopted the CFC Policy and is the primary focus of today's agenda item. For over a year, staff has coordinated closely with OPC and the Department on development of a draft Strategy, which identifies priority funding needs and coordinated interagency actions to improve the climate-readiness of California's fisheries and associated communities. There are four priorities currently identified in the draft Strategy:

  1. Manage for Increased Ecological and Stock Resilience
  2. Build Socioeconomic Resilience
  3. Expand Implementation of Adaptive Management
  4. Modernize and Improve Data Systems

  The draft Strategy is expected to include goals and actions nested under each priority that are intended to guide coordinated efforts among state agencies and partners over the next five years. OPC has played an important role in bringing together shared priorities across

agencies within a broader climate resilience framework. OPC plans to release the draft Strategy for public review in December 2026.

- *Staff Review of the Strategy and its Relationship with CFC Project Staff Recommendations*

  Staff worked with OPC and the Department during development of the draft Strategy to help align proposed priorities and actions with the CFC Policy, SRs, and fisheries management priorities, including implementation priorities identified through the Marine Life Management Act Master Plan for Fisheries.

  Staff's assessment found substantial alignment between several SRs and draft Strategy priorities (Exhibit 2), creating opportunities to advance shared objectives through coordinated implementation efforts, existing partnerships, and future funding. These opportunities appear to represent the most practical near-term pathways for advancing several priority SRs.

For Today's Discussion

Staff compared the draft elements of OPC's climate-ready fisheries strategy with the CFC Policy and other nine SRs to identify areas of alignment and determine which recommendations are best positioned for advancement through future Strategy implementation. As detailed in Exhibit 2, staff recommendations are grouped into one of three categories:

- *Directly Advanced*
- *Potential Support for Future Implementation*
- *Not Specifically Identified*

By leveraging the collaborative framework established through the draft Strategy, the Commission can build upon ongoing efforts where significant overlap already exists, while continuing to monitor opportunities that may support other SRs over time.

To support today's discussion, OPC staff will present a high-level overview of the draft climate-ready fisheries strategy (Exhibit 3) — including the four specific priorities that drive the proposed goals and actions — and upcoming public review process (anticipated to begin in December). Commission staff will provide a presentation (Exhibit 4) on opportunities to advance implementation of the CFC Policy and priority SRs through areas of alignment identified in the draft Strategy and detailed in Exhibit 2, to support discussion, MRC feedback, and potential MRC recommendation on next steps.

Significant Public Comments (N/A)

Recommendation

Commission staff: Direct staff to continue engaging and collaborating with OPC, the Department, and other partners throughout development of a climate-ready fisheries strategy; track the strategy's refinement through the review process and how tribal, stakeholder and public input are reflected in the final version; evaluate the final strategy for alignment with the Commission's Coastal Fishing Communities Policy and associated staff recommendations; and

report back on opportunities to harmonize implementation efforts, advance shared objectives, and inform future planning related to Coastal Fishing Communities Project priorities.

Exhibits

1. California CFC Project staff recommendations, excerpted from 2019 synthesis report
2. "Coastal Fishing Communities Project: Initial Assessment of Opportunities to Advance Staff Recommendations Through a Climate-Ready Fisheries Strategy," dated November 6, 2026
3. OPC presentation
4. Staff presentation (*to be posted separately*)

Committee Direction/Recommendation

The Marine Resources Committee recommends that the Commission direct staff to continue engaging during the public review process for the draft climate-ready fisheries strategy and monitor the Strategy's development and refinement, evaluate the final Strategy for alignment with the Commission's Coastal Fishing Communities Policy and staff recommendations, and report back on the potential scale of synergy and opportunities for coordinated implementation between the two efforts.

California Fish and Game Commission Marine Resources Committee
California Coastal Fishing Communities Project Staff Recommendations

The ten recommendations in this document are excerpted from *Staff Synthesis Report on California Coastal Fishing Communities Meetings, 2016 – 2018*, pages 10-12, as prepared by California Fish and Game Commission staff in 2019. This document is intended only as a quick-reference guide for public discussions about the recommendations under consideration by the Commission's Marine Resources Committee.

1. Develop and adopt a policy and definition for coastal fishing communities.

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

2. Review the Commission's policy on restricted access commercial fisheries.

Restricted access programs and the Commission's policy were cited by many community members as contributing barriers to entry and adapting fishing strategies and targets as local changes arise, including those associated with climate dynamics. Other community members defended current restricted access programs as effective management that has improved the resource, the economic viability of fishing, or both. The Commission could conduct a review of how the policy has been applied since it was adopted in 1999, to examine where it was or wasn't applied to specific fisheries, how the policy performed at meeting the fishery objectives, identifying any unintended consequences for fishing communities, and whether any objectives have changed that warrant possible adjustments to the policy. This complex policy includes 21 individual sub-policies across 9 unique topic areas.

3. Approve specific, small-scale projects to test and evaluate proposed new approaches.

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

4. Engage legislative staff to pursue adjustments to laws as ideas are refined, if warranted to support fishing community adaptability.

Recognizing that some possible actions may be outside of Commission authority to accomplish, direct staff to seek to partner with stakeholders, the Department, and non-governmental organizations to find appropriate issues and means of engaging with legislative staff.

5. Direct staff to increase engagement and coordination with sister agencies, when feasible, on management decisions affecting California coastal communities.

Commission-related actions in isolation cannot meet all needs of coastal fishing communities, and

decisions made by different coastal management authorities can have a combined influence on the health of a coastal community. Community members have requested deeper Commission engagement with coastal management agencies to urge them to consider potential impacts to California's coastal fishing communities from their decision-making. Sister agencies that fishing community members emphasized include the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) related to west coast federal fisheries management decisions, and the California Coastal Commission, related to coastal development permit approvals to facilitate awareness and coordination on relevant topics and/or projects.

6. Explore pathways for authorizing community-based adaptable fishery structures (e.g., community permit banks or risk pools).

Explore options for community-organized structures that provide for adaptable responses within the community and could include co-management responsibilities. Consult with partner organizations and possibly convene an experts' workshop. This recommendation may require legislative or regulatory frameworks to accommodate such avenues. An example of such a structure that could be used as a model is the Monterey Fisheries Trust.

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

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

8. Survey communities, commercial and recreational fishers, and processors about their priorities for Commission focus.

This strategy could help refine understanding about the issues facing coastal fishing communities and their priorities. Some stakeholders have criticized this idea as being too similar to this coastal fishing communities project.

9. Explore a model of "fishing community sustainability plans" (CSPs) and possible development of a state fisheries-based module to add to existing CSPs.

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

10. Continue to develop an understanding of climate change impacts on fisheries and fishing communities.

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

California Fish and Game Commission
Marine Resources Committee

Coastal Fishing Communities Project: Initial Staff Assessment of Opportunities to Advance Staff Recommendations Through a Climate-Ready Fisheries Strategy

November 7, 2026

Background

The Coastal Fishing Communities (CFC) Project is a California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) initiative pursued through the Commission's Marine Resources Committee (MRC). The project originated with a series of regional community meetings conducted between 2016 and 2018 to explore the concerns, priorities, and needs of fishing communities, particularly as fisheries resources and fishing opportunities were affected by changing climate and ocean conditions.

Through extensive public engagement, the meetings informed development of ten staff recommendations (SRs) that reflected community priorities and identified potential areas for Commission action, as summarized in the document "Staff Synthesis Report on California Coastal Fishing Communities Meetings, 2016-2018." Since adoption of the Coastal Fishing Communities Policy in 2024, staff have continued to explore and engage in opportunities to advance the policy's strategies and evaluate pathways for implementing the remaining SRs. Although these efforts have often occurred through collaboration with partner agencies and organizations, over several years they have cumulatively contributed to and supported initiatives that advance shared priorities for California's coastal fishing communities, including development of the California Ocean Protection Council's (OPC's) Climate Ready Fisheries Strategy.

Overview

This initial assessment identifies opportunities to advance CFC Project SRs through alignment with a climate-ready fisheries strategy (Strategy). The Strategy is being developed through a collaborative interagency process under the leadership of California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) staff and will include priorities, goals, and actions intended to strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity of coastal fishing communities and fishery participants. The four priorities currently identified in the draft Strategy are:

1. Manage for Increased Ecological and Stock Resilience
2. Build Socioeconomic Resilience
3. Expand Implementation of Adaptive Management
4. Modernize and Improve Data Systems

Staff's assessment summarizes the relationship between the draft Strategy and each of the SRs by identifying areas of alignment across the draft Strategy's priorities considering potential goals and proposed actions that will be released next month for public review. Table 1 highlights the relative degree to which each SR aligns with the draft Strategy's four defined priorities, while the accompanying discussion provides additional context on opportunities for

advancing the SRs, highlights potential limitations, and offers considerations for future implementation. The initial assessment indicates that several SRs are already being advanced through development of the Strategy itself and may benefit from future interagency coordination, implementation efforts, funding opportunities, and partnership-based approaches.

The purpose of this initial assessment is to help MRC identify which SRs appear most readily positioned for advancement through existing efforts and to inform discussion of potential next steps for the CFC Project.

Key for Table 1 (related to priorities in the draft climate-ready fisheries strategy)

- **P1** = Manage for Increased Ecological and Stock Resilience
- **P2** = Build Socioeconomic Resilience
- **P3** = Expand Implementation of Adaptive Management
- **P4** = Modernize and Improve Data Systems

Color	Relationship	Meaning
Green	Directly Advanced	The draft Strategy incorporates priorities with associated goals and actions that provide direct opportunities to advance this recommendation through future implementation efforts.
Orange	Potential Support for Future Implementation	The draft Strategy does not directly pursue this recommendation; however, one or two draft Strategy priorities include goals and actions that may provide information, partnerships, tools, funding opportunities, or experience that could support future implementation.
Grey	Not Specifically Identified	This recommendation is not currently addressed in the draft Strategy.

Table 1. Staff Recommendations Most Readily Positioned for Advancement Through the Draft Climate-Ready Fisheries Strategy

Staff Recommendation (SR)	Relationship to Strategy	P1	P2	P3	P4
SR 1: Develop and adopt a policy and definition for coastal fishing communities	Directly Advanced	✓	✓	✓	✓
SR 2: Review of the Commission's policy on restricted access commercial fisheries	Potential Support for Future Implementation		✓		
SR 3: Approve specific, small-scale projects to test and evaluate proposed new approaches	Potential Support for Future Implementation		✓	✓	
SR 4: Engage legislative staff to pursue adjustments to laws as ideas are refined, if warranted, to support fishing community adaptability	Not Specifically Identified				
SR 5: Direct staff to increase engagement and coordination with sister agencies, when feasible, on management decisions affecting California coastal communities	Directly Advanced		✓	✓	✓

Staff Recommendation (SR)	Relationship to Strategy	P1	P2	P3	P4
SR 6: Explore pathways for possible community-based adaptable fishery structures (e.g., community permit banks or risk pools) to be authorized	Potential Support for Future Implementation		✓		
SR 7: Explore filling data needs through collaborative research and data collection	Directly Advanced		✓	✓	✓
SR 8: Survey communities, commercial and recreational fishers, and processors about their priorities for Commission focus	Potential Support for Future Implementation		✓		
SR 9: Explore a model of "fishing community sustainability plans" (CSPs) and possible development of a state fisheries-based module to add to existing CSPs	Potential Support for Future Implementation		✓		
SR 10: Continue to develop an understanding of climate change impacts on coastal fisheries and coastal fishing communities	Directly Advanced	✓	✓	✓	✓

Staff Recommendations Most Readily Positioned for Advancement

Given the opportunities presented through development and potential future implementation of the draft Strategy, SRs 1, 5, 7 and 10 appear most readily positioned for advancement through existing partnerships, anticipated implementation efforts, and potential funding. Collectively, they span all four draft Strategy priorities and include opportunities related to CFC Policy implementation, interagency coordination, fishing community socioeconomic resilience, collaborative research and data collection, and climate-responsive fisheries management.

SR 1. Develop and Adopt a Policy and Definition for Coastal Fishing Communities

The Commission completed the first phase of SR 1 through adoption of the CFC Policy and definition in February 2024. The Commission collaboration with OPC and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife throughout development of the draft Strategy advances the policy's intent and helps ensure the final Strategy reflects and integrates aligned CFC Policy strategies, concepts, and priorities.

The CFC Policy serves as a foundational document, informing the focus and development of the Strategy. The draft Strategy explicitly recognizes the importance of the CFC Policy's three strategies: (A) meaningful engagement with fishing communities; (B) incorporating community interests and needs into fisheries decision-making; and (C) strengthening the adaptive capacity and resilience of coastal fishing communities. While these themes are reflected throughout the draft Strategy's four priorities, they are particularly central to Priority 2, which focuses on socioeconomic resilience.

The draft Strategy also identifies opportunities to improve the collection and use of socioeconomic essential fisheries information (EFI), an important component of achieving the socioeconomic management objectives identified in the Marine Life Management Act Master Plan for Fisheries. Socioeconomic objectives are described within the master plan in Chapter 7 (Socioeconomic Objectives), while Appendix H (Essential Fishery Information and Data

Collection Strategies) outlines the types of socioeconomic EFI needed and approaches for collection. The draft Strategy further explores opportunities to strengthen integration into management and decision-making processes.

Future implementation of the Strategy may create additional opportunities to advance the CFC Policy through enhanced coordination, partnership, and future funding opportunities. However, implementation of the Strategy does not replace the need for a Commission-led process to establish a framework for implementing the CFC Policy.

SR 5. Direct Staff to Increase Engagement and Coordination with Sister Agencies, When Feasible, on Management Decisions Affecting California Coastal Communities

SR 5 is already being advanced even through development of the draft Strategy itself. OPC has worked with Commission and California Department of Fish and Wildlife staff throughout draft Strategy development, reflecting the SR's emphasis on interagency coordination.

The draft Strategy advances SR 5 through its emphasis on sustained interagency coordination and partnerships to address climate-related challenges affecting fisheries and coastal communities. While a formal interagency working group is not proposed at this time, the draft Strategy envisions coordinated efforts among state and federal agencies, tribes, fishing communities, researchers, and other partners through working groups as needed to strengthen fisheries management and community resilience These partnerships provide opportunities to improve information sharing, coordinate management approaches, and address emerging issues affecting fisheries and coastal fishing communities.

SR 7. Explore Filling Data Needs Through Collaborative Research and Data Collection

The draft Strategy strongly aligns with SR 7 through its emphasis on improving fisheries information, expanding collaborative research and monitoring, and modernizing data systems. Across its priorities, the draft Strategy recognizes the importance of partnerships among agencies, tribes, researchers, fishermen, and other stakeholders for identifying information needs, filling data gaps, and improving fisheries monitoring. Priority 4 provides the strongest connection through its emphasis on cooperative fisheries sampling, expanded monitoring partnerships, cost-effective data collection technologies, and better uptake of these data by decision-makers.

SR 10. Continue to Develop an Understanding of Climate Change Impacts on Coastal Fisheries and Coastal Fishing Communities

The goal of SR is the principle focus of the draft Strategy, which directly advances SR 10 by strengthening the state's understanding of climate change impacts on fisheries, marine ecosystems, and coastal fishing communities. Across all four priorities, the draft Strategy emphasizes improving climate-related research and monitoring, understanding ecological and socioeconomic vulnerabilities, incorporating climate information into fisheries management, and modernizing data systems. Together, these efforts strengthen the scientific and informational foundation needed to understand changing ocean conditions — and their implications for fisheries and the communities that depend on them — and represent a practical mechanism for continuing to advance the Commission's interest in climate-responsive fisheries management.

Staff Recommendations Receiving Potential Future Support

SRs 2, 3 6, 8 and 9 are not directly advanced through the draft Strategy but may benefit from future Strategy implementation efforts, including through partnerships, funding opportunities, adaptive management approaches, and lessons learned from Strategy-supported projects and initiatives. While advancing these recommendations as intended may require separate Commission processes or policy discussions, the information, relationships, and outcomes generated through Strategy implementation could help inform and support those future efforts.

SR 2. Review the Commission's Policy on Restricted Access Commercial Fisheries

The draft Strategy does not directly address the Commission's Restricted Access Commercial Fisheries Policy or propose a review of existing restricted access frameworks. However, the draft Strategy recognizes the importance of equitable access to fishing opportunities, livelihood diversification, and adaptive capacity as key components of socioeconomic resilience. As climate-driven changes in ocean conditions affect the availability and distribution of marine resources, these concepts may help inform future discussions about how access frameworks can support community adaptability and resilience, while maintaining the long-term stability and conservation benefits provided by restricted access programs. Advancing SR 2 would require a facilitated review process, informed by stakeholder engagement, policy analysis, and dedicated funding.

SR 3. Approve Specific, Small-Scale Projects to Test and Evaluate Proposed New Approaches

The draft Strategy emphasizes innovation, experimentation and testing new approaches to strengthen fisheries and fishing community resilience. It identifies opportunities for pilot projects, innovative management approaches, and case studies that could help evaluate the effectiveness of new tools, technologies, and management strategies. These efforts may provide opportunities to support future small-scale projects consistent with SR 3 and generate information about possible ways that fisheries and fishing communities can adapt to changing conditions. However, any funding for potential projects flowing from the draft Strategy — and its nexus to specific projects envisioned by this recommendation — is unclear at this time.

SR 6. Explore Pathways for Authorizing Community-Based Adaptable Fishery Structures (e.g., community permit banks or risk pools)

The draft Strategy emphasizes strengthening the adaptive capacity and resilience of fishing communities through innovative financial mechanisms, approaches to fishing opportunities, and community-based resilience initiatives. These concepts are broadly consistent with the intent of SR 6 and may help inform future exploration of adaptable fishery structures, including potential financial mechanisms or other approaches for increasing community flexibility in responding to changing environmental, economic, and fishery conditions. However, the draft Strategy may not specifically address community permit banks, risk pools, or other community-based fishery structures, nor is it anticipated to propose pathways for their authorization. Additional policy consideration and evaluation would be needed to explore the full scope of SR 6.

SR 8. Survey Communities, Commercial and Recreational Fishers, and Processors about Their Priorities for Commission Focus

SR 8 was substantially advanced through implementation of SR 1 and the extensive public engagement conducted during development of the CFC Policy. The draft Strategy emphasizes meaningful and sustained engagement with coastal fishing communities and other fishery stakeholders to better understand community needs, priorities, and climate-related challenges. Its emphasis on inclusive participation, local knowledge, and incorporating community perspectives into fisheries decision-making aligns with the intent of SR 8.

While the draft Strategy does not specifically propose a survey focused on Commission priorities, engagement conducted through the Strategy's implementation may provide opportunities to gather information that helps inform future Commission decision-making and priority-setting. A dedicated survey addressing the specific scope of SR 8 would likely require a separate Commission-led effort and is not recommended at this time.

SR 9. Explore a Model of "Fishing Community Sustainability Plans" (CSPs) and Possible Development of a State Fisheries-Based Module to Add to Existing CSPs

The draft Strategy identifies community sustainability planning as an important approach to strengthening the adaptive capacity and resilience of coastal fishing communities. This creates a direct connection to the underlying intent of SR 9 and may provide opportunities to support, inform, or expand community sustainability planning through future Strategy implementation efforts.

However, the draft Strategy is focused on supporting community sustainability planning opportunities in coastal communities that do not currently have CSPs, rather than specifically proposing development of a state fisheries-based module or a standardized model for incorporating state-managed fisheries considerations into existing CSPs. Additional exploration, stakeholder engagement, and program development may be needed to advance the full scope of SR 9.

Staff Recommendations Not Currently Reflected in the Strategy

SR 4 is the only recommendation not directly advanced through the draft Strategy and would likely require a separate pathway if pursued. While potentially a valuable area for future Commission consideration, it is outside the current scope of the draft Strategy.

SR 4. Engage Legislative Staff to Pursue Adjustments to Laws as Ideas are Refined, if Warranted to Support Fishing Community Adaptability

The draft Strategy does not specifically address legislative engagement or potential statutory changes to support fishing community adaptability. However, the draft Strategy's emphasis on responsive and flexible fisheries management may help identify emerging management or regulatory challenges as ocean conditions and fisheries change. These efforts could inform future legislative discussions, if warranted. Advancing SR 4 would likely require a separate pathway involving Commission direction if specific statutory or regulatory changes are identified as necessary.



Draft Climate-Ready Fisheries Strategy

Marine Resources Committee

November 12 , 2026

Katie Cieri, Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture Program Manager

Climate Change and California's Fisheries

California's fisheries are integral to:

- Coastal economies and fishing communities
- California's food system
- Cultural and recreational heritage

Climate-driven changes in ocean conditions are affecting:

- Species abundance, distribution, and productivity
- Key habitats
- Spawning and recruitment
- Timing and safety of harvest
- Fishing opportunities, businesses, and communities

Climate change introduces both challenges and opportunities

CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL

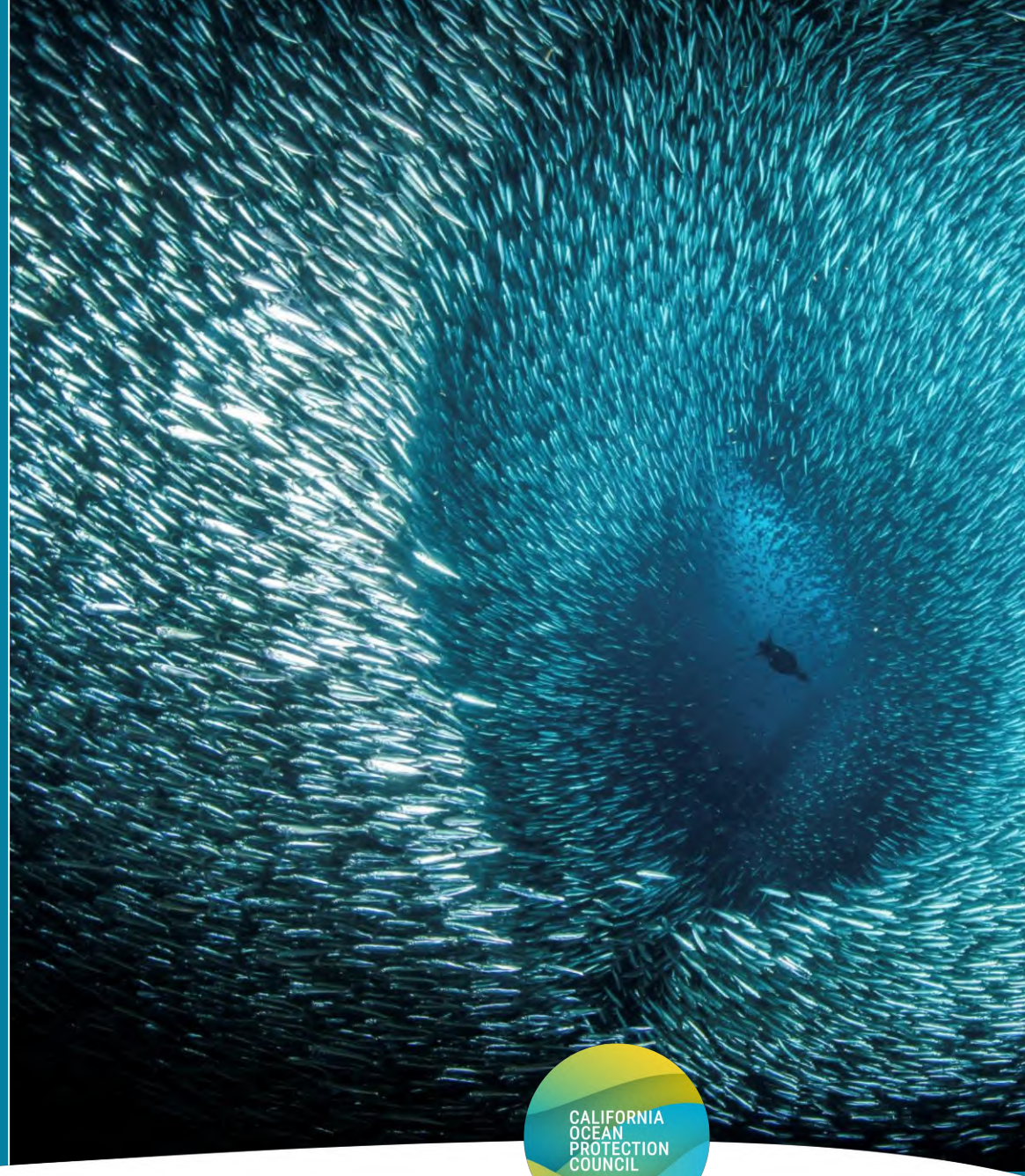
Fisheries are Changing

Changing ocean conditions:

- Marine heatwaves and El Niño
- Changing upwelling
- Harmful algal blooms
- Declining dissolved oxygen
- Ocean acidification

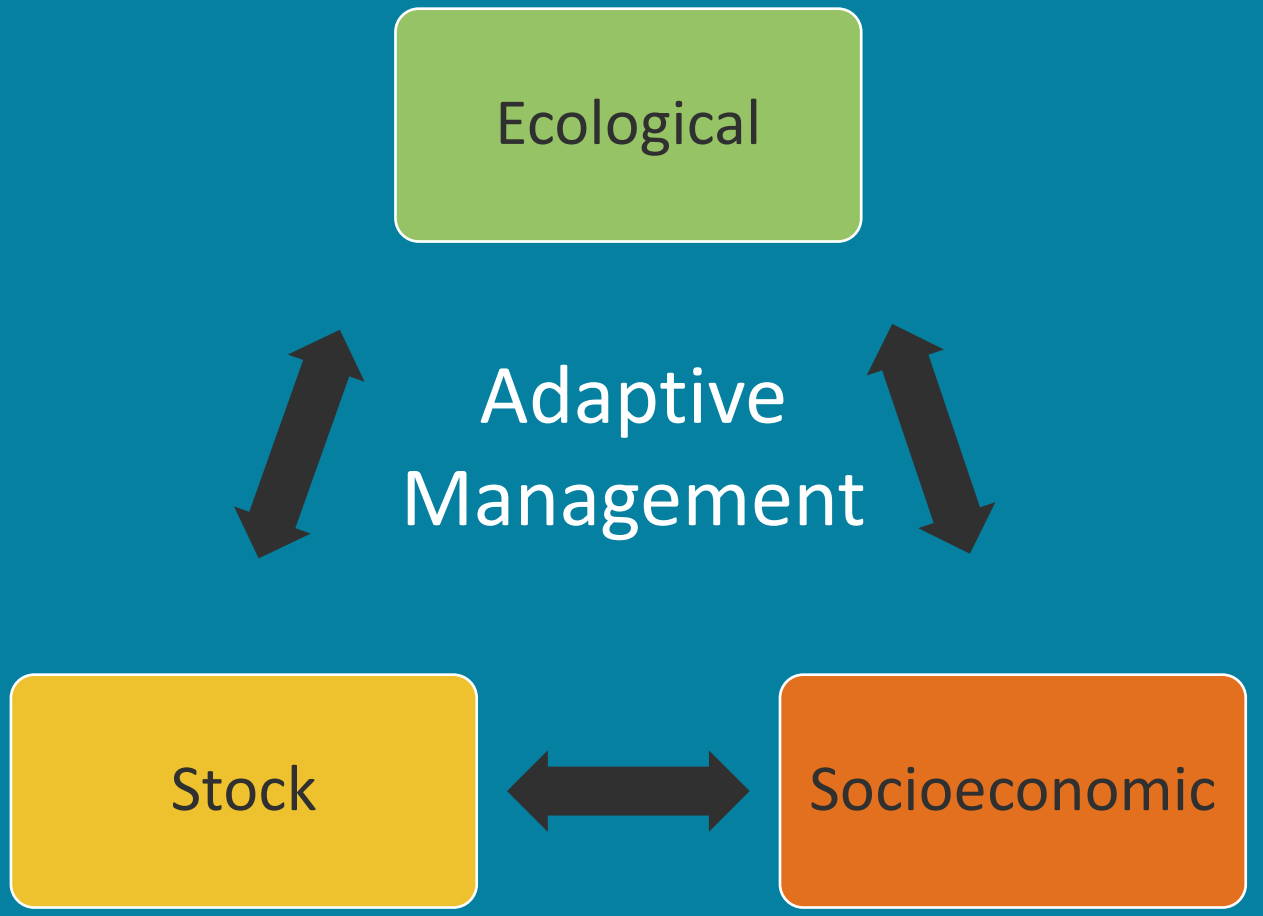
Potential consequences:

- Shifting species distributions
- Changes in abundance and productivity
- Changing habitat conditions
- Shifts in fishing locations and seasons
- Fishery closures
- New or emerging fishing opportunities



CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL

Climate Resilience has 3 Dimensions



CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL

Climate-Ready Fisheries Management

- anticipates and responds to changing ocean conditions

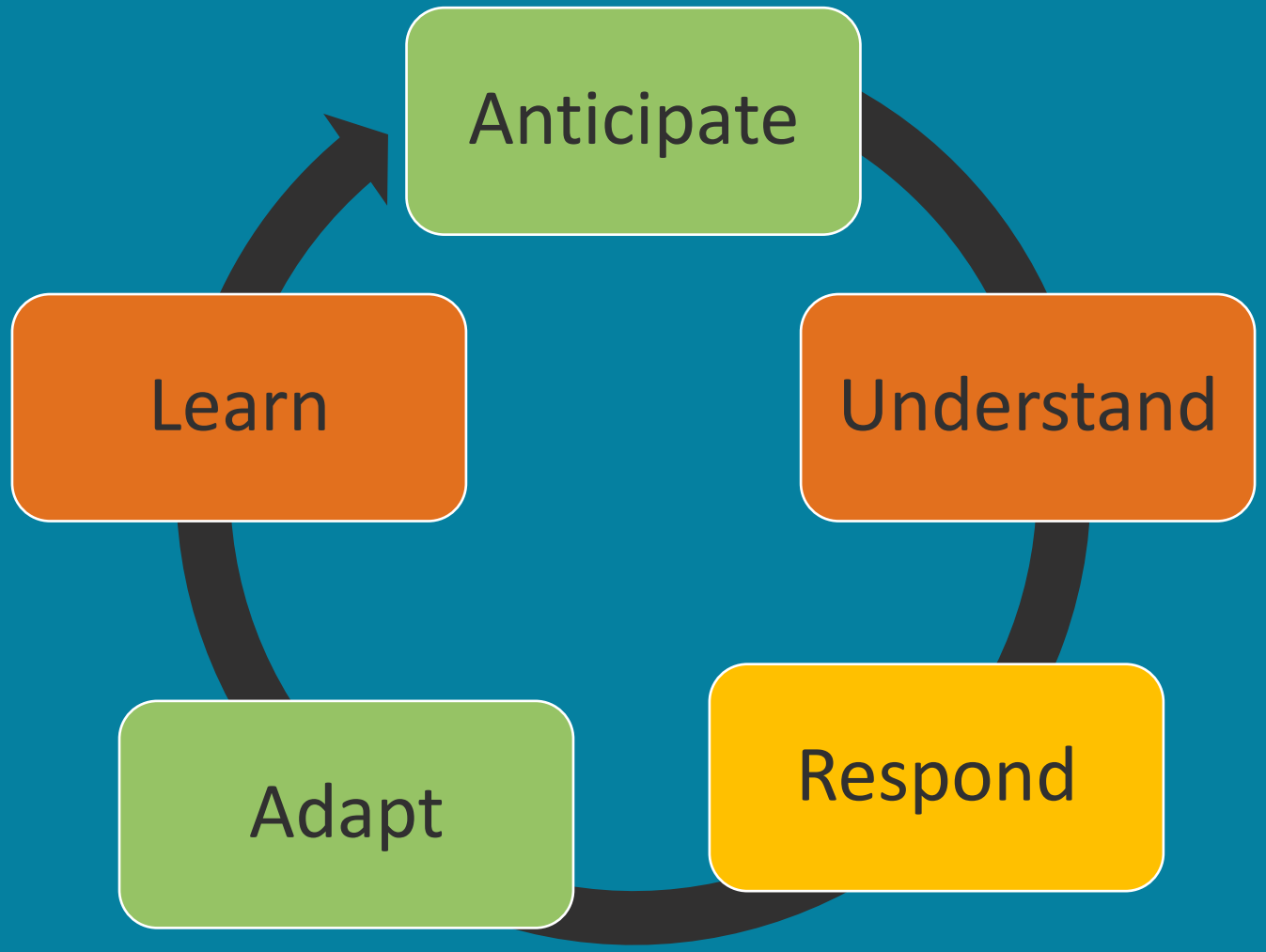
- maintains/ improves the health and resilience of
  - fish populations
  - marine ecosystems
  - dependent communities

- through adaptive decision-making informed by
  - timely, reliable data
  - tribal partnerships
  - transparent and inclusive stakeholder engagement
  - best available science



CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL

Climate-Ready Fisheries Management in Practice



CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL

MLMA Master Plan

MLMA Capability	Climate-Ready Fisheries Application
Adaptive management	Detect, respond to, learn from, and adjust to changing conditions
Best available science & monitoring	Improve detection, understanding, and timely use of changing ecological and socioeconomic information
Ecosystem-based & socioeconomic objectives	Address ecological, stock, and community dimensions of resilience
Scaled management	Match management approaches to fishery needs, information, capacity, and changing conditions
Harvest control rules & Management Strategy Evaluation	Develop and test responsive decision frameworks under uncertainty and environmental change
Stakeholder engagement & strategic partnerships	Incorporate local knowledge and strengthen collaborative research, monitoring, implementation, and learning

CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL

Policies, Programs & Partnerships

- OPC's Strategic Plan
- Fish and Game Commission's Coastal Fishing Communities Policy
- Salmon Strategy for a Hotter, Drier Future
- Marine Protected Area Network
- Long-term ocean and fisheries monitoring
- Tribal, community, academic, NGO, and other partnerships



Strategy Priorities

- Priority 1: Manage for Increased Ecological and Stock Resilience
- Priority 2: Build Socioeconomic Resilience
- Priority 3: Expand Implementation of Adaptive Management
- Priority 4: Modernize and Improve Data Systems



Strategy Design

Priority



Goal



Action



Implementation

Strategy Design

Priority

- Priority 1: Manage for Increased Ecological and Stock Resilience

Goal

- Improve understanding of climate impacts on fish populations and their habitats

Action

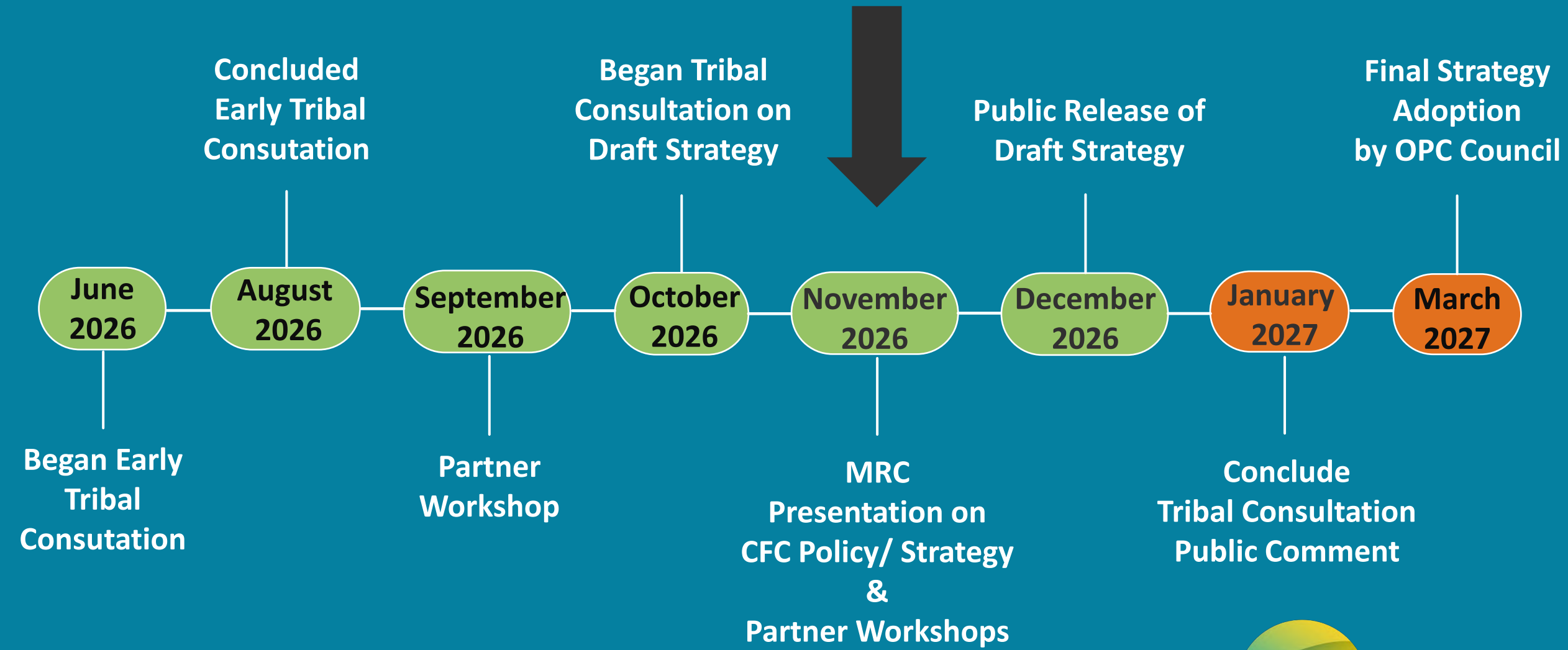
- Expand evaluations of climate impacts on fish recruitment dynamics, spawning habitat, and spawning aggregations in Enhanced Status Reports.

Implementation

- Agencies collaborate with external partners to identify priority information needs
- Incorporate relevant climate and habitat information into ESRs
- Identify monitoring and research gaps
- Use findings to inform future research priorities and management decisions

CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL

Timeline


June 2026
Began Early Tribal Consutation
August 2026
Concluded Early Tribal Consutation
September 2026
Partner Workshop
October 2026
Began Tribal Consultation on Draft Strategy
November 2026
MRC Presentation on CFC Policy/ Strategy & Partner Workshops
December 2026
Public Release of Draft Strategy
January 2027
Conclude Tribal Consultation Public Comment
March 2027
Final Strategy Adoption by OPC Council



CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL

Thank you!

Katie Cieri, Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture Program Manager
Katie.cieri@resources.ca.gov