

**California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative:
Draft Criteria for Selecting the Central Coast Project Area**

The Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) requires the Department of Fish and Game (Department) to design a draft proposal for alternative marine protected area (MPA) networks to be adopted by the Fish and Game Commission. The MLPA Initiative will begin this process in an area along the central coast under the guidance of the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force. The Central Coast MLPA Project will produce a suite of alternative MPA networks according to the MLPA requirements and draft Master Plan Framework, in a regional project that incorporates sound science, stakeholder input and general public participation.

In order to begin the Central Coast MLPA Project, the project area along the central coast must be selected. In determining where specifically to locate and how large an area to select for the Central Coast MLPA Project, the following criteria should be used:

- ∄ Progress of past Department and other public discussion groups
- ∄ Potential state, federal and private partners with financial or in-kind services
- ∄ Scientific knowledge of and research being conducted in the area
- ∄ Availability of first-hand knowledge of the area
- ∄ Availability of scientific data on existing MPAs and how they meet or do not meet both resource protection needs and the requirements of the MLPA
- ∄ Existing fishery regulations in the area and how they meet or do not meet both resource protection needs and the requirements of the MLPA
- ∄ Range or area over which resources are utilized by user groups
- ∄ Range or area over which a resource user may be expected to have a working knowledge of the resources
- ∄ Distance members of a regional stakeholder group would need to travel in order to participate in group meetings
- ∄ Availability of Department personnel