

Chapter 7. Master Plan Review

The Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) establishes several objectives that assure fishery management systems are proactive, adaptive, and responsive to changing environmental conditions, market or socioeconomic factors, and the concerns of fishery participants and the public. In order to meet these objectives, there must be a process for regular review and revision of the Master Plan.

7.1 Purpose

The purpose for reviewing the Master Plan is to provide an opportunity for amendments or revisions that address unplanned needs, unexpected issues, changes in underlying circumstances and public concerns. Persons desiring changes to the Master Plan may address any part of the plan, but should focus on improving the fishery management system and on achieving the goal of fishery sustainability.

7.2 Scheduled Review Process

In order to provide for public involvement during the scheduled review process, the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) will invite suggestions and changes for Master Plan amendment or revision by holding meetings, workshops, or formal hearings, by using advisory bodies or taking written comment. After reviewing public suggestions and comments, the DFG will submit the revised Master Plan or amendment to the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) for adoption. The Master Plan amendment or revision will be available in written form at appropriate DFG and Marine Region offices, and on the DFG's web site at least 45 days prior to Commission adoption. The Commission must hold at least one public hearing before adoption.

The DFG will be reporting annually to the Commission on the status of at least one-fourth of the fisheries managed by the state. Thus, all the fisheries will be reviewed every four years. This serves as an appropriate timeframe for scheduled Master Plan review. The entire Master Plan will be reviewed no later than four years from the adoption date.

7.3 Amendment or Revision

The Master Plan amendment or revision process should be flexible to accommodate situations outlined in 7.2. Amendment or revision can be initiated by the DFG or members of the public. Requests by the public must be made in writing to the Commission clearly stating the reasons why the Master Plan should be changed. The Commission will decide whether the change is valid and *significant*, and direct the DFG to begin the amendment or revision process or whether the change is valid and *minor*, and direct the DFG to make an editorial change to the Master Plan.

A *significant* change for the purposes of Master Plan amendment or revision is defined as any of the following:

1. A need for re-prioritization of the fisheries being considered for fishery management plans (FMPs).

2. An addition or deletion to the process for meaningful public involvement.
3. Changes to definitions contained in the Master Plan.
4. Anything the Commission determines is a *significant* change.

Any changes other than those listed above will be considered minor.

There are some issues, such as prioritization of fisheries, that may need to be reviewed more frequently than every four years. The DFG Director may recommend to the Commission that fisheries be re-prioritized based upon recent changes or developments in a particular fishery, data and recommendations from the annual status of fisheries report (§7065, 7066 FGC), and other information.

The public may also petition the Commission to consider fisheries for re-prioritization through a written statement. Such petitions shall, at a minimum, include sufficient information that a change in prioritization may be warranted. Petitions shall include information regarding landing trends, life history attributes of the species, socioeconomics of the fishery, and other relevant factors. The petition must identify how current management of the fishery is inconsistent with MLMA, and show there is a great need for changes in conservation and management measures of the fishery in order to comply with MLMA. The Commission shall determine if there is sufficient information and adequate justification to warrant further review of the petition by the DFG. If so, then the Commission will send the petition to the DFG for analysis.

The DFG will examine the reasons for re-prioritizing fisheries and determine if it will significantly change the prioritization results of the Master Plan. The DFG will then apply the approaches described in Chapter 3 to re-prioritize fisheries, if needed. A revised prioritized list of fisheries will then be submitted to the Commission as an amendment to the Master Plan. If an amendment is rejected in whole, or in part, it will be sent back to the DFG for revision and re-submission. Written statements requesting re-prioritization of fisheries will be reviewed annually every March, or at other times if deemed necessary by the Commission.