



## California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

c/o Resources Agency  
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August 2, 2005

From: Michael DeLapa, Central Coast Project Manager  
To: Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (CCRSG)  
Re: Responses to your request for information

To address questions and information requests raised by the Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group at its July 7-8 meeting, the staff of the MLPA Initiative, the Department of Fish and Game, and members of the MLPA Science Sub-Team have met and prepared the following responses. In several cases, we were not able to obtain the necessary information to adequately respond at this time. We are currently conducting additional research and hope to have further information at the September CCRSG meeting. If you have further questions or comments about the responses, please contact Mike Weber, Senior Policy Analyst with the MLPA Initiative, at [mleoweber@aol.com](mailto:mleoweber@aol.com).

**RSG – 1:** *What are historic and recent population trends (spatial and temporal) of marine mammals (sea lions, harbor seals and sea otters specifically)? What are their diets? What is the impact of their feeding on commercially and recreationally important species?*

Jim Harvey from Moss Landing Marine Lab is compiling information regarding surveys of seals, sea lions, and sea otters, as well as papers that discuss their diets and the impact of their foraging on commercial catches. We hope to provide the CCRSG with this information within the next month.

**RSG – 2:** *What are the relationships between kelp abundance and climate variation?*

MLPA Initiative staff are working with Dr. Brian Kinlan at UCSB to determine the best formats for presenting available information on this topic.

**RSG – 3:** *What are trends in boating activity and variation in types of vessels and how does this vary regionally (by points of access) and by uses (e.g., recreational fishing, non-consumptive activities)? Can vessel registration be used for this?*

Ports and harbors are likely the best source of information for this type of information. State boat registration records cover only a fraction of the boats and vessels using ports. Coast Guard registration covers only vessels over five net tons.

The regional profile presents trends in commercial fishing vessel registration and recreational fishing, as well as information on types of use (consumptive and non-

consumptive) based on interviews of private and rental boat users at launch ramps in central California in 2004.

Staff was unclear what specifically is meant by "types of vessels." Does this refer to size, outfitting, purpose? We were also unclear how this information would contribute to evaluating existing MPAs and designing alternative MPAs in specific areas.

**RSG – 4:** *Compare the economic value of all the different non-consumptive and consumptive activities using a common currency.*

There is no readily available scientific information that would make this comparison possible, nor are there data or analyses using a currency common between consumptive uses such as commercial and recreational fishing.

**RSG – 5:** *What are "intrinsic values."*

According to Joe Milton, Legal Counsel to the Department of Fish and Game, "Although on some level, humans are certainly part of natural systems, the MLPA distinguishes anthropogenic from ecologic/trophic considerations. Indeed, the MLPA addresses the former solely in the context of adverse impacts on the latter (see e.g. Sections 2851(c) and (e), 2853(b)(3).) The scope of the concept 'marine natural heritage' in Section 2853(b)(4) is exemplified by the subsequent phrase 'protection of representative and unique marine life habitats...for their intrinsic value.' This reference emphasizes non-human considerations. 'Intrinsic value' is a term in natural resource economics that describes the value of a resource in terms of its inherent worth, independent of its value to anyone or anything else."

According to Dr. Linwood Pendelton, the science of economics does not attempt to measure or value intrinsic values.

**RSG – 6:** *SAT should review the Regional Profile with a focus on data quality (presented or used for analyses) and identify their relevance to CCRSG decision making.*

The SAT sub-team is reviewing the Regional Profile. The SAT suggested that the Department of Fish and Game and the MLPA Initiative staff were in the best position to prepare the Regional Profile. All of the information in the Regional Profile comes from peer-reviewed literature or from scientists on the team.

**RSG – 7:** *What are the locations and types of agricultural and other discharge hotspots?*

Some information on these matters will be available in the GIS layers being prepared by staff, including major rivers, percentage of agricultural lands in coastal watersheds, and permitted discharge points. Efforts are underway to map other relevant information.

**RSG – 8:** *Characterize resiliency in the Central Coast region.*

As presented in a separate memorandum on the definition of key terms, ecological resilience is defined as follows:

Ecosystem resilience is the amount of disturbance a system can absorb and still remain within the same state or domain of attraction. Resilience also encompasses the ability of an ecosystem subject to disturbance and change to reorganize and renew itself. The definition includes the degree to which the system is capable of self-organization (versus a lack of organization, or organization forced by external factors), and how much it expresses a capacity for learning and adaptation.

The information for determining the ecological resilience of central coast ecosystems is not readily available.

**RSG – 9:** *Help design a checklist of environmental attributes to be used as criteria for design and evaluation of MPAs.*

The MLPA and MPF identify environmental attributes that are key for the design of MPAs. These include the various types of habitats in different depth zones. The science sub-team is reviewing a draft checklist based on which of these habitat and depth-zone combinations occur in the central coast study region.